THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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The condition of the Roman Emperors has never yet been fully appreciated; nor has it been sufficiently perceived in what respects it was absolutely unique. There was but one Rome: no other city, as we are satisfied by the collation of many facts, either of ancient or modern times, has ever rivalled this astonishing metropolis in the grandeur of magnitude; and not many—if we except the cities of Greece, none at all—in the grandeur of architectural display. Speaking even of London, we ought in all reason to say—the *Nation of London,* and not the City of London; but of Rome in her palmy days, nothing less could be said in the naked severity of logic. A million and a half of souls—that population, apart from any other distinctions, is *per se* for London a justifying ground for such a classification; *à fortiori*, then, will it belong to a city which counted from one horn to the other of its mighty suburbs not less than four millions of inhabitants [Footnote: Concerning this question—once so fervidly debated, yet so unprofitably for the final adjudication, and in some respects, we may add, so erroneously—on a future occasion.] at the very least, as we resolutely maintain after reviewing all that has been written on that much vexed theme, and very probably half as many more. Republican Rome had her *prerogative* tribe; the earth has its *prerogative* city; and that city was Rome.

As was the city, such was its prince—mysterious, solitary, unique. Each was to the other an adequate counterpart, each reciprocally that perfect mirror which reflected, as it were *in alia materia,* those incommunicable attributes of grandeur, that under the same shape and denomination never upon this earth were destined to be revived. Rome

has not been repeated; neither has Cæsar. *Ubi Cæsar, ibi Roma*—was a maxim of Roman jurisprudence. And the same maxim may be translated into a wider meaning; in which it becomes true also for our historical experience. Cæsar and Rome have flourished and expired together. The illimitable attributes of the Roman prince, boundless and comprehensive as the universal air—like that also bright and apprehensible to the most vagrant eye, yet in parts (and those not far removed) unfathomable as outer darkness, (for no chamber in a dungeon could shroud in more impenetrable concealment a deed of murder than the upper chambers of the air,)—these attributes, so impressive to the imagination, and which all the subtlety of the Roman [Footnote: Or even of modern wit; witness the vain attempt of so many eminent sort, and illustrious *Antecessors*, to explain in self-consistency the differing functions of the Roman Cæsar, and in what sense he was *legibus solutus*. The origin of this difficulty we shall soon understand.] wit could as little fathom as the fleets of Cæsar could traverse the Polar basin, or unlock the gates of the Pacific, are best symbolized, and find their most appropriate exponent, in the illimitable city itself—that Rome, whose centre, the Capitol, was immovable as Teneriffe or Atlas, but whose circumference was shadowy, uncertain, restless, and advancing as the frontiers of her all-conquering empire. It is false to say, that with Cæsar came the destruction of Roman greatness. Peace, hollow rhetoricians! Until Cæsar came, Rome was a minor; by him, she attained her majority, and fulfilled her destiny. Caius Julius, you say, deflowered the virgin purity of her civil liberties. Doubtless, then, Rome had risen immaculate from the arms of Sylla and of Marius. But, if it were Caius Julius who deflowered Rome, if under him she forfeited her dowery of civic purity, if to him she first unloosed her maiden zone, then be it affirmed boldly—that she reserved her greatest favors for the noblest of her wooers, and we may plead the justification of Falconbridge

for his mother's trangression with the lion-hearted king—such a sin was self-ennobled. Did Julius deflower Rome? Then, by that consummation, he caused her to fulfill the functions of her nature; he compelled her to exchange the imperfect and inchoate condition of a mere *fæmina* for the perfections of a *mulier*. And, metaphor apart, we maintain that Rome lost no liberties by the mighty Julius. That which in tendency, and by the spirit of her institutions—that which, by her very corruptions and abuses co-operating with her laws, Rome promised and involved in the germ—even that, and nothing less or different, did Rome unfold and accomplish under this Julian violence. The rape [if such it were] of Cæsar, her final Romulus, completed for Rome that which the rape under Romulus, her earliest Cæsar, had prosperously begun. And thus by one godlike man was a nation-city matured; and from the everlasting and nameless [Footnote: "*Nameless city*."—The true name of Rome it was a point of religion to conceal; and, in fact, it was never revealed.] city was a man produced—capable of taming her indomitable nature, and of forcing her to immolate her wild virginity to the state best fitted for the destined "Mother of empires." Peace, then, rhetoricians, false threnodists of false liberty! hollow chanters over the ashes of a hollow republic! Without Cæsar, we affirm a thousand times that there would have been no perfect Rome; and, but for Rome, there could have been no such man as Cæsar.

Both then were immortal; each worthy of each. And the *Cui viget nihil simile aut secundum* of the poet, was as true of one as of the other. For, if by comparison with Rome other cities were but villages, with even more propriety it may be asserted, that after the Roman Cæsars all modern kings, kesars, or emperors, are mere phantoms of royalty. The Cæsar of Western Rome—he only of all earthly potentates, past or to come, could be said to reign as a *monarch*, that is, as a solitary king. He was not the greatest of princes,

simply because there was no other but himself. There were doubtless a few outlying rulers, of unknown names and titles upon the margins of his empire, there were tributary lieutenants and barbarous *reguli*, the obscure vassals of his sceptre, whose homage was offered on the lowest step of his throne, and scarcely known to him but as objects of disdain. But these feudatories could no more break the unity of his empire, which embraced the whole *oichomeni*;—the total habitable world as then known to geography, or recognised by the muse of History—than at this day the British empire on the sea can be brought into question or made conditional, because some chief of Owyhee or Tongataboo should proclaim a momentary independence of the British trident, or should even offer a transient outrage to her sovereign flag. Such a *tempestas in matulâ* might raise a brief uproar in his little native archipelago, but too feeble to reach the shores of Europe by an echo—or to ascend by so much as an infantine *susurrus* to the ears of the British Neptune. Parthia, it is true, might pretend to the dignity of an empire. But her sovereigns, though sitting in the seat of the great king, (*o basileus*,) were no longer the rulers of a vast and polished nation. They were regarded as barbarians—potent only by their standing army, not upon the larger basis of civic strength; and, even under this limitation, they were supposed to owe more to the circumstances of their position—their climate, their remoteness, and their inaccessibility except through arid and sultry deserts—than to intrinsic resources, such as could be permanently relied on in a serious trial of strength between the two powers. The kings of Parthia, therefore, were far enough from being regarded in the light of antagonist forces to the majesty of Rome. And, these withdrawn from the comparison, who else was there—what prince, what king, what potentate of any denomination, to break the universal calm, that through centuries continued to lave, as with the quiet undulations of summer lakes, the

sacred footsteps of the Cæsarean throne? The Byzantine court, which, merely as the inheritor of some fragments from that august throne, was drunk with excess of pride, surrounded itself with elaborate expressions of a grandeur beyond what mortal eyes were supposed able to sustain.

These fastidious, and sometimes fantastic ceremonies, originally devised as the very extremities of anti-barbarism, were often themselves but too nearly allied in spirit to the barbaresque in taste. In reality, some parts of the Byzantine court ritual were arranged in the same spirit as that of China or the Birman empire; or fashioned by anticipation, as one might think, on the practice of that Oriental Cham, who daily proclaims by sound of trumpet to the kings in the four corners of the earth—that they, having dutifully awaited the close of *his* dinner, may now with his royal license go to their own.

From such vestiges of *derivative* grandeur, propagated to ages so remote from itself, and sustained by manners so different from the spirit of her own—we may faintly measure the strength of the original impulse given to the feelings of men by the *sacred* majesty of the Roman throne. How potent must that splendor have been, whose mere reflection shot rays upon a distant crown, under another heaven, and across the wilderness of fourteen centuries! Splendor, thus transmitted, thus sustained, and thus imperishable, argues a transcendent in the basis of radical power. Broad and deep must those foundations have been laid, which could support an "arch of empire" rising to that giddy altitude—an altitude which sufficed to bring it within the ken of posterity to the sixtieth generation.

Power is measured by resistance. Upon such a scale, if it were applied with skill, the *relations* of greatness in Rome to the greatest of all that has gone before her, and has yet come after her, would first be adequately revealed. The youngest reader will know that the grandest forms in which

the *collective* might of the human race has manifested itself, are the four monarchies. Four times have the distributive forces of nations gathered themselves, under the strong compression of the sword, into mighty aggregates—denominated *Universal Empires*, or Monarchies. These are noticed in the Holy Scriptures; and it is upon *their* warrant that men have supposed no fifth monarchy or universal empire possible in an earthly sense; but that, whenever such an empire arises, it will have Christ for its head; in other words, that no fifth *monarchia* can take place until Christianity shall have swallowed up all other forms of religion, and shall have gathered the whole family of man into one fold under one all-conquering Shepherd. Hence [Footnote: This we mention, because a great error has been sometimes committed in exposing *their* error, that consisted, not in supposing that for a fifth time men were to be gathered under one sceptre, and that sceptre wielded by Jesus Christ, but in supposing that this great era had then arrived, or that with no deeper moral revolution men could be fitted for that yoke.] the fanatics of 1650, who proclaimed Jesus for their king, and who did sincerely anticipate his near advent in great power, and under some personal manifestation, were usually styled *Fifth-Monarchists*.

However, waiving the question (interesting enough in itself)—Whether upon earthly principles a fifth universal empire could by possibility arise in the present condition of knowledge for man individually, and of organization for man in general—this question waived, and confining ourselves to the comparison of those four monarchies which actually have existed—of the Assyrian or earliest, we may remark, that it found men in no state of cohesion. This cause, which came in aid of its first foundation, would probably continue; and would diminish the *intensity* of the power in the same proportion as it promoted its *extension*. This monarchy

would be absolute only by the personal presence of the monarch; elsewhere, from mere defect of organization, it would and must betray the total imperfections of an elementary state, and of a first experiment. More by the weakness inherent in such a constitution, than by its own strength, did the Persian spear prevail against the Assyrian. Two centuries revolved, seven or eight generations, when Alexander found himself in the same position as Cyrus for building a third monarchy, and aided by the selfsame vices of luxurious effeminacy in his enemy, confronted with the self-same virtues of enterprise and hardihood in his compatriot soldiers. The native Persians, in the earliest and very limited import of that name, were a poor and hardy race of mountaineers. So were the men of Macedon; and neither one tribe nor the other found any adequate resistance in the luxurious occupants of Babylonia. We may add, with respect to these two earliest monarchies, that the Assyrian was undefined with regard to space, and the Persian fugitive with regard to time. But for the third—the Grecian or Macedonian—we know that the arts of civility, and of civil organization, had made great progress before the Roman strength was measured against it. In Macedon, in Achaia, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Egypt—every where the members of this empire had begun to knit; the cohesion was far closer, the development of their resources more complete; the resistance therefore by many hundred degrees more formidable: consequently, by the fairest inference, the power in that proportion greater which laid the foundations of this last great monarchy. It is probable, indeed, both *à priori*, and upon the evidence of various facts which have survived, that each of the four great empires successively triumphed over an antagonist, barbarous in comparison of itself, and each *by* and through that very superiority in the arts and policy of civilization.

Rome, therefore, which came last in the succession, and swallowed up the three great powers that had *seriatim* cast the human race into one mould, and had brought them under the unity of a single will, entered by inheritance upon all that its predecessors in that career had appropriated, but in a condition of far ampler development. Estimated merely by longitude and latitude, the territory of the Roman empire was the finest by much that has ever fallen under a single sceptre. Amongst modern empires, doubtless, the Spanish of the sixteenth century, and the British of the present, cannot but be admired as prodigious growths out of so small a stem. In that view they will be endless monuments in attestation of the marvels which are lodged in civilization. But considered in and for itself, and with no reference to the proportion of the creating forces, each of these empires has the great defect of being disjointed, and even insusceptible of perfect union. It is in fact no *vinculum* of social organization which held them together, but the ideal *vinculum* of a common fealty, and of submission to the same sceptre. This is not like the tie of manners, operative even where it is not perceived, but like the distinctions of geography—existing to-day, forgotten to-morrow—and abolished by a stroke of the pen, or a trick of diplomacy. Russia, again, a mighty empire, as respects the simple grandeur of magnitude, builds her power upon sterility. She has it in her power to seduce an invading foe into vast circles of starvation, of which the radii measure a thousand leagues. Frost and snow are confederates of her strength. She is strong by her very weakness. But Rome laid a belt about the Mediterranean of a thousand miles in breadth; and within that zone she comprehended not only all the great cities of the ancient world, but so perfectly did she lay the garden of the world in every climate, and for every mode of natural wealth, within her own ring-fence, that since that era no land, no part and parcel of the Roman empire, has ever risen into strength and opulence, except

where unusual artificial industry has availed to counteract the tendencies of nature. So entirely had Rome engrossed whatsoever was rich by the mere bounty of native endowment.

Vast, therefore, unexampled, immeasurable, was the basis of natural power upon which the Roman throne reposed. The military force which put Rome in possession of this inordinate power, was certainly in some respects artificial; but the power itself was natural, and not subject to the ebbs and flows which attend the commercial empires of our days, (for all are in part commercial.) The depression, the reverses, of Rome, were confined to one shape—famine; a terrific shape, doubtless, but one which levies its penalty of suffering, not by elaborate processes that do not exhaust their total cycle in less than long periods of years. Fortunately for those who survive, no arrears of misery are allowed by this scourge of ancient days; [Footnote: "*Of ancient days*."—For it is remarkable, and it serves to mark an indubitable progress of mankind, that, before the Christian era, famines were of frequent occurrence in countries the most civilized; afterwards they became rare, and latterly have entirely altered their character into occasional dearths.] the total penalty is paid down at once. As respected the hand of man, Rome slept for ages in absolute security. She could suffer only by the wrath of Providence; and, so long as she continued to be Rome, for many a generation she only of all the monarchies has feared no mortal hand [Footnote: Unless that hand were her own armed against herself; upon which topic there is a burst of noble eloquence in one of the ancient Panegyrici, when haranguing the Emperor Theodosius: "Thou, Rome! that, having once suffered by the madness of Cinna, and of the cruel Marius raging from banishment, and of Sylla, that won his wreath of prosperity from thy disasters, and of Cæsar, compassionate to the dead, didst shudder at every blast of

the trumpet filled by the breath of civil commotion—thou, that, besides the wreck of thy soldiery perishing on either side, didst bewail, amongst thy spectacles of domestic woe, the luminaries of thy senate extinguished, the heads of thy consuls fixed upon a halberd, weeping for ages over thy self-slaughtered Catos, thy headless Ciceros (*truncosque Cicerones*), and unburied Pompeys;—to whom the party madness of thy own children had wrought in every age heavier woe than the Carthaginian thundering at thy gates, or the Gaul admitted within thy walls; on whom OEmathia, more fatal than the day of Allia—Collina, more dismal than Cannæ—had inflicted such deep memorials of wounds, that, from bitter experience of thy own valor, no enemy was to thee so formidable as thyself;—thou, Rome! didst now for the first time behold a civil war issuing in a hallowed prosperity, a soldiery appeased, recovered Italy, and for thyself liberty established. Now first in thy long annals thou didst rest from a civil war in such a peace, that righteously, and with maternal tenderness, thou mightst claim for it the honors of a civic triumph."]

—"God and his Son except,
Created thing nought valued she nor shunned."

That the possessor and wielder of such enormous power—power alike admirable for its extent, for its intensity, and for its consecration from all counterforces which could restrain it, or endanger it—should be regarded as sharing in the attributes of supernatural beings, is no more than might naturally be expected. All other known power in human hands has either been extensive, but wanting in intensity—or intense, but wanting in extent—or, thirdly, liable to permanent control and hazard from some antagonist power commensurate with itself. But the Roman power, in its centuries of grandeur, involved every mode of strength, with absolute immunity from all kinds and degrees of weakness. It ought not, therefore, to surprise us that the emperor, as the depositary of this charmed power, should

have been looked upon as a *sacred* person, and the imperial family considered a "*divina* domus." It is an error to regard this as excess of adulation, or as built *originally* upon hypocrisy. Undoubtedly the expressions of this feeling are sometimes gross and overcharged, as we find them in the very greatest of the Roman poets: for example, it shocks us to find a fine writer in anticipating the future canonization of his patron, and his instalment amongst the heavenly hosts, begging him to keep his distance warily from this or that constellation, and to be cautious of throwing his weight into either hemisphere, until the scale of proportions were accurately adjusted. These doubtless are passages degrading alike to the poet and his subject. But why? Not because they ascribe to the emperor a sanctity which he had not in the minds of men universally, or which even to the writer's feeling was exaggerated, but because it was expressed coarsely, and as a *physical* power: now, every thing physical is measurable by weight, motion, and resistance; and is therefore definite. But the very essence of whatsoever is supernatural lies in the indefinite. That power, therefore, with which the minds of men invested the emperor, was vulgarized by this coarse translation into the region of physics. Else it is evident, that any power which, by standing above all human control, occupies the next relation to superhuman modes of authority, must be invested by all minds alike with some dim and undefined relation to the sanctities of the next world. Thus, for instance, the Pope, as the father of Catholic Christendom, could not *but* be viewed with awe by any Christian of deep feeling, as standing in some relation to the true and unseen Father of the spiritual body. Nay, considering that even false religions, as those of Pagan mythology, have probably never been utterly stripped of all vestige of truth, but that every such mode of error has perhaps been designed as a process, and adapted by Providence to the case of those who were capable of admitting no more perfect shape of truth; even

the heads of such superstitions (the Dalai Lama, for instance) may not unreasonably be presumed as within the cognizance and special protection of Heaven. Much more may this be supposed of him to whose care was confided the weightier part of the human race; who had it in his power to promote or to suspend the progress of human improvement; and of whom, and the motions of whose will, the very prophets of Judea took cognizance. No nation, and no king, was utterly divorced from the councils of God. Palestine, as a central chamber of God's administration, stood in some relation to all. It has been remarked, as a mysterious and significant fact, that the founders of the great empires all had some connection, more or less, with the temple of Jerusalem. Melancthon even observes it in his Sketch of Universal History, as worthy of notice—that Pompey died, as it were, within sight of that very temple which he had polluted. Let us not suppose that Paganism, or Pagan nations, were therefore excluded from the concern and tender interest of Heaven. They also had their place allowed. And we may be sure that, amongst them, the Roman emperor, as the great accountant for the happiness of more men, and men more cultivated, than ever before were intrusted to the motions of a single will, had a special, singular, and mysterious relation to the secret counsels of Heaven.

Even we, therefore, may lawfully attribute some sanctity to the Roman emperor. That the Romans did so with absolute sincerity is certain. The altars of the emperor had a twofold consecration; to violate them, was the double crime of treason and heresy, In his appearances of state and ceremony, the fire, the sacred fire *epompeue* was carried in ceremonial solemnity before him; and every other circumstance of divine worship attended the emperor in his lifetime. [Footnote: The fact is, that the emperor was more of a sacred and divine creature in his lifetime than after his

death. His consecrated character as a living ruler was a truth; his canonization, a fiction of tenderness to his memory.]

To this view of the imperial character and relations must be added one single circumstance, which in some measure altered the whole for the individual who happened to fill the office. The emperor *de facto* might be viewed under two aspects: there was the man, and there was the office. In his office he was immortal and sacred: but as a question might still be raised, by means of a mercenary army, as to the claims of the particular individual who at any time filled the office, the very sanctity and privilege of the character with which he was clothed might actually be turned against himself; and here it is, at this point, that the character of Roman emperor became truly and mysteriously awful. Gibbon has taken notice of the extraordinary situation of a subject in the Roman empire who should attempt to fly from the wrath of the crown. Such was the ubiquity of the emperor that this was absolutely hopeless. Except amongst pathless deserts or barbarous nomads, it was impossible to find even a transient sanctuary from the imperial pursuit. If he went down to the sea, there he met the emperor: if he took the wings of the morning, and fled to the uttermost parts of the earth, there also was the emperor or his lieutenants. But the same omnipresence of imperial anger and retribution which withered the hopes of the poor humble prisoner, met and confounded the emperor himself, when hurled from his giddy elevation by some fortunate rival. All the kingdoms of the earth, to one in that situation, became but so many wards of the same infinite prison. Flight, if it were even successful for the moment, did but a little retard his inevitable doom. And so evident was this, that hardly in one instance did the fallen prince *attempt* to fly; but passively met the death which was inevitable, in the very spot where ruin had overtaken him. Neither was it

possible even for a merciful conqueror to show mercy; for, in the presence of an army so mercenary and factious, his own safety was but too deeply involved in the extermination of rival pretenders to the crown.

Such, amidst the sacred security and inviolability of the office, was the hazardous tenure of the individual. Nor did his dangers always arise from persons in the rank of competitors and rivals. Sometimes it menaced him in quarters which his eye had never penetrated, and from enemies too obscure to have reached his ear. By way of illustration we will cite a case from the life of the Emperor Commodus, which is wild enough to have furnished the plot of a romance—though as well authenticated as any other passage in that reign. The story is narrated by Herodian, and the circumstances are these: A slave of noble qualities, and of magnificent person, having liberated himself from the degradations of bondage, determined to avenge his own wrongs by inflicting continual terror upon the town and neighborhood which had witnessed his humiliation. For this purpose he resorted to the woody recesses of the province, (somewhere in the modern Transylvania,) and, attracting to his wild encampment as many fugitives as he could, by degrees he succeeded in forming and training a very formidable troop of freebooters. Partly from the energy of his own nature, and partly from the neglect and remissness of the provincial magistrates, the robber captain rose from less to more, until he had formed a little army, equal to the task of assaulting fortified cities. In this stage of his adventures, he encountered and defeated several of the imperial officers commanding large detachments of troops; and at length grew of consequence sufficient to draw upon himself the emperor's eye, and the honor of his personal displeasure. In high wrath and disdain at the insults offered to his eagles by this fugitive slave, Commodus fulminated

against him such an edict as left him no hope of much longer escaping with impunity.

Public vengeance was now awakened; the imperial troops were marching from every quarter upon the same centre; and the slave became sensible that in a very short space of time he must be surrounded and destroyed. In this desperate situation he took a desperate resolution: he assembled his troops, laid before them his plan, concerted the various steps for carrying it into effect, and then dismissed them as independent wanderers. So ends the first chapter of the tale.

The next opens in the passes of the Alps, whither by various routes, of seven or eight hundred miles in extent, these men had threaded their way in manifold disguises through the very midst of the emperor's camps. According to this man's gigantic enterprise, in which the means were as audacious as the purpose, the conspirators were to rendezvous, and first to recognise each other at the gates of Rome. From the Danube to the Tiber did this band of robbers severally pursue their perilous routes through all the difficulties of the road and the jealousies of the military stations, sustained by the mere thirst of vengeance—vengeance against that mighty foe whom they knew only by his proclamations against themselves. Every thing continued to prosper; the conspirators met under the walls of Rome; the final details were arranged; and those also would have prospered but for a trifling accident. The season was one of general carnival at Rome; and, by the help of those disguises which the license of this festal time allowed, the murderers were to have penetrated as maskers to the emperor's retirement, when a casual word or two awoke the suspicions of a sentinel. One of the conspirators was arrested; under the terror and uncertainty of the moment, he made much ampler discoveries than were expected of him; the other accomplices were secured: and Commodus

was delivered from the uplifted daggers of those who had sought him by months of patient wanderings, pursued through all the depths of the Illyrian forests, and the difficulties of the Alpine passes. It is not easy to find words commensurate to the energetic hardihood of a slave—who, by way of answer and reprisal to an edict which consigned him to persecution and death, determines to cross Europe in quest of its author, though no less a person than the master of the world—to seek him out in the inner recesses of his capital city and his private palace—and there to lodge a dagger in his heart, as the adequate reply to the imperial sentence of proscription against himself.

Such, amidst his superhuman grandeur and consecrated powers of the Roman emperor's office, were the extraordinary perils which menaced the individual, and the peculiar frailties of his condition. Nor is it possible that these circumstances of violent opposition can be better illustrated than in this tale of Herodian. Whilst the emperor's mighty arms were stretched out to arrest some potentate in the heart of Asia, a poor slave is silently and stealthily creeping round the base of the Alps, with the purpose of winning his way as a murderer to the imperial bedchamber; Cæsar is watching some mighty rebel of the Orient, at a distance of two thousand leagues, and he overlooks the dagger which is at his own heart. In short, all the heights and the depths which belong to man as aspirers, all the contrasts of glory and meanness, the extremities of what is his highest and lowest in human possibility—all met in the situation of the Roman Cæsars, and have combined to make them the most interesting studies which history has furnished.

This, as a general proposition, will be readily admitted. But meantime, it is remarkable that no field has been less trodden than the private memorials of those very Cæsars; whilst at the same time it is equally remarkable, in concurrence with that subject for wonder, that precisely

with the first of the Cæsars commences the first page of what in modern times we understand by anecdotes. Suetonius is the earliest writer in that department of biography; so far as we know, he may be held first to have devised it as a mode of history. The six writers, whose sketches are collected under the general title of the *Augustan History*, followed in the same track. Though full of entertainment, and of the most curious researches, they are all of them entirely unknown, except to a few elaborate scholars. We purpose to collect from these obscure, but most interesting memorialists, a few sketches and biographical portraits of these great princes, whose public life is sometimes known, but very rarely any part of their private and personal history. We must of course commence with the mighty founder of the Cæsars. In his case we cannot expect so much of absolute novelty as in that of those who succeed. But if, in this first instance, we are forced to touch a little upon old things, we shall confine ourselves as much as possible to those which are susceptible of new aspects. For the whole gallery of those who follow, we can undertake that the memorials which we shall bring forward, may be looked upon as belonging pretty much to what has hitherto been a sealed book.

CHAPTER I.

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The character of the first Cæsar has perhaps never been worse appreciated than by him who in one sense described it best—that is, with most force and eloquence wherever he really *did* comprehend it. This was Lucan, who has nowhere exhibited more brilliant rhetoric, nor wandered more from the truth, than in the contrasted portraits of Cæsar and Pompey. The famous line, "*Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum*," is a fine feature of the real character, finely expressed. But if it had been Lucan's purpose (as possibly, with a view to Pompey's benefit, in some respects it was) utterly and extravagantly to falsify the character of the great Dictator, by no single trait could he more effectually have fulfilled that purpose, nor in fewer words, than by this expressive passage, "*Gaudensque viam fecisse ruina*." Such a trait would be almost extravagant applied even to Marius, who (though in many respects a perfect model of Roman grandeur, massy, columnar, imperturbable, and more perhaps than any one man recorded in history capable of justifying the bold illustration of that character in Horace, "*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ*") had, however, a ferocity in his character, and a touch of the devil in him, very rarely united with the same tranquil intrepidity. But for Cæsar, the all-accomplished statesman, the splendid orator, the man of elegant habits and polished taste, the patron of the fine arts in a degree transcending all example of his own or the previous age, and as a man of general literature so much beyond his contemporaries, except Cicero, that he looked down even upon the brilliant Sylla as an illiterate person—to class such a man with the race of furious destroyers exulting in the