

purpose Byzantium, and gave it the name of Constantinople, or the city of Constantine.

The imperial city, enjoying the most salubrious clime, surrounded by realms of inexhaustible fertility, occupying an eminence which commanded an extensive view of the shores of Europe and of Asia; with the Bosphorus on the north, and the Dardanelles on the south, fortified gates which no force could penetrate, with a harbor spacious, and perfectly secure, and with the approaches on the side of the continent easy of defense, presented to the sagacious Constantine a site for the metropolis of universal dominion, all unrivaled. The wealth, energy, and artistic genius of the whole Roman empire were immediately called into requisition, to enlarge and beautify the new metropolis. The boundaries of the city were marked out, fourteen miles in circumference. It is said that a sum amounting to twelve millions of dollars, was expended in walls and public improvements. The forests which then frowned almost unbroken along the shores of the Euxine, and a fine quarry of white marble in a neighboring island, afforded an inexhaustible supply of materials.

The imperial palace, rivaling that of Rome, in its courts, gardens, porticos, and baths, covered many acres. The ancient cities of the empire, including even Rome itself, were despoiled of their most noble families, to add luster to the new metropolis. Magnificent mansions were reared for them, and wide domains assigned for the support of their dignity; and though Constantinople never fully equaled Rome in population, dignity, and splendor, it soon became without dispute the second city in the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EMPIRE DISMEMBERED.

FROM A. D. 330 TO A. D. 375.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.—DIVERSITY OF VIEWS RESPECTING HIM.—THE TRAGEDY OF CRISPUS AND FAUSTA.—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.—TRIPLE DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE.—TRIUMPH OF CONSTANTINE OVER HIS BROTHERS.—STRUGGLE WITH MAGNENTIUS.—FATAL BATTLE OF MURSA.—FATE OF GALLUS.—ACCESSION AND APOSTACY OF JULIAN.—HIS SCHOLARLY CHARACTER.—DEVELOPMENTS OF ENERGY.—HIS WAR IN GAUL.—SELECTION OF PARIS FOR HIS CAPITAL.—HIS MELANCHOLY DEATH.—RETREAT OF THE ARMY.—CHOICE OF VALENTINIAN.—VALENS HIS ASSOCIATE.—ACCUMULATING WARS.—DEATH OF VALENTINIAN.

NO man has ever been more warmly applauded, or more venomously condemned than Constantine, surnamed the Great. And though fifteen centuries have passed away since he disappeared from life's busy arena, his character is still the subject of the most bitter denunciation, and of the most lofty panegyric.

By nature Constantine was enriched with the choicest endowments. In person he was majestic and graceful, with features of the finest mold. Either from natural felicity of temperament, or from his own powers of self-restraint, during all his reign he preserved, to a wonderful degree, the virtues of chastity and temperance. In mental capacity he was both acute and comprehensive, having gathered from books and travel a vast fund of information. He possessed great capabilities of endurance, physical and intellectual. In the field he displayed alike the bravery of the soldier, and the talents of the general. Fully conscious of his superior abilities, with boundless resources at his command, and warmly sustained by the popular voice, he commenced and pursued a career to which we with difficulty find a parallel.

The execution of the emperor's son Crispus, and of his second wife Fausta, was one of those appalling and awful events which will probably ever be involved in some degree of obscurity. So far as we can collect the facts, from the exceedingly unsatisfactory and contradictory accounts, they were these. Fausta, an exceedingly beautiful woman, and much younger than her husband, fell in love with Crispus, the son of Constantine's former wife, and a prince of remarkable attractions, and who had imbibed the Christian views of his teacher Lactantius. Fausta, in accordance with the spirit of pagan Rome, which never revolted from any crime of this nature, after earnest efforts at the seduction of her son-in-law, made an open confession to him of her desires. Crispus repelled her, as Joseph did the wife of Potiphar. In confirmation of the sentiment that

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,"

Fausta, in her rage, fled to the emperor, declaring that Crispus had made violent attempts upon her virtue. Constantine, in the blindness of his jealousy and indignation, condemned the innocent prince to death. Circumstances soon after revealing the truth of the case, in remorse and despair he sentenced Fausta to be stifled in her bath. Some others who were her accomplices in the foul accusation perished with her. It is said that from the gloom of these events Constantine never recovered. For forty days he fasted and mourned bitterly, denying himself all the ordinary comforts of life. He erected a golden statue to Crispus, with this inscription:

"To my son whom I unjustly condemned."

The death of Crispus, perhaps, bound the imperial father more closely to his surviving sons. He resolved to divide the empire between them, at his death; and he gave them all the title of Cæsar. He placed them under the most celebrated

professors of the Christian faith, and of all Greek and Roman learning. Constantine had been trained in the school of hardships. His sons, from the cradle, were accustomed to luxury, were surrounded with flatterers, and anticipated the throne as their hereditary right. To train them to the cares of government, the eldest son, Constantine, was sent to Gaul, the second Constantius to Asia, and the third, Constans, was entrusted with the administration of Italy and Africa. Constantine, the father, reserved for himself the title of Augustus, conferring upon his sons only that of Cæsar. Two nephews, Dalmatius and Hannibalianus were also raised to the title of *princes*, and invested with distinct commands.

After a reign of singular prosperity, continuing for nearly thirty-one years, Constantine, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, died, in one of his rural palaces in the suburbs of Nicomedia. On his dying bed he sought the consolations of that Christian faith which he had ever politically favored, and was then baptized as a disciple of Jesus, thus professing a personal interest in the redemption our Saviour has purchased. His funeral was attended with all the pageantry which Roman power could suggest and execute.

The three sons of Constantine divided the realm to suit themselves. Constantine, the eldest, with the recognition of some slight preëminence in rank, established himself at Constantinople, in command of the central provinces. Constantius took charge of the eastern, and Constans of the western realms. The new emperors were all dissolute young men, of the several ages of twenty-one, twenty, and seventeen years.

The death of Constantine the Great was the signal for war. Persia, under the leadership of Sapor, endeavored to throw off the Roman yoke, and Constantius found it necessary immediately to relinquish the voluptuousness of his palace for the hardships of the camp on the plains of Mesopotamia. The usual scenes of blood and misery ensued, as the hostile armies,

now in surging waves of victory, and now in the refluxing billows of defeat, swept the doomed land.

While Constantius, the second brother, was thus battling on the fields of Mesopotamia, Constantine, the elder, was preparing to rob his younger brother, Constans of his imperial patrimony. Breaking through the Carnac or Julian Alps, he invaded Venetia, in Italy. Constans, who was then in Dacia, north of the Danube, three hundred miles distant, detached a division of his army, which he followed in person, lured Constantine into an ambush, surrounded and killed him, and attached all his domains, with Constantinople, to his own realms. He thus became the undisputed sovereign of two thirds of the Roman empire. Constans was still but a boy, with but little ability and abundant self-conceit. His incompetency excited contempt.

An ambitious soldier, named Magnentius, of barbarian extraction, conspired against him. On the occasion of a feast, in the city of Autun, subsequently renowned as the seat of the bishopric of Talleyrand, which feast was protracted until the hour of midnight, the conspiracy was consummated. On a sudden, in the midst of the carousal, the doors were thrown open, and Magnentius presented himself, arrayed in the imperial purple. There was a moment's pause, as of consternation, and then the whole assembly, with enthusiasm, wild and inflamed by wine and wassail, greeted the usurper with the titles of Augustus and emperor. The soldiers were rallied, and they took the oath of fidelity; the gates of the city were closed, and the banner of the new emperor floated over the citadel.

Constans was at the time absent on a hunting excursion in a neighboring forest. He heard at the same moment of the conspiracy, and of the defection of his guard, which left him utterly powerless. Putting spurs to his horse, he endeavored to reach the sea shore, but was overtaken at Helena, now Elne, at the foot of the Pyrenees, and was instantly put to

death. All the provinces of the west acknowledged Magnentius. The tidings soon reached Constantius, on the plains of Mesopotamia. Leaving his lieutenants to conduct the warfare there, with a strong division of his army he turned his steps toward Italy. But in the meantime, the powerful army, ever encamped on the banks of the Danube, in coöperation with Magnentius, appointed their renowned general, Vetranio associate emperor. Again the whole Roman empire was agitated with preparations for the most desperate civil war.

As soon as Constantius reached Illyricum on the frontiers of Italy, he sagaciously made propositions to Vetranio, that he would acknowledge him as associate emperor if he would abandon the cause of Magnentius and ally himself with Constantius. Basely the venal general accepted the bribe, and wheeled his whole army of twenty thousand horse, and several legions of infantry into the lines of Constantius. The soldiers blended in enthusiastic fraternization, intertwining their banners, and causing the plains of Sardinia to resound with the cries of "Long live Constantius."

Constantius, however, having thus gained the army of Vetranio, and conscious of his ability to reward it, so that there should be no fear of defection, at once relieved Vetranio of all the cares of empire, and sent him immediately into luxurious exile. A magnificent palace was assigned him at Prusa, in Bithynia. He was sumptuously provided with every luxury, and was there left to "fatten like a pig" until he died.

Magnentius, a bold and determined soldier, was a very different foe to encounter. Though Constantius had now by far the most powerful army, Magnentius was in every respect his superior, intellectually, physically, and morally. The two emperors marched eagerly to meet each other, neither of them reluctant to submit the question to the arbitrament of battle.

On the twenty-eighth of September the hostile armies were concentrated before the city of Mursa, now called

Esseg, in Slavonia, on the Drave, about ten miles from its embouchure into the Danube. Constantius, fully aware of the military superiority of his antagonist, after earnestly addressing his troops, wisely, but not very heroically, retired to a church at a safe distance from the field, and left the conduct of the decisive day to his veteran generals.

A more fierce and sanguinary battle was perhaps never fought. All the day long the hideous carnage continued—Romans and barbarians, with gladiatorial sinews, blending in the strife. The air was darkened with stones, arrows, and javelins. Clouds of horsemen, glittering in their scaly armor, like statues of steel, swept the field, breaking the ranks, cutting down the fugitives, and trampling alike the wounded and the dead beneath their iron feet. Night alone terminated the strife. The army of Magnentius, overpowered by numbers, was almost annihilated. Fifty-four thousand were left dead upon the plain. But they had sold their lives dearly, for a still greater number of the legions of Constantius slept gory and lifeless at their sides. Nearly one hundred and twenty thousand men, the veteran soldiers of the Roman empire, perished in this one battle. Thus did Rome, in civil strife, devour her own children, and open the way for the march of barbarian bands.

Magnentius, in the darkness of the night, casting away his imperial ornaments, mounted a fleet horse, and, accompanied by a few friends, attempted to escape directly west toward the Julian Alps. He reached the city of Aquileia, at the head of the Adriatic sea, not far from the present city of Trieste. Here, in the midst of mountain defiles and pathless morasses, he made a brief pause, and collected around him all the troops who yet remained faithful. But city after city in Italy abandoned his cause, and raised the banner of the victorious Constantius. He then fled to Gaul. But Constantius directed all the energies of the empire in the pursuit. At length Magnentius, hemmed in on every side, fell upon his own sword, and

thus obtained a more easy and honorable death than he could hope for from his foe. Thus was the whole Roman empire brought again under the sway of a single sovereign, and Constantius, the son of Constantine, reigned without a rival from the western shores of Britain to the banks of the Tigris, and from the unexplored realms of Central Germany to the dark interior of Africa.

There were still living two nephews of Constantine the Great, Gallus and Julian. Constantius regarded them with great jealousy, and for several years had kept them, under careful surveillance, exiled in a remote city in Bithynia. As they advanced toward manhood, he watched them with increasing apprehension, and imprisoned them in a strong castle near Cæsarea. The castle had formerly been a palace, and was provided with all the appliances of luxury, in the way of spacious saloons and inclosed gardens. Here the young princes were placed under the care of able teachers, and were thoroughly instructed in all the learning of the day.

Still their hours passed heavily along in loneliness and gloom. They were deprived of their fortune, their liberty, their birthright as princes. They could not pass the walls of the castle, and could enjoy only such society as the tyrant would allow them. When Gallus, the elder of the two, had attained his twenty-fifth year, Eusebius, the emperor, invested him with the title of Cæsar, thus constituting him heir to the throne; and at the same time united him in marriage to the princess Constantina. Constantius, having consummated this arrangement, went to the west to superintend the administration there, leaving Gallus to take up his residence at Antioch, as viceroy of the eastern empire. Gallus immediately released his younger brother Julian, and invested him with rank and dignity.

Gallus and his wife Constantina developed characters which assimilate them to demons. Instruments of death and torture filled the dungeons of their palace, and scenes of woe ensued

which can only be revealed when the arch-angel's trump shall summon the world to judgment. Constantina died of a fever. The emperor resolved to dispatch Gallus to seek her in the world of spirits. With treacherous professions of affection he lured Gallus on a journey to visit him in his imperial residence at Milan. Just as Gallus was approaching the frontiers of Italy he was seized, carried to Pola, in Istria, and there, with his hands tied behind him, was beheaded, a fate he richly merited. A band of soldiers was sent to arrest Julian. He was taken a captive to Milan, where he was imprisoned seven months, in the daily expectation of meeting the doom of his brother.

In this severe school of adversity Julian acquired firmness of character and much sagacity. Through the intercession of Eusebia, the wife of Constantius, the life of Julian was spared, and he was sent to honorable exile in the city of Athens. Here he spent six months in the groves of the Academy, engaged in the study of Greek literature, peculiarly congenial to his tastes, and associating with the most accomplished scholars of the day. By the execution of Gallus, the emperor Constantius was left with no partner to share the toil of empire. The Goths were again deluging Gaul. Other bands were crossing the Danube where there was no longer any force sufficient to repel them. The Persian monarch also, elated with recent victories, was ravaging the eastern provinces of the empire.

Constantius was bewildered with these menaces which he knew not how to face, and listening to the advice of the empress Eusebia, he consented to give his sister Helena in marriage to Julian, and then to appoint him, with the title of Cæsar, to administer the government on the other side of the Julian Alps. The young prince received the investiture of the purple in Milan, on the day he attained the twenty-fifth year of his age. Still he was watched with such jealousy by Constan-

tius, that for some time he was detained, rigidly captive, in the palace of Milan.

Constantius embraced this opportunity to visit the ancient capital of Rome, which had now become comparatively provincial from its desertion by the court. Approaching the city along the Æmilian and Flaminian ways, he assumed the triumph of a conqueror. A splendid train of troops, in glittering armor, accompanied him, waving silken banners embroidered with gold, and enlivening the march with bursts of music. As the procession entered the streets of the imperial city, Rome was overjoyed in beholding this revival of its ancient splendor. Constantius expressed much surprise in view of the immense population of the city, and, surrounded by such acclaim as had never greeted him before, took up his residence in the palace of Augustus, which had entertained no imperial guest for thirty-two years.

He remained but one month, admiring the monuments of power and art spread over the seven hills. Wishing to leave in Rome some memorial of his visit, which should transmit his name, with that of others of the most illustrious emperors, to posterity, he selected a magnificent obelisk which stood before the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, on the Nile, and ordered its transportation to the Roman circus. An enormous vessel was constructed for the purpose. The majestic shaft, one hundred and fifteen feet in length, was floated from the Nile to the Tiber, and thus became one of the prominent embellishments of the imperial city.

Constantius was suddenly recalled from Rome to meet the barbarians, who were crowding across the Danube and ravaging the frontier. They had seized many captives, and carried them as slaves into their inaccessible wilds. But the emperor, summoning troops from the East, pursued them with vigor, and compelled them to sue for peace, and to liberate their slaves. And now, with a host of a hundred thousand of the choicest troops of the East, Sapor, king of Persia, crossed the