**PARTHIA**

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## CHAPTER XII. Relations of Orodes with Pompey, and with Brutus and Cassius.

The civil troubles that had seemed to threaten Parthia from the ambition of the youthful Pacorus passed away without any explosion. The son showed his obedience by returning home submissively when he might have flown to arms; and the father accepted the act of obedience as a sufficient indication that no rebellion had been seriously meant. We find Pacorus not only allowed to live, but again entrusted a few years later with high office by the Parthian monarch; and on this occasion we find him showing no signs of disaffection or discontent.

Nine years, however, elapsed between the recall of the young prince and his reappointment to the supreme command against the Romans. Of the internal condition of Parthia during this interval we have no account. Apparently, Orodes ruled quietly and peaceably, contenting himself with the glory which he had gained, and not anxious to tempt fortune by engaging in any fresh enterprise. It was no doubt a satisfaction to him to see the arms of the Romans, instead of being directed upon Asia, employed in intestine strife; and we can well understand that he might even deem it for his interest to foment and encourage the quarrels which, at any rate for the time, secured his own empire from attack. It appears that communications took place in the year B.C. 49 or 48 between him and Pompey, a request for alliance being made by the latter, and an answer being sent by Orodes, containing the terms upon which he would consent to give Pompey effective aid in the war. If the Roman leader would deliver into his hands the province of Syria and make it wholly over to the Parthians, Orodes would conclude an alliance with him and send help; but not otherwise. It is to the credit of Pompey that he rejected these terms, and declined to secure his own private gain by depriving his country of a province. Notwithstanding the failure of these negotiations and the imprisonment of his envoy Hirrus, when a few months later, having lost the battle of Pharsalia, the unhappy Roman was in need of a refuge from his great enemy, he is said to have proposed throwing himself on the friendship, or mercy, of Orodes. He had hopes, perhaps, of enlisting the Parthian battalions in his cause, and of recovering power by means of this foreign aid. But his friends combated his design, and persuaded him that the risk, both to himself and to his wife, Cornelia, was too great to be compatible with prudence. Pompey yielded to their representations; and Orodes escaped the difficulty of having to elect between repulsing a suppliant, and provoking the hostility of the most powerful chieftain and the greatest general of the age.

Caesar quitted the East in B.C. 47 without entering into any communication with Orodes. He had plenty of work upon his hands; and whatever designs he may have even then entertained of punishing the Parthian inroad into Syria, or avenging the defeat of Carrhae, he was wise enough to keep his projects to himself and to leave Asia without exasperating by threats or hostile movements the Power on which the peace of the East principally depended. It was not until he had brought the African and Spanish wars to an end that he allowed his intention of leading an expedition against Parthia to be openly talked about. In B.C. 34, four years after Pharsalia, having put down all his domestic enemies, and arranged matters, as

he thought, satisfactorily at Rome, he let a decree be passed formally assigning to him "the Parthian War," and sent the legions across the Adriatic on their way to Asia. What plan of campaign he may have contemplated is uncertain; but there cannot be a doubt that an expedition under his auspices would have been a most serious danger to Parthia, and might have terminated in her subjection. The military talents of the Great Dictator were of the most splendid description; his powers of organization and consolidation enormous; his prudence and caution equal to his ambition and his courage. Once launched on a career of conquest in the East, it is impossible to say whither he might not have carried the Roman eagles, or what countries he might not have added to the Empire. But Parthia was saved from the imminent peril without any effort of her own. The daggers of "the Liberators" struck down on the 15th of March, B.C. 44, the only man whom she had seriously to fear; and with the removal of Julius passed away even from Roman thought for many a years the design which he had entertained, and which he alone could have accomplished.

In the civil war that followed on the murder of Julius the Parthians are declared to have actually taken a part. It appears that--about B.C. 46--a small body of Parthian horse-archers had been sent to the assistance of a certain Bassus, a Roman who amid the troubles of the times was seeking to obtain for himself something like an independent principality in Syria. The soldiers of Bassus, after a while (B.C. 43), went over in a body to Cassius, who was in the East collecting troops for his great struggle with Antony and Octavian; and thus a handful of Parthians came into his power. Of this circumstance he determined to take advantage, in order to obtain, if possible, a considerable body of troops from Orodes. He presented each of the Parthian soldiers with a sum of money, and dismissed them all to their homes, at the same time seizing the opportunity to send some of his own officers, as ambassadors, to Orodes, with a request for substantial aid. On receiving this application the Parthian monarch appears to have come to the conclusion that it was to his interest to comply with it. Whether he made conditions, or no, is uncertain; but he seems to have sent a pretty numerous body of horse to the support of the "Liberators" against their antagonists. Perhaps he trusted to obtain from the gratitude of Cassius what he had failed to extort from the fears of Pompey. Or, perhaps, he was only anxious to prolong the period of civil disturbance in the Roman State, which secured his own territory from attack, and might ultimately give him an opportunity of helping himself to some portion of the Roman dominions in Asia.

The opportunity seemed to him to have arrived in B.C. 40. Philippi had been fought and lost. The "Liberators" were crushed. The struggle between the Republicans and the Monarchists had come to an end. But, instead of being united, the Roman world was more than ever divided; and the chance of making an actual territorial gain at the expense of the tryant power appeared fairer than it had ever been before. Three rivals now held divided sway in the Roman State; each of them jealous of the other two, and anxious for his own aggrandizement. The two chief pretenders to the first place were bitterly hostile; and while the one was detained in Italy by insurrection against his authority, the other was plunged in luxury and dissipation, enjoying the first delights of a lawless passion, at the Egyptian capital. The nations of the East were, moreover, alienated by the recent exactions of the profligate Triumvir, who, to reward his parasites and favorites, had laid upon them a burden that they were scarcely able to bear. Further, the Parthians enjoyed at this time the advantage of having a Roman officer of good position in their service, whose knowledge of the Roman tactics, and influence in Roman provinces, might be expected to turn to their advantage. Under these circumstances, when the spring of the year arrived, Antony being still in Egypt, and Octavian (as far as was known)

occupied in the siege of Perusia, the Parthian hordes, under Labienus and Pacorus, burst upon Syria in greater force than on any previous occasion. Overrunning with their numerous cavalry the country between the Euphrates and Antioch, and thence the valley of the Orontes, they had (as usual) some difficulty with the towns. From Apamaea, placed (like Durham) on a rocky peninsula almost surrounded by the river, they were at first repulsed; but, having shortly afterwards defeated Decidius Saxa, the governor of Syria, in the open field, they received the submission of Apamaea and Antioch, which latter city Saxa abandoned at their approach, flying precipitately into Cilicia. Encouraged by these successes, Labienus and Pacorus agreed to divide their troops, and to engage simultaneously in two great expeditions. Pacorus undertook to carry the Parthian standard throughout the entire extent of Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, while Labienus determined to invade Asia Minor, and to see if he could not wrest some of its more fertile regions from the Romans. Both expeditions were crowned with success. Pacorus reduced all Syria, and all Phoenicia, except the single city of Tyre, which he was unable to capture for want of a naval force. He then advanced into Palestine, which he found in its normal condition of intestine commotion. Hyrcanus and Antigonus, two princes of the Asmonsean house, were rivals for the Jewish crown; and the latter, whom Hyrcanus had expelled, was content to make common cause with the invader, and to be indebted to a rude foreigner for the possession of the kingdom whereto he aspired. He offered Pacorus a thousand talents, and five hundred Jewish women, if he would espouse his cause and seat him upon his uncle's throne. The offer was readily embraced, and by the irresistible help of the Parthians a revolution was effected at Jerusalem. Hyrcanus was deposed and mutilated. A new priest-king was set up in the person of Antigonus, the last Asmonsean prince, who held the capital for three years--B.C. 40-37--as a Parthian satrap, the creature and dependant of the great monarchy on the further side of the Euphrates. Meanwhile in Asia Minor Labienus carried all before him. Decidius Saxa, having once more (in Cilicia) ventured upon a battle, was not only defeated, but slain. Pamphylia, Lycia, and Caria were overrun. Stratonicea was besieged; Mylasa and Alabanda were taken. According to some writers the Parthians even pillaged Lydia and Ionia, and were in possession of Asia to the shores of the Hellespont. It may be said that for a full year Western Asia changed masters; the rule and authority of Rome disappeared; and the Parthians were recognized as the dominant power. But the fortune of war now began to turn. In the autumn of B.C. 39 Antony, having set out from Italy to resume his command in the East, despatched his lieutenant, Publius Ventidius, into Asia, with orders to act against Labienus and the triumphant Parthians. Ventidius landed unexpectedly on the coast of Asia Minor, and so alarmed Labienus, who had no Parthian troops with him, that the latter fell back hurriedly towards Cilicia, evacuating all the more western provinces, and at the same time sending urgent messages to Pacorus to implore succor. Pacorus sent a body of horse to his aid; but these troops, instead of putting themselves under his command, acted independently, and, in a rash attempt to surprise the Roman camp, were defeated by Ventidius, whereupon they fled hastily into Cilicia, leaving Labienus to his fate. The self-styled "Imperator," upon this, deserted his men, and sought safety in flight; but his retreat was soon discovered, and he was pursued, captured, and put to death.

The Parthians, meanwhile, alarmed at the turn which affairs had taken, left Antigonus to maintain their interests in Palestine, and concentrated themselves in Northern Syria and Commagene, where they awaited the advance of the Romans. A strong detachment, under Pharnapates, was appointed to guard the Syrian Gates, or narrow pass over Mount

Amanus, leading from Cilicia into Syria. Here Ventidius gained another victory. He had sent forward an officer named Pompsedius Silo with some cavalry to endeavor to seize this post, and Pompaedius had found himself compelled to an engagement with Pharnapates, in which he was on the point of suffering defeat, when Ventidius himself, who had probably feared for his subordinate's safety, appeared on the scene, and turned the scale in favor of the Romans. The detachment under Pharnapates was overpowered, and Pharnapates himself was among the slain. When news of this defeat reached Pacorus, he resolved to retreat, and withdrew his troops across the Euphrates. This movement he appears to have executed without being molested by Ventidius, who thus recovered Syria to the Romans towards the close of B.C. 39, or early in B.C. 38.

But Pacorus was far from intending to relinquish the contest. He had made himself popular among the Syrians by his mild and just administration, and knew that they preferred his government to that of the Romans. He had many allies among the petty princes and dynasts, who occupied a semi-independent position on the borders of the Parthian and Roman empires. Antigonus, whom he had established as king of the Jews, still maintained himself in Judaea against the efforts of Herod, to whom Augustus and Antony had assigned the throne. Pacorus therefore arranged during the remainder of the winter for a fresh invasion of Syria in the spring, and, taking the field earlier than his adversary expected, made ready to recross the Euphrates. We are told that if he had crossed at the usual point, he would have found the Romans unprepared, the legions being still in their winter quarters, some north and some south of the range of Taurus. Ventidius, however, contrived by a stratagem to induce him to effect the passage at a different point, considerably lower down the stream, and in this way to waste some valuable time, which he himself employed in collecting his scattered forces. Thus, when the Parthians appeared on the right bank of the Euphrates, the Roman general was prepared to engage them, and was not even loath to decide the fate of the war by a single battle. He had taken care to provide himself with a strong force of slingers, and had entrenched himself in a position on high ground at some distance from the river. The Parthians, finding their passage of the Euphrates unopposed, and, when they fell in with the enemy, seeing him entrenched, as though resolved to act only on the defensive, became overbold; they thought the force opposed to them must be weak or cowardly, and might yield its position without a blow, if briskly attacked. Accordingly, as on a former occasion, they charged up the hill on which the Roman camp was placed, hoping to take it by sheer audacity. But the troops inside were held ready, and at the proper moment issued forth; the assailants found themselves in their turn assailed, and, fighting at a disadvantage on the slope, were soon driven down the declivity. The battle was renewed in plain below, where the mailed horse of the Parthians made a brave resistance; but the slingers galled them severely, and in the midst of the struggle it happened that by ill-fortune Pacorus was slain. The result followed which is almost invariable with an Oriental army: having lost their leader, the soldiers everywhere gave way; flight became universal, and the Romans gained a complete victory. The Parthian army fled in two directions. Part made for the bridge of boats by which it had crossed the Euphrates, but was intercepted by the Romans and destroyed. Part turned northwards into Commagene, and there took refuge with the king, Antiochus, who refused to surrender them to the demand of Ventidius, and no doubt allowed them to return to their own country.

Thus ended the great Parthian invasion of Syria, and with it ended the prospect of any further spread of the Arsacid dominion towards the west. When the two great powers, Rome and Parthia, first came into

collision--when the first blow struck by the latter, the destruction of the army of Crassus, was followed up by the advance of their clouds of horse into Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor--when Apamsea, Antioch, and Jerusalem fell into their hands, when Decidius Saxa was defeated and slain, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Caria, Lydia, and Ionia occupied--it seemed as if Rome had found, not so much an equal as a superior; it looked as if the power heretofore predominant would be compelled to contract her frontier, and as if Parthia would advance hers to the Egean or the Mediterranean. The history of the contest between the East and the West, between Asia and Europe, is a history of reactions. At one time one of the continents, at another time the other, is in the ascendant. The time appeared to have come when the Asiatics were once more to recover their own, and to beat back the European aggressor to his proper shores and islands. The triumphs achieved by the Seljukian Turks between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries would in that case have been anticipated by above a thousand years through the efforts of a kindred, and not dissimilar people. But it turned out that the effort made was premature. While the Parthian warfare was admirably adapted for the national defence on the broad plains of inner Asia, it was ill suited for conquest, and, comparatively speaking, ineffective in more contracted and difficult regions. The Parthian military system had not the elasticity of the Roman--it did not in the same way adapt itself to circumstances, or admit of the addition of new arms, or the indefinite expansion of an old one. However loose and seemingly flexible, it was rigid in its uniformity; it never altered; it remained under the thirtieth Arsaces such as it had been under the first, improved in details, perhaps, but essentially the same system. The Romans, on the contrary, were ever modifying their system, ever learning new combinations or new manoeuvres or new modes of warfare from their enemies. They met the Parthian tactics of loose array, continuous distant missiles, and almost exclusive employment of cavalry, with an increase in the number of their own horse, a larger employment of auxiliary irregulars, and a greater use of the sling. At the same time they learnt to take full advantage of the Parthian inefficiency against walls, and to practice against them the arts of pretended retreat and ambush. The result was, that Parthia found she could make no impression upon the dominions of Rome, and, having become persuaded of this by the experience of a decade of years, thenceforth laid aside for ever the idea of attempting Western conquests. She took up, in fact, from this time, a new attitude, Hitherto she had been consistently aggressive. She had labored constantly to extend herself at the expense successively of the Bactrians, the Scythians, the Syro-Macedonians, and the Armenians. She had proceeded from one aggression to another, leaving only short intervals between her wars, and had always been looking out for some fresh enemy. Henceforth she became, comparatively speaking, pacific. She was content for the most part, to maintain her limits. She sought no new foe. Her contest with Rome degenerated into a struggle for influence over the kingdom of Armenia; and her hopes were limited to the reduction of that kingdom into a subject position.

The death of Pacorus is said to have caused Orodes intense grief. For many days he would neither eat nor speak; then his sorrow took another turn. He imagined that his son had returned; he thought continually that he heard or saw him; he could do nothing but repeat his name. Every now and then, however, he awoke to a sense of the actual fact, and mourned the death of his favorite with tears. After a while this extreme grief wore itself out, and the aged king began to direct his attention once more to public affairs. He grew anxious about the succession. Of the thirty sons who still remained to him there was not one who had made himself a name, or was in any way distinguished above the remainder. In the absence of any personal

ground of preference, Orodes--who seems to have regarded himself as possessing a right to nominate the son who should succeed him--thought the claims of primogeniture deserved to be considered, and selected as his successor, Phraa-tes, the eldest of the thirty. Not content with nominating him, or perhaps doubtful whether the nomination would be accepted by the Megistanes, he proceeded further to abdicate in his favor, whereupon Phraates became king. The transaction proved a most unhappy one. Phraates, jealous of some of his brothers, who were the sons of a princess married to Orodes, whereas his own mother was only a concubine, removed them by assassination, and when the ex-monarch ventured to express disapproval of the act added the crime of parricide to fratricide by putting to death his aged father. Thus perished Orodes, after a reign of eighteen years--the most memorable in the Parthian annals.

### CHAPTER XIII. Reign of Phraates IV.

The shedding of blood is like, "the letting out of water." When it once begins, none can say where it will stop. The absolute monarch who, for his own fancied security, commences a system of executions, is led on step by step to wholesale atrocities from which he would have shrunk with horror at the outset. Phraates had removed brothers whose superior advantages of birth made them formidable rivals. He had punished with death a father who ventured to blame his act, and to forget that by abdication he had sunk himself to the position of a subject. Could he have stopped here, it might have seemed that his severities proceeded not so much from cruelty of disposition as from political necessity; and historians, always tender in the judgments which they pass on kings under such circumstances, would probably have condoned or justified his conduct. But the taste for bloodshed grows with the indulgence of it. In a short time the young king had killed all his remaining brothers, although their birth was no better than his own, and there was no valid ground for his fearing them; and soon afterwards, not content with the murder of his own relations, he began to vent his fury upon the Parthian nobles. Many of these suffered death; and such a panic seized the order that numbers quitted the country, and dispersed in different directions, content to remain in exile until the danger which threatened them should have passed by. There, were others, however, who were not so patient. A body of chiefs had fled to Antony, among whom was a certain Monseses, a nobleman of the highest rank, who seems to have distinguished himself previously in the Syrian wars. This person represented to Antony that Phraates had by his tyrannical and bloody conduct made himself hateful to his subjects, and that a revolution could easily be effected. If the Romans would support him, he offered to invade Parthia; and he made no doubt of wresting the greater portion of it from the hands of the tyrant, and of being himself accepted as king. In that, case he would consent to hold his crown of the Romans, who might depend upon his fidelity and gratitude. Antony is said to have listened to these overtures, and to have been induced by them to turn his thoughts to an invasion of the Parthian kingdom. He began to collect troops and to obtain allies with this object. He entered into negotiations with Artavasdes, the Armenian king, who seems at this time to have been more afraid of Rome than of Parthia, and engaged him to take a part in his projected campaign. He spoke of employing Monseses in a separate expedition. Under these circumstances Phraates became alarmed. He sent a message to Monseses with promises of pardon and favor, which that chief thought worthy of acceptance. Hereupon Monseses represented to Antony that by a peaceful return he might perhaps do him as much service as by having recourse to arms; and though Antony was not persuaded, he thought it prudent to profess himself well satisfied, and to allow Monseses to quit him. His relations with Parthia, he said, might

perhaps be placed on a proper footing without a war, and he was quite willing to try negotiation. His ambassadors should accompany Monasses. They would be instructed to demand nothing of Phraates but the restoration of the Roman standards taken from Crassus, and the liberation of such of the captive soldiers as were still living.'

But Antony had really determined on war. It may be doubted whether it had required the overtures of Monseses to put a Parthian expedition into his thoughts. He must have been either more or less than a man if the successes of his lieutenants had not stirred in his mind some feeling of jealousy, and some desire to throw their victories into the shade by a grand and noble achievement. Especially the glory of Ventidius, who had been allowed the much-coveted honor of a triumph at Rome on account of his defeats of the Parthians in Cilicia and Syria, must have moved him to emulation, and have caused him to cast about for some means of exalting his own military reputation above that of his subordinates. For this purpose nothing, he must have known, would be so effectual as a real Parthian success, the inflicting on this hated and dreaded foe of an unmistakable humiliation, the dictating to them terms of peace on their own soil after some crushing and overwhelming disaster. And, after the victories of Ventidius, this did not appear to be so very difficult. The prestige of the Parthian name was gone. Roman soldiers could be trusted to meet them without alarm, and to contend with them without undue excitement or flurry. The weakness, as well as the strength, of their military system had come to be known; and expedients had been devised by which its strong points were met and counterbalanced. At the head of sixteen legions, Antony might well think that he could invade Parthia successfully, and not only avoid the fate of Crassus, but gather laurels which might serve him in good stead in his contest with his great political rival.

Nor can the Roman general be taxed with undue precipitation or with attacking in insufficient force. He had begun, as already noticed, with securing the co-operation of the Armenian king, Artavasdes, who promised him a contingent of 7000 foot and 6000 horse. His Roman infantry is estimated at 60,000; besides which he had 10,000 Gallic and Iberian horse, and 30,000 light armed and cavalry of the Asiatic allies. His own army thus amounted to 100,000 men; and, with the Armenian contingent, his entire force would have been 113,000. It seems that it was his original intention to cross the Euphrates into Mesopotamia, and thus to advance almost in the footsteps of Crassus but when he reached the banks of the river (about midsummer B.C. 37) he found such preparations made to resist him that he abandoned his first design, and, turning northwards, entered Armenia, determined to take advantage of his alliance with Artavasdes, and to attack Parthia with Armenia as the basis of his operations. Artavasdes gladly received him, and persuaded him, instead of penetrating into Parthia itself, to direct his arms against the territory of a Parthian subject-ally, the king of Media Atropatene, whose territories adjoined Armenia on the southeast. Artavasdes pointed out that the Median monarch was absent from his own country, having joined his troops to those which Phraates had collected for the defence of Parthia. His territory therefore would be open to ravage, and even Praaspa, his capital, might prove an easy prey. The prospect excited Antony, who at once divided his troops, and having given orders to Oppius Statianus to follow him leisurely with the more unwieldy part of the army, the baggage-train, and the siege batteries, proceeded himself by forced marches to Praaspa with all the calvary and the infantry of the better class. This town was situated at the distance of nearly three hundred miles from the Armenian frontier; but the way to it lay through well-cultivated plains, where food and water were abundant. Antony performed the march without

difficulty and at once invested the place. The walls were strong, and the defenders numerous, so that he made little impression; and when the Median king returned, accompanied by his Parthian suzerain, to the defence of his country, the capital seemed in so little danger that it was resolved to direct the first attack on Statianus, who had not yet joined his chief. A most successful onslaught was made on this officer, who was surprised, defeated, and slain. Ten thousand Romans fell in the battle, and all the baggage-wagons and engines of war were taken. A still worse result of the defeat was the desertion of Aitavasdes, who, regarding the case of the Romans as desperate, drew off his troops, and left Antony to his own resources.

The Roman general now found himself in great difficulties. He had exhausted the immediate neighborhood of Praaspa, and was obliged to send his foraging-parties on distant expeditions, where, being beyond the reach of his protection, they were attacked and cut to pieces by the enemy. He had lost his siege-train, and found it impossible to construct another. Such works as he attempted suffered through the sallies of the besieged: and in some of these his soldiers behaved so ill that he was forced to punish their cowardice by decimation. His supplies failed, and he had to feed his troops on barley instead of wheat. Meantime the autumnal equinox was approaching, and the weather was becoming cold. The Medes and Parthians, under their respective monarchs, hung about him, impeded his movements, and cut off his stragglers, but carefully avoided engaging him in a pitched battle. If he could have forced the city to a surrender, he would have been in comparative safety, for he might have gone into winter quarters there and have renewed the war in the ensuing spring. But all his assaults, with whatever desperation they were made, failed; and it became necessary to relinquish the siege and retire into Armenia before the rigors of winter should set in. He could, however, with difficulty bring himself to make a confession of failure, and flattered himself for a while that the Parthians would consent to purchase his retirement by the surrender of the Crassian captives and standards. Having lost some valuable time in negotiations, at which the Parthians laughed, at length, when the equinox was passed, he broke up from before Praaspa, and commenced the work of retreat. There were two roads by which he might reach the Araxes at the usual point of passage, One lay towards the left, through a plain and open country, probably that through which he had come; the other, which was shorter, but more difficult, lay to the right, leading across a mountain-tract, but one fairly supplied with water, and in which there were inhabited villages. Antony was advised that the Parthians had occupied the easier route, expecting that he would follow it, and intended to overwhelm him with their cavalry in the plains. He therefore took the road to the right through a rugged and inclement country--probably that between Tahkt-i-Suleiman and Tabriz--and, guided by a Mardian who knew the region well, proceeded to make his way back to the Araxes. His decision took the Parthians by surprise, and for two days he was unmolested. But by the third day they had thrown themselves across his path; and thenceforward, for nineteen consecutive days, they disputed with Antony every inch of his retreat, and inflicted on him the most serious damage. The sufferings of the Roman army during this time, says a modern historian of Rome, were unparalleled in their military annals. The intense cold, the blinding snow and driving sleet, the want sometimes of provisions, sometimes of water, the use of poisonous herbs, and the harassing attacks of the enemy's cavalry and bowmen, which could only be repelled by maintaining the dense array of the phalanx or the tortoise, reduced the retreating army by one-third of its numbers. At length, after a march of 300 Roman, or 277 British, miles, they reached the river Araxes, probably at the Julfa ferry, and, crossing it, found themselves in Armenia.

But the calamities of the return were not yet ended. Though it was arranged with Artavasdes that the bulk of the army should winter in Armenia, yet, before the various detachments could reach their quarters in different parts of the country, eight thousand more had perished through the effects of past sufferings or the severity of the weather. Altogether, out of the hundred thousand men whom Antony led into Media Atropatene, less than seventy thousand remained to commence the campaign which was threatened for the ensuing year. Well may the unfortunate commander have exclaimed as he compared his own heavy losses with the light ones of Xenophon and his Greeks in these same regions, "Oh, those Ten Thousand! those Ten Thousand!"

On the withdrawal of Antony into Armenia a quarrel broke out between Phraates and his Median vassal. The latter regarded himself as wronged in the division made of the Roman spoils, and expressed himself with so much freedom on the subject as to offend his suzerain. He then began to fear that he had gone too far, and that Phraates would punish him by depriving him of his sovereignty. Accordingly, he was anxious to obtain a powerful alliance, and on turning over in his mind all feasible political combinations it seems to have occurred to him that his late enemy, Antony, might be disposed to take him under his protection. He doubtless knew that Artavasdes of Armenia had offended the Roman leader by deserting him in the hour of his greatest peril, and felt that, if Antony was intending to revenge himself on the traitor, he would be glad to have a friend on the Armenian border. He therefore sent an ambassador of rank to Alexandria, where Antony was passing the winter, and boldly proposed the alliance. Antony readily accepted it; he was intensely angered by the conduct of the Armenian monarch, and determined on punishing his defection; he viewed the Median alliance as of the utmost importance in connection with the design, which he still entertained, of invading Parthia itself; and he saw in the powerful descendant of Atropates a prince whom it would be well worth his while to bind to his cause indissolubly. He therefore embraced the overtures made to him with joy, and even rewarded the messenger who had brought them with a principality. After sundry efforts to entice Artavasdes into his power, which occupied him during most of B.C. 85, in the spring of B.C. 34 he suddenly appeared in Armenia. His army, which had remained there from the previous campaign, held all the more important positions, and, as he professed the most friendly feelings towards Artavasdes, even proposing an alliance between their families, that prince, after some hesitation, at length ventured into his presence. He was immediately seized and put in chains. Armenia was rapidly overrun. Artaxias, whom the Armenians made king in the room of his father, was defeated and forced to take refuge with the Parthians. Antony then arranged a marriage between the daughter of the Median monarch and his own son by Cleopatra, Alexander, and, leaving garrisons in Armenia, carried off Artavasdes and a rich booty into Egypt.

Phraates, during these transactions, stood wholly upon the defensive. It may not have been unpleasing to him to see Artavasdes punished. It must have gratified him to observe how Antony was injuring his own cause by exasperating the Armenians, and teaching them to hate Rome even more than they hated Parthia. But while Antony's troops held both Syria and Armenia, and the alliance between Media Atropatene and Rome continued, he could not venture to take any aggressive step or do aught but protect his own frontier. He was obliged even to look on with patience, when, early in B.C. 33, Antony appeared once more in these parts, and advancing to the Araxes, had a conference with the Median monarch, whereat their alliance was confirmed, troops exchanged, part of Armenia made over to the Median king, and Jotapa, his daughter, given as a bride to the young Alexander, whom Antony

designed to make satrap of the East. But no sooner had Antony withdrawn into Asia Minor in preparation for his contest with Octavian than Phraates took the offensive. In combination with Artaxias, the new Armenian king, he attacked Antony's ally; but the latter repulsed him by the help of his Roman troops. Soon afterwards, however, Antony recalled these troops without restoring to the Median king his own contingent; upon which the two confederates renewed their attack, and were successful. The Median prince was defeated and taken prisoner. Artaxias recovered Armenia and massacred all the Roman garrisons which he found in it. Both countries became once more wholly independent of Rome, and it is probable that Media returned to its old allegiance.

But the successes of Phraates abroad produced ill consequences at home. Elated by his victories, and regarding his position in Parthia as thereby secured, he resumed the series of cruelties towards his subjects which the Roman war had interrupted, and pushed them so far that an insurrection broke out against his authority (B.C. 33), and he was compelled to quit the country. The revolt was headed by a certain Tiridates, who, upon its success, was made king by the insurgents. Phraates fled into Scythia, and persuaded the Scythians to embrace his cause. These nomads, nothing loth, took up arms, and without any great difficulty restored Phraates to the throne from which his people had expelled him. Tiridates fled at their approach, and, having contrived to carry off in his flight the youngest son of Phraates, presented himself before Octavian, who was in Syria at the time on his return from Egypt (B.C. 30), surrendered the young prince into his hands, and requested his aid against the tyrant. Octavian accepted the valuable hostage, but with his usual caution, declined to pledge himself to furnish any help to the pretender; he might remain, he said, in Syria, if he so wished, and while he continued under Roman protection, a suitable provision should be made for his support, but, he must not expect armed resistance against the Parthian monarch. To that monarch, when some years afterwards (B.C. 23) he demanded the surrender of his subject and the restoration of his young son, Octavian answered that he could not give Tiridates up to him, but he would restore him his son without a ransom. He should expect, however, that in return for this kindness the Parthian king would on his part deliver to the Romans the standards taken from Crassus and Antony, together with all who survived of the Roman captives. It does not appear that Phraates was much moved by the Emperor's generosity. He gladly received his son; but he took no steps towards the restoration of those proofs of Parthian victory which the Romans were so anxious to recover. It was not until B.C. 20, when Octavian (now become Augustus) visited the East, and war seemed the probable alternative if he continued obstinate, that the Parthian monarch brought himself to relinquish the trophies which were as much prized by the victors as the vanquished. In extenuation of his act we must remember that he was unpopular with his subjects, and that Augustus could at any moment have produced a pretender, who had once occupied, and with Roman help might easily have mounted for a second time, the throne of the Arsacidse.

The remaining years of Phraates--and he reigned for nearly twenty years after restoring the standards--are almost unbroken by any event of importance. The result of the twenty years' struggle between Rome and Parthia had been to impress either nation with a wholesome dread of the other. Both had triumphed on their own ground; both had failed when they ventured on sending expeditions into the enemy's territory. Each now stood on its guard, watching the movements of its adversary across the Euphrates. Both had become pacific. It is a well-known fact that Augustus left it as a principle of policy to his successors that the Roman Empire had reached its proper limits, and could not with advantage be extended

further. This principle, followed with the utmost strictness by Tiberius, was accepted as a rule by all the earlier Caesars, and only regarded as admitting of rare and slight exceptions. Trajan was the first who, a hundred and thirty years after the accession of Augustus, made light of it and set it at defiance. With him re-awoke the spirit of conquest, the aspiration after universal dominion. But in the meantime there was peace--peace indeed not absolutely unbroken, for border wars occurred, and Rome was tempted sometimes to interfere by arms in the internal quarrels of her neighbors--but a general state of peace and amity prevailed--neither state made any grand attack on the other's dominions--no change occurred in the frontier, no great battle tested the relative strength of the two peoples. Such rivalry as remained was exhibited less in arms than in diplomacy and showed itself mainly in endeavors on either side to obtain a predominant influence in Armenia. There alone during the century and a half that intervened between Antony and Trajan did the interests of Rome and Parthia come into collision, and in connection with this kingdom alone did any struggle between the two countries continue.

Phraates, after yielding to Augustus in the matter of the standards and prisoners, appears for many years to have studiously cultivated his good graces. In the interval between B.C. 11 and B.C. 7, distrustful of his subjects, and fearful of their removing him in order to place one of his sons upon the Parthian throne, he resolved to send these possible rivals out of the country; and on this occasion he paid Augustus the compliment of selecting Rome for his children's residence. The youths were four in number, Vonones, Seraspadanes, Rhodaspes, and Phraates; two of them were married and had children; they resided at Rome during the remainder of their father's lifetime, and were treated as became their rank, being supported at the public charge and in a magnificent manner. The Roman writers speak of these as "hostages" given by Phraates to the Roman Emperor; but this was certainly not the intention of the Parthian monarch; nor could the idea well be entertained by the Romans at the time of their residence.

These amicable relations between the two sovereigns would probably have continued undisturbed till the death of one or the other, had not a revolution occured in Armenia, which tempted the Parthian king beyond his powers of resistance. On the death of Artaxias (B.C. 20), Augustus, who was then in the East, had sent Tiberius into Armenia to arrange matters, and Tiberius had placed upon the throne a brother of Artaxias, named Tigranes. Tigranes died in B.C. 6, and the Armenians, without waiting to know the will of the Roman Emperor, conferred the royal title on his sons, for whose succession he had before his death paved the way by associating them with him in the government. Enraged at this assumption of independence, Augustus sent an expedition into Armenia (B.C. 5), deposed the sons of Tigranes, and established on the throne a certain Artavasdes, whose birth and parentage are not known to us. But the Armenians were not now inclined to submit to foreign dictation; they rose in revolt against Artavasdes (ab. B.C. 2), defeated his Roman supporters, and expelled him from the kingdom. Another Tigranes was made king; and, as it was pretty certain that the Romans would interfere with this new display of the spirit of independence, the Parthians were called in to resist the Roman oppressors. Armenia, was, in fact, too weak to stand alone, and was obliged to lean upon one or other of the two great empires upon her borders. Her people had no clear political foresight, and allowed themselves to veer and fluctuate between the two influences according as the feelings of the hour dictated. Rome had now angered them beyond their very limited powers of endurance, and they flew to Parthia for help, just as on other occasions we shall find them flying to Rome. Phraates could not bring himself to reject the Armenian overtures. Ever since the time of the second

Mithridates it had been a settled maxim of Parthian policy to make Armenia dependent; and, even at the cost of a rupture with Rome, it seemed to Phraates that he must respond to the appeal made to him. The rupture might not come. Augustus was now aged, and might submit to the affront without resenting it. He had lately lost the services of his best general, Tiberius, who, indignant at slights put upon him, had gone into retirement at Rhodes. He had no one that he could employ but his grandsons, youths who had not yet fleshed their maiden swords. Phraates probably hoped that Augustus would draw back before the terrors of a Parthian war under such circumstances, and would allow without remonstrance the passing of Armenia into the position of a subject-ally of Parthia.

But if these were his thoughts, he had miscalculated. Augustus, from the time that he heard of the Armenian troubles, and of the support given to them by Parthia, seems never to have wavered in his determination to vindicate the claims of Rome to paramount influence in Armenia, and to have only hesitated as to the person whose services he should employ in the business. He would have been glad to employ Tiberius; but that morose prince had deserted him and, declining public life, had betaken himself to Rhodes, where he was living in a self-chosen retirement. Caius, the eldest of his grandsons, was, in B.C. 2, only eighteen years of age; and, though the thoughts of Augustus at once turned in this direction, the extreme youth of the prince caused him to hesitate somewhat; and the consequence was that Caius did not start for the East till late in B.C. 1. Meanwhile a change had occured in Parthia. Phraates, who had filled the throne for above thirty-five years, ceased to exist, and was succeeded by a young son, Phraataces, who reigned in conjunction with the queen-mother, Thermusa, or Musa.

The circumstances which brought about this change were the following. Phraates IV. had married, late in life, an Italian slave-girl, sent him as a present by Augustus; and she had borne him a son for whom she was naturally anxious to secure the succession. According to some, it was under her influence that the monarch had sent his four elder boys to Rome, there to receive their education. At any rate, in the absence of these youths, Phraataces, the child of the slave-girl, became the chief support of Phraates in the administration of affairs, and obtained a position in Parthia which led him to regard himself as entitled to the throne so soon as it should become vacant. Doubtful, however, of his father's goodwill, or fearful of the rival claims of his brothers, if he waited till the throne was vacated in the natural course of events, Phraataces resolved to anticipate the hand of time, and, in conjunction with his mother, administered poison to the old monarch, from the effects of which he died. A just Nemesis for once showed itself in that portion of human affairs which passes before our eyes. Phraates IV., the parricide and fratricide, was, after a reign of thirty-five years, himself assassinated (B.C. 2) by a wife whom he loved only too fondly and a son whom he esteemed and trusted.

Phraates cannot but be regarded as one of the ablest of the Parthian monarchs. His conduct of the campaign against Antony--one of the best soldiers that Rome ever produced--was admirable, and showed him a master of guerilla warfare. His success in maintaining himself upon the throne for five and thirty years, in spite of rivals, and notwithstanding the character which he obtained for cruelty, implies, in such a state as Parthia, considerable powers of management. His dealings with Augustus indicate much suppleness and dexterity. If he did not in the course of his long reign advance the Parthian frontier, at any rate he was not obliged to retract it. Apparently, he ceded nothing to the Scyths as the price of their assistance. He maintained the Parthian supremacy over Northern Media. He lost no inch of territory to the Romans. It was undoubtedly a prudent step on his part to soothe the irritated vanity

of Rome by a surrender of useless trophies, and scarcely more useful prisoners; and, we may doubt if this concession was not as effective as the dread of the Parthian arms in producing that peace between the two countries which continued unbroken for above ninety years from the campaign of Antony, and without serious interruption for yet another half century. If Phraates felt, as he might well feel after the campaigns of Pacorus, that on the whole Rome was a more powerful state than Parthia, and that consequently Parthia had nothing to gain but much to lose in the contest with her western neighbor, he did well to allow no sentiment of foolish pride to stand in the way of a concession that made a prolonged peace between the two countries possible. It is sometimes more honorable to yield to a demand than to meet it with defiance; and the prince who removed a cause of war arising out of mere national vanity, while at the same time he maintained in all essential points the interests and dignity of his kingdom, deserved well of his subjects, and merits the approval of the historian. As a man, Phraates has left behind him a bad name: he was cruel, selfish, and ungrateful, a fratricide and a parricide; but as a king he is worthy of respect, and, in certain points, of admiration.

### CHAPTER XIV. Short reigns of Phraataces, Orodes II., and Vonones I. Accession of Artabanus III.

The accession of Phraataces made no difference in the attitude of Parthia towards Armenia. The young prince was as anxious as his father had been to maintain the Parthian claims to that country, and at first perhaps as inclined to believe that Augustus would not dispute them. Immediately upon his accession he sent ambassadors to Rome announcing the fact, apologizing for the circumstances under which it had taken place, and proposing a renewal of the peace which had subsisted between Augustus and his father. Apparently, he said nothing about Armenia, but preferred a demand for the surrender of his four brothers, whom no doubt he designed to destroy. The answer of Augustus was severe in the extreme. Addressing Phraataces by his bare name, without adding the title of king, he required him to lay aside the royal appellation, which he had arrogantly and without any warrant assumed, and at the same time to withdraw his forces from Armenia. On the surrender of the Parthian princes he kept silence, ignoring a demand which he had no intention of according. It was clearly his design to set up one of the elder brothers as a rival claimant to Phraataces, or at any rate to alarm him with the notion that, unless he made concessions, this policy would be adopted. But Phraataces was not to be frightened by a mere message. He responded to Augustus after his own fashion, dispatching to him a letter wherein he took to himself the favorite Parthian title of "king of kings," and addressed the Roman Emperor simply as "Caesar." The attitude of defiance would no doubt have been maintained, had Augustus confined himself to menaces; when, however, it appeared that active measures would be taken, when Augustus, in B.C. 1, sent his grandson, Caius, to the East with orders to re-establish the Roman influence in Armenia even at the cost of a Parthian war, and that prince showed himself in Syria with all the magnificent surroundings of the Imperial dignity, the Parthian monarch became alarmed. He had an interview with Caius in the spring of A.D. 1, upon an island in the Euphrates; where the terms of an arrangement between the two Empires were discussed and settled. The armies of the two chiefs were drawn up on the opposite banks of the river, facing one another; and the chiefs themselves, accompanied by an equal number of attendants, proceeded to deliberate in the sight of both hosts. Satisfactory pledges having been given by the Parthian monarch, the prince and king in turn entertained each other on the borders of their respective dominions; and Caius returned into Syria, having obtained an engagement from the

Parthians to abstain from any further interference with Armenian affairs. The engagement appears to have been honorably kept; for when, shortly afterward, fresh complications occurred, and Caius in endeavoring to settle them received his death-wound before the walls of an Armenian tower, we do not hear of Parthia as in any way involved in the unfortunate occurrence. The Romans and their partisans in the country were left to settle the Armenian succession as they pleased; and Parthia kept herself wholly aloof from the matters transacted upon her borders.

One cause--perhaps the main cause of this abstinence, and of the engagement to abstain entered into by Phraataces, was doubtless the unsettled state of things in Parthia itself. The circumstances under which that prince had made himself king, though not unparalleled in the Parthian annals, were such as naturally tended towards civil strife, and as were apt to produce in Parthia internal difficulties, if not disorders or commotions. Phraataces soon found that he would have a hard task to establish his rule. The nobles objected to him, not only for the murder of his father, but his descent from an Italian concubine, and the incestuous commerce which he was supposed to maintain with her. They had perhaps grounds for this last charge. At any rate Phraataces provoked suspicion by the singular favors and honors which he granted to a woman whose origin was mean and extraction foreign. Not content with private marks of esteem and love, he departed from the practice of all former Parthian sovereigns in placing her effigy upon his coins; and he accompanied this act with fulsome and absurd titles. Musa was styled, not merely "Queen," but "Heavenly Goddess," as if the realities of slave origin and concubinage could be covered by the fiction of an apotheosis. It is not surprising that the proud Parthian nobles were offended by these proceedings, and determined to rid themselves of a monarch whom they at once hated and despised. Within a few years of his obtaining the throne an insurrection broke out against his authority; and after a brief struggle he was deprived of his crown and put to death. The nobles then elected an Arsacid, named Orodes, whose residence at the time and relationship to the former monarchs are uncertain. It seems probable that, like most princes of the blood royal, he had taken refuge in a foreign country from the suspicions and dangers that beset all possible pretenders to the royal dignity in Parthia, and was living in retirement, unexpectant of any such offer, when a deputation of Parthian nobles arrived and brought him the intelligence of his election. It might have been expected that, obtaining the crown under these circumstances, he would have ruled well; but, according to Josephus (who is here, unfortunately, our sole authority), he very soon displayed so much violence and cruelty of disposition that his rule was felt to be intolerable; and the Parthians, again breaking into insurrection, rid themselves of him, killing him either at a banquet or on a hunting excursion. This done, they sent to Rome, and requested Augustus to allow Vonones, the eldest son of Phraates IV., to return to Parthia in order that he might receive his father's kingdom. The Emperor complied readily enough, since he regarded his own dignity as advanced by the transaction; and the Parthians at first welcomed the object of their choice with rejoicings. But after a little time their sentiments altered. The young prince, bred up in Rome, and accustomed to the refinements of Western civilization, neglected the occupations which seemed to his subjects alone worthy of a monarch's regard, absented himself from the hunting-field, took small pleasure in riding, when he passed through the streets indulged in the foreign luxury of a litter, shrank with disgust from the rude and coarse feastings which formed a portion of the national manners. He had, moreover, brought with him from the place of his exile a number of Greek companions, whom the Parthians despised and ridiculed; and the

favors bestowed on these foreign interlopers were seen with jealousy and rage. It was in vain that he endeavored to conciliate his offended subjects by the openness of his manners and the facility with which he allowed access to his person. In their prejudiced eyes virtues and graces unknown to the nation hitherto were not merits but defects, and rather increased, than diminished their aversion. Having conceived a dislike for the monarch personally, they began to look back with dissatisfaction on their own act in sending for him. "Parthia," they said, "had indeed degenerated from her former self to have requested a king to be sent her who belonged to another world and had had a hostile civilization ingrained into him." All the glory gained by destroying Crassus and repulsing Antony was utterly lost and gone, if the country was to be ruled by Caesar's bond-slave, and the throne of the Arsacidse to be treated like a Roman province. It would have been bad enough to have had a prince imposed on them by the will of a superior, if they had been conquered; it was worse, in all respects worse, to suffer such an insult, when they had not even had war made on them. Under the influence of such feelings as these, the Parthians, after tolerating Vonones for a few years, rose against him (ab. A.D. 16), and summoned Artabanus, an Arsacid who had grown to manhood among the Dahee of the Caspian region, but was at this time king of Media Atropatene, to rule over them.

It was seldom that a crown was declined in the ancient world; and Artabanus, on receiving the overture, at once expressed his willingness to accept the proffered dignity. He invaded Parthia at the head of an army consisting of his own subjects, and engaged Vonones, to whom in his difficulties the bulk of the Parthian people had rallied. The engagement resulted in the defeat of the Median monarch, who returned to his own country, and, having collected a larger army, made a second invasion. This time he was successful. Vonones fled on horseback to Seleucia with a small body of followers; while his defeated army, following in his track, was pressed upon by the victorious Mede, and suffered great losses. Artabanus, having entered Ctesiphon in triumph, was immediately proclaimed king. Vonones, escaping from Seleucia, took refuge among the Armenians; and, as it happened that just at this time the Armenian throne was vacant, not only was an asylum granted him, but he was made king of the country. It was impossible that Artabanus should tamely submit to an arrangement which would have placed his deadly enemy in a position to cause him constant annoyance. He, therefore, at once remonstrated, both in Armenia and at Rome. As Rome now claimed the investiture of the Armenian monarchs, he sent an embassy to Tiberius, and threatened war if Vonones were acknowledged; while at the same time he applied to Armenia and required the surrender of the refugee. An important section of the Armenian nation was inclined to grant his demand; Tiberius, who would willingly have supported Vonones, drew back before the Parthian threats; Vonones found himself in imminent danger, and, under the circumstances, determined on quitting Armenia and betaking himself to the protection of the Roman governor of Syria. This was Creticus Silanus, who received him gladly, gave him a guard, and allowed him the state and title of king. Meanwhile Artabanus laid claim to Armenia, and suggested as a candidate for the throne one of his own sons, Orodes.

Under these circumstances, the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, who had recently succeeded Augustus, resolved to despatch to the East a personage of importance, who should command the respect and attention of the Oriental powers by his dignity, and impose upon them by the pomp and splendor with which he was surrounded. He selected for this office Germanicus, his nephew, the eldest son of his deceased brother, Drusus, a prince of much promise, amiable in his disposition, courteous and affable in his

manners, a good soldier, and a man generally popular. The more to strike the minds of the Orientals, he gave Germanicus no usual title or province, but invested him with an extraordinary command over all the Roman dominions to the east of the Hellespont, thus rendering him a sort of monarch of Roman Asia. Full powers were granted him for making peace or war, for levying troops, annexing provinces, appointing subject kings, and performing other sovereign acts, without referring back to Rome for instructions. A train of unusual magnificence accompanied him to his charge, calculated to impress the Orientals with the conviction that this was no common negotiator. Germanicus arrived in Asia early in A.D. 18, and applied himself at once to his task. Entering Armenia at the head of his troops, he proceeded to the capital, Artaxata, and, having ascertained the wishes of the Armenians themselves, determined on his course of conduct. To have insisted on the restoration of Vonones would have been grievously to offend the Armenians who had expelled him, and at the same time to provoke the Parthians, who could not have tolerated a pretender in a position of power upon their borders; to have allowed the pretensions of the Parthian monarch, and accepted the candidature of his son, Orodes, would have lowered Rome in the opinion of all the surrounding nations, and been equivalent to an abdication of all influence in the affairs of Western Asia. Germanicus avoided either extreme, and found happily a middle course. It happened that there was a foreign prince settled in Armenia, who having grown up there had assimilated himself in all respects to the Armenian ideas and habits, and had thereby won golden opinions from both the nobles and the people. This was Zeno, the son of Polemo, once king of the curtailed Pontus, and afterwards of the Lesser Armenia, an outlying Roman dependency. The Armenians themselves suggested that Zeno should be their monarch; and Germanicus saw a way out of his difficulties in the suggestion. At the seat of government, Artaxata, in the presence of a vast multitude of the people, with the consent and approval of the principal nobles, he placed with his own hand the diadem on the brow of the favored prince, and saluted him as king under the new name of "Artaxias." He then returned into Syria, where he was shortly afterwards visited by ambassadors from the Parthian monarch. Artabanus reminded him of the peace concluded between Rome and Parthia in the reign of Augustus, and assumed that the circumstances of his own appointment to the throne had in no way interfered with it. He would be glad, he said, to renew with Germanicus the interchange of friendly assurances which had passed between his predecessor, Phraataces, and Caius; and to accommodate the Roman general, he would willingly come to meet him as far as the Euphrates; meanwhile, until the meeting could take place, he must request that Vonones should be removed to a greater distance from the Parthian frontier, and that he should not be allowed to continue the correspondence in which he was engaged with many of the Parthian nobles for the purpose of raising fresh troubles. Germanicus replied politely, but indefinitely, to the proposal of an interview, which he may have thought unnecessary, and open to misconstruction. To the request for the removal of Vonones he consented. Vonones was transferred from Syria to the neighboring province of Cilicia; and the city of Pompeiopolis, built by the great Pompey on the site of the ancient Soli, was assigned to him as his residence. With this arrangement the Parthian monarch appears to have been contented. Vonones on the other hand was so dissatisfied with the change that in the course of the next year (A.D. 19) he endeavored to make his escape; his flight was, however, discovered, and, pursuit being made, he was overtaken and slain on the banks of the Pyramus. Thus perished ingloriously one of the least blamable and most unfortunate of the Parthian princes.

After the death of Germanicus, in A.D. 19, the details of the Parthian history are for some years unknown to us. It appears that during this interval Artabanus [PLATE II. Fig. 5.] was engaged in wars with several of the nations upon his borders, and met with so much success that he came after a while to desire, rather than fear, a rupture with Rome. He knew that Tiberius was now an old man, and that he was disinclined to engage in distant wars; he was aware that Germanicus was dead; and he was probably not much afraid of L. Vitellius, the governor of Syria, who had been recently deputed by Tiberius to administer that province. Accordingly in A.D. 34, the Armenian throne being once more vacant by the death of Artaxias (Zeno), he suddenly seized the country, and appointed his eldest son, whom Dio and Tacitus call simply Arsaces, to be king. At the same time he sent ambassadors to require the restoration of the treasure which Vonones had carried off from Parthia and had left behind him in Syria or Cilicia. To this plain and definite demand were added certain vague threats, or boasts, to the effect that he was the rightful master of all the territory that had belonged of old to Macedonia or Persia, and that it was his intention to resume possession of the provinces, whereto, as the representative of Cyrus and Alexander, he was entitled. He is said to have even commenced operations against Cappadocia, which was an actual portion of the Roman Empire, when he found that Tiberius, so far from resenting the seizure of Armenia, had sent instructions to Vitellius, that he was to cultivate peaceful relations with Parthia. Apparently he thought that a good opportunity had arisen for picking a quarrel with his Western neighbor, and was determined to take advantage of it. The aged despot, hidden in his retreat of Capreae, seemed to him a pure object of contempt; and he entertained the confident hope of defeating his armies and annexing portions of his territory.

But Tiberius was under no circumstances a man to be wholly despised. Simultaneously with the Parthian demands and threats intelligence reached him that the subjects of Artabanus were greatly dissatisfied with his rule, and that it would be easy by fomenting the discontent to bring about a revolution. Some of the nobles even went in person to Rome (A.D. 35), and suggested that if Phraates, one of the surviving sons of Phraates IV., were to appear under Roman protection upon the banks of the Euphrates, an insurrection would immediately break out. Artabanus, they said, among his other cruelties had put to death almost all the adult males of the Arsacid family; a successful revolution could not be hoped for without an Arsacid leader; if Tiberius, however, would deliver to them the prince for whom they asked, this difficulty would be removed, and there was then every reason to expect a happy issue to the rebellion. The Emperor was not hard to persuade; he no doubt argued that, whatever became of the attempt and those engaged in it, one result at least was certain--Artabanus would find plenty of work to occupy him at home, and would desist from his foreign aggressions. He therefore let Phraates take his departure and proceed to Syria, glad to meet the danger which had threatened him by craft and policy rather than by force of arms.

Artabanus soon became aware of the intrigue. He found that the chief conspirators in Parthia were a certain Sinnaces, a nobleman distinguished alike for his high birth and his great riches, and a eunuch named Abdus, who held a position about the court, and was otherwise a personage of importance. It would have been easy to seize these two men, and execute them; but Artabanus was uncertain how far the conspiracy extended, and thought it most prudent to defer bringing matters to a crisis. He therefore dissembled, and was content to cause a delay, first by administering to Abdus a slow poison, and then by engaging Sinnaces so constantly in affairs of state that he had little or no time to

devote to plotting. Successful thus far by his own cunning and dexterity, he was further helped by a stroke of good fortune, on which he could not have calculated. Phraates, who thought that after forty years of residence in Rome it was necessary to fit himself for the position of Parthian king by resuming the long-disused habits of his nation, was carried off, after a short residence in Syria, by a disease which he was supposed to have contracted through the change in his mode of life. His death must for the time have paralyzed the conspirators, and have greatly relieved Artabanus. It was perhaps now, under the stimulus of a sudden change from feelings of extreme alarm to fancied security, that he wrote the famous letter to Tiberius, in which he reproached him for his cruelty, cowardice, and luxuriousness of living, and recommended him to satisfy the just desires of the subjects who hated him by an immediate suicide.

This letter, if genuine, must be pronounced under any circumstances a folly; and if really sent at this time, it may have had tragical consequences. It is remarkable that Tiberius, on learning the death of Phraates, instead of relaxing, intensified his efforts. Not only did he at once send out to Syria another pretender, Tiridates, a nephew of the deceased prince, in order to replace him, but he made endeavors, such as we do not hear of before, to engage other nations in the struggle; and further, he enlarged the commission of Vitellius, giving him a general superintendence over the affairs of the East. Thus Artabanus found himself in greater peril than ever, and if he had really indulged in the silly effusion ascribed to him was rightly punished. Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, a portion of the modern Georgia, incited by Tiberius, took the field (A.D. 35), and proclaimed his intention of placing his brother, Mithridates, on the Armenian throne. Having by corruption succeeded in bringing about the murder of Arsaces by his attendants, he marched into Armenia, and became master of the capital without meeting any resistance. Artabanus, upon this, sent his son Orodes to maintain the Parthian cause in the disputed province; but he proved no match for the Iberian, who was superior in numbers, in the variety of his troops, and in familiarity with the localities. Pharasmanes had obtained the assistance of his neighbors, the Albanians, and, opening the passes of the Caucasus, had admitted through them a number of the Scythic or Sarmatian hordes, who were always ready, when their swords were hired, to take a part in the quarrels of the south. Orodes was unable to procure either mercenaries or allies, and had to contend unassisted against the three enemies who had joined their forces to oppose him. For some time he prudently declined an engagement; but it was difficult to restrain the ardor of his troops, whom the enemy exasperated by their reproaches. After a while he was compelled to accept the battle which Pharasmanes incessantly offered. His force consisted entirely of cavalry, while Pharasmanes had besides his horse a powerful body of infantry. The battle was nevertheless stoutly contested; and the victory might have been doubtful, had it not happened that in a hand-to-hand combat between the two commanders Orodes was struck to the ground by his antagonist, and thought by most of his own men to be killed. As usual under such circumstances in the East, a rout followed. If we may believe Josephus, "many tens of thousands" were slain. Armenia was wholly lost; and Artabanus found himself left with diminished resources and tarnished fame to meet the intrigues of his domestic enemies.

Still, he would not succumb without an effort. In the spring of A.D. 36, having levied the whole force of the Empire, he took the field and marched northwards, determined, if possible, to revenge himself on the Iberians and recover his lost province. But his first efforts were unsuccessful; and before he could renew them Vitellius put himself at the head of his legions, and marching towards the Euphrates threatened Mesopotamia with

invasion. Placed thus between two fires, the Parthian monarch felt that he had no choice but to withdraw from Armenia and return to the defence of his own proper territories, which in his absence must have lain temptingly open to an enemy. His return caused Vitellius to change his tactics. Instead of measuring his strength against that which still remained to Artabanus, he resumed the weapon of intrigue so dear to his master, and proceeded by a lavish expenditure of money to excite disaffection once more among the Parthian nobles. This time conspiracy was successful. The military disasters of the last two years had alienated from Artabanus the affections of those whom his previous cruelties had failed to disgust or alarm; and he found himself without any armed force whereon he could rely, beyond a small body of foreign guards which he maintained about his person. It seemed to him that his only safety was in flight; and accordingly he quitted his capital and removed himself hastily into Hyrcania, which was in the immediate vicinity of the Scythian Dahse, among whom he had been brought up. Here the natives were friendly to him, and he lived a retired life," waiting" (as he said) "until the Parthians, who could judge an absent prince with equity, though they could not long continue faithful to a present one, should repent of their behavior to him."

Upon learning the flight of Artabamis, Vitellius advanced to the banks of the Euphrates, and introduced Tiridates into his kingdom. Fortunate omens were said to have accompanied the passage of the river; and these were followed by adhesions of greater importance. Ornospades, satrap of Mesopotamia, was the first to join the standard of the pretender with a large body of horse. He was followed by the conspirator Sinnaces, his father Abdageses, the keeper of the king's treasures, and other personages of high position. The Greek cities in Mesopotamia readily opened their gates to a monarch long domiciled at Rome, from whom they expected a politeness and refinement that would harmonize better with their feelings than the manners of the late king, bred up among the uncivilized Scyths. Parthian towns, like Halus and Artemita, followed their example. Seleucia, the second city in the Empire, received the new monarch with an obsequiousness that bordered on adulation. Not content with paying him all customary royal honors, they appended to their acclamations disparaging remarks upon his predecessor, whom they affected to regard as the issue of an adulterous intrigue, and as no true Arsacid. Tiridates was pleased to reward the unseemly flattery of these degenerate Greeks by a new arrangement of their constitution. Hitherto they had lived under the government of a Senate of Three Hundred members, the wisest and wealthiest of the citizens, a certain control being, however, secured to the people. Artabanus had recently modified the constitution in an aristocratic sense; and therefore Tiridates pursued the contrary course, and established an unbridled democracy in the place of a mixed government. He then entered Ctesiphon, the capital, and after waiting some days for certain noblemen, who had expressed a wish to attend his coronation but continually put off their coming, he was crowned in the ordinary manner by the Surena of the time being, in the sight and amid the acclamations of a vast multitude.

The pretender now regarded his work as completed, and forbore any further efforts. The example of the Western provinces would, he assumed, be followed by the Eastern, and the monarch approved by Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and the capital would carry, as a matter of course, the rest of the nation. Policy required that the general acquiescence should not have been taken for granted. Tiridates should have made a military progress through the East, no less than the West, and have sought out his rival in the distant Hyrcania, and slain him, or driven him beyond the borders. Instead of thus occupying himself, he was content to besiege a stronghold where Artabanus had left his

treasure and his harem. This conduct was imprudent; and the imprudence cost him his crown. That fickle temper which Artabanus had noted in his countrymen began to work so soon as the new king was well installed in his office; the coveted post of chief vizier could but be assigned to one, and the selection of the fortunate individual was the disappointment of a host of expectants; nobles absent from the coronation, whether by choice or necessity, began to be afraid that their absence would cost them dear, when Tiridates had time to reflect upon it and to listen to their detractors. The thoughts of the malcontents turned towards their dethroned monarch; and emissaries were despatched to seek him out, and put before him the project of a restoration. He was found in Hyrcania, in a miserable dress and plight, living on the produce of his bow. At first he suspected the messengers, believing that their intention was to seize him and deliver him up to Tiridates; but it was not long ere they persuaded him that, whether their affection for himself were true or feigned, their enmity to Tiridates was real. They had indeed no worse charges to bring against this prince than his youth, and the softness of his Roman breeding; but they were evidently in earnest, and had committed themselves too deeply to make it possible for them to retract. Artabanus, therefore, accepted their offers, and having obtained the services of a body of Dahse and other Scyths, proceeded westward, retaining the miserable garb and plight in which he had been found, in order to draw men to his side by pity; and making all haste, in order that his enemies might have less opportunity to prepare obstructions and his friends less time to change their minds. He reached the neighborhood of Ctesiphon while Tiridates was still doubting what he should do, distracted between the counsels of some who recommended an immediate engagement with the rebels before they recovered from the fatigues of their long march or grew accustomed to act together, and of others who advised a retreat into Mesopotamia, reliance upon the Armenians and other tribes of the north, and a union with the Roman troops, which Vitellius, on the first news of what had happened, had thrown across the Euphrates. The more timid counsel had the support of Abdageses, whom Tiridates had made his vizier, and therefore naturally prevailed, the prince himself being moreover of an unwarlike temper. It had, in appearance, much to recommend it; and if its execution had been in the hands of Occidentals might have succeeded. But, in the East, the first movement in retreat is taken as a confession of weakness and almost as an act of despair: an order to "retire" is regarded as a direction to fly. No sooner was the Tigris crossed and the march through Mesopotamia began, than the host of Tiridates melted away like an iceberg in the Gulf Stream. The tribes of the Desert set the example of flight; and in a little time almost the whole army had dispersed, drawing off either to the camp of the enemy or to their homes. Tiridates reached the Euphrates with a mere handful of followers, and crossing into Syria found himself once more safe under the protection of the Romans.

The flight of Tiridates gave Parthia back into the hands of its former ruler. Artabanus reoccupied the throne, apparently without having to fight a battle. He seems, however, not to have felt himself strong enough either to resume his designs upon Armenia, or to retaliate in any way upon the Romans for their support of Tiridates. Mithridates, the Iberian, was left in quiet possession of the Armenian kingdom, and Vitellius found himself unmolested on the Euphrates. Tiberius, however, was anxious that the war with Parthia should be formally terminated, and, having failed in his attempts to fill the Parthian throne with a Roman nominee, was ready to acknowledge Artabanus, and eager to enter into a treaty with him. He instructed Vitellius to this effect; and that officer (late in A.D. 36 or early in A.D. 37), having invited Artabanus to an interview on the Euphrates, persuaded him to terms which were regarded

by the Romans as highly honorable to themselves, though Artabanus probably did not feel them to be degrading to Parthia. Peace and amity were re-established between the two nations. Rome, it may be assumed, undertook to withhold her countenance from all pretenders to the Parthian throne, and Parthia withdrew her claims upon Armenia. Artabanus was persuaded to send his son, Darius, with some other Parthians of rank, to Rome, and was thus regarded by the Romans as having given hostages for his good behavior. He was also induced to throw a few grains of frankincense on the sacrificial fire which burnt in front of the Roman standards and the Imperial images, an act which was accepted at Rome as one of submission and homage. The terms and circumstances of the peace did not become known in Italy till Tiberius had been succeeded by Caligula (March, A.D. 37). When known, they gave great satisfaction, and were regarded as glorious alike to the negotiator, Vitellius, and to the prince whom he represented. The false report was spread that the Parthian monarch had granted to the new Csesar what his contempt and hatred would have caused him to refuse to Tiberius; and the inclination of the Romans towards their young sovereign was intensified by the ascription to him of a diplomatic triumph which belonged of right to his predecessor.

Contemporaneously with the troubles which have been above described, but reaching down, it would seem, a few years beyond them, were other disturbances of a peculiar character in one of the Western provinces of the Empire. The Jewish element in the population of Western Asia had been one of importance from a date anterior to the rise, not only of the Parthian, but even of the Persian Empire. Dispersed colonies of Jews were to be found in Babylonia, Armenia, Media, Susiana, Mesopotamia, and probably in other Parthian provinces. These colonies dated from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's captivity, and exhibited everywhere the remarkable tendency of the Jewish race to an increase disproportionate to that of the population among which they are settled. The Jewish element became perpetually larger and more important in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, in spite of the draughts which were made upon it by Seleucus and other Syrian princes. Under the Parthians, it would seem that the Mesopotamian Jews enjoyed generally the same sort of toleration, and the same permission to exercise a species of self-government, which Jews and Christians enjoy now in many parts of Turkey. They formed a recognized community, had some cities which were entirely their own, possessed a common treasury, and from time to time sent up to Jerusalem the offerings of the people under the protection of a convoy of 30,000 or 40,000 men. The Parthian kings treated them well, and no doubt valued them as a counterpoise to the disaffected Greeks and Syrians of this part of their Empire. They had no grievance of which to complain, and it might have been thought very unlikely that any troubles would arise in connection with them; but circumstances seemingly trivial threw the whole community into commotion, and led on to disasters of a very lamentable character.

Two young Jews, Asinai and Anilai, brothers, natives of Nearda, the city in which the treasury of the community was established, upon suffering some ill-treatment at the hands of the manufacturer who employed them, gave up their trade, and, withdrawing to a marshy district between two arms of the Euphrates, made up their minds to live by robbery. A band of needy youths soon gathered about them, and they became the terror of the entire neighborhood. They exacted a blackmail from the peaceable population of shepherds and others who lived near them, made occasional plundering raids to a distance, and required an acknowledgment (bakhshish) from travellers. Their doings having become notorious, the satrap of Babylonia marched against them with an army, intending to surprise them on the Sabbath, when it was supposed that they

would not fight; but his approach was discovered, it was determined to disregard the obligation of Sabbatical rest, and the satrap was himself surprised and completely defeated. Artabanus, having heard of the disaster, made overtures to the brothers, and, after receiving a visit from them at his court, assigned to Asinai, the elder of the two, the entire government of the Babylonian satrapy. The experiment appeared at first to have completely succeeded. Asinai governed the province with prudence and zeal, and for fifteen years no complaint was made against his administration. But at the end of this time the lawless temper, held in restraint for so long, reasserted itself, not, indeed, in Asinai, but in his brother. Anilai fell in love with the wife of a Parthian magnate, commander (apparently) of the Parthian troops stationed in Babylonia, and, seeing no other way of obtaining his wishes, made war upon the chieftain and killed him. He then married the object of his affections, and might perhaps have been content; but the Jews under Asinai's government remonstrated against the idolatries which the Parthian woman had introduced into a Jewish household, and prevailed on Asinai to require that she should be divorced. His compliance with their wishes proved fatal to him, for the woman, fearing the consequences, contrived to poison Asinai; and the authority which he had wielded passed into the hands of Anilai, without (so far as we hear) any fresh appointment from the Parthian monarch. Anilai had, it appears, no instincts but those of a freebooter, and he was no sooner settled in the government than he proceeded to indulge them by attacking the territory of a neighboring satrap, Mithridates, who was not only a Parthian of high rank, but had married one of the daughters of Artabanus. Mithridates flew to arms to defend his province; but Anilai fell upon his encampment in the night, completely routed his troops, and took Mithridates himself prisoner. Having subjected him to a gross indignity, he was nevertheless afraid to put him to death, lest the Parthian king should avenge the slaughter of his relative on the Jews of Babylon, Mithridates was consequently released, and returned to his wife, who was so indignant at the insult whereto he had been subjected that she left him no peace till he collected a second army and resumed the war. Analai was no ways daunted. Quitting his stronghold in the marshes, he led his troops a distance of ten miles through a hot and dry plain to meet the enemy, thus unnecessarily exhausting them, and exposing them to the attack of their enemies under the most unfavorable circumstances. He was of course defeated with loss; but he himself escaped and revenged himself by carrying fire and sword over the lands of the Babylonians, who had hitherto lived peaceably under his protection. The Babylonians sent to Nearda and demanded his surrender; but the Jews of Nearda, even if they had had the will, had no power to comply. A pretence was then made of arranging matters by negotiation; but the Babylonians, having in this way obtained a knowledge of the position which Anilai and his troops occupied, fell upon them in the night, when they were all either drunk or asleep, and at one stroke exterminated the whole band.

Thus far no great calamity had occurred. Two Jewish robber-chiefs had been elevated into the position of Parthian satraps; and the result had been, first, fifteen years of peace, and then a short civil war, ending in the destruction of the surviving chief and the annihilation of the band of marauders. But the lamentable consequences of the commotion were now to show themselves. The native Babylonians had always looked with dislike on the Jewish colony, and occasions of actual collision between the two bodies had not been wholly wanting. The circumstances of the existing time seemed to furnish a good excuse for an outbreak; and scarcely were Anilai and his followers destroyed, when the Jews of Babylon were set upon by their native fellow-citizens. Unable to make an effectual resistance, they resolved to

retire from the place, and, at the immense loss which such a migration necessarily costs, they quitted Babylon and transferred themselves in great numbers to Seleucia. Here they lived quietly for five years (about A.D. 34-39), but in the sixth year (A.D. 40) fresh troubles broke out. The remnant of the Jews at Babylon were assailed, either by their old enemies or by a pestilence, and took refuge at Seleucia with their brethren. It happened that at Seleucia there was a feud of long standing between the Syrian population and the Greeks. The Jews naturally joined the Syrians, who were a kindred race, and the two together brought the Greeks under; whereupon these last contrived to come to terms with the Syrians, and persuaded them to join in an attack on the late allies. Against the combined Greeks and Syrians the Jews were powerless, and in the massacre which ensued they lost above 50,000 men. The remnant withdrew to Otesiphon; but even there the malice of their enemies pursued them, and the persecution was only brought to an end by their quitting the metropolitan cities altogether, and withdrawing to the provincial towns of which they were the sole occupants.

The narrative of these events derives its interest, not so much from any sympathy that we can feel with any of the actors in it as from the light which it throws upon the character of the Parthian rule, and the condition of the countries under Parthian government. In the details given we seem once more to trace a near resemblance between the Parthian system and that of the Turks; we seem to see thrown back into the mirror of the past an image of those terrible conflicts and disorders which have passed before our own eyes in Syria and the Lebanon while under acknowledged Turkish sovereignty. The picture has the same features of antipathies of race unsoftened by time and contact, of perpetual feud bursting out into occasional conflict, of undying religious animosities, of strange combinations, of fearful massacres, and of a government looking tamely on, and allowing things for the most part to take their course. We see how utterly the Parthian system failed to blend together or amalgamate the conquered peoples; and not only so, but how impotent it was even to effect the first object of a government, the securing of peace and tranquillity within its borders. If indeed it were necessary to believe that the picture brought before us represented truthfully the normal condition of the people and countries with which it is concerned, we should be forced to conclude that Parthian government was merely another name for anarchy, and that it was only good fortune that preserved the empire from falling to pieces at this early date, within two centuries of its establishment But there is reason to believe that the reign of Artabanus III. represents, not the normal, but an exceptional state of things--a state of things which could only arise in Parthia when the powers of government were relaxed in consequence of rebellion and civil war. We must remember that Artabanus was actually twice driven from his kingdom, and that during the greater part of his reign he lived in perpetual fear of revolt and insurrection. It is not improbable that the culminating atrocities of the struggle above described synchronized with the second expulsion of the Parthian monarch, and are thus not so much a sign of the ordinary weakness of the Parthian rule as of the terrible strength of the forces which that rule for the most part kept under control.

The causes which led to the second expulsion of Artabanus are not distinctly stated, but they were probably not very different from those that brought about the first. Artabanus was undoubtedly a harsh ruler; and those who fell under his displeasure, naturally fearing his severity, and seeing no way of meeting it but by a revolution, were driven to adopt extreme measures. Something like a general combination of the nobles against him seems to have taken place about the year A.D. 40; and it appears that he, on becoming aware of it, determined to quit the capital and

throw himself on the protection of one of the tributary monarchs. This was Izates, the sovereign of Adiabene, or the tract between the Zab rivers, who is said to have been a convert to Judaism. On the flight of Artabanus to Izates it would seem that the Megistanes formally deposed him, and elected in his place a certain Kinnam, or Kinnamus, an Arsacid who had been brought up by the king. Izates, when he interfered on behalf of the deposed monarch, was met by the objection that the newly-elected prince had rights which could not be set aside. The difficulty appeared insuperable; but it was overcome by the voluntary act of Kinnamus, who wrote to Artabanus and offered to retire in his favor. Hereupon Artabanus returned and remounted his throne, Kinnamus carrying his magnanimity so far as to strip the diadem from his own brow and replace it on the head of the old monarch. A condition of the restoration was a complete amnesty for all political offences, which was not only promised by Artabanus, but likewise guaranteed by Izates.

It was very shortly after his second restoration to the throne that Artabanus died. One further calamity must, however, be noticed as having fallen within the limits of his reign. The great city of Seleucia, the second in the Empire, shortly after it had experienced the troubles above narrated, revolted absolutely from the Parthian power, and declared itself independent. No account has reached us of the circumstances which caused this revolt; but it was indicative of a feeling that Parthia was beginning to decline, and that the disintegration of the Empire was a thing that might be expected. The Seleucians had at no time been contented with their position as Parthian subjects. Whether they supposed that they could stand alone, or whether they looked to enjoying under Roman protection a greater degree of independence than had been allowed them by the Parthians, is uncertain. They revolted however, in A. D. 40, and declared themselves a self-governing community. It does not appear that the Romans lent them any assistance, or broke for their sake the peace established with Parthia in A.D. 37. The Seleucians had to depend upon themselves alone, and to maintain their rebellion by means of their own resources. No doubt Artabanus proceeded at once to attack them, but his arms made no impression. They were successful in defending their independence during his reign, and for some time afterwards, although compelled in the end to succumb and resume a subject position under their own masters. Artabanus seems to have died in August or September A.D. 42, the year after the death of Caligula. His checkered reign had covered a space which cannot have fallen much short of thirty years.

## CHAPTER XV. Doubts as to the successor of Artabanus III.

There is considerable doubt as to the immediate successor of Artabanus. According to Josephus he left his kingdom to his son, Bardanes or Vardanes, and this prince entered without difficulty and at once upon the enjoyment of his sovereignty. According to Tacitus, the person who obtained the throne directly upon the death of Artabanus was his son, Gotarzes, who was generally accepted for king, and might have reigned without having his title disputed, had he not given indications of a harsh and cruel temper. Among other atrocities whereof he was guilty was the murder of his brother, Artabanus, whom he put to death, together with his wife and son, apparently upon mere suspicion. This bloody initiation of his reign spread alarm among the nobles, who thereupon determined to exert their constitutional privilege of deposing an obnoxious monarch and supplying his place with a new one. Their choice fell upon Vardanes, brother of Gotarzes, who was residing in a distant province, 350 miles from the Court. Having entered into communications with this prince, they easily induced him to quit his retirement, and to take up arms against the tyrant. Vardanes was ambitious, bold and

prompt: he had no sooner received the invitation of the Megistanes than he set out, and, having accomplished his journey to the Court in the space of two days, found Gotarzes wholly unprepared to offer resistance. Thus Vardanes became king without fighting a battle. Gotarzes fled, and escaped into the country of the Dahse, which lay east of the Caspian Sea, and north of the Parthian province of Hyrcania. Here he was allowed to reign for some time unmolested by his brother, and to form plans and make preparations for the recovery of his lost power.

The statements of Tacitus are so circumstantial, and his authority as an historian is so great, that we can scarcely hesitate to accept the history as he delivers it, rather than as it is related by the Jewish writer. It is, however, remarkable that the series of Parthian coins presents an appearance of accordance rather with the latter than the former, since it affords no trace of the supposed first reign of Gotarzes in A.D. 42, while it shows Vardanes to have held the throne from Sept. A.D. 43 to at least A.D. 46. Still this does not absolutely contradict Tacitus. It only proves that the first reign of Gotarzes was comprised within a few weeks, and that before two months had passed from the death of Artabanus, the kingdom was established in the hands of Vardanes. That prince, after the flight of his brother, applied himself for some time to the reduction of the Seleucians, whose continued independence in the midst of a Parthian province he regarded as a disgrace to the Empire. His efforts to take the town failed, however, of success. Being abundantly provisioned and strongly fortified, it was well able to stand a siege; and the high spirit of its inhabitants made them determined to resist to the uttermost. While they still held out, Vardanes was called away to the East, where his brother had been gathering strength, and was once more advancing his pretensions. The Hyrcanians, as well as the Dahse, had embraced his cause, and Parthia was threatened with dismemberment. Vardanes, having collected his troops, occupied a position in the plain region of Bactria, and there prepared to give battle to his brother, who was likewise at the head of a considerable army. Before, however, an engagement took place, Gotarzes discovered that there was a design among the nobles on either side to rid themselves of both the brothers, and to set up a wholly new king. Apprehensive of the consequences, he communicated his discovery to Vardanes; and the result was that the two brothers made up their differences and agreed upon terms of peace. Gotarzes yielded his claim to the crown, and was assigned a residence in Hyrcania, which was, probably, made over to his government. Vardanes then returned to the west, and, resuming the siege of Seleucia, compelled the rebel city to a surrender in the seventh year after it had revolted (A.D. 46.)

Successful thus far, and regarding his quarrel with his brother as finally arranged, Vardanes proceeded to contemplate a military expedition of the highest importance. The time, he thought, was favorable for reviving the Parthian claim to Armenia, and disputing once more with Rome the possession of a paramount influence over that country. The Roman government of the dependency, since Artabanus formally relinquished it to them, had been far from proving satisfactory. Mithridates, their protege, had displeased them, and had been summoned to Rome by Caligula, who kept him there a prisoner until his death. Armenia, left without a king, had asserted her independence; and when, after an absence of several years, Mithridates was authorized by Claudius to return to his kingdom, the natives resisted him in arms, and were only brought under his rule by the combined help of the Romans and the Iberians. Forced upon a reluctant people by foreign arms, Mithridates felt himself insecure, and this feeling made him rule his subjects with imprudent severity. Under these circumstances it seemed to Vardanes that it would not be very difficult to recover

Armenia, and thus gain a signal triumph over the Romans.

But to engage in so great a matter with a good prospect of success it was necessary that the war should be approved, not only by himself, but by his principal feudatories. The most important of these was now Izates, king of Adiabene and Gordyene who in the last reign had restored Artabanus to his lost throne. Vardanes, before committing himself by any overt act, appears to have taken this prince into his counsels, and to have requested his opinion on affronting the Romans by an interference with Armenian affairs. Izates strenuously opposed the project. He had a personal interest in the matter, since he had sent five of his boys to Rome, to receive there a polite education, and he had also a profound respect for the Roman power and military system. He endeavored, both by persuasion and reasoning, to induce Vardanes to abandon his design. His arguments may have been cogent, but they were not thought by Vardanes to have much force, and the result of the conference was that the Great King declared war against his feudatory.

The war had, apparently, but just begun, when fresh troubles broke out in the north-east. Gotarzes had never ceased to regret his renunciation of his claims, and was now, on the invitation of the Parthian nobility, prepared to came forward again and contest the kingdom with his brother. Vardanes had to relinquish his attempt to coerce Izates, and to hasten to Hyrcania in order to engage the troops which Gotarzes had collected in that distant region. These he met and defeated more than once in the country between the Caspian and Herat; but the success of his military operations failed to strengthen his hold upon the affections of his subjects. Like the generality of the Parthian princes, he showed himself harsh and cruel in the hour of victory, and in conquering an opposition roused an opposition that was fiercer and more formidable. A conspiracy was formed against him shortly after his return from Hyrcania, and he was assassinated while indulging in the national amusement of the chase.

The murder of Vardanes was immediately followed by the restoration of Gotarzes to the throne. There may have been some who doubted his fitness for the regal office, and inclined to keep the throne vacant till they could send to Rome and obtain from thence one of the younger and more civilized Parthian princes. But we may be sure that the general desire was not for a Romanized sovereign, but for a truly national king, one born and bred in the country. Gotarzes was proclaimed by common consent, and without any interval, after the death of Vardanes, and ascended the Parthian throne before the end of the year A.D. 46. It is not likely that his rule would have been resisted had he conducted himself well; but the cruelty of his temper, which had already once cost him his crown, again displayed itself after his restoration, and to this defect was added a slothful indulgence yet more distasteful to his subjects. Some military expeditions which he undertook, moreover, failed of success, and the crime of defeat caused the cup of his offences to brim over. The discontented portion of his people, who were a strong party, sent envoys to the Roman Emperor, Claudius (A.D. 49), and begged that he would surrender to them Meherdates, the grandson of Phraates IV. and son of Vonones, who still remained at Rome in a position between that of a guest and a hostage. "They were not ignorant," they said, "of the treaty which bound the Romans to Parthia, nor did they ask Claudius to infringe it." Their desire was not to throw off the authority of the Arsacidse, but only to exchange one Arsacid for another. The rule of Gotarzes had became intolerable, alike to the nobility and the common people. He had murdered all his male relatives, or at least all that were within his reach--first his brothers, then his near kinsmen, finally even those whose relationship was remote; nor had he stopped there; he had proceeded to put to death their

young children and their pregnant wives. He was sluggish in his habits, unfortunate in his wars, and had betaken himself to cruelty, that men might not despise him for his want of manliness. The friendship between Rome and Parthia was a public matter; it bound the Romans to help the nation allied to them--a nation which, though equal to them in strength, was content on account of its respect for Rome to yield her precedence. Parthian princes were allowed to be hostages in foreign lands for the very reason that then it was always possible, if their own monarch displeased them, for the people to obtain a king from abroad, brought up under milder influences.

This harangue was made before the Emperor Claudius and the assembled Senate, Meherdates himself being also present. Claudius responded to it favorably. He would follow the example of the Divine Augustus, and allow the Parthians to take from Rome the monarch whom they requested. That prince, bred up in the city, had always been remarkable for his moderation. He would (it was to be hoped) regard himself in his new position, not as a master of slaves, but as a ruler of citizens. He would find that clemency and justice were the more appreciated by a barbarous nation, the less they had had experience of them Meherdates might accompany the Parthian envoys; and a Roman of rank, Caius Cassius, the prefect of Syria, should be instructed to receive them on their arrival in Asia, and to see them safely across the Euphrates.

The young prince accordingly set out, and reached the city of Zeugma in safety. Here he was joined, not only by a number of the Parthian nobles, but also by the reigning king of Osrhoene, who bore the usual name of Abgarus. The Parthians were anxious that he should advance at his best speed and by the shortest route on Ctesiphon, and the Roman governor, Cassius, strongly advised the same course; but Meherdates fell under the influence of the Osrhoene monarch, who is thought by Tacitus to have been a false friend, and to have determined from the first to do his best for Gotarzes. Abgarus induced Meherdates to proceed from Zeugma to his own capital, Edessa, and there detained him for several days by means of a series of festivities. He then persuaded him, though the winter was approaching, to enter Armenia, and to proceed against his antagonist by the circuitous route of the Upper Tigris, instead of the more direct one through Mesopotamia. In this way much valuable time was lost. The rough mountain-routes and snows of Armenia harassed and fatigued the pretender's troops, while Gotarzes was given an interval during which to collect a tolerably large body of soldiers. Still, the delay was not very great. Meherdatos marched probably by Diarbekr, Til, and Jezireh, or in other words, followed the course of the Tigris, which he crossed in the neighborhood of Mosul, after taking the small town which represented the ancient Nineveh. His line of march had now brought him into Adiabene; and it seemed a good omen for the success of his cause that Izates, the powerful monarch of that tract, declared in his favor, and brought a body of troops to his assistance. Gotarzes was in the neighborhood, but was distrustful of his strength, and desirous of collecting a larger force before committing himself to the hazard of an engagement. He had taken up a strong position with the river Corma in his front, and, remaining on the defensive, contented himself with trying by his emissaries the fidelity of his rival's troops and allies. The plan succeeded. After a little time, the army of Meherdates began to melt away. Izates of Adiabene and Abgarus of Edessa drew off their contingents, and left the pretender to depend wholly on his Parthian supporters. Even their fidelity was doubtful, and might have given way on further trial; Meherdates therefore resolved, before being wholly deserted, to try the chance of a battle.

His adversary was now as willing to engage as himself, since he felt that he was no longer outnumbered. The rivals met, and a fierce and

bloody action was fought between the two armies, no important advantage being for a long time gained by either. At length Oarrhenes, the chief general on the side of Meherdates, having routed the troops opposed to him and pursued them too hotly, was intercepted by the enemy on his return and either killed or made prisoner. This event proved decisive. The loss of their leader caused the army of Meherdates to fly; and he himself, being induced to intrust his safety to a certain Parrhaces, a dependent of his father's, was betrayed by this miscreant, loaded with chains, and given up to his rival. Gotarzes now proved less unmerciful than might have been expected from his general character. Instead of punishing Meherdates with death, he thought it sufficient to insult him with the names of "foreigner" and "Roman," and to render it impossible that he should be again put forward as monarch by subjecting him to mutilation. The Roman historian supposes that this was done to cast a slur upon Rome but it was a natural measure of precaution under the circumstances, and had probably no more recondite motive than compassion for the youth and inexperience of the pretender.

Gotarzes, having triumphed over his rival, appears to have resolved on commemorating his victory in a novel manner. Instead of striking a new coin, like Vonones, he determined to place his achievement on record by making it the subject of a rock-tablet, which he caused to be engraved on the sacred mountain of Baghistan, adorned already with sculptures and inscriptions by the greatest of the Achaemenian monarchs. The bas-relief and its inscription have been much damaged, both by the waste of ages and the rude hand of man; but enough remains to show that the conqueror was represented as pursuing his enemies in the field, on horseback, while a winged Victory, flying in the air, was on the point of placing a diadem on his head. In the Greek legend which accompanied the sculpture he was termed "Satrap of Satraps"--an equivalent of the ordinary title "King of Kings"; and his conquered rival was mentioned under the name of Mithrates, a corrupt form of the more common or Mithridates or Meherdates.

Very shortly after his victory Gotarzes died. His last year seems to have been A.D. 51. According to Tacitus, he died a natural death, from the effects of disease; but, according to Josephus, he was the victim of a conspiracy. The authority of Tacitus, here as elsewhere generally, is to be preferred; and we may regard Gotarzes as ending peacefully his unquiet reign, which had begun in A.D. 42, immediately after the death of his father, had been interrupted for four years--from A.D. 42 to A.D. 46--and had then been renewed and lasted from A.D. 46 to A.D. 51. Gotarzes was not a prince of any remarkable talents, or of a character differing in any important respects from the ordinary Parthian type. He was perhaps even more cruel than the bulk of the Arsacidae, though his treatment of Meherdates showed that he could be lenient upon occasion. He was more prudent than daring, more politic than brave, more bent on maintaining his own position than on advancing the power or dignity of his country. Parthia owed little or nothing to him. The internal organization of the country must have suffered from his long wars with his brother and his nephew; its external reputation was not increased by one whose foreign expeditions were uniformly unfortunate.

The successor of Gotarzes was a certain Vonones. His relationship to previous monarchs is doubtful--and may be suspected to have been remote. Gotarzes had murdered or mutilated all the Arsacidse on whom he could lay his hands; and the Parthians had to send to Media upon his disease in order to obtain a sovereign of the required blood. The coins of Vonones II. are scarce, and have a peculiar rudeness. The only date found upon them is one equivalent to A.D. 51; and it would seem that his entire reign was comprised within the space of a few months.

Tacitus tells us that his rule was brief and inglorious, marked by no important events, either prosperous or adverse. He was succeeded by his son, Volagases I., who appears to have ascended the throne before the year A.D. 51 had expired.