



COMPLETE WORKS OF
AMMIANUS
MARCELLINUS

HISTORY
OF ROME

ILLUSTRATED

**COMPLETE WORKS OF
AMMIANUS
MARCELLINUS**

Illustrated

HISTORY OF ROME

Ammianus Marcellinus was a Roman soldier and historian who wrote the penultimate major historical account surviving from. The surviving books of his history cover the years 353 to 378.

His work, known as the Res Gestae, chronicled in Latin the history of Rome from the accession of the Emperor Nerva in 96 to the death of Valens at the Battle of Adrianople.

It is lauded as a clear, comprehensive, and generally impartial account of events by a contemporary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[HISTORY OF ROME](#)

[THE TRANSLATIONS](#)

[C. D. YONGE TRANSLATION, 1862](#)

[PREFACE.](#)

[BOOK XIV.](#)

[BOOK XV.](#)

[BOOK XVI.](#)

[BOOK XVII.](#)

[BOOK XVIII.](#)

[BOOK XIX.](#)

[BOOK XX.](#)

[BOOK XXI.](#)

[BOOK XXII.](#)

[BOOK XXIII.](#)

[BOOK XXIV.](#)

[BOOK XXV.](#)

[BOOK XXVI.](#)

[BOOK XXVII.](#)

[BOOK XXVIII.](#)

[BOOK XXIX.](#)

[BOOK XXX.](#)

[BOOK XXXI.](#)

[J. C. ROLFE TRANSLATION, 1940](#)

[BOOK XIV](#)

[BOOK XV](#)

[BOOK XVI](#)

[BOOK XVII](#)

[BOOK XVIII](#)

[BOOK XIX](#)

[BOOK XX](#)

[BOOK XXI](#)

[BOOK XXII](#)

[BOOK XXIII](#)

[BOOK XXIV](#)

[BOOK XXV](#)

[BOOK XXVI](#)

[BOOK XXVII](#)

[BOOK XXVIII](#)

[BOOK XXIX](#)

[BOOK XXX](#)

[BOOK XXXI](#)

[THE LATIN TEXT](#)

[LIBER XIV.](#)

[LIBER XV.](#)

[LIBER XVI.](#)

[LIBER XVII.](#)

[LIBER XVIII.](#)

[LIBER XIX.](#)

[LIBER XX.](#)

[LIBER XXI.](#)

[LIBER XXII.](#)

[LIBER XXIII.](#)

[LIBER XXIV.](#)

[LIBER XXV.](#)

[LIBER XXVI.](#)

[LIBER XXVII.](#)

[LIBER XXVIII.](#)

[LIBER XXIX.](#)

[LIBER XXX.](#)

[LIBER XXXI.](#)

[Anonymi Valesiani Pars Prior: origo Constantini Imperatoris](#)

[Anonymi Valesiani pars posterior: Chronica Theodericiana](#)

HISTORY OF ROME

THE TRANSLATIONS

Ammianus Marcellinus was a fourth-century Roman soldier and historian, whose sole surviving work, *Res Gestae*, is now regarded as the penultimate major historical account surviving from Antiquity, with the last being by Procopius. Ammianus' *History of Rome* chronicled the years AD 96, from the accession of Nerva, to the death of Valens at the Battle of Adrianople in AD 378, forming a continuation of Tacitus' great historical work. Ammianus presumably completed his work before 391, as in the twenty-second book he praises the Serapeum in Egypt as the glory of the empire, though in that year the Emperor granted the temple grounds to the Christian bishop, causing the pagans to barricade themselves in the temple, plundering its contents and torturing Christians, leading to the temple's destruction.

Res Gestae was originally written in thirty-one books, but the first thirteen books are now lost, with the extant text of eighteen books covering the years 353 to 378. As a whole the text is considered extremely valuable, offering a clear and comprehensive account of events by a contemporary witness. However, like most ancient historians, Ammianus had a strong political and religious agenda to pursue, as demonstrated by his contrasts of the emperors Constantius II and Julian, always to the former's disadvantage. Edward Gibbon judged Ammianus "an accurate and faithful guide, who composed the history of his own times without indulging the prejudices and passions which usually affect the mind of a contemporary." Nevertheless, Gibbon also criticised Ammianus for his lack of literary flair: "The coarse and undistinguishing pencil of Ammianus has delineated his bloody figures with tedious and disgusting accuracy."

Ammianus provides us with a remarkably accurate and impartial record of his own times. As an experienced soldier, who joined the army when still young, serving under the governor Ursicinus and the emperors Constantius II and Julian, his work is rich in military experience, demonstrating a keen understanding in economic and social affairs.

Ammianus is also refreshingly broad-minded towards non-Romans and accepting of Christianity. His polished style indicates that his prose was intended for recitation, yet the concise and knowledgeable manner of conveying his historical account ensures that we gather a clear understanding of the causes of the Roman empire's fall.

The surviving text has suffered badly from the manuscript transmission. As well as the loss of the first thirteen books, the remaining eighteen are in many places corrupt and contain lacunae. The sole surviving manuscript from which almost every other is derived is a ninth-century Carolingian text, named Vatican lat. 1873 (V), produced in Fulda from an insular exemplar. The only independent textual source for Ammianus lies in *Fragmenta Marbugensia* (M), another ninth-century Frankish codex, which was taken apart to provide covers for account-books during the fifteenth century. Only six leaves of M survive; however, before this manuscript was dismantled the Abbot of Hersfeld lent the manuscript to Sigismund Gelenius, who used it in preparing the text of the second Froben edition (G).

C. D. YONGE TRANSLATION, 1862

PREFACE.

Of Ammianus Marcellinus, the writer of the following History, we know very little more than what can be collected from that portion of it which remains to us. From that source we learn that he was a native of Antioch, and a soldier; being one of the *prefectores domestici* — the body-guard of the emperor, into which none but men of noble birth were admitted. He was on the staff of Ursicinus, whom he attended in several of his expeditions; and he bore a share in the campaigns which Julian made against the Persians. After that time he never mentions himself, and we are ignorant when he quitted the service and retired to Rome, in which city he composed his History. We know not when he was born, or when he died, except that from one or two incidental passages in his work it is plain that he lived nearly to the end of the fourth century: and it is even uncertain whether he was a Christian or a Pagan; though the general belief is, that he adhered to the religion of the ancient Romans, without, however, permitting it to lead him even to speak disrespectfully of Christians or Christianity.



His History, which he divided into thirty-one books (of which the first thirteen are lost, while the text of those which remain is in some places imperfect), began with the accession of Nerva, A.D. 96, where Tacitus and Suetonius end, and was continued to the death of Valens, A.D. 378, a period of 282 years. And there is probably no work as to the intrinsic value of which there is so little difference of opinion. Gibbon bears repeated testimony to his accuracy, fidelity, and impartiality, and quotes him extensively. In losing his aid after A.D. 378, he says, "It is not without sincere regret that I must now take leave of an accurate and faithful guide, who has composed the history of his own times without indulging the prejudices and passions which usually affect the mind of a contemporary." Professor Ramsay (in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography) says, "We are indebted to him for a knowledge of many important facts not elsewhere recorded, and for much valuable insight into the modes of thought and the general tone of public feeling prevalent in his day. Nearly all the statements admitted appear to be founded upon his own observations, or upon the information derived from trustworthy eye-witnesses. A considerable number of dissertations and digressions are introduced, many of them highly interesting and valuable. Such are his notices of the institutions and manners of the Saracens (xiv. 4), of the Scythians and Sarmatians (xvii. 12), of the Huns and Alani (xxxi. 2), of the Egyptians and their country (xxii. 6, 14-16), and his geographical discussions upon Gaul (xv. 9), the Pontus (xxii. 8), and Thrace (xxvii. 4). Less legitimate and less judicious are his geological speculations upon earthquakes (xvii. 7), his astronomical inquiries into eclipses (xx. 3), comets (xxv. 10), and the regulation of the calendar (xxvi. 1); his medical researches into the origin of epidemics (xix. 4); his zoological theory on the destruction of lions by mosquitos (xviii. 7), and his horticultural essay on the impregnation of palms (xxiv. 3). In addition to industry in

research and honesty of purpose, he was gifted with a large measure of strong common sense, which enabled him in many points to rise superior to the prejudices of his day, and with a clear-sighted independence of spirit which prevented him from being dazzled or over-awed by the brilliancy and the terrors which enveloped the imperial throne. But although sufficiently acute in detecting and exposing the follies of others, and especially in ridiculing the absurdities of popular superstition, Ammianus did not entirely escape the contagion. The general and deep-seated belief in magic spells, omens, prodigies, and oracles, which appears to have gained additional strength upon the first introduction of Christianity, evidently exercised no small influence over his mind. The old legends and doctrines of the pagan creed, and the subtle mysticism which philosophers pretended to discover lurking below, when mixed up with the pure and simple but startling tenets of the new faith, formed a confused mass which few intellects could reduce to order and harmony."

The vices of our author's style, and his ambitious affectation of ornament, are condemned by most critics; but some of the points which strike a modern reader as defects evidently arise from the alteration which the Latin language had already undergone since the days of Livy. His great value, however, consists in the facts he has made known to us, and is quite independent of the style or language in which he has conveyed that knowledge, of which without him we should have been nearly destitute.

The present translation has been made from Wagner and Erfurdt's edition, published at Leipzig in 1808, and their division of chapters into short paragraphs has been followed.

Feb. 1862.

NOTE: THE FIRST THIRTEEN BOOKS ARE LOST.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

I. The cruelty of the Cæsar Gallus. — II. The incursions of the Isaurians. — III. The unsuccessful plans of the Persians. — IV. The invasion of the Saracens, and the manners of that people. — V. The punishment of the adherents of Magnentius. — VI. The vices of the senate and people of Rome. — VII. The ferocity and inhumanity of the Cæsar Gallus. — VIII. A description of the provinces of the East. — IX. About the Cæsar Constantius Gallus. — X. The Emperor Constantius grants the Allemanni peace at their request. — XI. The Cæsar Constantius Gallus is sent for by the Emperor Constantius, and beheaded.

I.

A.D. 353.

§ 1. After the events of an expedition full of almost insuperable difficulties, while the spirits of all parties in the state, broken by the variety of their dangers and toils, were still enfeebled; while the clang of trumpets was ringing in men's ears, and the troops were still distributed in their winter quarters, the storms of angry fortune surrounded the commonwealth with fresh dangers through the manifold and terrible atrocities of Cæsar Gallus:¹ who, when just entering into the prime of life, having been raised with unexpected honour from the lowest depth of misery to the highest rank, exceeded all the legitimate bounds of the power conferred on him, and with preposterous violence threw everything into confusion. For by his near relationship to the royal family, and his connection with the name of Constantine, he was so inflated with pride, that if he had had more power, he would, as it seemed, have ventured to attack even the author of his prosperity.

2. His wife added fuel to his natural ferocity; she was a woman immoderately proud of her sisterly relationship to Augustus, and had been formerly given in marriage by the

elder Constantine to King Hannibalianus,² his brother's son. She was an incarnate fury: never weary of inflaming his savage temper, thirsting for human blood as insatiably as her husband. The pair, in process of time, becoming more skilful in the infliction of suffering, employed a gang of underhand and crafty talebearers, accustomed in their wickedness to make random additions to their discoveries, which consisted in general of such falsehoods as they themselves delighted in; and these men loaded the innocent with calumnies, charging them with aiming at kingly power, or with practising infamous acts of magic.

3. And among his less remarkable atrocities, when his power had gone beyond the bounds of moderate crimes, was conspicuous the horrible and sudden death of a certain noble citizen of Alexandria, named Clematius. His mother-in-law, having conceived a passion for him, could not prevail on him to gratify it; and in consequence, as was reported, she, having obtained an introduction by a secret door into the palace, won over the queen by the present of a costly necklace, and procured a fatal warrant to be sent to Honoratus, at that time count-governor of the East, in compliance with which Clematius was put to death, a man wholly innocent of any kind of wickedness, without being permitted to say a word in his defence.

4. After this iniquitous transaction, which struck others also with fear lest they should meet with similar treatment, as if cruelty had now obtained a licence, many were condemned on mere vague suspicion; of whom some were put to death, others were punished by the confiscation of their property, and driven forth as exiles from their homes, so that having nothing left but their tears and complaints, they were reduced to live on the contributions of their friends; and many opulent and famous houses were shut up, the old constitutional and just authority being changed into a government at the will of a bloodthirsty tyrant.

5. Nor amid these manifold atrocities was any testimony of an accuser, not even of a suborned one, sought for, in order to give at least an appearance of these crimes being committed according to law and statute, as very commonly even the most cruel princes have done: but whatever suited the implacable temper of Cæsar was instantly accomplished in haste, as if its accordance with human and divine law had been well considered.

6. After these deeds a fresh device was adopted, and a body of obscure men, such as, by reason of the meanness of their condition, were little likely to excite suspicion, were sent through all the districts of Antioch, to collect reports, and to bring news of whatever they might hear. They, travelling about, and concealing their object, joined clandestinely in the conversational circles of honourable men, and also in disguise obtained entrance into the houses of the rich. When they returned they were secretly admitted by back doors into the palace, and then reported all that they had been able to hear or to collect; taking care with an unanimous kind of conspiracy to invent many things, and to exaggerate for the worse all they really knew; at the same time suppressing any praises of Cæsar which had come to their ears, although these were wrung from many, against their consciences, by the dread of impending evils.

7. And it had happened sometimes that, if in his secret chamber, when no domestic servant was by, the master of the house had whispered anything into his wife's ear, the very next day, as if those renowned seers of old, Amphiaraus or Marcius, had been at hand to report it, the emperor was informed of what had been said; so that even the walls of a man's secret chamber, the only witnesses to his language, were viewed with apprehension.

8. And Cæsar's fixed resolution to inquire into these and other similar occurrences was increased by the queen, who constantly stimulated his desire, and was driving on the fortunes of her husband to headlong destruction, while she

ought rather, by giving him useful advice, to have led him back into the paths of truth and mercy, by feminine gentleness, as, in recounting the acts of the Gordiani, we have related to have been done by the wife of that truculent emperor Maximinus.

9. At last, by an unsurpassed and most pernicious baseness, Gallus ventured on adopting a course of fearful wickedness, which indeed Gallienus, to his own exceeding infamy, is said formerly to have tried at Rome; and, taking with him a few followers secretly armed, he used to rove in the evening through the streets and among the shops, making inquiries in the Greek language, in which he was well skilled, what were the feelings of individuals towards Cæsar. And he used to do this boldly in the city, where the brillancy of the lamps at night often equalled the light of day. At last, being often recognized, and considering that if he went out in this way he should be known, he took care never to go out except openly in broad daylight, to transact whatever business which he thought of serious importance. And these things caused bitter though secret lamentation, and discontent to many.

10. But at that time Thalassius was the present prefect³ of the palace, a man of an arrogant temper; and he, perceiving that the hasty fury of Gallus gradually increased to the danger of many of the citizens, did not mollify it by either delay or wise counsels, as men in high office have very often pacified the anger of their princes; but by untimely opposition and reproof, did often excite him the more to frenzy; often also informing Augustus of his actions, and that too with exaggeration, and taking care, I know not with what intention, that what he did should not be unknown to the emperor. And at this Cæsar soon became more vehemently exasperated, and, as if raising more on high than ever the standard of his contumacy, without any regard to the safety of others or of himself, he bore himself

onwards like a rapid torrent, with an impetuosity which would listen to no reason, to sweep away all the obstacles which opposed his will.

II.

§ 1. Nor indeed was the East the only quarter which this plague affected with its various disasters. For the Isaurians also, a people who were accustomed to frequent alternations of peace, and of turbulence which threw everything into confusion with sudden outbreaks — impunity having fostered their growing audacity and encouraged it to evil — broke out in a formidable war. Being especially excited, as they gave out by this indignity, that some of their allies, having been taken prisoners, were in an unprecedented manner exposed to wild beasts, and in the games of the amphitheatre, at Iconium, a town of Pisidia.

2. And as Cicero⁴ says, that “even wild beasts, when reminded by hunger, generally return to that place where they have been fed before.” So they all, descending like a whirlwind from their high and pathless mountains, came into the districts bordering on the sea: in which hiding themselves in roads full of lurking-places, and in defiles, when the long nights were approaching, the moon being at that time new, and so not yet giving her full light, they lay wait for the sailors; and when they perceived that they were wrapped in sleep, they, crawling on their hands and feet along the cables which held the anchors, and raising themselves up by them, swung themselves into the boats, and so came upon the crews unexpectedly, and, their natural ferocity being inflamed by covetousness, they spared not even those who offered no resistance, but slew them all, and carried off a splendid booty with no more trouble than if it had been valueless.

3. This conduct did not last long, for when the deaths of the crews thus plundered and slaughtered became known,

no one afterwards brought a vessel to the stations on that coast; but, avoiding them as they would have avoided the deadly precipices of Sciron,⁵ they sailed on, without halting, to the shores of Cyprus, which lie opposite to the rocks of Isauria.

4. Therefore as time went on, and no foreign vessels went there any more, they quitted the sea-coast, and betook themselves to Lycaonia, a country which lies on the borders of Isauria. And there, occupying the roads with thick barricades, they sought a living by plundering the inhabitants of the district, as well as travellers. These outrages aroused the soldiers who were dispersed among the many municipal towns and forts which lie on the borders. And they, endeavouring to the utmost of their strength to repel these banditti, who were spreading every day more widely, sometimes in solid bodies, at others in small straggling parties, were overcome by their vast numbers.

5. Since the Isaurians, having been born and brought up amid the entangled defiles of lofty mountains, could bound over them as over plain and easy paths, and attacked all who came in their way with missiles from a distance, terrifying them at the same time with savage yells.

6. And very often our infantry were compelled in pursuit of them to climb lofty crags, and, when their feet slipped, to catch hold of the shrubs and briars to raise themselves to the summits; without ever being able to deploy into battle array, by reason of the narrow and difficult nature of the ground, nor even to stand firm; while their enemy running round in every direction hurled down upon them fragments of rock from above till they retired down the declivities with great danger. Or else, sometimes, in the last necessity fighting bravely, they were overwhelmed with fragments of immense bulk and weight.

7. On this account they subsequently were forced to observe more caution, and whenever the plunderers began to retire to the high ground, our soldiers yielded to the unfavourable character of the country and retired. But whenever they could be met with in the plain, which often happened, then charging them without giving them time to combine their strength, or even to brandish the javelins of which they always carried two or three, they slaughtered them like defenceless sheep.

8. So that these banditti, conceiving a fear of Lycaonia, which is for the most part a champaign country, since they had learnt by repeated proofs that they were unequal to our troops in a pitched battle, betook themselves by unfrequented tracks to Pamphylia. This district had long been free from the evils of war, but nevertheless had been fortified in all quarters by strong forts and garrisons, from the dread entertained by the people of rapine and slaughter, since soldiers were scattered over all the neighbouring districts.

9. Therefore hastening with all speed, in order by their exceeding celerity of movement to anticipate all rumour of their motions, trusting to their strength and activity of body, they travelled by winding roads until they reached the high ground on the tops of the mountains, the steepness of which delayed their march more than they had expected. And when at last, having surmounted all the difficulties of the mountains, they came to the precipitous banks of the Melas, a deep river and one full of dangerous currents, which winds round the district, protecting the inhabitants like a wall, the night which had overtaken them increased their fears, so that they halted for a while awaiting the daylight. For they expected to be able to cross without hindrance, and then, in consequence of the suddenness of their inroad, to be able to ravage all the country around; but they had incurred great toil to no purpose.

10. For when the sun rose they were prevented from crossing by the size of the river, which though narrow was very deep. And while they were searching for some fishing-boats, or preparing to commit themselves to the stream on rafts hastily put together, the legions which at that time were wintering about Side, came down upon them with great speed and impetuosity; and having pitched their standards close to the bank with a view to an immediate battle, they packed their shields together before them in a most skilful manner, and without any difficulty slew some of the banditti, who either trusted to their swimming, or who tried to cross the river unperceived in barks made of the trunks of trees hollowed out.

11. And the Isaurians having tried many devices to obtain success in a regular battle, and having failed in everything, being repulsed in great consternation, and with great vigour on the part of the legions, and being uncertain which way to go, came near the town of Laranda. And there, after they had refreshed themselves with food and rest, and recovered from their fears, they attacked several wealthy towns; but being presently scared by the support given to the citizens by some squadrons of horse which happened to be at hand, and which they would not venture to resist in the extensive plains, they retreated, and retracing their steps summoned all the flower of their youth which had been left at home to join them.

12. And as they were oppressed with severe famine, they made for a place called Palea, standing on the sea-shore, and fortified with a strong wall; where even to this day supplies are usually kept in store, to be distributed to the armies which defend the frontier of Isauria.

13. Therefore they encamped around this fortress for three days and three nights, and as the steepness of the ground on which it stood prevented any attempt to storm it without the most deadly peril, and as it was impossible to effect anything by mines, and no other manœuvres such as

are employed in sieges availed anything, they retired much dejected, being compelled by the necessities of their situation to undertake some enterprise, even if it should be greater than their strength was equal to.

14. Then giving way to greater fury than ever, being inflamed both by despair and hunger, and their strength increased by their unrestrainable ardour, they directed their efforts to destroy the city of Seleucia, the metropolis of the province, which was defended by Count Castucius, whose legions were inured to every kind of military service.

15. The commanders of the garrison being forewarned of their approach by their own trusty scouts, having, according to custom, given out the watchword to the troops, led forth all their forces in a rapid sally, and having with great activity passed the bridge over the river Calicadnus, the mighty waters of which wash the turrets of the walls, they drew out their men as if prepared for battle. But as yet no man left the ranks, and the army was not allowed to engage; for the band of the Isaurians was dreaded, inasmuch as they were desperate with rage, and superior in number, and likely to rush upon the arms of the legions without any regard to their lives. Therefore as soon as the army was beheld at a distance, and the music of the trumpeters was heard, the banditti halted and stood still for a while, brandishing their threatening swords, and after a time they marched on slowly. And when the steady Roman soldiery began to deploy, preparing to encounter them, beating their shields with their spears (a custom which rouses the fury of the combatants, and strikes terror into their enemies), they filled the front ranks of the Isaurians with consternation. But as the troops were pressing forward eagerly to the combat their generals recalled them, thinking it inopportune to enter upon a contest of doubtful issue, when their walls were not far distant, under protection of which the safety of the whole army could be placed on a solid foundation.

16. Therefore the soldiers were brought back inside the walls in accordance with this resolution, and all the approaches and gates were strongly barred; and the men were placed on the battlements and bulwarks, having vast stones and weapons of all kinds piled close at hand, so that if any one forced his way inside he might be overwhelmed with a multitude of missiles and stones.

17. But those who were shut up in the walls were at the same time greatly afflicted, because the Isaurians having taken some vessels which were conveying grain down the river, were well provided with abundance of food, while they themselves, having almost consumed the usual stores of food, were in a state of alarm dreading the fatal agonies of approaching famine. When the news of this distress got abroad, and when repeated messages to this effect had moved Gallus Cæsar, because the master of the horse was kept away longer than usual at that season, Nebridius the count of the East was ordered to collect a military force from all quarters, and hastened forward with exceeding zeal to deliver the city, so wealthy and important, from such a peril. And when this was known the banditti retired, without having performed any memorable exploit, and dispersing, according to their wont, they sought the trackless recesses of the lofty mountains.

III.

§ 1. While affairs were in this state in Isauria, and while the king of Persia was involved in wars upon his frontier, repulsing from his borders a set of ferocious tribes which, being full of fickleness, were continually either attacking him in a hostile manner, or, as often happens, aiding him when he turned his arms against us, a certain noble, by name Nohodares, having been appointed to invade Mesopotamia, whenever occasion might serve, was

anxiously exploring our territories with a view to some sudden incursion, if he could anywhere find an opportunity.

2. And because since every part of Mesopotamia is accustomed to be disturbed continually, the lands were protected by frequent barriers, and military stations in the rural districts, Nohodares, having directed his march to the left, had occupied the most remote parts of the Osdroene, having devised a novel plan of operations which had never hitherto been tried. And if he had succeeded he would have laid waste the whole country like a thunderbolt.

3. Now the plan which he had conceived was of this kind. There is a town in Anthemusia called Batne, built by the ancient Macedonians, a short distance from the river Euphrates, thickly peopled by wealthy merchants. To this city, about the beginning of the month of September, a great multitude of all ranks throng to a fair, in order to buy the wares which the Indians and Chinese send thither, and many other articles which are usually brought to this fair by land and sea.

4. The leader before named, preparing to invade this district on the days set apart for this solemnity, marching through the deserts and along the grassy banks of the river Abora, was betrayed by information given by some of his own men, who being alarmed at the discovery of certain crimes which they had committed, deserted to the Roman garrisons, and accordingly he retired again without having accomplished anything; and after that remained quiet without undertaking any further enterprise.

IV.

§ 1. At this time also the Saracens, a race whom it is never desirable to have either for friends or enemies, ranging up and down the country, if ever they found anything, plundered it in a moment, like rapacious hawks

who, if from on high they behold any prey, carry it off with rapid swoop, or, if they fail in their attempt, do not tarry.

2. And although, in recounting the career of the Prince Marcus, and once or twice subsequently, I remember having discussed the manners of this people, nevertheless I will now briefly enumerate a few more particulars concerning them.

3. Among these tribes, whose primary origin is derived from the cataracts of the Nile and the borders of the Blemmyæ, all the men are warriors of equal rank; half naked, clad in coloured cloaks down to the waist, overrunning different countries, with the aid of swift and active horses and speedy camels, alike in times of peace and war. Nor does any member of their tribes ever take plough in hand or cultivate a tree, or seek food by the tillage of the land; but they are perpetually wandering over various and extensive districts, having no home, no fixed abode or laws; nor can they endure to remain long in the same climate, no one district or country pleasing them for a continuance.

4. Their life is one continued wandering; their wives are hired, on special covenant, for a fixed time; and that there may be some appearance of marriage in the business, the intended wife, under the name of a dowry, offers a spear and a tent to her husband, with a right to quit him after a fixed day, if she should choose to do so. And it is inconceivable with what eagerness the individuals of both sexes give themselves up to matrimonial pleasures.

5. But as long as they live they wander about with such extensive and perpetual migrations, that the woman is married in one place, brings forth her children in another, and rears them at a distance from either place, no opportunity of remaining quiet being ever granted to her.

6. They all live on venison, and are further supported on a great abundance of milk, and on many kinds of herbs, and on whatever birds they can catch by fowling. And we have

seen a great many of them wholly ignorant of the use of either corn or wine.

7. So much for this most mischievous nation. Now let us return to the subject we originally proposed to ourselves.

V.

§ 1. While these events were taking place in the East, Constantius was passing the winter at Arles; and after an exhibition of games in the theatre and in the circus, which were displayed with most sumptuous magnificence, on the tenth of October, the day which completed the thirtieth year of his reign, he began to give the reins more freely to his insolence, believing every information which was laid before him as proved, however doubtful or false it might be; and among other acts of cruelty, he put Gerontius, a count of the party of Magnentius, to the torture, and then condemned him to banishment.

2. And as the body of a sick man is apt to be agitated by even trifling grievances, so his narrow and sensitive mind, thinking every sound that stirred something either done or planned to the injury of his safety, made his victory⁶ mournful by the slaughter of innocent men.

3. For if any one of his military officers, or of those who had ever received marks of honour, or if any one of high rank was accused, on the barest rumour, of having favoured the faction of his enemy, he was loaded with chains and dragged about like a beast. And whether any enemy of the accused man pressed him or not, as if the mere fact that his name had been mentioned was sufficient, every one who was informed against or in any way called in question, was condemned either to death, or to confiscation of his property, or to confinement in a desert island.

4. For his ferocity was excited to a still further degree when any mention was made of treason or sedition; and the bloodthirsty insinuations of those around him, exaggerating

everything that happened, and pretending great concern at any danger which might threaten the life of the emperor, on whose safety, as on a thread, they hypocritically exclaimed the whole world depended, added daily to his suspicions and watchful anger.

5. And therefore it is reported he gave orders that no one who was at any time sentenced to punishment for these or similar offences should be readmitted to his presence for the purpose of offering the usual testimonies to his character, a thing which the most implacable princes have been wont to permit. And thus deadly cruelty, which in all other men at times grows cool, in him only became more violent as he advanced in years, because the court of flatterers which attended on him added continual fuel to his stern obstinacy.

6. Of this court a most conspicuous member was Paulus, the secretary, a native of Spain, a man keeping his objects hidden beneath a smooth countenance, and acute beyond all men in smelling out secret ways to bring others into danger. He, having been sent into Britain to arrest some military officers who had dared to favour the conspiracy of Magnentius, as they could not resist, licentiously exceeded his commands, and like a flood poured with sudden violence upon the fortunes of a great number of people, making his path through manifold slaughter and destruction, loading the bodies of free-born men with chains, and crushing some with fetters, while patching up all kinds of accusations far removed from the truth. And to this man is owing one especial atrocity which has branded the time of Constantius with indelible infamy.

7. Martinus, who at that time governed these provinces as deputy, being greatly concerned for the sufferings inflicted on innocent men, and making frequent entreaties that those who were free from all guilt might be spared, when he found that he could not prevail, threatened to withdraw from the province, in the hope that this

malevolent inquisitor, Paulus, might be afraid of his doing so, and so give over exposing to open danger men who had combined only in a wish for tranquillity.

8. Paulus, thinking that this conduct of Martinus was a hindrance to his own zeal, being, as he was, a formidable artist in involving matters, from which people gave him the nickname of “the Chain,” attacked the deputy himself while still engaged in defending the people whom he was set to govern, and involved him in the dangers which surrounded every one else, threatening that he would carry him, with his tribunes and many other persons, as a prisoner to the emperor’s court. Martinus, alarmed at this threat, and seeing the imminent danger in which his life was, drew his sword and attacked Paulus. But because from want of strength in his hand he was unable to give him a mortal wound, he then plunged his drawn sword into his own side. And by this unseemly kind of death that most just man departed from life, merely for having dared to interpose some delay to the miserable calamities of many citizens.

9. And when these wicked deeds had been perpetrated, Paulus, covered with blood, returned to the emperor’s camp, bringing with him a crowd of prisoners almost covered with chains, in the lowest condition of squalor and misery; on whose arrival the racks were prepared, and the executioner began to prepare his hooks and other engines of torture. Of these prisoners, many of them had their property confiscated, others were sentenced to banishment, some were given over to the sword of the executioner. Nor is it easy to cite the acquittal of a single person in the time of Constantius, where the slightest whisper of accusation had been brought against him.

VI.

§ 1. At this time Orfitus was the governor of the Eternal City, with the rank of prefect; and he behaved with a degree

of insolence beyond the proper limits of the dignity thus conferred upon him. A man of prudence indeed, and well skilled in all the forensic business of the city, but less accomplished in general literature and in the fine arts than was becoming in a nobleman. Under his administration some very formidable seditions broke out in consequence of the scarcity of wine, as the people, being exceedingly eager for an abundant use of that article, were easily excited to frequent and violent disorders.

2. And since I think it likely that foreigners who may read this account (if, indeed, any such should meet with it) are likely to wonder how it is that, when my history has reached the point of narrating what was done at Rome, nothing is spoken of but seditions, and shops, and cheapness, and other similarly inconsiderable matters, I will briefly touch upon the causes of this, never intentionally departing from the strict truth.

3. At the time when Rome first rose into mundane brilliancy — that Rome which was fated to last as long as mankind shall endure, and to be increased with a sublime progress and growth — virtue and fortune, though commonly at variance, agreed upon a treaty of eternal peace, as far as she was concerned. For if either of them had been wanting to her, she would never have reached her perfect and complete supremacy.

4. Her people, from its very earliest infancy to the latest moment of its youth, a period which extends over about three hundred years, carried on a variety of wars with the natives around its walls. Then, when it arrived at its full-grown manhood, after many and various labours in war, it crossed the Alps and the sea, till, as youth and man, it had carried the triumphs of victory into every country in the world.

5. And now that it is declining into old age, and often owes its victories to its mere name, it has come to a more tranquil time of life. Therefore the venerable city, after