

she should recover her husband, and that her honour should be preserved inviolate. For hearing that her husband was exceedingly devoted to her, he thought that by this bribe he might win him over to betray Nisibis.

4. And he also extended his protection to other virgins who, according to Christian rites, had been formally consecrated to the service of God, ordering that they should be kept uninjured, and be allowed to perform the offices of religion as they had been accustomed. Affecting clemency for a time, in order that those who were alarmed at his former ferocity and cruelty might now discard their fears, and come to him of their own accord, learning from these recent examples that he tempered the greatness of his success with humanity and courtesy.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

I. Sapor, while exhorting the citizens of Amida to surrender, is assailed with arrows and javelins by the garrison—And when king Grumbates makes a similar attempt, his son is slain.—II. Amida is blockaded, and within two days is twice assaulted by the Persians.—III. Ursicinus makes a vain proposal to sally out by night, and surprise the besiegers, being resisted by Sabinianus, the commander of the forces.—IV. A pestilence, which breaks out in Amida, is checked within ten days by a little rain—A discussion of the causes, and different kinds of pestilences.—V. Amida, betrayed by a deserter, is assailed both by assaults on the walls and by underground mines.—VI. A sally of the Gallic legions does great harm to the Persians.—VII. Towers and other engines are brought close to the walls of the city, but they are burnt by the Romans.—VIII. Attempts are made to raise lofty mounds close to the walls of Amida, and by these means it is entered—After the fall of the city, Marcellinus escapes by night, and flees to Antioch.—IX. Of the Roman generals at Amida, some are put to death, and others are kept as prisoners—Craugasius of Nisibis deserts to the Persians from love of his wife, who is their prisoner.—X. The people of Rome, fearing a scarcity, become seditious.—XI. The Limigantes of Sarmatia, under pretence of suing for peace, attack Constantius, who is deceived by their trick; but are driven back with heavy loss.—XII. Many are prosecuted for treason, and condemned.—XIII. Lauricius, of the Isaurians, checks the hordes of banditti.

I.

§ 1. THE king, rejoicing at this our disaster and captivity, and expecting other successes, advanced from this castle, and marching slowly, on the third day came to Amida.

2. And at daybreak, everything, as far as we could see, glittered with shining arms; and an iron cavalry filled the plains and the hills.

3. And he himself, mounted on his charger, and being taller than the rest, led his whole army, wearing instead of a crown a golden figure of a ram's head inlaid with jewels; being also splendid from the retinue of men of high rank and of different nations which followed him. And it was evident that his purpose was merely to try the garrison of the walls with a parley, as, in following out the counsel of Antoninus, he was hastening to another quarter.

4. But the deity of heaven, mercifully limiting the disasters of the empire within the compass of one region, led on this king to such an extravagant degree of elation, that he seemed to believe that the moment he made his appearance the besieged would be suddenly panic-stricken, and have recourse to supplication and entreaty.

5. He rode up to the gates, escorted by the cohort of his royal guard; and while pushing on more boldly, so that his very features might be plainly recognized, his ornaments made him such a mark for arrows and other missiles, that he would have been slain, if the dust had not hindered the sight of those who were shooting at him; so that after a part of his robe had been cut off by a blow of a javelin, he escaped to cause vast slaughter at a future time.

6. After this, raging as if against sacrilegious men who had violated a temple, he cried out that the lord of so many monarchs and nations had been insulted, and resolved to use all his efforts to destroy the city. But at the entreaty of his choicest generals not to break the example of mercy which he had so gloriously set, by indulging in anger, he was pacified, and the next day ordered the garrison to be summoned to surrender.

7. Therefore, at daybreak, Grumbates, king of the Chionitæ, went boldly up to the walls to effect that object,

with a brave body of guards; and when a skilful reconnoitrer had noticed him coming within shot, he let fly his balista, and struck down his son in the flower of his youth, who was at his father's side, piercing through his breast-plate, breast and all; and he was a prince who in stature and beauty was superior to all his comrades.

8. At his death all his countrymen took to flight, but presently returning in order to prevent his body from being carried off, and having roused with their dissonant clamours various tribes to their aid, a stern conflict arose, the arrows flying on both sides like hail.

9. The deadly struggle having been continued till the close of day, it was nightfall before the corpse of the young prince, which had been so stubbornly defended, was extricated from the heap of dead and streams of blood, amid the thick darkness; as formerly at Troy, the armies fought in furious combat for the comrade of the Thessalian chieftain.¹

10. At his death the count was sad, and all the nobles as well as his father were distressed at his sudden loss; and a cessation of arms having been ordered, the youth, so noble and beloved, was mourned after the fashion of his nation. He was carried out in the arms he was wont to wear, and placed on a spacious and lofty pile; around him ten couches were dressed, bearing effigies of dead men, so carefully laid out, that they resembled corpses already buried; and for seven days all the men in the companies and battalions celebrated a funeral feast, dancing, and singing melancholy kinds of dirges in lamentation for the royal youth.

11. And the women, with pitiable wailing, deplored with their customary weepings the hope of their nation thus cut off in the early bloom of youth; as the worshippers of Venus are often seen to do in the solemn festival of Adonis, which the mystical doctrines of religion show to be some sort of image of the ripened fruits of the earth.

II.

§ 1. WHEN the body was burnt and the bones collected in a silver urn, which his father had ordered to be carried

¹ Patroclus, the companion of Achilles.

back to his native land, to be there buried beneath the earth, Sapor, after taking counsel, determined to propitiate the shade of the deceased prince by making the destroyed city of Amida his monument. Nor indeed was Grumbates willing to move onward while the shade of his only son remained unavenged.

2. And having given two days to rest, and sent out large bodies of troops to ravage the fertile and well-cultivated fields which were as heavy with crops as in the time of peace, the enemy surrounded the city with a line of heavy-armed soldiers five deep; and at the beginning of the third day the brilliant squadrons filled every spot as far as the eye could see in every direction, and the ranks marching slowly, took up the positions appointed to each by lot.

3. All the Persians were employed in surrounding the walls; that part which looked eastward, where that youth so fatal to us was slain, fell to the Chionitæ. The Vertæ were appointed to the south; the Albani watched the north; while opposite to the western gate were posted the Segestani, the fiercest warriors of all, with whom were trains of tall elephants, horrid with their wrinkled skins, which marched on slowly, loaded with armed men, terrible beyond the savageness of any other frightful sight, as we have often said.

4. When we saw these countless hosts thus deliberately collected for the conflagration of the Roman world, and directed to our own immediate destruction, we despaired of safety, and sought only how to end our lives gloriously, as we all desired.

5. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the enemy's lines stood immovable, as if rooted to the ground, without changing a step or uttering a sound; nor was even the neigh of a horse heard; and the men having withdrawn in the same order as they had advanced, after refreshing themselves with food and sleep, even before the dawn, returned, led by the clang of brazen trumpets, to surround the city, as if fated to fall with their terrible ring.

6. And scarcely had Grumbates, like a Roman fecial, hurled at us a spear stained with blood, according to his native fashion, than the whole army, rattling their arms, mounted up to the walls, and instantly the tumult of

war grew fierce, while all the squadrons hastened with speed and alacrity to the attack, and our men on their side opposed them with equal fierceness and resolution.

7. Soon many of the enemy fell with their heads crushed by vast stones hurled from scorpions, some were pierced with arrows, others were transfixed with javelins, and strewed the ground with their bodies; others, wounded, fled back in haste to their comrades.

8. Nor was there less grief or less slaughter in the city, where the cloud of arrows obscured the air, and the vast engines, of which the Persians had got possession when they took Singara, scattered wounds everywhere.

9. For the garrison, collecting all their forces, returning in constant reliefs to the combat, in their eagerness to defend the city, fell wounded, to the hindrance of their comrades, or, being sadly torn as they fell, threw down those who stood near them, or if still alive, sought the aid of those skilful in extracting darts which had become fixed in their bodies.

10. So slaughter was met by slaughter, and lasted till the close of day, being scarcely stopped by the darkness of evening, so great was the obstinacy with which both sides fought.

11. And the watches of the night were passed under arms, and the hills resounded with the shouts raised on both sides, while our men extolled the valour of Constantius Cæsar as lord of the empire and of the world, and the Persians styled Sapor Saansas and Pyroses, which appellations mean king of kings, and conqueror in wars.

12. The next morning, before daybreak, the trumpet gave the signal, and countless numbers from all sides flocked like birds to a contest of similar violence; and in every direction, as far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen in the plains and valleys but the glittering arms of these savage nations.

13. And presently a shout was raised, and as the enemy rushed forward all at once, they were met by a dense shower of missiles from the walls; and as may be conjectured, none were hurled in vain, falling as they did among so dense a crowd. For while so many evils surrounded us, we fought as I have said before, with the hope, not of procuring safety, but of dying bravely; and from

dawn to eventide the battle was evenly balanced, both fighting with more ferocity than method, and there arose the shouts of men striking and falling, so that from the eagerness of both parties there was scarcely any one who did not give or receive wounds.

14. At last, night put an end to the slaughter, and the losses on both sides caused a longer truce. For when the time intended for rest was allowed to us, continual sleepless toil still exhausted our little remaining strength, in spite of the dread caused by the bloodshed and the pallid faces of the dying, whom the scantiness of our room did not permit us even the last solace of burying; since within the circuit of a moderate city there were seven legions, and a vast promiscuous multitude of citizens and strangers of both sexes, and other soldiers, so that at least twenty thousand men were shut up within the walls.

15. So each attended to his own wounds as well as he could, availing himself of whatever assistance or remedies came in his way. While some, being severely wounded, died of loss of blood; and some, pierced through by swords, lay on the ground, and breathed their last in the open air; others who were pierced through and through the skilful refused to touch, in order not to pain them further by inflicting useless sufferings; some, seeking the doubtful remedy of extracting the arrows, only incurred agonies worse than death.

III.

§ 1. WHILE the war was going on in this manner around Amida, Ursicinus, vexed at being dependent on the will of another, gave continual warning to Sabinianus, who had superior authority over the soldiers, and who still remained in the quarter of the tombs, to collect all his light-armed troops, and hasten by secret paths along the foot of the mountain chain, with the idea that by the aid of this light force, if chance should aid them, they might surprise some of the enemy's outposts, and attack with success the night watches of the army, which, with its vast circuit, was surrounding the walls, or else by incessant attacks might harass those who clung resolutely to the blockade.

2. But Sabinianus rejected this proposal as mischievous,

and produced some letters from the emperor, expressly enjoining that all that could be done was to be done without exposing the troops to any danger; but his own secret motive he kept in his own bosom, namely, that he had been constantly recommended while at court to refuse his predecessor, who was very eager for glory, every opportunity of acquiring renown, however much it might be for the interest of the republic.

3. Extreme pains were taken, even to the ruin of the provinces, to prevent the gallant Ursicinus from being spoken of as the author of or partner in any memorable exploit. Therefore, bewildered with these misfortunes, Ursicinus, seeing that, though constantly sending spies to us (although from the strict watch that was set it was not easy for any one to enter the city), and proposing many advantageous plans, he did no good, seemed like a lion, terrible for his size and fierceness, but with his claws cut and his teeth drawn, so that he could not dare to save from danger his cubs entangled in the nets of the hunters.

IV.

§ 1. BUT in the city, where the number of the corpses which lay scattered over the streets was too great for any one to perform the funeral rites over them, a pestilence was soon added to the other calamities of the citizens; the carcasses becoming full of worms and corruption, from the evaporation caused by the heat, and the various diseases of the people; and here I will briefly explain whence diseases of this kind arise.

2. Both philosophers and skilful physicians agree that excess of cold, or of heat, or of moisture, or of drought, all cause pestilences; on which account those who dwell in marshy or wet districts are subject to coughs and complaints in the eyes, and other similar maladies: on the other hand, those who dwell in hot climates are liable to fevers and inflammations. But since fire is the most powerful of all elements, so drought is the quickest at killing.

3. On this account it is that when the Greeks were toiling at the ten years' war,¹ to prevent a foreigner from

¹ The Trojan war. See the account of the pestilence, Homer II. i. 50.

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