

have been blind to this; that he not only knew full well that the senate of Rome would not accede to a measure so suicidal, but that he had actually arranged with his partisans in the senate to reject his proposal, and that thus his resignation of power was a mere trick.

It may have been so. The motives which influence human minds are so conflictive and blending, that it is not easy to pronounce judgment. Indeed, the heart often deceives itself. Octavius was now thirty-six years of age. Ambition may have been sated, and, as he could then retire safely with opulence, renown, and an immortalized name, he may, with a mind now vacillating to this side and now to that of the question, have decided to retire to the tranquil dignity opening before him. At the same time he may have been gratified, and his ambition inspired anew, by the solicitations of the senate that he should continue in power. But whatever his motives may have been, the facts are, that he made a formal surrender of all his power into the hands of the senate.

The senate unanimously, and with urgency which could not well be resisted, besought him not to resign, declaring that such a surrender of power would plunge the nation into irremediable disorder. With reluctance, real or affected, Octavius consented to retain the cares of empire for ten years longer, expressing the hope that, at the end of that period imperial powers would no longer be needed for the interests of the state. With the most ardent expressions of joy the senate and the people accepted this consent. All parties now vied with each other in lavishing honors upon Octavius. The senate voted that the epithet *August* should be ever attached to his name of Cæsar; and from that time the prefix Octavius has been dropped, and he has thenceforth been known as Cæsar Augustus. In his honor the eighth month of the year was called August, as the seventh month had been named July, in commemoration of the renown of Julius Cæsar.

Thus, at the age of thirty-six, Cæsar Augustus commenced

his legitimate and undisputed reign, which, with the cordial support of both senate and people, continued undisturbed for forty years. His administration was so brilliant in all beneficial results, that, to the present day, no higher commendation can be conferred upon a sovereign, than to compare his administration with the Augustan era of the Roman empire.

The remote barbaric island of Britain was nominally in subjection to Rome. Julius Cæsar, during his campaign in Gaul, had crossed the channel with a fleet of one hundred galleys, and, after several fierce battles with the savage inhabitants, declared himself conqueror of the island, and, laden with what was then called glory, but with nothing more substantial, returned to Rome. The petty chiefs of the tribes of Britain occasionally sent gifts to Augustus Cæsar to propitiate his favor, for the foray of Julius Cæsar had made them alarmingly acquainted with the energy of Roman arms.

The despotic power held by Augustus, was conferred upon him by the appointment of the people, and it was universally understood that this power was wielded for the public benefit. All history shows that to such despotism communities will readily submit. Such was the despotism of the first Napoleon. The French people regarded him as their own creation. They regarded with admiration the sagacity and energy with which he swayed the scepter of power for their good; and they were ever eager to confer upon the idol they had enthroned, more power than he wished to assume.

By the famous Portian law, the origin of which is lost in obscurity, no Roman citizen could be either scourged or put to death. No matter what his crime, the severest penalty which could be inflicted upon a *citizen* was exile and confiscation of property. Even in the army, a *Roman* soldier could not be flogged; though the scourge was applied freely to soldiers from the allies. Such was the law. In times of mutiny, however, and in seasons of popular violence, the law was often disregarded.

The whole Italian peninsula, from the Alps to the Straits of Messina was now called Italy, and all the native born inhabitants of this region had attained the rights of Roman citizenship. We must exclude, however, from these rights, a large number of slaves, torn from their homes in various nations by the rapacity of war. Sicily was at this time quite desolate. It had recently been ravaged by the wars between Cæsar and Sextus Pompey, and impoverished cities and wasted fields everywhere met the eye. Immense flocks and herds tended by slaves, were pastured on its fertile plains and mountain sides. The islands of Corsica and Sardinia were in a similar state, only the inhabitants, on a much lower scale of civilization, were exceedingly barbarous, and robbers roamed the mountains and in piratic bands infested all the neighboring seas. They, not unfrequently, even crossed the sea to Italy, and, after plundering a few houses, retreated to their inaccessible fastnesses where they could bid defiance to the Roman power.

The condition of the Alpine provinces, bordering Italy on the north, had been essentially the same. But Augustus Cæsar himself had, at one time, in traversing those provinces, lost all his baggage and many of his soldiers from an attack by the robbers, which so exasperated him, that he entirely extirpated the nation of the Salassi, selling no less than forty-four thousand of them into slavery. He then colonized the country with Roman settlers. One of the colonies was established at Aosta, at the head of the valley from whence two roads, still famous, branch across the Alps, one for mules over the Great St. Bernard, and the other, then practicable for carriages, over the Little St. Bernard. Thus tranquil communication with Gaul was secured.

Gaul had hardly yet recovered from the rough usage it had encountered in its recent subjugation to Rome. But twenty years had elapsed since Julius Cæsar swept over it with his legions. The Roman conquest, introducing Roman

laws, arts and commerce, had proved so beneficial to the realm, that the Gallic people were well satisfied with the result. Roman colonies had been established in different parts of the kingdom. Still the extortions of the Roman governors were at times very oppressive, and yet perhaps not more so than were the exactions of the native rulers of Gaul. Human sacrifices were prohibited by the Romans, and also the barbaric custom of carrying about as ornaments, the skulls of enemies. Learned Greeks became in great demand in the cities of Gaul as teachers. As the Gauls had no literature of their own, the old Celtic language, which was not a written language, rapidly disappeared, and the Roman took its place. The Latin became of necessity the court language, and was almost exclusively adopted by the higher classes.

The peninsula of Spain was at that time divided into three provinces, Bætica, Lusitania, and Hispania Tarraconensis, each of which was placed under the dominion of a Roman governor. Spain had been in the possession of Rome for about two hundred years, and was the most flourishing part of the empire. The inhabitants had become almost entirely Roman in dress, manners, and speech. From the valley of the Gaudalquiver, then one of the most fertile and densely populated on the globe, a very lucrative traffic was carried on, along the shores of the Mediterranean, with the cities of Italy. The articles transported in this traffic were wool, corn, wine, oil, wax, honey, and an insect used in producing a celebrated scarlet dye. The Spanish merino was then, as now, highly celebrated, a single ram often selling for over nine hundred dollars of our money. Spain was also rich in mineral treasures, gold, silver, lead, tin, iron, and copper. The present towns of Cordova and Seville were then distinguished Roman colonies.

All the northern coast of Africa, from the present site of Algiers to the straits of Gibraltar, was called Mauritania. Augustus had conferred the sovereignty of this province upon Juba, an African prince, who had married one of the

daughters of Antony and Cleopatra. The portion of northern Africa, bordering on the Mediterranean, east of this region, extending several hundred miles, was called the province of Africa, and was assigned to a proconsul, with a military establishment of two legions. It was a powerful province, and was engaged in almost constant warfare with the barbaric tribes of the unexplored interior. A very thrifty trade was carried on between this region and the Italian cities. Next eastward, came the large province Cyrenaica or Libya, originally a Grecian colony, but now devoured by the omnivorous Roman empire. From this region the currents of trade flowed eastward, by the way of Egypt and the Red sea, to India. There was then a canal from the delta of the Nile to Suez on the Red sea. There was also a land route across the desert, tolerably supplied with water from wells and reservoirs. Alexandria was the great Egyptian port for all this commerce. When the Apostle Paul sailed from Syria to Rome, he informs us that the voyage was made in a ship from Alexandria. "When we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia," he writes, "we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria, and he put us therein."

At this time Alexandria was the second city in the Roman empire.

Leaving Egypt and following along the coast of the Mediterranean to the Ægean sea, we pass through the extensive, populous, and opulent provinces of Syria and Asia Minor. These provinces were cut up into smaller subdivisions, all subjected to Roman control. Throughout this wide region Greek was the language commonly spoken, particularly by the higher classes. Still there were very many languages and dialects in vogue in the different provinces. The enormous expenses of the Roman armies demanded heavy taxation; and the tax-gatherers, unprincipled and extortionate, were detested by the people.

All Greece was divided into the two great provinces of

Macedonia and Achaia. Civil war had swept these provinces with a blast more destructive than tornado ever inflicted. The war between Julius Cæsar and Pompey was a storm which emptied all its vials upon that devoted land. The cloud was but just disappearing, and the thunders of the tempest had scarcely ceased their reverberations, when the blackness of another cloud appeared in the horizon, gleaming and rumbling with the most terrific menace. Again the tempest swept the land, as the legions of the triumvirs and of Brutus and Cassius surged to and fro in billows of flame and blood. The ashes of the cities were still smoking, and the clotted blood still crimsoned the fields, when the bugle blasts announced the rush of still other legions to the war scathed arena, and all the powers of the east, under Antony and Cleopatra, met all the powers of the west under Octavius Cæsar, to contend for the mastery of the world. Greece, scathed, depopulated, smoldering, presented but a melancholy aspect of ruin and despair. But notwithstanding this material desolation, Greece still maintained her preëminence in literature, philosophy, and the arts.