

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

I. Julian crosses the Rhine and plunders and burns the towns of the Allemanni, repairs the fortress of Trajan, and grants the barbarians a truce for ten months.—II. He hems in six hundred Franks who are devastating the second Germania, and starves them into surrender.—III. He endeavours to relieve the Gauls from some of the tribute which weighs them down.—IV. By order of the Emperor Constantius an obelisk is erected at Rome in the Circus Maximus ;—some observations on obelisks and on hieroglyphics.—V. Constantius and Sapor, king of the Persians, by means of ambassadors and letters, enter into a vain negotiation for peace.—VI. The Nethargi, an Alleman tribe, are defeated in the Tyrol, which they were laying waste.—VII. Nicomedia is destroyed by an earthquake ; some observations on earthquakes—VIII. Julian receives the surrender of the Salii, a Frankish tribe. He defeats one body of the Chamari, takes another body prisoners, and grants peace to the rest.—IX. He repairs three forts on the Meuse that had been destroyed by the barbarians. His soldiers suffer from want, and become discontented and reproachful.—X. Surmarius and Hortarius, kings of the Allemanni, surrender their prisoners and obtain peace from Julian.—XI. Julian, after his successes in Gaul, is disparaged at the court of Constantius by enviers of his fame, and is spoken of as inactive and cowardly.—XII. The Emperor Constantius compels the Sarmatians to give hostage, and to restore their prisoners ; and imposes a king on the Sarmatian exiles, whom he restores to their country and to freedom.—XIII. He compels the Limigantes, after defeating them with great slaughter, to emigrate, and harangues his own soldiers.—XIV. The Roman ambassadors, who had been sent to treat for peace, return from Persia ; and Sapor returns into Armenia and Mesopotamia.

I.

A.D. 357.

§ 1. AFTER the various affairs which we have described were brought to a conclusion, the warlike young prince, now that the battle of Strasburg had secured him the navigation of the Rhine, felt anxious that the ill-omened

birds should not feed on the corpses of the slain, and so ordered them all to be buried without distinction. And having dismissed the ambassadors whom we have mentioned as having come with some arrogant messages before the battle, he returned to Saverne.

2. From this place he ordered all the booty and the prisoners to be brought to Metz, to be left there till his return. Then departing for Mayence, to lay down a bridge at that city and to seek the barbarians in their own territories, since he had left none of them in arms, he was at first met by great opposition on the part of his army; but addressing them with eloquence and persuasion he soon won them to his opinion. For their affection for him, becoming strengthened by repeated experience, induced them to follow one who shared in all their toils, and who, while never surrendering his authority, was still accustomed, as every one saw, to impose more labour on himself than on his men. They soon arrived at the appointed spot, and, crossing the river by a bridge they laid down, occupied the territory of the enemy.

3. The barbarians, amazed at the greatness of his enterprise, inasmuch as they had fancied they were situated in a position in which they could hardly be disturbed, were now led by the destruction of their countrymen to think anxiously of their own future fate, and accordingly, pretending to implore peace that they might escape from the violence of his first invasion, they sent ambassadors to him with a set message, offering a lasting treaty of agreement; but (though it is not known what design or change of circumstances altered their purpose) they immediately afterwards sent off some others with all speed, to threaten our troops with implacable war if they did not at once quit their territories.

4. And when this was known, the Cæsar, as soon as all was quiet, at the beginning of night embarked 800 men in some small swift boats, with the intention that they should row with all their strength up stream for some distance, and then land and destroy all they could find with fire and sword.

5. After he had made this arrangement, the barbarians were seen at daybreak on the tops of the mountains, on

which our soldiers were led with speed to the higher ground; and when no enemy was found there (since the barbarians, divining their plan, immediately retreated to a distance), presently large volumes of smoke were seen, which indicated that our men had broken into the enemy's territory, and were laying it waste.

6. This event broke the spirit of the Germans, who, deserting the ambuscades which they had laid for our men in narrow defiles full of lurking-places, they fled across the river Maine to carry aid to their countrymen.

7. For, as is often the case in times of uncertainty and difficulty, they were panic-stricken by the incursion of our cavalry on the one side, and the sudden attacks of our infantry, conveyed in boats, on the other; and therefore, relying on their knowledge of the country, they sought safety in the rapidity of their flight; and, as their retreat left the motions of our troops free, we plundered the wealthy farms of their crops and their cattle, sparing no one. And having carried off a number of prisoners, we set fire to, and burnt to the ground all their houses, which in that district were built more carefully than usual, in the Roman fashion.

8. And when we had penetrated a distance of ten miles, till we came near a wood terrible from the denseness of its shade, our army halted for a while, and stayed its advance, having learnt from information given by a deserter that a number of enemies were concealed in some subterranean passages and caverns with many entrances in the neighbourhood, ready to sally forth when a favourable opportunity should appear.

9. Nevertheless our men presently ventured to advance in full confidence, and found the roads blockaded by oaks, ashes, and pines, of great size, cut down and laid together. And so they retreated with caution, perceiving that it was impossible to advance except by long and rugged defiles; though they could hardly restrain their indignation at being compelled to do so.

10. The weather too became very severe, so that they were enveloped in all kinds of toil and danger to no purpose (forasmuch as it was now past the autumnal equinox, and the snow, which had already fallen in those regions, covered the mountains and the plains), and so, instead of

proceeding, Julian undertook a work worthy of being related.

11. He repaired with great expedition, while there was no one to hinder him, the fortress which Trajan had constructed in the territory of the Allemanni, and to which he had given his own name, and which had lately been attacked with great violence and almost destroyed. And he placed there a temporary garrison, and also some magazines, which he had collected from the barbarians.

12. But when the Allemanni saw these preparations made for their destruction, they assembled rapidly in great consternation at what had already been done, and sent ambassadors to implore peace, with prayers of extreme humility. And the Cæsar, now that he had fully matured and secured the success of all his designs, taking into consideration all probabilities, granted them a truce for ten months. In reality he was especially influenced by this prudent consideration, that the camp which he had thus occupied without hindrance, in a way that could hardly have been hoped for, required, nevertheless, to be fortified with mural engines and other adequate equipments.

13. Trusting to this truce, three of the most ferocious of those kings who had sent reinforcements to their countrymen when defeated at Strasburg, came to him, though still in some degree of alarm, and took the oaths according to the formula in use in their country, that they would create no further disturbance, but that they would keep the truce faithfully up to the appointed day, because that had been the decision of our generals; and that they would not attack the fortress; and that they would even bring supplies to it on their shoulders if the garrison informed them that they were in want; all which they promised, because their fear bridled their treachery.

14. In this memorable war, which deserves to be compared with those against the Carthaginians or the Gauls, yet was accompanied with very little loss to the republic, Julian triumphed as a fortunate and successful leader. The very smallness of his losses might have given some colour to the assertions of his detractors, who declared that he had only fought bravely on all occasions, because he preferred dying gloriously to being put to death like his brother Gallus, as a condemned malefactor, as they had

expected he would be, if he had not, after the death of Constantius, continued to distinguish himself equally by splendid exploits.

II.

§ 1. Now when everything was settled in that country as fairly as the case permitted, Julian, returning to his winter quarters, found some trouble still left for him. Severus, the master of the horse, being on the way to Rheims through Cologne and Juliers, fell in with some strong battalions of Franks, consisting of six hundred light-armed soldiers, who were laying waste those places which were not defended by garrisons. They had been encouraged to this audacious wickedness by the opportunity afforded them when the Cæsar was occupied in the remote districts of the Allemanni, thinking to obtain a rich booty without any hindrance. But in fear of the army which had now returned, they occupied two fortresses which had been abandoned for some time, and defended themselves there as long as they could.

2. Julian, amazed at the novelty of such an attempt, and thinking it impossible to say how far such a spirit would spread if he allowed it to pass without a check, halted his soldiers, and gave orders to blockade the forts. . . . The Meuse passes beneath them; and the blockade was protracted for fifty-four days, through nearly the entire months of December and January, the barbarians resisting with incredible obstinacy and courage.

3. Then the Cæsar, like an experienced general, fearing that the barbarians might take advantage of some moonless night to cross over the river, which was now thoroughly frozen, ordered soldiers to go up and down the stream every day in light boats, from sunset till daybreak, so as to break the crust of ice and prevent any one from escaping in that manner. Owing to this manœuvre, the barbarians were so exhausted by hunger, watching, and the extremity of despair, that at last they voluntarily surrendered, and were immediately sent to the court of the emperor.

4. And a vast multitude of Franks, who had come to their assistance, hearing that they were taken prisoners and sent off, would not venture on any further enterprise, but returned to their own country. And when this affair

was finished, the Cæsar retired to Paris to pass the winter there.

III.

§ 1. It was now expected that a number of tribes would unite in greater force, and therefore the prudent Julian, bearing in mind the uncertainties of war, became very anxious and full of care. And as he thought that the truce lately made, though not free from trouble, and not of long duration, still gave him opportunity to remedy some things which were faulty, he began to remodel the arrangements about tribute.

2. And when Florentius, the prefect of the prætorium, having taken an estimate of everything, affirmed that whatever deficiency there might be in the produce of a capitation tax he should be able to make good from what he could levy by force, Julian, deprecating this practice, determined to lose his own life rather than permit it.

3. For he knew that the wounds inflicted by such extortions, or, as I should rather call them, confiscations, are incurable, and have often reduced provinces to extreme destitution. Indeed, such conduct, as will be related hereafter, utterly lost us Illyricum.

4. And when, owing to this resolution of his, the prætorian prefect exclaimed that it could not be endured that he, to whom the emperor had intrusted the chief authority in this matter, should be thus distrusted, Julian attempted to appease him, showing by exact and accurate calculations that the capitation tax was not only enough, but more than enough to provide all the necessary supplies.

5. And when some time afterwards an edict for a supplementary tax was nevertheless presented to him by Florentius, he refused to sign or even to read it; and threw it on the ground; and when warned by letters from the emperor (written on receiving the prefect's report) not to act in so embarrassing a manner, lest he should seem to be diminishing the authority of Florentius, Julian wrote in answer, that it was a matter to be thankful for, if a province that had been devastated in every direction could still pay its regular taxes, without

demanding from it any extraordinary contributions, which indeed no punishments could extort from men in a state of destitution: and then, and from that time forward, owing to the firmness of one man, no one ever attempted to extort anything illegal in Gaul beyond the regular taxes.

6. The Cæsar had also in another affair set an example wholly unprecedented, entreating the prefect to intrust to him the government of the second Belgic province, which was oppressed by manifold evils; on the especial and single condition that no officer, either belonging to the prefect or to the garrison, should force any one to pay anything. And the whole people whom he thus took under his care, comforted and relieved by this mildness, paid all the taxes due from them before the appointed day, without any demand being made upon them.

IV.

§ 1. WHILE Julian was thus beginning to put Gaul into a better condition, and while Orfitus was still governor of the second province, an obelisk was erected at Rome, in the Circus Maximus, concerning which, as this seems a convenient opportunity, I will mention a few particulars.

2. The city of Thebes, in Egypt, built in remote ages, with enormous walls, and celebrated also for entrances by a hundred gates, was from this circumstance called by its founders *ἑκατόμυλος* (*Hecatompylos*); and from the name of this city the whole district is known as Thebais.

3. When Carthage began to rise in greatness, the Carthaginian generals conquered and destroyed Thebes by a sudden attack. And after it was rebuilt, Cambyses, the celebrated king of Persia, who throughout his whole life was covetous and ferocious, overran Egypt, and again attacked this city that he might plunder it of its wealth, which was enough to excite his envy; and he spared not even the offerings which had been made to the gods.

4. And while he was in his savage manner moving to and fro among his plunderers, he got entangled in his own flowing robes, and fell on his face, and by the fall his dagger, which he wore close to his thigh, got loose from the scabbard, and he was mortally wounded and died.

5. And long afterwards, Cornelius Gallus, who was gover

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