Chapter I: The Extent Of The Empire In The Age Of The Antonines.—Part III.

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city. [60] As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the praetorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labor was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pickaxe was no less familiar than that of the sword or pilum. Active valor may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.[61]

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legendaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.[62] Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles.[63] On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle.[64] The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

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60 Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words:—"Universa quae ix quoque belli genere necessaria esse creduntur, secum Jegio debet ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, arma'am faciat civitatem."

61 For the Roman Castrametation, see Polybius, l. vi. with Lipsius de Militia Romana, Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21—25, iii. 9, and Memoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.

62 Cicero in Tusculan. ii. 37, [15.]—Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5, Frontinus, iv. 1.

63 Vegetius, i. 9. See Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.

64 See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 141—234.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions: two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhaetia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Maesia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was intrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of City Cohorts and Praetorian Guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the Praetorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but, in their arms and institutions, we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.[65]

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity;[66] the whole extent

65 Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. lv. p. 794) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavored to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romana, l. i. c. 4, 5.

66 The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.[67] Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ships, and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.[68] If we review this general state of the Imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men: a military power, which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire. [69]

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavor, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but, at present, divided into so many independent and hostile states. Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenaean Mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Baetica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the

67 Plutarch, in Marc. Anton. [c. 67.] And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19.

68 See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

69 Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

former on the side of the East, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Baetica. The remainder of Spain, Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, Leon, and the two Castiles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.[70] Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburgh, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul, equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above a hundred independent states.[71] The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphine, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Caesar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valor, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany.[72] Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic, or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

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70 See Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to suppose, that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis, and several moderns who have written in Latin use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Geographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.

71 One hundred and fifteen cities appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

72 D'Anville. Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule.

We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman Province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dumbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgae in the West, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. [73] As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission, they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state, which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.[74] The middle part of the peninsula, that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilized life.[75] The Tyber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and their posterity have erected convents.[76] Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.[77]

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73 Whittaker's History of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.] Before the Roman conquest, the country which is now called Lombardy, was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine.

74 The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. * Note: Or Liburnian, according to Niebuhr. Vol. i. p. 172.—M.

75 See Maffei Verona illustrata, l. i. * Note: Add Niebuhr, vol. i., and Otfried Muller, die Etrusker, which contains much that is known, and much that is conjectured, about this remarkable people. Also Micali, Storia degli antichi popoli Italiani. Florence, 1832—M.

76 The first contrast was observed by the ancients. See Florus, i. 11. The second must strike every modern traveller.

77 Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. iii.) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is, at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters.[78] The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier,[79] and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Maesia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The province of Rhaetia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains, and the country of Tirol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save,—Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia,—was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Teyss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the House of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman Empire.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pacha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power.[80]

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78 Tournefort, Voyages en Grece et Asie Mineure, lettre xviii.

79 The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.

80 A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.

After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister.[81] It formerly divided Maesia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Maesia, which, during the middle ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Haemus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Aegean to the Ionian Sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves, that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achaean league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed with some propriety to the peninsula, which, confined betwixt the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district, westward of Mount Taurus and the River Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland

81 The Save rises near the confines of Istria, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube.

country, separated from the Roman Asia by the River Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe, that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.[82]

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidae, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern frontier of their empire: nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the south, the confines of Egypt, and the Red Sea. Phoenicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent.[83] Yet Phoenicia and Palestine will forever live in the memory of mankind; since

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82 See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

83 This comparison is exaggerated, with the intention, no doubt, of attacking the authority of the Bible, which boasts of the fertility of Palestine. Gibbon's only authorities were that of Strabo (l. xvi. 1104) and the present state of the country. But Strabo only speaks of the neighborhood of Jerusalem, which he calls barren and arid to the extent of sixty stadia round the city: in other parts he gives a favorable testimony to the fertility of many parts of Palestine: thus he says, "Near Jericho there is a grove of palms, and a country of a hundred stadia, full of springs, and well peopled." Moreover, Strabo had never seen Palestine; he spoke only after reports, which may be as inaccurate as those according to which he has composed that description of Germany, in which Gluverius has detected so many errors. (Gluv. Germ. iii. 1.) Finally, his testimony is contradicted and refuted by that of other ancient authors, and by medals. Tacitus says, in speaking of Palestine, "The inhabitants are healthy and robust; the rains moderate; the soil fertile." (Hist. v. 6.) Ammianus Macellinus says also, "The last of the Syrias is Palestine, a country of considerable extent, abounding in clean and well-cultivated land, and containing some fine cities, none of which yields to the other; but, as it were, being on a parallel, are rivals."—xiv. 8. See also the historian Josephus, Hist. vi. 1. Procopius of Caeserea, who lived in the sixth century, says that Chosroes, king of Persia, had a great desire to make himself master of Palestine, on account of its extraordinary fertility, its opulence, and the great number of its inhabitants. The Saracens thought the same, and were afraid that Omar. when he went to Jerusalem, charmed with the fertility of the soil and the purity of the air, would never return to Medina. (Ockley, Hist. of Sarac. i. 232.) The importance attached by the Romans to the conquest of Palestine, and the obstacles they encountered, prove also the richness and population of the country. Vespasian and Titus caused medals to be struck with trophies, in which Palestine is represented by a female under a palm-tree, to signify the richness of he country, with this legend: Judea capta. Other medals also indicate this fertility; for instance, that of Herod holding a bunch of grapes, and that of the young Agrippa displaying fruit. As to the present state of he country, one perceives that it is not fair to draw any inference against its ancient fertility: the disasters

America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.[84] A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to for many settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.[85]

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through which it has passed, the government to which it is subject, the disposition of the inhabitants, explain sufficiently the wild and uncultivated appearance of the land, where, nevertheless, fertile and cultivated districts are still found, according to the testimony of travellers; among others, of Shaw, Maundrel, La Rocque, &c.—G. The Abbe Guenee, in his Lettres de quelques Juifs a Mons. de Voltaire, has exhausted the subject of the fertility of Palestine; for Voltaire had likewise indulged in sarcasm on this subject. Gibbon was assailed on this point, not, indeed, by Mr. Davis, who, he slyly insinuates, was prevented by his patriotism as a Welshman from resenting the comparison with Wales, but by other writers. In his Vindication, he first established the correctness of his measurement of Palestine, which he estimates as 7600 square English miles, while Wales is about 7011. As to fertility, he proceeds in the following dexterously composed and splendid passage: "The emperor Frederick II., the enemy and the victim of the clergy, is accused of saying, after his return from his crusade, that the God of the Jews would have despised his promised land, if he had once seen the fruitful realms of Sicily and Naples." (See Giannone, Istor. Civ. del R. di Napoli, ii. 245.) This raillery, which malice has, perhaps, falsely imputed to Frederick, is inconsistent with truth and piety; yet it must be confessed that the soil of Palestine does not contain that inexhaustible, and, as it were, spontaneous principle of fertility, which, under the most unfavorable circumstances, has covered with rich harvests the banks of the Nile, the fields of Sicily, or the plains of Poland. The Jordan is the only navigable river of Palestine: a considerable part of the narrow space is occupied, or rather lost, in the Dead Sea whose horrid aspect inspires every sensation of disgust, and countenances every tale of horror. The districts which border on Arabia partake of the sandy quality of the adjacent desert. The face of the country, except the sea-coast, and the valley of the Jordan, is covered with mountains, which appear, for the most part, as naked and barren rocks; and in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, there is a real scarcity of the two elements of earth and water. (See Maundrel's Travels, p. 65, and Reland's Palestin. i. 238, 395.) These disadvantages, which now operate in their fullest extent, were formerly corrected by the labors of a numerous people, and the active protection of a wise government. The hills were clothed with rich beds of artificial mould, the rain was collected in vast cisterns, a supply of fresh water was conveyed by pipes and aqueducts to the dry lands. The breed of cattle was encouraged in those parts which were not adapted for tillage, and almost every spot was compelled to yield some production for the use of the inhabitants.

84 The progress of religion is well known. The use of letter was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Christian Aera. But in a period of three thousand years, the Phoenician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

85 Dion Cassius, lib. lxviii. p. 1131.

Pater ispe colendi Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque par artem Movit agros; curis acuens mortalia corda, Nec torpere gravi passus sua Regna veterno. Gibbon, Misc. Works, iv. 540.

But Gibbon has here eluded the question about the land "flowing with milk and honey." He is describing Judaea only, without comprehending Galilee, or the rich pastures beyond the Jordan, even now proverbial for their flocks and herds. (See Burckhardt's Travels, and Hist of Jews, i. 178.) The following is believed to be a fair statement: "The extraordinary fertility of the whole country must be taken into the account. No part was waste; very little was occupied by unprofitable wood; the more fertile hills were cultivated in artificial terraces, others were hung with orchards of fruit trees the more rocky and barren districts were covered with vineyards." Even in the present day, the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil. "Galilee," says Malte Brun, "would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government. No land could be less dependent on foreign importation; it bore within itself every thing that could be necessary for the subsistence and comfort of a simple agricultural people. The climate was healthy, the seasons regular; the former rains, which fell about October, after the vintage, prepared the ground for the seed; that latter, which prevailed during March and the beginning of April, made it grow rapidly. Directly the rains ceased, the grain ripened with still greater rapidity, and was gathered in before the end of May. The summer months were dry and very hot, but the nights cool and refreshed by copious dews. In September, the vintage was gathered. Grain of all kinds, wheat, barley, millet, zea, and other sorts, grew in abundance; the wheat commonly yielded thirty for one. Besides the vine and the olive, the almond, the date, figs of many kinds, the orange, the pomegranate, and many other fruit trees, flourished in the greatest luxuriance. Great quantity of honey was collected. The balm-tree, which produced the opobalsamum,a great object of trade, was probably introduced from Arabia, in the time of Solomon. It flourished about Jericho and in Gilead."—Milman's Hist. of Jews. i. 177.—M.]

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.[86] By its situation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman praefect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamelukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pacha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles

86 Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.