

BOOK XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

- I. Valentinian, the tribune of the second school of the Scutarii, by the unanimous consent of both the civil and military officers, is elected emperor at Nicæa, in his absence—A dissertation on leap-year.—II. Valentinian, being summoned from Ancyra, comes with speed to Nicæa, and is again unanimously elected emperor, and having been clothed in the purple, and saluted as Augustus, harangues the army.—III. Concerning the prefecture of Rome, as administered by Apronianus.—IV. Valentinian at Nicomedia makes Valens, his brother, who was master of the horse, his colleague in the empire, and repeats his appointment at Constantinople, with the consent of the army—V. The two emperors divide the counts and the army between them, and soon afterwards enter on their first consulship, the one at Milan, the other at Constantinople—The Allemanni lay waste Gaul—Procopius attempts a revolt in the East.—VI. The country, family, habits, and rank of Procopius; his obscurity in the time of Jovian, and how he came to be saluted emperor at Constantinople.—VII. Procopius, without bloodshed, reduces Thrace to acknowledge his authority; and by promises prevails on the cavalry and infantry, who were marching through that country, to take the oath of fidelity to him; he also by a speech wins over the Jovian and Victorian legions, which were sent against him by Valens.—VIII. Nicæa and Chalcedon being delivered from their blockades, Bithynia acknowledges the sovereignty of Procopius; as presently, after Cyzicus is stormed, the Hellespont does likewise.—IX. Procopius is deserted by his troops in Bithynia, Lycia, and Phrygia, is delivered alive to Valens, and beheaded.—X. Marcellus, a captain of the guard, his kinsman, and many of his partisans are put to death.

I.

A.D. 364.

§ 1. HAVING narrated with exceeding care the series of transactions in my own immediate recollection, it is necessary now to quit the track of notorious events, in order to avoid the dangers often found in connection with truth; and also to avoid exposing ourselves to unreasonable critics of our work, who would make an outcry as if they had been personally injured, if anything should be passed over which the emperor has said at dinner, if any cause should be overlooked for which the common soldiers

were assembled round their standards, or if there were not inserted a mention of every insignificant fort, however little such things ought to have room in a varied description of different districts. Or if the name of every one who filled the office of urban prætor be not given, and many other things quite impertinent to the proper idea of a history, which duly touches on prominent occurrences, and does not stoop to investigate petty details or secret motives, which any one who wishes to know may as well hope to be able to count those little indivisible bodies flying through space, which we call atoms.

2. Some of the ancients, fearing this kind of criticism, though they composed accounts of various actions in a beautiful style, forbore to publish them, as Tully, a witness of authority, mentions in a letter to Cornelius Nepos. However, let us, despising the ignorance of people in general, proceed with the remainder of our narrative.

3. The course of events being terminated so mournfully, by the death of two emperors at such brief intervals, the army, having paid the last honours to the dead body which was sent to Constantinople to be interred among the other emperors, advanced towards Nicæa, which is the metropolis of Bithynia, where the chief civil and military authorities applied themselves to an anxious consideration of the state of affairs, and as some of them were full of vain hopes, they sought for a ruler of dignity and proved wisdom.

4. In reports, and the concealed whispers of a few persons, the name of Equitius was ventilated, who was at that time tribune of the first class of the Scutarii; but he was disapproved by the most influential leaders as being rough and boorish; and their inclinations rather tended towards Januarius, a kinsman of Julian, who was the chief commissary of the camp in Illyricum.

5. However, he also was rejected because he was at a distance; and, as a man well qualified and at hand, Valentinian was elected by the unanimous consent of all men, and the manifest favour of the Deity. He was the tribune of the second class of the Scutarii, and had been left at Ancyra, it having been arranged that he should follow afterwards. And, because no one denied that this was for the advantage of the republic, messengers were sent

to beg him to come with all speed ; and for ten days the empire was without a ruler, which the soothsayer Marcus, by an inspection of entrails at Rome, announced to be the case at that moment in Asia.

6. But in the meanwhile, to prevent any attempt to overturn what had been thus settled, or any movement on the part of the fickle soldiers to set aside the election in favour of some one on the spot, Equitius and Leo, who was acting as commissary under Dagalaiphus the commander of the cavalry, and who afterwards incurred great odium as master of the offices,¹ strove with great prudence and vigilance to establish, to the best of their power, what had been the decision of the whole army, they being also natives of Pannonia, and partisans of the emperor elect.

7. When Valentinian arrived in answer to the summons he had received, either in obedience to omens which guided him in the prosecution of the affair, as was generally thought, or to repeated warnings conveyed in dreams, he would not come into public or be seen by any one for two days, because he wished to avoid the bissextile day of February which came at that time, and which he knew to have been often an unfortunate day for the Roman empire : of this day I will here give a plain explanation.

8. The ancients who were skilled in the motions of the world and the stars, among whom the most eminent are Meton, Euctemon, Hipparchus, and Archimedes, define it as the period of the revolving year when the sun, in accordance with the laws which regulate the heavens, having gone through the zodiac, in three hundred and sixty-five days and nights, returns to the same point : as, for instance, when, after having moved on from the second degree of the Ram, it returns again to it after having completed its circuit.

9. But the exact period of a year extends over the number of days above mentioned and six hours more. And so the correct commencement of the next year will not begin till after midday and ends in the evening. The third year begins at the first watch, and lasts till the sixth hour of the night. The fourth begins at daybreak.

10. Now as the beginning of each year varies, one commencing at the sixth hour of the day, another at the same

¹ Master of the Offices—v. Bohn's 'Gibbon,' ii., 223.

hour of the night, to prevent the calculation from throwing all science into confusion by its perplexing diversity, and the months of autumn from sometimes being found to come in the spring, it has been settled that those six hours which in a period of four years amount to twenty-four shall be put together so as to make one day and night.

11. And after much consideration it has been so arranged with the concurrence of many learned men, that thus the revolutions of the year may come to one regular end, removed from all vagueness and uncertainty, so that the theory of the heavens may not be clouded by any error, and that the months may retain their appointed position.

12. Before their dominions had reached any wide extent, the Romans were for a long time ignorant of this fact, and having been for many years involved in obscure difficulties, they were in deeper darkness and error than ever, when they gave the priests the power of intercalating, which they, in profligate subservience to the interests of the farmers of the revenue, or people engaged in lawsuits, effected by making additions or subtractions at their own pleasure.

13. And from this mode of proceeding many other expedients were adopted, all of which were fallacious, and which I think it superfluous now to enumerate. But when they were given up, Octavianus Augustus, in imitation of the Greeks, corrected these disorderly arrangements and put an end to these fluctuations, after great deliberation fixing the duration of the year at twelve months and six hours, during which the sun with its perpetual movement runs through the whole twelve signs, and concludes the period of a whole year.

14. This rule of the bissextile year, Rome, which is destined to endure to the end of time, established with the aid of the heavenly Deity. Now let us return to our history.

II.

§ 1. WHEN this day, so little fit in the opinion of many for beginning any great affair, had passed, at the approach of evening, by the advice of the prefect Sallust, an order was issued by general consent, and with the penalty of death attached to any neglect of it, that no one of higher autho-

city, or suspected of aiming at any objects of ambition, should appear in public the next morning.

2. And when, while the numbers who allowed their own empty wishes to torment them were weary of the slowness of time, the night ended at last, and daylight appeared, the soldiers were all assembled in one body, and Valentinian advanced into the open space, and mounting a tribunal of some height which had been erected on purpose, he was declared ruler of the empire as a man of due wisdom by this assembly, bearing the likeness of a comitia, with the unanimous acclamations of all present.

3. Presently he was clothed with the imperial robe, and crowned, and saluted as Augustus with all the delight which the pleasure of this novelty could engender; and then he began to harangue the multitude in a premeditated speech. But as he put forth his arm to speak more freely, a great murmur arose, the centuries and maniples beginning to raise an uproar, and the whole mass of the cohorts presently urging that a second emperor should be at once elected.

4. And though some people fancied that this cry was raised by a few corrupt men in order to gain the favour of those who had been passed over, it appeared that that was a mistake, for the cry that was raised did not resemble a purchased clamour, but rather the unanimous voice of the whole multitude all animated with the same wish, because recent examples had taught them to fear the instability of this high fortune. Presently the murmurs of the furious and uproarious army appeared likely to give rise to a complete tumult, and men began to fear that the audacity of the soldiers might break out into some atrocious act.

5. And as Valentinian feared this above everything, he raised his hand firmly with the vigour of an emperor full of confidence, and venturing to rebuke some as obstinate and seditious, he delivered the speech he had intended without interruption.

6. "I exult, O ye gallant defenders of our provinces, and boast and always shall boast that your valour has conferred on me, who neither expected nor desired such an honour, the government of the Roman empire, as the fittest

man to discharge its duties. That which was in your hands before an emperor was elected, you have completed beneficially and gloriously, by raising to this summit of honour a man whom you know by experience to have lived from his earliest youth to his present age with honour and integrity. Now then I entreat you to listen with quietness to a few plain observations which I think will be for the public advantage.

7. "So numerous are the matters for the consideration of an emperor, that I neither deny nor even doubt that it is a desirable thing that he should have a colleague of equal power to deal with every contingency. And I myself, as a man, do also fear the great accumulation of cares which must be mine, and the various changes of events. But still we must use every exertion to insure concord, by which even the smallest affairs give strength. And that is easily secured if, your patience concurring with your equity, you willingly grant me what belongs to me in this matter. For Fortune, the ally of all good counsels, will I trust aid me, while to the very utmost of my ability and power, I diligently search for a wise and temperate partner. For as wise men lay it down, not only in the case of empire where the dangers are frequent and vast, but also in matters of private and everyday life, a man ought rather to take a stranger into his friendship after he has had opportunities of judging him to be wise, than to ascertain his wisdom after he has made him his friend.

8. "This, in hopes of a happier fortune, I promise. Do you, retaining your steadiness of conduct and loyalty, recruit the vigour of your minds and bodies while rest in your winter quarters allows you to do so. And you shall soon receive what is your due on my nomination as emperor."

9. Having finished this speech, to which his unexpected authority gave weight, the emperor by it brought all over to his opinion. And even those who a few minutes before with loud voices demanded something different, now, following his advice, surrounded him with the eagles and standards, and, forming a splendid and formidable escort of all classes and ranks of the army, *conducted him to the palace.*

III.

§ 1. WHILE the decisions of Fate were rapidly bringing these events to pass in the East, Apronianus, the governor of Rome, an upright and severe judge, among the grave cases by which that prefecture is continually oppressed, was labouring with most particular solicitude to suppress the magicians, who were now getting scarce, and who, having been taken prisoners, had been, after being put to the question, manifestly convicted by the evidence of their accomplices of having injured some persons. These he put to death, hoping thus, by the punishment of a few, to drive the rest, if any were still concealed, out of the city through fear of similar treatment.

2. And he is said to have acted thus energetically because having been promoted by Julian while he was still in Syria, he had lost one eye on his journey to take possession of his office, and he suspected that this was owing to his having been the object of some nefarious practices; therefore with just but unusual indignation he exerted great industry in searching out these and similar crimes. This made him appear cruel to some persons, because the populace were continually pouring in crowds into the amphitheatre while he was conducting the examination of some of the greatest criminals.

3. At last, after many punishments of this kind had been inflicted, he condemned to death the charioteer Hilarinus, who was convicted on his own confession of having intrusted his son, who was but a very young boy, to a sorcerer to be taught some secret mysteries forbidden by the laws, in order that he might avail himself of unlawful assistance without the privity of any one. But, as the executioner held him but loosely he suddenly escaped and fled to a Christian altar, and had to be dragged from it, when he was immediately beheaded.

4. But soon ample precautions were taken against the recurrence of this and similar offences, and there were none or very few who ventured afterwards to insult the rigour of the public law by practising these iniquities. But at a later period long impunity nourished atrocious crimes; and licentiousness increased to such a pitch that a certain

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