

Tigris, marched resolutely through Mesopotamia, finding no foe to obstruct his march until he arrived at Amida. Constantius marched to meet this foe, and Julian was sent to encounter the fierce legions of the north.

It would have been difficult to have found a man apparently less qualified to lead in such a warfare and against such a foe, than was the bookish, bashful, idol-worshipping Julian. The strong men of Rome, who were nominal pagans, in heart despised the superstitions of their country, regarding them only as means of overawing the vulgar; but Julian was actually a worshiper at those besotted shrines. It was, however, necessary for him to repair to Gaul, and to take his stand in the tented field. In view of it he was heard to exclaim, with a deep sigh, "O Plato, Plato, what a task for a philosopher!"

But Julian developed traits of character which astonished his contemporaries, and which have not ceased to astonish mankind. He inured himself to hardship, not indulging in a fire in his chamber in the cold climate of northern Gaul. He slept upon the floor, frequently rising in the night to take the rounds of his camp. He allowed no delicacies to be brought to his table, but shared in the coarse fare and in all the hardships and toils of the common soldiers. After one unfortunate campaign, in which the barbarians firmly stood their ground and repelled their assailants, Julian, at the head of but thirteen thousand men, assailed, at Strasbourg, on the Rhine, thirty-five thousand of the bravest warriors of Germany. After a long battle, in which both parties fought with the utmost fury, the Germans were put to flight, leaving six thousand dead upon the field. In the heat of the battle six hundred of the Roman cuirassiers, in a panic, fled. After the battle, Julian punished them by dressing them in women's clothes, and exposing them to the derision of the army. He then marched down the Rhine, and through a series of sieges

and battles drove back the Franks, who had taken possession of all that region.

In imitation of Julius Cæsar, Julian, with scholarly elegance, wrote the annals of the Gallic war. He crossed the Rhine, marched boldly into the almost unknown regions of the north, cutting down the barbarians before him, and returned with twenty thousand Roman slaves, whom, by the sword, he had liberated from their barbarian masters. The country, thus ravaged by war, was suffering all the horrors of famine. Julian sent six hundred barges to the coasts of Britain, from whence they returned laden with grain, which was distributed along the banks of the Rhine.

Engaged in these labors, Julian selected Paris as the seat of his winter residence. Julius Cæsar had found this now renowned city but a collection of fisherman's huts, on a small island in the Seine. It was called Lutetia, or the city of mire. The place had since gradually increased. The small island was covered with houses; two wooden bridges connected it with the shore. A wall surrounded the city, and many dwellings were scattered about the suburbs. Julian became very partial to the place, and built for himself a palace there.

Constantius, in the meantime, was in the far east, fighting the Persians. The victories of Julian, and his renown, excited the jealousy of the emperor, and to weaken the arm of the Cæsar, the Augustus sent for a large division of Julian's army to be forwarded to Persia. The soldiers refused to go; rallied around Julian; declared him Augustus, and both emperors, one from the heart of Gaul, the other from beyond the Euphrates, left their natural enemies, and turned furiously to assail each other. Months would elapse, and many thousands of miles were to be traversed before the heads of their columns could meet. Constantius had but reached Tarsus in Cilicia, when he was seized with a fever and died. The imperial dignity, the purple vesture, the scepter and diadem, did not disarm death of its terror. The monarch was but a poor sinner,

dying, and going to the bar of God. Enlightened by revelation, he knew his duty, but did it not. He trembled, he prayed, he was baptized, and received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and passed away to that tribunal where monarch and subject, master and slave, stand upon the same equality, and where every man shall receive according to his deeds.

Julian heard the welcome tidings of the death of Constantius, just as he was entering the defiles of the Alps, which bound the eastern frontiers of northern Italy. With renewed alacrity he pressed on to Constantinople, where he was crowned undisputed sovereign of the Roman empire, in the thirty-second year of his age. He immediately commenced vigorous measures to restore the heathen worship in all its splendor, and to throw every available obstacle in the way of the propagation of Christianity. The temples were repaired, embellished, and the worship of idols made fashionable by gorgeous parades, and by the presence of the court, Julian himself often officiating as a priest. The churches were robbed of their property, and Christians were ejected from all lucrative and honorable offices, and their places supplied by pagans. The schools of the Christians were broken up, and they were denied the privileges of education. To prove Christ a false prophet in regard to the temple at Jerusalem, he ordered the demolished edifice to be rebuilt. Encountering unexpected obstacles, he was exasperated to press forward in his endeavor with all the energy and power which a Roman emperor could wield. To his amazement, he failed, and failed utterly.

Whatever may have been the cause of this failure, the memorable fact remains forever undeniable. *The Roman emperor Julian could not rebuild the temple at Jerusalem.* It is stated, and the statement is confirmed by very important testimony, that the workmen were terrified and driven away by phenomena which they certainly regarded as supernatural. Julian, a well read scholar, knew that open persecution, im-

prisonment, torture, and death had utterly failed in arresting the progress of Christianity, and he endeavored to paralyze the energies of the church by the influences of ignorance, contempt, and neglect.

Under such teaching and example from the imperial palace, bitterness of feeling was rapidly springing up between the pagans and the Christians. Then, as now, there were millions who had no faith, but who were drifted along with the popular current. The empire was menaced with the most terrible civil war. Julian was called to Persia, to resist the invasions which were there making desolating headway. Gloom overshadowed the empire. Julian was discomfited in battle; pestilence and famine wasted his ranks, and with a heavy heart the emperor was compelled to order a retreat. As he was leading his exhausted troops over the burning plains of Mesopotamia, which were utterly scathed and desolated by war, the soldiers dropping dead in the ranks from sheer exhaustion, while the cavalry of the Persians mercilessly harassed them, Julian, in rage and despair, turned upon his foes. A javelin pierced him with a mortal wound. Tradition says, that as he tore the weapon from the quivering flesh and sank dying upon the sand, he raised his eyes to heaven and said, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered." Conveyed to his tent, he died, descanting upon the virtues of his life, and solacing himself with the thought that without any personal or conscious immortality, his soul was to be absorbed in the ethereal substance of the universe.

The retreating troops, pressed by the foe, had no time to mourn the dead. Surrounded with famine, pestilence, gory corpses, dismay, and the din of war, a few voices proclaimed Jovian, one of the leading officers of the imperial guard, to succeed the emperor. With faint acclaim the army ratified the choice, and Jovian, as he urged forward the retreating legions, found time hastily to slip on the imperial purple. Rome had indeed fallen. Utterly unable to resist the Persians,

Jovian was reduced to the ignominy of purchasing a truce with Sapor for thirty years, by surrendering to him many of the eastern provinces. And here commenced the dismemberment of the Roman empire. All the garrisons were withdrawn from these provinces, and the humiliated army, with downcast eyes, left the banks of the Tigris forever.

Jovian repealed all the laws which had been enacted against the Christians, and immediately the idol temples were abandoned, and paganism, like a hideous dream of night, passed away to be revived no more forever. The army was seven months slowly retracing its march fifteen hundred miles to Antioch. Jovian was anxious to reach Constantinople. When he had arrived within about three hundred miles of the imperial city, he passed a night in the obscure town of Dadastana, and was in the morning found dead in bed, accidentally stifled, as it is supposed, by the fumes of a charcoal fire in his apartment. His broken-hearted wife met his remains on the road, and with the anguish and tears of widowhood, bitter then as now, accompanied them to the tomb in Constantinople.

For ten days the Roman world was without a master. But at length the straggling divisions of the army were assembled at Nice, in Bithynia. After unusually mature deliberation the diadem was placed upon the brow of Valentinian, an officer of much merit, who had retired from active service and was living in the enjoyment of an ample fortune. In all respects he seems to have been worthy of the throne. Majestic in stature, temperate in his habits, inflexibly upright, and with a comprehensive and commanding mind, he was peculiarly qualified to win and retain public esteem. Julian had dismissed him from service in consequence of his adhesion to the Christian faith. The new emperor, crowned by the army in Nice, Bithynia, immediately proceeded to Constantinople, and there appointed his brother Valens associate emperor with the equal title of Augustus.

Valentinian took charge of the western empire, assigning

Valens the eastern, from the Danube to the confines of Persia; the one selecting Milan as his capital, the other Constantinople; Rome, in the meantime, being left to slow, but sure decay. The war of the barbarians now assailed the whole Roman empire, both the east and the west, with a ferocity never before surpassed. The Picts and Scots rushed down upon Britain from the mountains of Caledonia. All along the Rhine and the Danube, Gothic tribes of various names devastated the country with fire and sword. For twelve years Valentinian was engaged in almost an incessant battle. In a fit of passion he burst a blood vessel, and fell speechless into the arms of attendants, and died in convulsions of agony, the seventeenth of November, A. D. 375, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.