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The Twelve Caesars

By C. Suetonius Tranquillus

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Aulus Vitellius

I. Very different accounts are given of the origin of the Vitellian family. Some describe it as ancient and noble, others as recent and obscure, nay, extremely mean. I am inclined to think, that these several representations have been made by the flatterers and detractors of Vitellius, after he became emperor, unless the fortunes of the family varied before. There is extant a memoir addressed by Quintus Eulogius to Quintus Vitellius, quaestor to the Divine Augustus, in which it is said, that the Vitellii were descended from Faunus, king of the aborigines, and Vitellia, who was worshipped in many places as a goddess, and that they reigned formerly over the whole of Latium: that all who were left of the family removed out of the country of the Sabines to Rome, and were enrolled among the patricians: that some monuments of the family continued a long time; as the Vitellian Way, reaching from the Janiculum to the sea, and likewise a colony of that name, which, at a very remote period of time, they desired leave from the government to defend against the Aequicolae, with a force raised by their own family only: also that, in the time of the war with the Samnites, some of

the Vitellii who went with the troops levied for the security of Apulia, settled at Nuceria, and their descendants, a long time afterwards, returned again to Rome, and were admitted into the patrician order. On the other hand, the generality of writers say that the founder of the family was a freedman. Cassius Severus and some others relate that he was likewise a cobbler, whose son having made a considerable fortune by agencies and dealings in confiscated property, begot, by a common strumpet, daughter of one Antiochus, a baker, a child, who afterwards became a Roman knight. Of these different accounts the reader is left to take his choice.

II. It is certain, however, that Publius Vitellius, of Nuceria, whether of an ancient family, or of low extraction, was a Roman knight, and a procurator to Augustus. He left behind him four sons, all men of very high station, who had the same cognomen, but the different praenomina of Aulus, Quintus, Publius, and Lucius. Aulus died in the enjoyment of the consulship, which office he bore jointly with Domitius, the father of Nero Caesar. He was elegant to excess in his manner of living, and notorious for the vast expense of his entertainments. Quintus was deprived of his rank of senator, when, upon a motion made by Tiberius, a resolution passed to purge the senate of those who were in any respect not duly qualified for that honour. Publius, an intimate friend and companion of Germanicus, prosecuted his enemy and murderer, Cneius Piso, and procured sentence against him. After he had been made proctor, being arrested among the accomplices of Sejanus, and delivered into the hands of his brother to be confined in his house, he opened a vein with a penknife, intending to bleed himself to death. He suffered, however, the wound to be bound up and cured, not so much from repenting the resolution he had formed, as to comply with the importunity of his relations. He died afterwards a natural death during his confinement. Lucius, after his consulship, was made governor of Syria, and by his politic management not only brought Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to give him an interview, but to worship the standards of the Roman legions. He afterwards filled two ordinary consulships, and also the censorship jointly with the emperor Claudius. Whilst that prince was absent upon his

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expedition into Britain, the care of the empire was committed to him, being a man of great integrity and industry. But he lessened his character not a little, by his passionate fondness for an abandoned freedwoman, with whose spittle, mixed with honey, he used to anoint his throat and jaws, by way of remedy for some complaint, not privately nor seldom, but daily and publicly. Being extravagantly prone to flattery, it was he who gave rise to the worship of Caius Caesar as a god, when, upon his return from Syria, he would not presume to accost him any otherwise than with his head covered, turning himself round, and then prostrating himself upon the earth. And to leave no artifice untried to secure the favour of Claudius, who was entirely governed by his wives and freedmen, he requested as the greatest favour from Messalina, that she would be pleased to let him take off her shoes; which, when he had done, he took her right shoe, and wore it constantly betwixt his toga and his tunic, and from time to time covered it with kisses. He likewise worshipped golden images of Narcissus and Pallas among his household gods. It was he, too, who, when Claudius exhibited the secular games, in his compliments to him upon that occasion, used this expression, "May you often do the same."

III. He died of palsy, the day after his seizure with it, leaving behind him two sons, whom he had by a most excellent and respectable wife, Sextilia. He had lived to see them both consuls, the same year and during the whole year also; the younger succeeding the elder for the last six months. The senate honoured him after his decease with a funeral at the public expense, and with a statue in the Rostra, which had this inscription upon the base: "One who was steadfast in his loyalty to his prince." The emperor Aulus Vitellius, the son of this Lucius, was born upon the eighth of the calends of October [24th September], or, as some say, upon the seventh of the ides of September [7th September], in the consulship of Drusus Caesar and Norbanus Flaccus. His parents were so terrified with the predictions of astrologers upon the calculation of his nativity, that his father used his utmost endeavours to prevent his being sent governor into any of the provinces, whilst he was alive. His mother, upon his being sent to the legions, and also upon his being proclaimed

emperor, immediately lamented him as utterly ruined. He spent his youth amongst the catamites of Tiberius at Capri, was himself constantly stigmatized with the name of Spintria, and was supposed to have been the occasion of his father's advancement, by consenting to gratify the emperor's unnatural lust.

IV. In the subsequent part of his life, being still most scandalously vicious, he rose to great favour at court; being upon a very intimate footing with Caius [Caligula], because of his fondness for chariot-driving, and with Claudius for his love of gaming. But he was in a still higher degree acceptable to Nero, as well on the same accounts, as for a particular service which he rendered him. When Nero presided in the games instituted by himself, though he was extremely desirous to perform amongst the harpers, yet his modesty would not permit him, notwithstanding the people entreated much for it. Upon his quitting the theatre, Vitellius fetched him back again, pretending to represent the determined wishes of the people, and so afforded him the opportunity of yielding to their in treaties.

V. By the favour of these three princes, he was not only advanced to the great offices of state, but to the highest dignities of the sacred order; after which he held the proconsulship of Africa, and had the superintendence of the public works, in which appointment his conduct, and, consequently, his reputation, were very different. For he governed the province with singular integrity during two years, in the latter of which he acted as deputy to his brother, who succeeded him. But in his office in the city, he was said to pillage the temples of their gifts and ornaments, and to have exchanged brass and tin for gold and silver.

VI. He took to wife Petronia, the daughter of a man of consular rank, and had by her a son named Petronius, who was blind of an eye. The mother being willing to appoint this youth her heir, upon condition that he should be released from his father's authority, the latter discharged him accordingly; but shortly after, as was believed, murdered him, charging him with a design upon his life, and pretending that he had, from consciousness of his guilt, drank the poison he had prepared for his father. Soon afterwards, he

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married Galeria Fundana, the daughter of a man of pretorian rank, and had by her both sons and daughters. Among the former was one who had such a stammering in his speech, that he was little better than if he had been dumb.

VII. He was sent by Galba into Lower Germany, contrary to his expectation. It is supposed that he was assisted in procuring this appointment by the interest of Titus Junius, a man of great influence at that time; whose friendship he had long before gained by favouring the same set of charioteers with him in the Circensian games. But Galba openly declared that none were less to be feared than those who only cared for their bellies, and that even his enormous appetite must be satisfied with the plenty of that province; so that it is evident he was selected for that government more out of contempt than kindness. It is certain, that when he was to set out, he had not money for the expenses of his journey; he being at that time so much straitened in his circumstances, that he was obliged to put his wife and children, whom he left at Rome, into a poor lodging which he hired for them, in order that he might let his own house for the remainder of the year; and he pawned a pearl taken from his mother's ear-ring, to defray his expenses on the road. A crowd of creditors who were waiting to stop him, and amongst them the people of Sineussa and Formia, whose taxes he had converted to his own use, he eluded, by alarming them with the apprehension of false accusation. He had, however, sued a certain freedman, who was clamorous in demanding a debt of him, under pretence that he had kicked him; which action he would not withdraw, until he had wrung from the freedman fifty thousand sesterces. Upon his arrival in the province, the army, which was disaffected to Galba, and ripe for insurrection, received him with open arms, as if he had been sent them from heaven. It was no small recommendation to their favour, that he was the son of a man who had been thrice consul, was in the prime of life, and of an easy, prodigal disposition. This opinion, which had been long entertained of him, Vitellius confirmed by some late practices; having kissed all the common soldiers whom he met with upon the road, and been excessively complaisant in the inns and stables to the muleteers and travellers; asking

them in a morning, if they had got their breakfasts, and letting them see, by belching, that he had eaten his.

VIII. After he had reached the camp, he denied no man any thing he asked for, and pardoned all who lay under sentence for disgraceful conduct or disorderly habits. Before a month, therefore, had passed, without regard to the day or season, he was hurried by the soldiers out of his bed-chamber, although it was evening, and he in an undress, and unanimously saluted by the title of EMPEROR. He was then carried round the most considerable towns in the neighbourhood, with the sword of the Divine Julius in his hand; which had been taken by some person out of the temple of Mars, and presented to him when he was first saluted. Nor did he return to the pretorium, until his dining-room was in flames from the chimney's taking fire. Upon this accident, all being in consternation, and considering it as an unlucky omen, he cried out, "Courage, boys! it shines brightly upon us." And this was all he said to the soldiers. The army of the Upper Province likewise, which had before declared against Galba for the senate, joining in the proceedings, he very eagerly accepted the cognomen of Germanicus, offered him by the unanimous consent of both armies, but deferred assuming that of Augustus, and refused for ever that of Caesar.

IX. Intelligence of Galba's death arriving soon after, when he had settled his affairs in Germany he divided his troops into two bodies, intending to send one of them before him against Otho, and to follow with the other himself. The army he sent forward had a lucky omen; for, suddenly, an eagle came flying up to them on the right, and having hovered round the standards, flew gently before them on their road. But, on the other hand, when he began his own march, all the equestrian statues, which were erected for him in several places, fell suddenly down with their legs broken; and the laurel crown, which he had put on as emblematical of auspicious fortune, fell off his head into a river. Soon afterwards, at Vienne, as he was upon the tribunal administering justice, a cock perched upon his shoulder, and afterwards upon his head. The issue corresponded to these omens; for he was not able to keep the empire which had been secured for him by his lieutenants.

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X. He heard of the victory at Bedriacum, and the death of Otho, whilst he was yet in Gaul, and without the least hesitation, by a single proclamation, disbanded all the pretorian cohorts, as having, by their repeated treasons, set a dangerous example to the rest of the army; commanding them to deliver up their arms to his tribunes. A hundred and twenty of them, under whose hands he had found petitions presented to Otho, for rewards of their service in the murder of Galba, he besides ordered to be sought out and punished. So far his conduct deserved approbation, and was such as to afford hope of his becoming an excellent prince, had he not managed his other affairs in a way more corresponding with his own disposition, and his former manner of life, than to the imperial dignity. For, having begun his march, he rode through every city in his route in a triumphal procession; and sailed down the rivers in ships, fitted out with the greatest elegance, and decorated with various kinds of crowns, amidst the most extravagant entertainments. Such was the want of discipline, and the licentiousness both in his family and army, that, not satisfied with the provision every where made for them at the public expense, they committed every kind of robbery and insult upon the inhabitants, setting slaves at liberty as they pleased; and if any dared to make resistance, they dealt blows and abuse, frequently wounds, and sometimes slaughter amongst them. When he reached the plains on which the battles were fought, some of those around him being offended at the smell of the carcases which lay rotting upon the ground, he had the audacity to encourage them by a most detestable remark, "That a dead enemy smelt not amiss, especially if he were a fellow-citizen." To qualify, however, the offensiveness of the stench, he quaffed in public a goblet of wine, and with equal vanity and insolence distributed a large quantity of it among his troops. On his observing a stone with an inscription upon it to the memory of Otho, he said, "It was a mausoleum good enough for such a prince." He also sent the poniard, with which Otho killed himself, to the colony of Agrippina, to be dedicated to Mars. Upon the Appenine hills he celebrated a Bacchanalian feast.

XI. At last he entered the City with trumpets sounding, in his general's cloak, and girded with

his sword, amidst a display of standards and banners; his attendants being all in the military habit, and the arms of the soldiers unsheathed. Acting more and more in open violation of all laws, both divine and human, he assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, upon the day of the defeat at the Allia; ordered the magistrates to be elected for ten years of office; and made himself consul for life. To put it out of all doubt what model he intended to follow in his government of the empire, he made his offerings to the shade of Nero in the midst of the Campus Martius, and with a full assembly of the public priests attending him. And at a solemn entertainment, he desired a harper who pleased the company much, to sing something in praise of Domitius; and upon his beginning some songs of Nero's, he started up in presence of the whole assembly, and could not refrain from applauding him, by clapping his hands.

XII. After such a commencement of his career, he conducted his affairs, during the greater part of his reign, entirely by the advice and direction of the vilest amongst the players and charioteers, and especially his freedman Asiaticus. This fellow had, when young, been engaged with him in a course of mutual and unnatural pollution, but, being at last quite tired of the occupation, ran away. His master, some time after, caught him at Puteoli, selling a liquor called Posca, and put him in chains, but soon released him, and retained him in his former capacity. Growing weary, however, of his rough and stubborn temper, he sold him to a strolling fencing-master; after which, when the fellow was to have been brought up to play his part at the conclusion of an entertainment of gladiators, he suddenly carried him off, and at length, upon his being advanced to the government of a province, gave him his freedom. The first day of his reign, he presented him with the gold rings at supper, though in the morning, when all about him requested that favour in his behalf, he expressed the utmost abhorrence of putting so great a stain upon the equestrian order.

XIII. He was chiefly addicted to the vices of luxury and cruelty. He always made three meals a day, sometimes four: breakfast, dinner, and supper, and a drunken revel after all. This load of victuals he could well enough bear, from a custom to which he had enured himself, of frequently vomiting. For

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these several meals he would make different appointments at the houses of his friends on the same day. None ever entertained him at less expense than four hundred thousand sesterces. The most famous was a set entertainment given him by his brother, at which, it is said, there were served up no less than two thousand choice fishes, and seven thousand birds. Yet even this supper he himself outdid, at a feast which he gave upon the first use of a dish which had been made for him, and which, for its extraordinary size, he called "The Shield of Minerva." In this dish there were tossed up together the livers of char-fish, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, with the tongues of flamingos, and the entrails of lampreys, which had been brought in ships of war as far as from the Carpathian Sea, and the Spanish Straits. He was not only a man of an insatiable appetite, but would gratify it likewise at unseasonable times, and with any garbage that came in his way; so that, at a sacrifice, he would snatch from the fire flesh and cakes, and eat them upon the spot. When he travelled, he did the same at the inns upon the road, whether the meat was fresh dressed and hot, or what had been left the day before, and was half-eaten.

XIV. He delighted in the infliction of punishments, and even those which were capital, without any distinction of persons or occasions. Several noblemen, his school-fellows and companions, invited by him to court, he treated with such flattering caresses, as seemed to indicate an affection short only of admitting them to share the honours of the imperial dignity; yet he put them all to death by some base means or other. To one he gave poison with his own hand, in a cup of cold water which he called for in a fever. He scarcely spared one of all the usurers, notaries, and publicans, who had ever demanded a debt of him at Rome, or any toll or custom upon the road. One of these, while in the very act of saluting him, he ordered for execution, but immediately sent for him back; upon which all about him applauding his clemency, he commanded him to be slain in his own presence, saying, "I have a mind to feed my eyes." Two sons who interceded for their father, he ordered to be executed with him. A Roman knight, upon his being dragged away for execution, and crying out to him, "You are my heir," he desired to

produce his will: and finding that he had made his freedman joint heir with him, he commanded that both he and the freedman should have their throats cut. He put to death some of the common people for cursing aloud the blue party in the Circensian games; supposing it to be done in contempt of himself, and the expectation of a revolution in the government. There were no persons he was more severe against than jugglers and astrologers; and as soon as any one of them was informed against, he put him to death without the formality of a trial. He was enraged against them, because, after his proclamation by which he commanded all astrologers to quit home, and Italy also, before the calends [the first] of October, a bill was immediately posted about the city, with the following words:--"TAKE NOTICE: The Chaldaeans also decree that Vitellius Germanicus shall be no more, by the day of the said calends." He was even suspected of being accessory to his mother's death, by forbidding sustenance to be given her when she was unwell; a German witch, whom he held to be oracular, having told him, "That he would long reign in security if he survived his mother." But others say, that being quite weary of the state of affairs, and apprehensive of the future, she obtained without difficulty a dose of poison from her son.

XV. In the eighth month of his reign, the troops both in Moesia and Pannonia revolted from him; as did likewise, of the armies beyond sea, those in Judaea and Syria, some of which swore allegiance to Vespasian as emperor in his own presence, and others in his absence. In order, therefore, to secure the favour and affection of the people, Vitellius lavished on all around whatever he had it in his power to bestow, both publicly and privately, in the most extravagant manner. He also levied soldiers in the city, and promised all who enlisted as volunteers, not only their discharge after the victory was gained, but all the rewards due to veterans who had served their full time in the wars. The enemy now pressing forward both by sea and land, on one hand he opposed against them his brother with a fleet, the new levies, and a body of gladiators, and in another quarter the troops and generals who were engaged at Bedriacum. But being beaten or betrayed in every direction, he agreed with Flavius Sabinus,

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Vespasian's brother, to abdicate, on condition of having his life spared, and a hundred millions of sesterces granted him; and he immediately, upon the palace-steps, publicly declared to a large body of soldiers there assembled, "that he resigned the government, which he had accepted reluctantly;" but they all remonstrating against it, he deferred the conclusion of the treaty. Next day, early in the morning, he came down to the Forum in a very mean habit, and with many tears repeated the declaration from a writing which he held in his hand; but the soldiers and people again interposing, and encouraging him not to give way, but to rely on their zealous support, he recovered his courage, and forced Sabinus, with the rest of the Flavian party, who now thought themselves secure, to retreat into the Capitol, where he destroyed them all by setting fire to the temple of Jupiter, whilst he beheld the contest and the fire from Tiberius's house, where he was feasting. Not long after, repenting of what he had done, and throwing the blame of it upon others, he called a meeting, and swore "that nothing was dearer to him than the public peace;" which oath he also obliged the rest to take. Then drawing a dagger from his side, he presented it first to the consul, and, upon his refusing it, to the magistrates, and then to every one of the senators; but none of them being willing to accept it, he went away, as if he meant to lay it up in the temple of Concord; but some crying out to him, "You are Concord," he came back again, and said that he would not only keep his weapon, but for the future use the cognomen of Concord.

XVI. He advised the senate to send deputies, accompanied by the Vestal Virgins, to desire peace, or, at least, time for consultation. The day after, while he was waiting for an answer, he received intelligence by a scout, that the enemy was advancing. Immediately, therefore, throwing himself into a small litter, borne by hand, with only two attendants, a baker and a cook, he privately withdrew to his father's house, on the Aventine hill, intending to escape thence into Campania. But a groundless report being circulated, that the enemy was willing to come to terms, he suffered himself to be carried back to the palace. Finding, however, nobody there, and those who were with him stealing away, he girded round his waist a belt

full of gold pieces, and then ran into the porter's lodge, tying the dog before the door, and piling up against it the bed and bedding.

XVII. By this time the forerunners of the enemy's army had broken into the palace, and meeting with nobody, searched, as was natural, every corner. Being dragged by them out of his cell, and asked "who he was?" (for they did not recognize him), "and if he knew where Vitellius was?" he deceived them by a falsehood. But at last being discovered, he begged hard to be detained in custody, even were it in a prison; pretending to have something to say which concerned Vespasian's security. Nevertheless, he was dragged half-naked into the Forum, with his hands tied behind him, a rope about his neck, and his clothes torn, amidst the most contemptuous abuse, both by word and deed, along the Via Sacra; his head being held back by the hair, in the manner of condemned criminals, and the point of a sword put under his chin, that he might hold up his face to public view; some of the mob, meanwhile, pelting him with dung and mud, whilst others called him "an incendiary and glutton." They also upbraided him with the defects of his person, for he was monstrously tall, and had a face usually very red with hard-drinking, a large belly, and one thigh weak, occasioned by a chariot running against him, as he was attending upon Caius, while he was driving. At length, upon the Scalae Gemoniae, he was tormented and put to death in lingering tortures, and then dragged by a hook into the Tiber.

XVIII. He perished with his brother and son, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and verified the prediction of those who, from the omen which happened to him at Vienne, as before related, foretold that he would be made prisoner by some man of Gaul. For he was seized by Antoninus Primus, a general of the adverse party, who was born at Toulouse, and, when a boy, had the cognomen of Becco, which signifies a cock's beak.

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After the extinction of the race of the Caesars, the possession of the imperial power became extremely precarious; and great influence in the army was the means which now invariably led to the throne. The soldiers having arrogated to themselves the right of nomination, they either

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unanimously elected one and the same person, or different parties supporting the interests of their respective favourites, there arose between them a contention, which was usually determined by an appeal to arms, and followed by the assassination of the unsuccessful competitor. Vitellius, by being a parasite of all the emperors from Tiberius to Nero inclusively, had risen to a high military rank, by which, with a spirit of enterprise, and large promises to the soldiery, it was not difficult to snatch the reins of government, while they were yet fluctuating in the hands of Otho. His ambition prompted to the attempt, and his boldness was crowned with success. In the service of the four preceding emperors, Vitellius had imbibed the principal vices of them all: but what chiefly distinguished him was extreme voraciousness, which, though he usually pampered it with enormous luxury, could yet be gratified by the vilest and most offensive garbage. The pusillanimity discovered by this emperor at his death, forms a striking contrast to the heroic behaviour of Otho.

T. Flavius Vespasianus Augustus

I. The empire, which had been long thrown into a disturbed and unsettle state, by the rebellion and violent death of its three last rulers, was at length restored to peace and security by the Flavian family, whose descent was indeed obscure, and which boasted no ancestral honours; but the public had no cause to regret its elevation; though it is acknowledged that Domitian met with the just reward of his avarice and cruelty. Titus Flavius Petro, a townsman of Reate, whether a centurion or an evocatus of Pompey's party in the civil war, is uncertain, fled out of the battle of Pharsalia and went home; where, having at last obtained his pardon and discharge, he became a collector of the money raised by public sales in the way of auction. His son, surnamed Sabinus, was never engaged in the military service, though some say he was a centurion of the first order, and others, that whilst he held that rank, he was discharged on account of his bad state of health: this Sabinus, I say, was a publican, and received the tax of the fortieth penny in Asia. And there were remaining, at the time of the advancement of the family, several statues, which had been erected to him by the cities of that

province, with this inscription: "To the honest Tax-farmer." He afterwards turned usurer amongst the Helvetii, and there died, leaving behind him his wife, Vespasia Pella, and two sons by her; the elder of whom, Sabinus, came to be prefect of the city, and the younger, Vespasian, to be emperor. Polla, descended of a good family, at Nursia, had for her father Vespasius Pollio, thrice appointed military tribune, and at last prefect of the camp; and her brother was a senator of praetorian dignity. There is to this day, about six miles from Nursia, on the road to Spoleto, a place on the summit of a hill, called Vespasiae, where are several monuments of the Vespasii, a sufficient proof of the splendour and antiquity of the family. I will not deny that some have pretended to say, that Petro's father was a native of Gallia Transpadana, whose employment was to hire workpeople who used to emigrate every year from the country of the Umbria into that of the Sabines, to assist them in their husbandry; but who settled at last in the town of Reate, and there married. But of this I have not been able to discover the least proof, upon the strictest inquiry.

II. Vespasian was born in the country of the Sabines, beyond Reate, in a little country-seat called Phalacrine, upon the fifth of the calends of December [27th November], in the evening, in the consulship of Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus and Caius Poppaeus Sabinus, five years before the death of Augustus; and was educated under the care of Tertulla, his grandmother by the father's side, upon an estate belonging to the family, at Cosa. After his advancement to the empire, he used frequently to visit the place where he had spent his infancy; and the villa was continued in the same condition, that he might see every thing about him just as he had been used to do. And he had so great a regard for the memory of his grandmother, that, upon solemn occasions and festival days, he constantly drank out of a silver cup which she had been accustomed to use. After assuming the manly habit, he had a long time a distaste for the senatorian toga, though his brother had obtained it; nor could he be persuaded by any one but his mother to sue for that badge of honour. She at length drove him to it, more by taunts and reproaches, than by her entreaties and authority, calling him now and then, by way of reproach, his

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brother's footman. He served as military tribune in Thrace. When made quaestor, the province of Crete and Cyrene fell to him by lot. He was candidate for the aedileship, and soon after for the praetorship, but met with a repulse in the former case; though at last, with much difficulty, he came in sixth on the poll-books. But the office of praetor he carried upon his first canvass, standing amongst the highest at the poll. Being incensed against the senate, and desirous to gain, by all possible means, the good graces of Caius, he obtained leave to exhibit extraordinary games for the emperor's victory in Germany, and advised them to increase the punishment of the conspirators against his life, by exposing their corpses unburied. He likewise gave him thanks in that august assembly for the honour of being admitted to his table.

III. Meanwhile, he married Flavia Domitilla, who had formerly been the mistress of Statilius Capella, a Roman knight of Sabrata in Africa, who [Domitilla] enjoyed Latin rights; and was soon after declared fully and freely a citizen of Rome, on a trial before the court of Recovery, brought by her father Flavius Liberalis, a native of Ferentum, but no more than secretary to a quaestor. By her he had the following children: Titus, Domitian, and Domitilla. He outlived his wife and daughter, and lost them both before he became emperor. After the death of his wife, he renewed his union with his former concubine Caenis, the freedwoman of Antonia, and also her amanuensis, and treated her, even after he was emperor, almost as if she had been his lawful wife.

IV. In the reign of Claudius, by the interest of Narcissus, he was sent to Germany, in command of a legion; whence being removed into Britain, he engaged the enemy in thirty several battles. He reduced under subjection to the Romans two very powerful tribes, and above twenty great towns, with the Isle of Wight, which lies close to the coast of Britain; partly under the command of Aulus Plautius, the consular lieutenant, and partly under Claudius himself. For this success he received the triumphal ornaments, and in a short time after two priesthoods, besides the consulship, which he held during the two last months of the year. The interval between that and his proconsulship he spent in leisure and retirement, for fear of

Agrippina, who still held great sway over her son, and hated all the friends of Narcissus, who was then dead. Afterwards he got by lot the province of Africa, which he governed with great reputation, excepting that once, in an insurrection at Adrumetum, he was pelted with turnips. It is certain that he returned thence nothing richer; for his credit was so low, that he was obliged to mortgage his whole property to his brother, and was reduced to the necessity of dealing in mules, for the support of his rank; for which reason he was commonly called "the Muleteer." He is said likewise to have been convicted of extorting from a young man of fashion two hundred thousand sesterces for procuring him the broad-stripe, contrary to the wishes of his father, and was severely reprimanded for it. While in attendance upon Nero in Achaia, he frequently withdrew from the theatre while Nero was singing, and went to sleep if he remained, which gave so much offence, that he was not only excluded from his society, but debarred the liberty of saluting him in public. Upon this, he retired to a small out-of-the-way town, where he lay skulking in constant fear of his life, until a province, with an army, was offered him.

A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East, that it was fated for the empire of the world, at that time, to devolve on some who should go forth from Judaea. This prediction referred to a Roman emperor, as the event shewed; but the Jews, applying it to themselves, broke out into rebellion, and having defeated and slain their governor, routed the lieutenant of Syria, a man of consular rank, who was advancing to his assistance, and took an eagle, the standard, of one of his legions. As the suppression of this revolt appeared to require a stronger force and an active general, who might be safely trusted in an affair of so much importance, Vespasian was chosen in preference to all others, both for his known activity, and on account of the obscurity of his origin and name, being a person of whom there could be not the least jealousy. Two legions, therefore, eight squadrons of horse, and ten cohorts, being added to the former troops in Judaea, and, taking with him his eldest son as lieutenant, as soon as he arrived in his province, he turned the eyes of the neighbouring provinces

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upon him, by reforming immediately the discipline of the camp, and engaging the enemy once or twice with such resolution, that, in the attack of a castle, he had his knee hurt by the stroke of a stone, and received several arrows in his shield.

V. After the deaths of Nero and Galba, whilst Otho and Vitellius were contending for the sovereignty, he entertained hopes of obtaining the empire, with the prospect of which he had long before flattered himself, from the following omens. Upon an estate belonging to the Flavian family, in the neighbourhood of Rome, there was an old oak, sacred to Mars, which, at the three several deliveries of Vespasia, put out each time a new branch; evident intimations of the future fortune of each child. The first was but a slender one, which quickly withered away; and accordingly, the girl that was born did not live long. The second became vigorous, which portended great good fortune; but the third grew like a tree. His father, Sabinus, encouraged by these omens, which were confirmed by the augurs, told his mother, "that her grandson would be emperor of Rome;" at which she laughed heartily, wondering, she said, "that her son should be in his dotage whilst she continued still in full possession of her faculties."

Afterwards in his aedileship, when Caius Caesar, being enraged at his not taking care to have the streets kept clean, ordered the soldiers to fill the bosom of his gown with dirt, some persons at that time construed it into a sign that the government, being trampled under foot and deserted in some civil commotion, would fall under his protection, and as it were into his lap. Once, while he was at dinner, a strange dog, that wandered about the streets, brought a man's hand, and laid it under the table. And another time, while he was at supper, a plough-ox throwing the yoke off his neck, broke into the room, and after he had frightened away all the attendants, on a sudden, as if he was tired, fell down at his feet, as he lay still upon his couch, and hung down his neck. A cypress-tree likewise, in a field belonging to the family, was torn up by the roots, and laid flat upon the ground, when there was no violent wind; but next day it rose again fresher and stronger than before.

He dreamt in Achaia that the good fortune of himself and his family would begin when Nero had

a tooth drawn; and it happened that the day after, a surgeon coming into the hall, showed him a tooth which he had just extracted from Nero. In Judaea, upon his consulting the oracle of the divinity at Carmel, the answer was so encouraging as to assure him of success in anything he projected, however great or important it might be. And when Josephus, one of the noble prisoners, was put in chains, he confidently affirmed that he should be released in a very short time by the same Vespasian, but he would be emperor first. Some omens were likewise mentioned in the news from Rome, and among others, that Nero, towards the close of his days, was commanded in a dream to carry Jupiter's sacred chariot out of the sanctuary where it stood, to Vespasian's house, and conduct it thence into the circus. Also not long afterwards, as Galba was going to the election, in which he was created consul for the second time, a statue of the Divine Julius turned towards the east. And in the field of Bedriacum, before the battle began, two eagles engaged in the sight of the army; and one of them being beaten, a third came from the east, and drove away the conqueror.

VI. He made, however, no attempt upon the sovereignty, though his friends were very ready to support him, and even pressed him to the enterprise, until he was encouraged to it by the fortuitous aid of persons unknown to him and at a distance. Two thousand men, drawn out of three legions in the Moesian army, had been sent to the assistance of Otho. While they were upon their march, news came that he had been defeated, and had put an end to his life; notwithstanding which they continued their march as far as Aquileia, pretending that they gave no credit to the report. There, tempted by the opportunity which the disorder of the times afforded them, they ravaged and plundered the country at discretion; until at length, fearing to be called to an account on their return, and punished for it, they resolved upon choosing and creating an emperor. "For they were no ways inferior," they said, "to the army which made Galba emperor, nor to the pretorian troops which had set up Otho, nor the army in Germany, to whom Vitellius owed his elevation." The names of all the consular lieutenants, therefore, being taken into consideration, and one objecting to one, and another to another, for various reasons; at last

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some of the third legion, which a little before Nero's death had been removed out of Syria into Moesia, extolled Vespasian in high terms; and all the rest assenting, his name was immediately inscribed on their standards. The design was nevertheless quashed for a time, the troops being brought to submit to Vitellius a little longer.

However, the fact becoming known, Tiberius Alexander, governor of Egypt, first obliged the legions under his command to swear obedience to Vespasian as their emperor, on the calends [the 1st] of July, which was observed ever after as the day of his accession to the empire; and upon the fifth of the ides of the same month [the 28th July], the army in Judaea, where he then was, also swore allegiance to him. What contributed greatly to forward the affair, was a copy of a letter, whether real or counterfeit, which was circulated, and said to have been written by Otho before his decease to Vespasian, recommending to him in the most urgent terms to avenge his death, and entreating him to come to the aid of the commonwealth; as well as a report which was circulated, that Vitellius, after his success against Otho, proposed to change the winter quarters of the legions, and remove those in Germany to a less hazardous station and a warmer climate. Moreover, amongst the governors of provinces, Licinius Mucianus dropping the grudge arising from a jealousy of which he had hitherto made no secret, promised to join him with the Syrian army, and, among the allied kings, Volugesus, king of the Parthians, offered him a reinforcement of forty thousand archers.

VII. Having, therefore, entered on a civil war, and sent forward his generals and forces into Italy, he himself, in the meantime, passed over to Alexandria, to obtain possession of the key of Egypt. Here having entered alone, without attendants, the temple of Serapis, to take the auspices respecting the establishment of his power, and having done his utmost to propitiate the deity, upon turning round, [his freedman] Basilides appeared before him, and seemed to offer him the sacred leaves, chaplets, and cakes, according to the usage of the place, although no one had admitted him, and he had long laboured under a muscular debility, which would hardly have allowed him to walk into the temple; besides

which, it was certain that at the very time he was far away. Immediately after this, arrived letters with intelligence that Vitellius's troops had been defeated at Cremona, and he himself slain at Rome. Vespasian, the new emperor, having been raised unexpectedly from a low estate, wanted something which might clothe him with divine majesty and authority. This, likewise, was now added. A poor man who was blind, and another who was lame, came both together before him, when he was seated on the tribunal, imploring him to heal them, and saying that they were admonished in a dream by the god Serapis to seek his aid, who assured them that he would restore sight to the one by anointing his eyes with his spittle, and give strength to the leg of the other, if he vouchsafed but to touch it with his heel. At first he could scarcely believe that the thing would any how succeed, and therefore hesitated to venture on making the experiment. At length, however, by the advice of his friends, he made the attempt publicly, in the presence of the assembled multitudes, and it was crowned with success in both cases. About the same time, at Tegea in Arcadia, by the direction of some soothsayers, several vessels of ancient workmanship were dug out of a consecrated place, on which there was an effigy resembling Vespasian.

VIII. Returning now to Rome, under these auspices, and with a great reputation, after enjoying a triumph for victories over the Jews, he added eight consulships to his former one. He likewise assumed the censorship, and made it his principal concern, during the whole of his government, first to restore order in the state, which had been almost ruined, and was in a tottering condition, and then to improve it. The soldiers, one part of them emboldened by victory, and the other smarting with the disgrace of their defeat, had abandoned themselves to every species of licentiousness and insolence. Nay, the provinces, too, and free cities, and some kingdoms in alliance with Rome, were all in a disturbed state. He, therefore, disbanded many of Vitellius's soldiers, and punished others; and so far was he from granting any extraordinary favours to the sharers of his success, that it was late before he paid the gratuities due to them by law. That he might let slip no opportunity of reforming the

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discipline of the army, upon a young man's coming much perfumed to return him thanks for having appointed him to command a squadron of horse, he turned away his head in disgust, and, giving him this sharp reprimand, "I had rather you had smelt of garlic," revoked his commission. When the men belonging to the fleet, who travelled by turns from Ostia and Puteoli to Rome, petitioned for an addition to their pay, under the name of shoe-money, thinking that it would answer little purpose to send them away without a reply, he ordered them for the future to run barefooted; and so they have done ever since. He deprived of their liberties, Achaia, Lycia, Rhodes, Byzantium, and Samos; and reduced them into the form of provinces; Thrace, also, and Cilicia, as well as Comagene, which until that time had been under the government of kings. He stationed some legions in Cappadocia on account of the frequent inroads of the barbarians, and, instead of a Roman knight, appointed as governor of it a man of consular rank. The ruins of houses which had been burnt down long before, being a great desight to the city, he gave leave to any one who would, to take possession of the void ground and build upon it, if the proprietors should hesitate to perform the work themselves. He resolved upon rebuilding the Capitol, and was the foremost to put his hand to clearing the ground of the rubbish, and removed some of it upon his own shoulder. And he undertook, likewise, to restore the three thousand tables of brass which had been destroyed in the fire which consumed the Capitol; searching in all quarters for copies of those curious and ancient records, in which were contained the decrees of the senate, almost from the building of the city, as well as the acts of the people, relative to alliances, treaties, and privileges granted to any person.

IX. He likewise erected several new public buildings, namely, the temple of Peace near the Forum, that of Claudius on the Coelian mount, which had been begun by Agrippina, but almost entirely demolished by Nero; and an amphitheatre in the middle of the city, upon finding that Augustus had projected such a work. He purified the senatorian and equestrian orders, which had been much reduced by the havoc made amongst them at several times, and was fallen into disrepute by neglect. Having expelled the most

unworthy, he chose in their room the most honourable persons in Italy and the provinces. And to let it be known that those two orders differed not so much in privileges as in dignity, he declared publicly, when some altercation passed between a senator and a Roman knight, "that senators ought not to be treated with scurrilous language, unless they were the aggressors, and then it was fair and lawful to return it."

X. The business of the courts had prodigiously accumulated, partly from old law-suits which, on account of the interruption that had been given to the course of justice, still remained undecided, and partly from the accession of new suits arising out of the disorder of the times. He, therefore, chose commissioners by lot to provide for the restitution of what had been seized by violence during the war, and others with extraordinary jurisdiction to decide causes belonging to the centumviri, and reduce them to as small a number as possible, for the dispatch of which, otherwise, the lives of the litigants could scarcely allow sufficient time.

XI. Lust and luxury, from the licence which had long prevailed, had also grown to an enormous height. He, therefore, obtained a decree of the senate, that a woman who formed an union with the slave of another person, should be considered a bondwoman herself; and that usurers should not be allowed to take proceedings at law for the recovery of money lent to young men whilst they lived in their father's family, not even after their fathers were dead.

XII. In other affairs, from the beginning to the end of his government, he conducted himself with great moderation and clemency. He was so far from dissembling the obscurity of his extraction, that he frequently made mention of it himself. When some affected to trace his pedigree to the founders of Reate, and a companion of Hercules, whose monument is still to be seen on the Salarian road, he laughed at them for it. And he was so little fond of external and adventitious ornaments, that, on the day of his triumph, being quite tired of the length and tediousness of the procession, he could not forbear saying, "he was rightly served, for having in his old age been so silly as to desire a triumph; as if it was either due to his ancestors, or had ever been expected by himself." Nor would he

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for a long time accept of the tribunitian authority, or the title of Father of his Country. And in regard to the custom of searching those who came to salute him, he dropped it even in the time of the civil war.

XIII. He bore with great mildness the freedom used by his friends, the satirical allusions of advocates, and the petulance of philosophers. Licinius Mucianus, who had been guilty of notorious acts of lewdness, but, presuming upon his great services, treated him very rudely, he reproved only in private; and when complaining of his conduct to a common friend of theirs, he concluded with these words, "However, I am a man." Salvius Liberalis, in pleading the cause of a rich man under prosecution, presuming to say, "What is it to Caesar, if Hipparchus possesses a hundred millions of sesterces?" he commended him for it. Demetrius, the Cynic philosopher, who had been sentenced to banishment, meeting him on the road, and refusing to rise up or salute him, nay, snarling at him in scurrilous language, he only called him a cur.

XIV. He was little disposed to keep up the memory of affronts or quarrels, nor did he harbour any resentment on account of them. He made a very splendid marriage for the daughter of his enemy Vitellius, and gave her, besides, a suitable fortune and equipage. Being in a great consternation after he was forbidden the court in the time of Nero, and asking those about him, what he should do? or, whither he should go? one of those whose office it was to introduce people to the emperor, thrusting him out, bid him go to Morbonia. But when this same person came afterwards to beg his pardon, he only vented his resentment in nearly the same words. He was so far from being influenced by suspicion or fear to seek the destruction of any one, that, when his friends advised him to beware of Metius Pomposianus, because it was commonly believed, on his nativity being cast, that he was destined by fate to the empire, he made him consul, promising for him, that he would not forget the benefit conferred.

XV. It will scarcely be found, that so much as one innocent person suffered in his reign, unless in his absence, and without his knowledge, or, at least, contrary to his inclination, and when he was

imposed upon. Although Helvidius Priscus was the only man who presumed to salute him on his return from Syria by his private name of Vespasian, and, when he came to be praetor, omitted any mark of honour to him, or even any mention of him in his edicts, yet he was not angry, until Helvidius proceeded to inveigh against him with the most scurrilous language. Though he did indeed banish him, and afterwards ordered him to be put to death, yet he would gladly have saved him notwithstanding, and accordingly dispatched messengers to fetch back the executioners; and he would have saved him, had he not been deceived by a false account brought, that he had already perished. He never rejoiced at the death of any man; nay he would shed tears, and sigh, at the just punishment of the guilty.

XVI. The only thing deservedly blameable in his character was his love of money. For not satisfied with reviving the imposts which had been repealed in the time of Galba, he imposed new and onerous taxes, augmented the tribute of the provinces, and doubled that of some of them. He likewise openly engaged in a traffic, which is discreditable even to a private individual, buying great quantities of goods, for the purpose of retailing them again to advantage. Nay, he made no scruple of selling the great offices of the state to candidates, and pardons to persons under prosecution, whether they were innocent or guilty. It is believed, that he advanced all the most rapacious amongst the procurators to higher offices, with the view of squeezing them after they had acquired great wealth. He was commonly said, "to have used them as sponges," because it was his practice, as we may say, to wet them when dry, and squeeze them when wet. It is said that he was naturally extremely covetous, and was upbraided with it by an old herdsman of his, who, upon the emperor's refusing to enfranchise him gratis, which on his advancement he humbly petitioned for, cried out, "That the fox changed his hair, but not his nature." On the other hand, some are of opinion, that he was urged to his rapacious proceedings by necessity, and the extreme poverty of the treasury and exchequer, of which he took public notice in the beginning of his reign; declaring that "no less than four hundred thousand millions of sesterces were wanting to carry on the

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government." This is the more likely to be true, because he applied to the best purposes what he procured by bad means.

XVII. His liberality, however, to all ranks of people, was excessive. He made up to several senators the estate required by law to qualify them for that dignity; relieving likewise such men of consular rank as were poor, with a yearly allowance of five hundred thousand sesterces; and rebuilt, in a better manner than before, several cities in different parts of the empire, which had been damaged by earthquakes or fires.

XVIII. He was a great encourager of learning and the liberal arts. He first granted to the Latin and Greek professors of rhetoric the yearly stipend of a hundred thousand sesterces each out of the exchequer. He also bought the freedom of superior poets and artists, and gave a noble gratuity to the restorer of the Coan of Venus, and to another artist who repaired the Colossus. Some one offering to convey some immense columns into the Capitol at a small expense by a mechanical contrivance, he rewarded him very handsomely for his invention, but would not accept his service, saying, "Suffer me to find maintenance for the poor people."

XIX. In the games celebrated when the stage-scenery of the theatre of Marcellus was repaired, he restored the old musical entertainments. He gave Apollinaris, the tragedian, four hundred thousand sesterces, and to Terpinus and Diodorus, the harpers, two hundred thousand; to some a hundred thousand; and the least he gave to any of the performers was forty thousand, besides many golden crowns. He entertained company constantly at his table, and often in great state and very sumptuously, in order to promote trade. As in the Saturnalia he made presents to the men which they were to carry away with them, so did he to the women upon the calends of March; notwithstanding which, he could not wipe off the disrepute of his former stinginess. The Alexandrians called him constantly Cybiosactes; a name which had been given to one of their kings who was sordidly avaricious. Nay, at his funeral, Favo, the principal mimic, personating him, and imitating, as actors do, both his manner of speaking and his gestures, asked aloud of the procurators, "how much his funeral and the

procession would cost?" And being answered "ten millions of sesterces," he cried out, "give him but a hundred thousand sesterces, and they might throw his body into the Tiber, if they would."

XX. He was broad-set, strong-limbed, and his features gave the idea of a man in the act of straining himself. In consequence, one of the city wits, upon the emperor's desiring him "to say something droll respecting himself," facetiously answered, "I will, when you have done relieving your bowels." He enjoyed a good state of health, though he used no other means to preserve it, than repeated friction, as much as he could bear, on his neck and other parts of his body, in the tennis-court attached to the baths, besides fasting one day in every month.

XXI. His method of life was commonly this. After he became emperor, he used to rise very early, often before daybreak. Having read over his letters, and the briefs of all the departments of the government offices; he admitted his friends; and while they were paying him their compliments, he would put on his own shoes, and dress himself with his own hands. Then, after the dispatch of such business as was brought before him, he rode out, and afterwards retired to repose, lying on his couch with one of his mistresses, of whom he kept several after the death of Caenis. Coming out of his private apartments, he passed to the bath, and then entered the supper-room. They say that he was never more good-humoured and indulgent than at that time: and therefore his attendants always seized that opportunity, when they had any favour to ask.

XXII. At supper, and, indeed, at other times, he was extremely free and jocose. For he had humour, but of a low kind, and he would sometimes use indecent language, such as is addressed to young girls about to be married. Yet there are some things related of him not void of ingenious pleasantry; amongst which are the following. Being once reminded by Mestrius Florus, that plaustra was a more proper expression than plostra, he the next day saluted him by the name of Flaurus. A certain lady pretending to be desperately enamoured of him, he was prevailed upon to admit her to his bed; and after he had gratified her desires, he gave her four hundred

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thousand sesterces. When his steward desired to know how he would have the sum entered in his accounts, he replied, "For Vespasian's being seduced."

XXIII. He used Greek verses very wittily; speaking of a tall man, who had enormous parts:

Makxi bibas, kradon dolichoskion enchos; Still shaking, as he strode, his vast long spear.

And of Cerylus, a freedman, who being very rich, had begun to pass himself off as free-born, to elude the exchequer at his decease, and assumed the name of Laches, he said:

----O Lachaes, Lachaes, Epan apothanaes, authis ex archaes esae Kaerylos.

Ah, Laches, Laches! when thou art no more, Thou'lt Cerylus be called, just as before.

He chiefly affected wit upon his own shameful means of raising money, in order to wipe off the odium by some joke, and turn it into ridicule. One of his ministers, who was much in his favour, requesting of him a stewardship for some person, under pretence of his being his brother, he deferred granting him his petition, and in the meantime sent for the candidate, and having squeezed out of him as much money as he had agreed to give to his friend at court, he appointed him immediately to the office. The minister soon after renewing his application, "You must," said he, "find another brother; for the one you adopted is in truth mine."

Suspecting once, during a journey, that his mule-driver had alighted to shoe his mules, only in order to have an opportunity for allowing a person they met, who was engaged in a law-suit, to speak to him, he asked him, "how much he got for shoeing his mules?" and insisted on having a share of the profit. When his son Titus blamed him for even laying a tax upon urine, he applied to his nose a piece of the money he received in the first instalment, and asked him, "if it stunk?" And he replying no, "And yet," said he, "it is derived from urine."

Some deputies having come to acquaint him that a large statue, which would cost a vast sum, was ordered to be erected for him at the public expense, he told them to pay it down immediately, holding out the hollow of his hand, and saying,

"there was a base ready for the statue." Not even when he was under the immediate apprehension and peril of death, could he forbear jesting. For when, among other prodigies, the mausoleum of the Caesars suddenly flew open, and a blazing star appeared in the heavens; one of the prodigies, he said, concerned Julia Calvina, who was of the family of Augustus; and the other, the king of the Parthians, who wore his hair long. And when his distemper first seized him, "I suppose," said he, "I shall soon be a god."

XXIV. In his ninth consulship, being seized, while in Campania, with a slight indisposition, and immediately returning to the city, he soon afterwards went thence to Cutiliae, and his estates in the country about Reate, where he used constantly to spend the summer. Here, though his disorder much increased, and he injured his bowels by too free use of the cold waters, he nevertheless attended to the dispatch of business, and even gave audience to ambassadors in bed. At last, being taken ill of a diarrhoea, to such a degree that he was ready to faint, he cried out, "An emperor ought to die standing upright." In endeavouring to rise, he died in the hands of those who were helping him up, upon the eighth of the calends of July [24th June], being sixty-nine years, one month, and seven days old.

XXV. All are agreed that he had such confidence in the calculations on his own nativity and that of his sons, that, after several conspiracies against him, he told the senate, that either his sons would succeed him, or nobody. It is said likewise, that he once saw in a dream a balance in the middle of the porch of the Palatine house exactly poised; in one scale of which stood Claudius and Nero, in the other, himself and his sons. The event corresponded to the symbol; for the reigns of the two parties were precisely of the same duration.

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Neither consanguinity nor adoption, as formerly, but great influence in the army having now become the road to the imperial throne, no person could claim a better title to that elevation than Titus Flavius Vespasian. He had not only served with great reputation in the wars both in Britain and Judaea, but seemed as yet untainted with any vice which could pervert his conduct in the civil

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administration of the empire. It appears, however, that he was prompted more by the persuasion of friends, than by his own ambition, to prosecute the attainment of the imperial dignity. To render this enterprise more successful, recourse was had to a new and peculiar artifice, which, while well accommodated to the superstitious credulity of the Romans, impressed them with an idea, that Vespasian's destiny to the throne was confirmed by supernatural indications. But, after his elevation, we hear no more of his miraculous achievements.

The prosecution of the war in Britain, which had been suspended for some years, was resumed by Vespasian; and he sent thither Petilius Cerealis, who by his bravery extended the limits of the Roman province. Under Julius Frontinus, successor to that general, the invaders continued to make farther progress in the reduction of the island: but the commander who finally established the dominion of the Romans in Britain, was Julius Agricola, not less distinguished for his military achievements, than for his prudent regard to the civil administration of the country. He began his operations with the conquest of North Wales, whence passing over into the island of Anglesey, which had revolted since the time of Suetonius Paulinus, he again reduced it to subjection. Then proceeding northwards with his victorious army, he defeated the Britons in every engagement, took possession of all the territories in the southern parts of the island, and driving before him all who refused to submit to the Roman arms, penetrated even into the forests and mountains of Caledonia. He defeated the natives under Galgacus, their leader, in a decisive battle; and fixing a line of garrisons between the friths of Clyde and Forth, he secured the Roman province from the incursions of the people who occupied the parts of the island beyond that boundary. Wherever he established the Roman power, he introduced laws and civilization amongst the inhabitants, and employed every means of conciliating their affection, as well as of securing their obedience.

The war in Judaea, which had been commenced under the former reign, was continued in that of Vespasian; but he left the siege of Jerusalem to be conducted by his son Titus, who displayed great valour and military talents in the prosecution of

the enterprise. After an obstinate defence by the Jews, that city, so much celebrated in the sacred writings, was finally demolished, and the glorious temple itself, the admiration of the world, reduced to ashes; contrary, however, to the will of Titus, who exerted his utmost efforts to extinguish the flames.

The manners of the Romans had now attained to an enormous pitch of depravity, through the unbounded licentiousness of the times; and, to the honour of Vespasian, he discovered great zeal in his endeavours to effect a national reformation. Vigilant, active, and persevering, he was indefatigable in the management of public affairs, and rose in the winter before day-break, to give audience to his officers of state. But if we give credit to the whimsical imposition of a tax upon urine, we cannot entertain any high opinion, either of his talents as a financier, or of the resources of the Roman empire. By his encouragement of science, he displayed a liberality, of which there occurs no example under all the preceding emperors, since the time of Augustus. Pliny the elder was now in the height of reputation, as well as in great favour with Vespasian; and it was probably owing not a little to the advice of that minister, that the emperor showed himself so much the patron of literary men. A writer mentioned frequently by Pliny, and who lived in this reign, was Licinius Mucianus, a Roman knight: he treated of the history and geography of the eastern countries. Juvenal, who had begun his Satires several years before, continued to inveigh against the flagrant vices of the times; but the only author whose writings we have to notice in the present reign, is a poet of a different class.

C. VALERIUS FLACCUS wrote a poem in eight books, on the Expedition of the Argonauts; a subject which, next to the wars of Thebes and Troy, was in ancient times the most celebrated. Of the life of this author, biographers have transmitted no particulars; but we may place his birth in the reign of Tiberius, before all the writers who flourished in the Augustan age were extinct. He enjoyed the rays of the setting sun which had illumined that glorious period, and he discovers the efforts of an ambition to recall its meridian splendour. As the poem was left incomplete by the death of the author, we can only judge

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imperfectly of the conduct and general consistency of the fable: but the most difficult part having been executed, without any room for the censure of candid criticism, we may presume that the sequel would have been finished with an equal claim to indulgence, if not to applause. The traditional anecdotes relative to the Argonautic expedition are introduced with propriety, and embellished with the graces of poetical fiction. In describing scenes of tenderness, this author is happily pathetic, and in the heat of combat, proportionably animated. His similes present the imagination with beautiful imagery, and not only illustrate, but give additional force to the subject. We find in Flaccus a few expressions not countenanced by the authority of the most celebrated Latin writers. His language, however, in general, is pure; but his words are perhaps not always the best that might have been chosen. The versification is elevated, though not uniformly harmonious; and there pervades the whole poem an epic dignity, which renders it superior to the production ascribed to Orpheus, or to that of Apollonius, on the same subject.
