

BOOK XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

I. The Allemanni having defeated the Romans, put the counts Charitto and Severianus to death.—II. Jovinus, the commander of the cavalry in Gaul, surprises and routs two divisions of the Allemanni; defeats a third army in the country of the Catalauni, the enemy losing six thousand killed and four thousand wounded.—III. About the three prefects of the city, Symmachus, Lampadius, and Juventius—The quarrels of Damasus and Ursinus about the bishopric of Rome.—IV. The people and the six provinces of Thrace are described, and the chief cities in each province.—V. The emperor Valens attacks the Goths, who had sent Procopius' auxiliary troops to be employed against him, and after three years makes peace with them.—VI. Valentinian, with the consent of the army, makes his son Gratian emperor; and, after investing the boy with the purple, exhorts him to behave bravely, and recommends him to the soldiers.—VII. The passionate temper, ferocity, and cruelty of the emperor Valentinian.—VIII. Count Theodosius defeats the Picts, Attacotti, and Scots, who were ravaging Britain with impunity, after having slain the duke and count of that province, and makes them restore their plunder.—IX. The Moorish tribes ravage Africa—Valens checks the predatory incursions of the Isaurians—Concerning the office of city prefect.—X. The emperor Valentinian crosses the Rhine, and in a battle, attended with heavy loss to both sides, defeats and routs the Allemanni, who had taken refuge in their highest mountains.—XI. On the high family, wealth, dignity, and character of Probus.—XII. The Romans and Persians quarrel about the possession of Armenia and Iberia.

I.

A.D. 367.

§ 1. WHILE these events which we have related were taking place with various consequences in the east, the Allemanni, after the many disasters and defeats which they had received in their frequent contests with the emperor Julian, at length, having recruited their strength, though not to a degree equal to their former condition, for the reason which has been already set forth, crossed the frontier of Gaul in formidable numbers. And immediately after the beginning of the year, while winter was still in its greatest severity in those frozen districts, a vast multitude poured forth in a solid column, plundering all the places around in the most licentious manner.

2. Their first division was met by Charietto, who at that time had the authority of count in both the German provinces, and who marched against them with his most active troops, having with him as a colleague count Severianus, a man of great age and feeble health, who had the legions *Divitensis* and *Tungricana* under his command, near *Cabillonum* (Châlons).¹

3. Then having formed the whole force into one solid body, and having with great rapidity thrown a bridge over a small stream, the Romans assailed the barbarians from a distance with arrows and light javelins, which they shot back at us with great vigour.

4. But when the battalions met and fought with drawn swords, our line was shaken by the vehement onset of the enemy, and could neither resist nor do any valorous deeds by way of attack, but were all put to flight as soon as they saw Severianus struck down from his horse and severely wounded by an arrow.

5. Charietto, too, while labouring by the exposure of his own person, and with bitter reproaches, to encourage his men, who were giving way, and while by the gallantry with which he maintained his own position he strove to efface the disgrace they were incurring, was slain by a mortal wound from a javelin.

6. And after his death the standard of the *Eruli* and of the *Batavi* was lost, and the barbarians raised it on high, insulting it, dancing round it, but after a fierce struggle it was recovered.

II.

A.D. 367.

§ 1. THE news of this disaster was received with great sorrow, and *Dagalaiphus* was sent from Paris to restore affairs to order. But as he delayed some time, and made excuses, alleging that he was unable to attack the barbarians, who were dispersed over various districts, and as he was soon after sent for to receive the consulship with *Gratian*, who was still only a private individual, *Jovinus* was appointed commander of the cavalry: and he being well provided and fully prepared, attacked the fortress of *Chur-*

¹ *Cabillonum* is Châlons-sur-Soane, in Burgundy; *Catalauni* is Châlons-sur-Marne, in Champagne.

peigne, protecting both his wings and flanks with great care. And at this place he fell on the barbarians unexpectedly, before they could arm themselves, and in a very short time utterly destroyed them.

2. Then leading on the soldiers while exulting in the glory of this easy victory, to defeat the other divisions, and advancing slowly, he learnt from the faithful report of his scouts that a band of ravagers, after having plundered the villages around, were resting on the bank of the river. And as he approached, while his army was concealed by the lowness of the ground and the thickness of the trees, he saw some of them bathing, some adorning their hair after their fashion, and some carousing.

3. And seizing this favourable opportunity, he suddenly bade the trumpet give the signal, and burst into the camp of the marauders. On the other hand, the Germans could do nothing but pour forth useless threats and shouts, not being allowed time to collect their scattered arms, or to form in any strength, so vigorously were they pressed by the conquerors. Thus numbers of them fell pierced with javelins and swords, and many took to flight, and were saved by the winding and narrow paths.

4. After this success, which was won by valour and good fortune, Jovinus struck his camp without delay, and led on his soldiers with increased confidence (sending out a body of careful scouts in advance) against the third division. And arriving at Châlons by forced marches, he there formed the whole body ready for battle.

5. And having constructed a rampart with seasonable haste, and refreshed his men with food and sleep as well as the time permitted, at daybreak he arranged his army in an open plain, extending his line with admirable skill, in order that by occupying an extensive space of ground the Romans might appear to be equal in number to the enemy: being in fact inferior in that respect though equal in strength.

6. Accordingly, when the trumpet gave the signal and the battle began to rage at close quarters, the Germans stood amazed, alarmed at the well-known appearance of the shining standards. But though they were checked for a moment, they presently recovered themselves, and the conflict was protracted till the close of the day, when our

valorous troops would have reaped the fruit of their gallantry without any loss if it had not been for Balcho-baudes, a tribune of the legions, who being as sluggish as he was boastful, at the approach of evening retreated in disorder to the camp. And if the rest of the cohorts had followed his example and had also retired, the affair would have turned out so ruinous that not one of our men would have been left alive to tell what had happened.

7. But our soldiers, persisting with energy and courage, showed such a superiority in personal strength that they wounded four thousand of the enemy and slew six thousand, while they did not themselves lose more than twelve hundred killed and two hundred wounded.

8. At the approach of night the battle terminated, and our weary men having recruited their strength, a little before dawn our skilful general led forth his army in a square, and found that the barbarians had availed themselves of the darkness to escape. And having no fear there of ambuscade, he pursued them over the open plain, trampling on the dying and the dead, many of whom had perished from the effect of the severity of the cold on their wounds.

9. After he had advanced some way further, without finding any of the enemy he returned, and then he learnt that the king of the hostile army had been taken prisoner, with a few followers, by the Ascarii,¹ whom he himself had sent by another road to plunder the tents of the Allemanni, and they had hanged him. But the general being angry at this, ordered the punishment of the tribune who had ventured on such an act without consulting his superior officer, and he would have condemned him if he had not been able to establish by manifest proof that the atrocious act had been committed by the violent impulse of the soldiers.

10. After this, when he returned to Paris with the glory of this success, the emperor met him with joy, and appointed him to be consul the next year, being additionally rejoiced because at the very same time he received the head of Procopius, which had been sent to him by Valens.

11. Besides these events, many other battles of inferior

¹ These seem to have been a tribe of the *Batavi*; but some editors give, as a various reading, *Hastarii*, which may be translated, a detachment of lancers.

interest and importance took place in Gaul, which it would be superfluous to recount, since they brought no results worth mentioning, and it is not fit to spin out history with petty details.

III.

§ 1. AT this time, or a little before, a new kind of prodigy appeared in the corn district of Tuscany; those who were skilful in interpreting such things being wholly ignorant of what it portended. For in the town of Pistoja, at about the third hour of the day, in the sight of many persons, an ass mounted the tribunal, where he was heard to bray loudly. All the bystanders were amazed, as were all those who heard of the occurrence from the report of others, as no one could conjecture what was to happen.

2. But soon afterwards the events showed what was portended, for a man of the name of Terence, a person of low birth and a baker by trade, as a reward for having given information against Orsitus, who had formerly been prefect, which led to his being convicted of peculation, was intrusted with the government of this same province. And becoming elated and confident, he threw affairs into great disorder, till he was convicted of fraud on transactions relating to some ship-masters, as was reported, and was executed while Claudius was prefect of Rome.

3. But some time before this happened Symmachus succeeded Apronianus; a man deserving to be named among the most eminent examples of learning and moderation; under whose government the most sacred city enjoyed peace and plenty in an unusual degree; being also adorned with a magnificent and solid bridge which he constructed, and opened amid the great joy of his ungrateful fellow-citizens, as the result very plainly showed.

4. For they some years afterwards burnt his beautiful house on the other side of the Tiber, being enraged because some worthless plebeian had invented a story, which there was no evidence or witness to support, that he had said that he would prefer putting out the limekilns with his own wine, to selling the lime at the price expected of him.

5. After him the prefect of the city was Lampadius, who had been prefect of the prætorium, a man of such boundless arrogance, that he grew very indignant if he were not praised even when he spat, as if he did that with more grace than any one else; but still a man of justice, virtue, and economy.

6. When as prætor he was celebrating some splendid games, and giving abundant largesses, being unable to bear the tumult of the populace, which was often urgent to have gifts distributed to those who were unworthy, in order to show his liberality and his contempt for the multitude, he sent for a crowd of beggars from the Vatican, and enriched them with great presents.

7. But, not to digress too much, it will be sufficient to record one instance of his vanity, which, though of no great importance, may serve as a warning to judges. In every quarter of the city which had been adorned at the expense of different emperors he inscribed his own name, and that, not as if he were the restorer of old works, but their founder. This same fault is said to have characterized the emperor Trajan, from which the people in jest named him "The Pellitory of the wall."

8. While he was prefect he was disturbed by frequent commotions, the most formidable being when a vast mob of the lowest of the people collected, and with firebrands and torches would have burnt his house near the baths of Constantine, if they had not been driven away by the prompt assistance of his friends and neighbours, who pelted them with stones and tiles from the tops of the houses.

9. And he himself, being alarmed at a sedition, which on this occasion had become so violent, retired to the Mulvian bridge (which the elder Scaurus is said to have built), and waited there till the discontent subsided, which indeed had been excited by a substantial grievance.

10. For when he began to construct some new buildings, he ordered the cost to be defrayed, not from the customary sources of revenue, but if iron, or lead, or copper, or anything of that kind was required, he sent officers who, pretending to try the different articles, did in fact seize them without paying any price for them. This so enraged the poor, since they suffered repeated losses from such a prac-

tice, that it was all he could do to escape from them by a rapid retreat.

11. His successor had formerly been a quæstor of the palace, his name was Juventius, a man of integrity and prudence, a Pannonian by birth. His administration was tranquil and undisturbed, and the people enjoyed plenty under it. Yet he also was alarmed by fierce seditions raised by the discontented populace, which arose from the following occurrence.

12. Damasus and Ursinus, being both immoderately eager to obtain the bishopric, formed parties and carried on the conflict with great asperity, the partisans of each carrying their violence to actual battle, in which men were wounded and killed. And as Juventius was unable to put an end to, or even to soften these disorders, he was at last by their violence compelled to withdraw to the suburbs.

13. Ultimately Damasus got the best of the strife by the strenuous efforts of his partisans. It is certain that on one day one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies were found in the Basilica of Sicininus, which is a Christian church.¹ And the populace who had been thus roused to a state of ferocity were with great difficulty restored to order.

14. I do not deny, when I consider the ostentation that reigns at Rome, that those who desire such rank and power may be justified in labouring with all possible exertion and vehemence to obtain their wishes; since after they have succeeded, they will be secure for the future, being enriched by offerings from matrons, riding in carriages, dressing splendidly, and feasting luxuriously, so that their entertainments surpass even royal banquets.

15. And they might be really happy if, despising the vastness of the city, which they excite against themselves by their vices, they were to live in imitation of some of the priests in the provinces, whom the most rigid abstinence in eating and drinking, and plainness of apparel, and eyes always cast on the ground, recommend to the everlasting Deity and his true worshippers as pure and sober-minded men. This is a sufficient digression on this subject: let us now return to our narrative.

¹ Probably the church of Santa Maria Maggiore; but see note in Gibbon, ch. xxv. (vol. iii. p. 91, Bohn).

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