PARTHIA

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CHAPTER XVI. Reign of Volagases I.

Vonones the Second left behind him three sons, Volagases, Tiridates, and Paeorus. It is doubtful which of them was the eldest, but, on the whole, most probable that that position belonged to Paeorus. We are told that Volagases obtained the crown by his brothers yielding up their claim to him, from which we must draw the conclusion that both of them were his elders. These circumstances of his accession will account for much of his subsequent conduct. It happened that he was able at once to bestow a principality upon Paeorus, to whom he felt specially indebted; but in order adequately to reward his other benefactor, he found it necessary to conquer a province and then make its government over to him. Hence his frequent attacks upon Armenia, and his numerous wars with Rome for its possession, which led ultimately to an arrangement by which the quiet enjoyment of the Armenian throne was secured to Tiridates.

The circumstances under which Volagases made his first attack upon Armenia were the following. Pharasmanes of Iberia, whose brother, Mithridates, the Romans had (in A.D. 47) replaced upon the Armenian throne, had a son named Rhadamistus, whose lust of power was so great that to prevent his making an attempt on his own crown Pharasmanes found it necessary to divert his thoughts to another quarter. Armenia, he suggested, lay near, and was a prize worth winning; Rhadamistus had only to ingratiate himself with the people, and then craftily remove his uncle, and he would probably step with ease into the vacant place. The son took the advice of his father, and in a little time succeeded in getting Mithridates into his power, when he ruthlessly put him to death, together with his wife and children. Rhadamistus then, supported by his father, obtained the object of his ambition, and became king. It was known, however, that a considerable number of the Armenians were adverse to a rule which had been brought about by treachery and murder; and it was suspected that, if an attack were made upon him, he would not be supported with much zeal by his subjects. This was the condition of things when Volagases ascended the Parthian throne, and found himself in want of a principality with which he might reward the services of Tiridates, his brother. It at once occurred to him that, a happy chance presented him with an excellent opportunity of acquiring Armenia, and he accordingly proceeded, in the very year of his accession, to make an expedition against it. At first he carried all before him. The Iberian supporters of Rhadamistus fled without risking a battle; his Armenian subjects resisted weakly; Artaxata and Tigranocerta opened their gates; and the country generally submitted. Tiridates enjoyed his kingdom for a few months; but a terrible pestilence, brought about by a severe winter and a want of proper provisions, decimated the Parthian force left in garrison; and Volagases found himself obliged, after a short occupation, to relinquish his conquest. Rhadamistus returned, and, although the Armenians opposed him in arms, contrived to re-establish himself. The Parthians did not renew their efforts, and for three years--from A.D. 51 to A.D. 54--Rhadamistus was left in quiet possession of the Armenian kingdom.'

It appears to have been in this interval that the arms of Volagases were directed against one of his great feudatories, Izatos. As in

Europe during the prevalence of the feudal system, so under the Parthian government, it was always possible that the sovereign might be forced to contend with one of the princes who owed him fealty. Volagases seems to have thought that the position of the Adiabenian monarch was becoming too independent, and that it was necessary to recall him, by a sharp mandate, to his proper position of subordinate and tributary. Accordingly, he sent him a demand that he should surrender the special privileges which had been conferred upon him by Artabanus III., and resume the ordinary status of a Parthian feudatory. Izates, who feared that if he yielded he would find that this demand was only a prelude to others more intolerable, replied by a positive refusal, and immediately prepared to resist an invasion. He sent his wives and children to the strongest fortress within his dominions, collected all the grain that his subjects possessed into fortified places, and laid waste the whole of the open country, so that it should afford no sustenance to an invading army. He then took up a position on the lower Zab, or Caprius, and stood prepared to resist an attack upon his territory. Volagases advanced to the opposite bank of the river, and was preparing to invade Adiabene, when news reached him of an important attack upon his eastern provinces. A horde of barbarians, consisting of Dahse and other Scythians, had poured into Parthia Proper, knowing that he was engaged elsewhere, and threatened to carry fire and sword through the entire province. The Parthian monarch considered that it was his first duty to meet these aggressors; and leaving Izates unchastised, he marched away to the north-east to repel the external enemy.

Volagases, after defeating this foe, would no doubt have returned to Adiabene, and resumed the war with Izates, but in his absence that prince died. Monobazus, his brother, who inherited his crown, could have no claim to the privileges which had been conferred for personal services upon Izates; and consequently there was no necessity for the war to be renewed. The bones of Izates were conveyed to the holy soil of Palestine and buried in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Monobazus was accepted by Volagases as his brother's successor without any apparent reluctance, and proved a faithful tributary, on whom his suzerain could place complete dependence.

The quarrel with Izates, and the war with the Dahee and Sacse, may have occupied the years A.D. 52 and 53. At any rate it was not till A.D. 54, his fourth year, that Volagases resumed his designs against Armenia. Rhadamistus, though he had more than once had to fly the country, was found in possession as king, and for some time he opposed the progress of the Parthian arms; but, before the year was out, despairing of success, he again fled, and left Volagases to arrange the affairs of Armenia at his pleasure. Tiridates was at once established as king, and Armenia brought into the position of a regular Parthian dependency. The claims of Rome were ignored. Volagases was probably aware that the Imperial throne was occupied by a mere youth, not eighteen years old, one destitute of all warlike tastes, a lover of music and of the arts, who might be expected to submit to the loss of a remote province without much difficulty. He therefore acted as if Rome had no rights in this part of Asia, established his brother at Artaxata, and did not so much as send an embassy to Nero to excuse or explain his acts. These proceedings caused much uneasiness in Italy. If Nero himself cannot be regarded as likely to have felt very keenly the blow struck at the prestige of the Empire, yet there were those among his advisers who could well understand and appreciate the situation. The ministers of the young prince resolved that efforts on the largest scale should be made. Orders were at once issued for recruiting the Oriental legions, and moving them nearer to Armenia; preparations were set on foot for bridging the Euphrates; Antiochus of Commagene, and Herod Agrippa II., were

required to collect troops and hold themselves in readiness to invade Parthia; the Roman provinces bordering upon Armenia were placed under new governors; above all, Corbulo, regarded as the best general of the time, was summoned from Germany, and assigned the provinces of Cappadocia and Galatia, together with the general superintendence of the war for retaining possession of Armenia. At the same time instructions were sent out to Ummidius, proconsul of Syria, requiring him to co-operate with Corbulo; and arrangements were made to obviate the clashing of authority which was to be feared between two equal commanders. In the spring of A.D. 55 the Roman armies were ready to take the field, and a struggle seemed impending which would recall the times of Antony and Phraates.

But, at the moment when expectation was at its height, and the clang of arms appeared about to resound throughout Western Asia, suddenly a disposition for peace manifested itself. Both Corbulo and Ummidius sent embassies to Volagases, exhorting him to make concessions, and apparently giving him to understand that something less was required of him than the restoration of Armenia to the Romans. Volagases listened favorably to the overtures, and agreed to put into the hands of the Roman commanders the most distinguished members of the royal family as hostages. At the same time he withdrew his troops from Armenia; which the Romans, however, did not occupy, and which continued, as it would seem, to be governed by Tiridates. The motive of the Parthian king in acting as he did is obvious. A revolt against his authority had broken out in Parthia, headed by his son, Vardanes; and, until this internal trouble should be suppressed, he could not engage with advantage in a foreign war. [PLATE III. Fig. 1.] The reasons which actuated the Roman generals are far more obscure. It is difficult to understand their omission to press upon Volagases in his difficulties, or their readiness to accept the persons of a few hostages, however high their rank, as an equivalent for the Roman claim to a province. Perhaps the jealousy which subsequently showed itself in regard to the custody of the hostages may have previously existed between the two commanders, and they may have each consented to a peace disadvantageous to Rome through fear of the other's obtaining the chief laurels if war were entered on.

The struggle for power between Volagases and his son Vardanes seems to have lasted for three years--from A.D. 55 to A.D. 58. Its details are unknown to us; but Volagases must have been successful; and we may assume that the pretender, of whom we hear no more, was put to death. No sooner was the contest terminated than Volagases, feeling that he was now free to act, took a high tone in his communications with Corbulo and Ummidius, and declared that not only must his brother, Tiridates, be left in the undisturbed possession of Armenia but it must be distinctly understood that he held it as a Parthian, and not as a Roman, feudatory. At the same time Tiridates began to exercise his authority over the Armenians with severity, and especially to persecute those whom he suspected of inclining towards the Romans. Oorbulo appears to have felt that it was necessary to atone for his three years of inaction by at length prosecuting the war in earnest. He tightened the discipline of the legions, while he recruited them to their full strength, made fresh friends among the hardy races of the neighborhood, renewed the Roman alliance with Pharasmanes of Iberia, urged Antiochus of Commagene to cross the Armenian frontier, and taking the field himself, carried fire and sword over a large portion of the Armenian territory. Volagases sent a contingent of troops to the assistance of his feudatory, but was unable to proceed to his relief in person, owing to the occurrence of a revolt in Hyrcania, which broke out, fortunately for the Romans, in the very year that the rebellion of Vardanes was suppressed. Under these circumstances it is

not surprising that Tiridates had recourse to treachery, or that on his treachery failing he continually lost ground, and was at last compelled to evacuate the country and yield the possession of it to the Romans. It is more remarkable that he prolonged his resistance into the third year than that he was unable to continue the straggle to a later date. He lost his capital, Artaxata, in A.D. 58, and Tigranocerta, the second city of Armenia, in A.D. 60. After this he made one further effort from the side of Media, but the attempt was unavailing; and on suffering a fresh defeat he withdrew altogether from the struggle, whereupon Armenia reverted to the Romans. They entrusted the government to a certain Tigranes, a grandson of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, but at the same time greatly diminished the extent of the kingdom by granting portions of it to neighboring princes. Pharasmanes of Iberia, Polemo of Pontus, Aristobulus of the Lesser Armenia, and Antiochus of Commagene, received an augmentation of their territories at the expense of the rebel state, which had shown itself incapable of appreciating the blessings of Roman rule and had manifested a decided preference for the Parthians.

But the fate of Armenia, and the position which she was to hold in respect of the two great rivals, Rome and Parthia, were not yet decided. Hitherto Volagases, engaged in a contest with the Hyrcanians and with other neighboring nations, whereto the flames of war had spread, had found himself unable to take any personal part in the struggle in which his brother and vassal had been engaged in the west. Now matters in Hyrcania admitted of arrangement, and he was at liberty to give his main attention to Armenian affairs. His presence in the West had become absolutely necessary. Not only was Armenia lost to him, but it had been made a centre from which his other provinces in this quarter might be attacked and harassed. Tigranes, proud of his newly-won crown, and anxious to show himself worthy of it, made constant incursions into Adiabene, ravaging and harrying the fertile country far and wide. Monobazus, unable to resist him in the field, was beginning to contemplate the transfer of his allegiance to Rome, as the only means of escaping from the evils of a perpetual border war. Tiridates, discontented with the position whereto he found himself reduced, and angry that his brother had not given him more effective support, was loud in his complaints, and openly taxed Volagases with an inertness that bordered on cowardice. Public opinion was inclined to accept and approve the charge; and in Parthia public opinion could not be safely contemned. Volagases found it necessary to win back his subjects' good-will by calling a council of the nobility, and making them a formal address: "Parthians," he said, "when I obtained the first place among you by my brothers ceding their claims, I endeavored to substitute for the old system of fraternal hatred and contention a new one of domestic affection and agreement; my brother Pacorus received Media from my hands at once; Tiridates, whom you see now before you, I inducted shortly afterwards into the sovereignty of Armenia, a dignity reckoned the third in the Parthian kingdom. Thus I put my family matters on a peaceful and satisfactory footing. But these arrangements are now disturbed by the Romans, who have never hitherto broken their treaties with us to their profit, and who will now find that they have done so to their ruin. I will not deny that hitherto I have preferred to maintain my right to the territories, which have come to me from my ancestors, by fair dealing rather than by shedding of blood--by negotiation rather than by arms; if, however, I have erred in this and have been weak to delay so long, I will now correct my fault by showing the more zeal. You at any rate have lost nothing by my abstinence; your strength is intact, your glory undiminished; you have added, moreover, to your reputation for valor the credit of moderation--a virtue which not even the highest among men can afford to despise, and which the Gods view with special favor."

Having concluded his speech, he placed a diadem on the brow of Tiridates, proclaiming by this significant act his determination to restore him to the Armenian throne. At the same time he ordered Monseses, a Parthian general, and Monobazus, the Adiabenian monarch, to take the field and enter Armenia, while he himself with the main strength of the empire advanced towards the Euphrates and threatened Syria with invasion.

The results of the campaign which followed (A.D. 62) scarcely answered to this magnificent opening. Monseses indeed, in conjunction with Monobazus, invaded Armenia, and, advancing to Tigranocerta, besieged Tigranes in that city, which, upon the destruction of Artaxata by Corbulo, had become the seat of government. Volagases himself proceeded as far as Nisibis, whence he could threaten at the same time Armenia and Syria. The Parthian arms proved, however, powerless to effect any serious impression upon Tigranocerta; and Volagases, being met at Nisibis by envoys from Corbulo, who threatened an invasion of Parthia in retaliation of the Parthian attack upon Armenia, consented to an arrangement. A plague of locusts had spread itself over Upper Mesopotamia, and the consequent scarcity of forage completely paralyzed a force which consisted almost entirely of cavalry. Volagases was glad under the circumstances to delay the conflict which had seemed impending, and readily agreed that his troops should suspend the siege of Tigranocerta and withdraw from Armenia on condition that the Roman should at the same time evacuate the province. He would send, he said, ambassadors to Rome who should arrange with Nero the footing upon which Armenia was to be placed. Meanwhile, until the embassy returned, there should be peace--the Armenians should be left to themselves--neither Rome nor Parthia should maintain a soldier within the limits of the province, and any collision between the armies of the two countries should be avoided.

A pause, apparently of some months' duration, followed. Towards the close of autumn, however, a new general came upon the scene; and a new factor was introduced into the political and military combinations of the period. L. Caesennius Paetus, a favorite of the Roman Emperor, but a man of no capacity, was appointed by Nero to take the main direction of affairs in Armenia, while Corbulo confined himself to the care of Syria, his special province. Corbulo had requested a coadjutor, probably not so much from an opinion that the war would be better conducted by two commanders than by one, as from fear of provoking the jealousy of Nero, if he continued any longer to administer the whole of the East. On the arrival of Paetus, who brought one legion with him, an equitable division of the Roman forces was made between the generals. Each had three legions; and while Corbulo retained the Syrian auxiliaries, those of Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia were attached to the army of Paetus. But no friendly feeling united the leaders. Corbulo was jealous of the rival whom he knew to have been sent out as a check upon him rather than as a help; and Paetus was inclined to despise the slow and temporizing policy of the elder chief. The war, according to his views, required to be carried on with more dash and vigor than had hitherto appeared in its conduct--cities should be stormed, he said--the whole country plundered--severe examples made of the guilty. The object of the war also should be changed--instead of setting up shadowy kings, his own aim would be to reduce Armenia into the form of a province.

The truce established in the early summer, when Volagases sent his envoys to Nero, expired in the autumn, on their return without a definite reply; and the Roman commanders at once took the offensive and entered upon an autumn campaign, the second within the space of a year. Corbulo crossed the Euphrates in the face of a large Parthian army, which he forced to retire from the eastern bank of the river by means of

military engines worked from ships anchored in mid-stream. He then advanced and occupied a strong position in the hills at a little distance from the river, where he caused his legions to construct an entrenched camp. Paetus, on his part, entered Armenia from Cappadocia with two legions, and, passing the Taurus range, ravaged a large extent of country; winter, however, approaching, and the enemy nowhere appearing in force, he led back his troops across the mountains, and, regarding the campaign as finished, wrote a despatch to Nero boasting of his successes, sent one of his three legions to winter in Pontus, and placed the other two in quarters between the Taurus and the Euphrates, at the same time granting furloughs to as many of the soldiers as chose to apply for them. A large number took advantage of his liberality, preferring no doubt the pleasures and amusements of the Syrian and Cappadocian cities to the hardships of a winter in the Armenian highlands. While matters were in this position Paetus suddenly heard that Volagases was advancing against him. As once before at an important crisis, so now with the prospect of Armenia as the prize of victory, the Parthians defied the severities of winter and commenced a campaign when their enemy regarded the season for war as over. In this crisis Paetus exhibited an entire unfitness for command. First, he resolved to remain on the defensive in his camp; then, affecting to despise the protection of ramparts and ditches, he gave the order to advance and meet the enemy; finally, after losing a few scouts whom he had sent forward, he hastily retreated and resumed his old position, but at the same time unwisely detached three thousand of his best foot to block the pass of Taurus, through which Volagases was advancing. After some hesitation he was induced to make Corbulo acquainted with his position; but the message which he sent merely stated that he was expecting to be attacked. Corbulo was in no hurry to proceed to his relief, preferring to appear upon the scene at the last moment, when he would be hailed as a savior.

Volagases, meanwhile, continued his march. The small force left by Paetus to block his progress was easily overpowered, and for the most part destroyed. The castle of Arsamosata, where Paetus had placed his wife and child, and the fortified camp of the legions, were besieged. The Romans were challenged to a battle, but dared not show themselves outside their entrenchments. Having no confidence in their leader, the legionaries despaired and began openly to talk of a surrender. As the danger drew nearer, fresh messengers had been despatched to Corbulo, and he had been implored to come at his best speed in order to save the poor remnant of a defeated army. That commander was on his march, by way of Commagene and Cappadocia; it could not be very long before he would arrive; and the supplies in the camp of Paetus were sufficient to have enabled him to hold out for weeks and months. But an unworthy terror had seized both Paetus and his soldiers. Instead of holding out to the last, the alarmed chief proposed negotiations, and the result was that he consented to capitulate. His troops were to be allowed to quit their entrenchments and withdraw from the country, but were to surrender their strongholds and their stores. Armenia was to be completely evacuated by the Romans; and a truce was to be observed and Armenia not again invaded, until a fresh embassy, which Volagases proposed to send to Rome, returned. Moreover, a bridge was to be made by the Romans over the Arsanias, a tributary of the Euphrates, which, as it was of no immediate service to the Parthians, could only be intended as a monument of the Roman defeat. Paetus assented to these terms, and they were carried out; not, however, without some further ignominy to the Romans. The Parthians entered the Roman entrenchments before the legionaries had left them, and laid their hands on anything which they recognized as Armenian

spoil. They even seized the soldiers' clothes and arms, which were relinquished to them without a struggle, lest resistance should provoke an outbreak. Paetus, once more at liberty; proceeded with unseemly haste to the Euphrates, deserting his wounded and his stragglers, whom he left to the tender mercies of the Armenians. At the Euphrates he effected a junction with Corbulo, who was but three days' march distant when Paetus so gracefully capitulated.

The chiefs, when they met, exchanged no cordial greeting. Corbulo complained that he had been induced to make a useless journey, and to weary his troops to no purpose, since without any aid from him the legions might have escaped from their difficulties by simply waiting until the Parthians had exhausted their stores, when they must have retired. Paetus, anxious to obliterate the memory of his failure, proposed that the combined armies should at once enter Armenia and overrun it, since Volagases and his Parthians had withdrawn. Corbulo replied coldly--that "he had no such orders from the Emperor. He had quitted his province to rescue the threatened legions from their peril; now that the peril was past, he must return to Syria, since it was quite uncertain what the enemy might next attempt. It would be hard work for his infantry, tired with the long marches it had made, to keep pace with the Parthian cavalry, which was fresh and would pass rapidly through the plains." The generals upon this parted. Paetus wintered in Cappadocia; Corbulo returned into Syria, where a demand reached him from Volagases that he would evacuate Mesopotamia. He agreed to do so on the condition that Armenia should be evacuated by the Parthians. To this Volagases consented; since he had re-established Tiridates as king, and the Armenians might be trusted, if left to themselves, to prefer Parthian to Roman ascendancy.

There was now, again, a pause in the war for some months. The envoys sent by Volagases after the capitulation of Paetus reached Rome at the commencement of spring (A.D. 63), and were there at once admitted to an audience. They proposed peace on the terms that Tiridates should be recognized as king of Armenia, but that he should go either to Rome, or to the head-quarters of the Roman legions in the East, in order to receive investiture, either from the Emperor or his representative. It was with some difficulty that Nero was brought to believe in the success of Volagases, so entirely had he trusted the despatches of Paetus, which represented the Romans as triumphant. When the state of affairs was fully understood from the letters of Corbulo and the accounts given by a Roman officer who had accompanied the Parthian envoys, there was no doubt or hesitation as to the course which should be pursued. The Parthian proposals must be rejected. Rome must not make peace immediately upon a disaster, or until she had retrieved her reputation and shown her power by again taking the offensive. Paetus was at once recalled, and the whole direction of the war given to Corbulo, who was intrusted with a wide-spreading and extraordinary authority. The Parthian envoys were dismissed, but with gifts, which seemed to show that it was not so much their proposals as the circumstances under which they had been made that were unpalatable. Another legion was sent to the East; and the semi-independent princes and dynasts were exhorted to support Corbulo with zeal. That commander used his extraordinary powers to draw together, not so much a very large force, as one that could be thoroughly trusted; and, collecting his troops at Melitene (Malatiyeh), made his arrangements for a fresh invasion.

Penetrating into Armenia by the road formerly followed by Lucullus, Corbulo, with three legions, and probably the usual proportion of allies--an army of about 80,000 men--advanced against the combined Armenians and Parthians under Tiridates and Volagases, freely offering battle, and at the same time taking vengeance, as he proceeded,

on the Armenian nobles who had been especially active in opposing Tigranes, the late Roman puppet-king. His march led him near the spot where the capitulation of Paetus had occurred in the preceding winter; and it was while he was in this neighborhood that envoys from the enemy met him with proposals for an accommodation. Corbulo, who had never shown himself anxious to push matters to an extremity, readily accepted the overtures. The site of the camp of Paetus was chosen for the place of meeting; and there, accompanied by twenty horsemen each, Tiridates and the Roman general held an interview. The terms proposed and agreed upon were the same that Nero had rejected; and thus the Parthians could not but be satisfied, since they obtained all for which they had asked. Corbulo, on the other hand, was content to have made the arrangement on Armenian soil, while he was at the head of an intact and unblemished army, and held possession of an Armenian district; so that the terms could not seem to have been extorted by fear, but rather to have been allowed as equitable. He also secured the immediate performance of a ceremony at which Tiridates divested himself of the regal ensigns and placed them at the foot of the statue of Nero; and he took security for the performance of the promise that Tiridates should go to Rome and receive his crown from the hands of Nero, by requiring and obtaining one of his daughters as a hostage. In return, he readily undertook that Tiridates should be treated with all proper honor during his stay at Rome, and on his journeys to and from Italy, assuring Volagases, who was anxious on these points, that Rome regarded only the substance, and made no account of the mere show and trappings of power.

The arrangement thus made was honestly executed. After a delay of about two years, for which it is difficult to account, Tiridates set out upon his journey. He was accompanied by his wife, by a number of noble youths, among whom were sons of Volagases and of Monobazus, and by an escort of three thousand Parthian cavalry. The long cavalcade passed, like a magnificent triumphal procession, through two thirds of the Empire, and was everywhere warmly welcomed and sumptuously entertained. Each city which lay upon its route was decorated to receive it; and the loud acclaims of the multitudes expressed their satisfaction at the novel spectacle. The riders made the whole journey, except the passage of the Hellespont, by land, proceeding through Thrace and Illyricum to the head of the Adriatic, and then descending the peninsula. Their entertainment was furnished at the expense of the state, and is said to have cost the treasury 800,000 sesterces (about L6250.) a day this outlay was continued for nine months, and must have amounted in the aggregate to above a million and a half of our money. The first interview of the Parthian prince with his nominal sovereign was at Naples, where Nero happened to be staying. According to the ordinary etiquette of the Roman court, Tiridates was requested to lay aside his sword before approaching the Emperor; but this he declined to do; and the difficulty seemed serious until a compromise was suggested, and he was allowed to approach wearing his weapon, after it had first been carefully fastened to the scabbard by nails. He then drew near, bent one knee to the ground, interlaced his hands, and made obeisance, at the same time saluting the Emperor as his "lord."

The ceremony of the investiture was performed afterwards at Rome. On the night preceding, the whole city was illuminated and decorated with garlands; the Forum, as morning approached, was filled with "the people," arranged in their several tribes, clothed in white robes and bearing boughs of laurel; the Praetorians, in their splendid arms, were drawn up in two lines from the further extremity of the Forum to the Rostra, to maintain the avenue of approach clear; all the roofs of the buildings on every side were thronged with crowds of spectators; at break

of day Nero arrived in the attire appropriated to triumphs, accompanied by the members of the Senate and his body-guard, and took his seat on the Rostra in a curule chair. Tiridates and his suite were then introduced between the two long lines of soldiers; and the prince, advancing to the Rostra, made an oration, which (as reported by Dio) was of a sufficiently abject character. Nero responded proudly; and then the Armenian prince, ascending the Rostra by a way constructed for the purpose, and sitting at the feet of the Roman Emperor, received from his hand, after his speech had been interpreted to the assembled Romans, the coveted diadem, the symbol of Oriental sovereignty.

After a stay of some weeks, or possibly months, at Rome, during which he was entertained by Nero with extreme magnificence, Tiridates returned, across the Adriatic and through Greece and Asia Minor, to his own land. The circumstances of his journey and his reception involved a concession to Rome of all that could be desired in the way of formal and verbal acknowledgment. The substantial advantage, however, remained with the Parthians. The Romans, both in the East and at the capital, were flattered by a show of submission; but the Orientals must have concluded that the long struggle had terminated in an acknowledgment by Rome of Parthia as the stronger power. Ever since the time of Lucullus, Armenia had been the object of contention between the two states, both of which had sought, as occasion served, to place upon the throne its own nominees. Recently the rival powers had at one and the same time brought forward rival claimants; and the very tangible issue had been raised, Was Tigranes or Tiridates to be king? When the claims of Tigranes were finally, with the consent of Rome, set aside, and those of Tiridates allowed, the real point in dispute was yielded by the Romans. A Parthian, the actual brother of the reigning Parthian king, was permitted to rule the country which Rome had long deemed her own. It could not be doubted that he would rule it in accordance with Parthian interests. His Roman investiture was a form which he had been forced to go through; what effect could it have on him in the future, except to create a feeling of soreness? The arms of Volagases had been the real force which had placed him upon the throne; and to those arms he must have looked to support him in case of an emergency. Thus Armenia was in point of fact relinquished to Parthia at the very time when it was nominally replaced under the sovereignty of the Romans.

There is much doubt as to the time at which Volagases I. ceased to reign. The classical writers give no indication of the death of any Parthian king between the year A.D. 51, when they record the demise of Vonones II., and about the year A.D. 90, when they speak of a certain Pacorus as occupying the throne. Moreover, during this interval, whenever they have occasion to mention the reigning Parthian monarch, they always give him the name of Volagases. Hence it has been customary among writers on Parthian history to assign to Volagases I. the entire period between A.D. 51 and A.D. 90--a space of thirty-nine years. Recently, however, the study of the Parthian coins has shown absolutely that Pacorus began to reign at least as early as A.D. 78, while it has raised a suspicion that the space between A.D. 51 and A.D. 78 was shared between two kings, one of whom reigned from A.D. 51 to about A.D. 62, and the other from about A.D. 62 to A.D. 78. It has been proposed to call these kings respectively Volagases I. and Artabanus IV. or Volagases I. and Volagases II., and Parthian history has been written on this basis; but it is confessed that the entire absence of any intimation by the classical writers that there was any change of monarch in this space, or that the Volagases of whom they speak as a contemporary of Vespasian was any other than the adversary of Corbulo, is a very great difficulty in the way of this view being accepted; and it is suggested that the two kings which the coins indicate may have been

contemporary monarchs reigning in different parts of Parthia. To such a theory there can be no objection. The Parthian coins distinctly show the existence under the later Arsacidae of numerous pretenders, or rivals to the true monarch, of whom we have no other trace. In the time of Volagases I. there was (we know) a revolt in Hyrcania, which was certainly not suppressed as late as A.D. 75. The king who has been called Artabanus IV. or Volagases II. may have maintained himself in this region, while Volagases I. continued to rule in the Western provinces and to be the only monarch known to the Romans and the Jews. If this be the true account of the matter, we may regard Volagases I. as having most probably reigned from A.D. 51 to about A.D. 78--a space of twenty-seven years.

CHAPTER XVII. Peace between Parthia and Rome.

The establishment of Tiridates as king of Armenia, with the joint consent of Volagases and Nero, inaugurated a period of peace between the two Empires of Rome and Parthia, which exceeded half a century. This result was no doubt a fortunate one for the inhabitants of Western Asia; but it places the modern historian of the Parthians at a disadvantage. Hitherto the classical writers, in relating the wars of the Syro-Macedonians and the Romans, have furnished materials for Parthian history, which, if not as complete as we might wish, have been at any rate fairly copious and satisfactory. Now, for the space of half a century, we are left without anything like a consecutive narrative, and are thrown upon scattered and isolated notices, which can form only a most incomplete and disjointed narrative. The reign of Volagases I. appears to have continued for about twelve years after the visit of Tiridates to Rome; and no more than three or four events are known as having fallen into this interval. Our knowledge of the reign of Pacorus is yet more scanty. But as the business of the workman is simply to make the best use that he can of his materials, such a sketch of this dark period as the notices which have come down to us allow will now be attempted.

When the troubles which followed upon the death of Nero shook the Roman world, and after the violent ends of Galba and Otho, the governor of Judaea, Vespasian, resolved to become a candidate for the imperial power (A.D. 69), Volagases was at once informed by envoys of the event, and was exhorted to maintain towards the new monarch the same peaceful attitude which he had now for seven years observed towards his predecessors. Volagases not only complied with the request, out sent ambassadors in return to Vespasian, while he was still at Alexandria (A.D. 70), and offered to put at his disposal a body of forty thousand Parthian cavalry. The circumstances of his position allowed Vespasian to decline this magnificent proposal, and to escape the odium which would have attached to the employment of foreign troops against his countrymen. His generals in Italy had by this time carried all before them; and he was able, after thanking the Parthian monarch, to inform him that peace was restored to the Roman world, and that he had therefore no need of auxiliaries. In the same friendly spirit in which he had made this offer, Volagases, in the next year (A.D. 71), sent envoys to Titus at Zeugma, who presented to him the Parthian king's congratulations on his victorious conclusion of the Jewish war, and begged his acceptance of a crown of gold. The polite attention was courteously received; and before allowing them to return to their master the young prince hospitably entertained the Parthian messengers at a banquet.

Soon after this, circumstances occurred in the border state of Commagene which threatened a rupture of the friendly relations that had hitherto subsisted between Volagases and Vespasian. Caesennius Paetus, proconsul of Syria, the unsuccessful general in the late Armenian war, informed Vespasian, early in A.D. 72, that he had discovered a plot, by which Commagene, one of the Roman subject

kingdoms, was to be detached from the Roman alliance, and made over to the Parthians. Antiochus, the aged monarch, and his son Epiphanes were, according to Paetus, both concerned in the treason; and the arrangement with the Parthians was, he said, actually concluded. It would be well to nip the evil in the bud. If the transfer of territory once took place, a most serious disturbance of the Roman power would follow. Commagene lay west of the Euphrates; and its capital city, Samosata (the modern Sumeisat), commanded one of the points where the great river was most easily crossed; so that, if the Parthians held it, they would have a ready access at all times to the Roman provinces of Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria, with a perfectly safe retreat. These arguments had weight with Vespasian, who seems to have had entire confidence in Paetus, and induced him to give the proconsul full liberty to act as he thought best. Thus empowered, Paetus at once invaded Commagene in force, and meeting at first with no resistance (for the Commagenians were either innocent or unprepared), succeeded in occupying Samosata by a _coup de main_. The aged king wished to yield everything without a blow; but his two sons, Epiphanes and Callinicus, were not to be restrained. They took arms, and, at the head of such a force as they could hastily muster, met Paetus in the field, and fought a battle with him which lasted the whole day, and ended without advantage to either side. But the decision of Antiochus was not to be shaken; he refused to countenance his sons' resistance, and, quitting Commagene, passed with his wife and daughters into the Roman province of Cilicia, where he took up his abode at Tarsus. The spirit of the Commagenians could not hold out against this defection; the force collected began to disperse; and the young princes found themselves forced to fly, and to seek a refuge in Parthia, which they reached with only ten horsemen. Volagases received them with the courtesy and hospitality due to their royal rank; but as he had given them no help in the struggle, so now he made no effort to reinstate them. All the exertion to which he could be brought was to write a letter on their behalf to Vespasian, in which he probably declared them guiltless of the charges that had been brought against them by Paetus. Vespasian, at any rate, seems to have become convinced of their innocence; for though he allowed Commagene to remain a Roman province, he permitted the two princes with their father to reside at Rome, assigned the ex-monarch an ample revenue, and gave the family an honorable status.

It was probably not more than two or three years after the events above narrated, that Volagases found himself in circumstances which impelled him to send a petition to the Roman Emperor for help. The Alani, a Scythian people, who had once dwelt near the Tanais and the Lake Mseotis, or Sea of Azof, but who must now have lived further to the East, had determined on a great predatory invasion of the countries west of the Caspian Gates, and having made alliance with the Hyrcanians, who were in possession of that important pass, had poured into Media through it, driven King Pacorus to the mountains, and overrun the whole of the open country. From hence they had passed on into Armenia, defeated Tiridates, in a battle, and almost succeeded in capturing him by means of a lasso. Volagases, whose subject-kings were thus rudely treated, and who might naturally expect his own proper territories to be next attacked, sent in this emergency a request to Vespasian for aid. He asked moreover that the forces put at his disposal should be placed under the command of either Titus or Domitian, probably not so much from any value that he set on their military talents as from a conviction that if a member of the Imperial family was sent, the force which accompanied him would be considerable. We are told that the question, whether help be given or no, was seriously discussed at Rome, and that Domitian was exceedingly anxious that the troops should go, and begged that he might be

their commander. But Vespasian was disinclined for any expenditure of which he did not recognize the necessity, and disliked all perilous adventure. His own refusal of extraneous support, when offered by his rival, rendered it impossible for him to reject Volagases's request without incurring the charge of ingratitude. The Parthians were therefore left to their own resources; and the result seems to have been that the invaders, after ravaging and harrying Media and Armenia at their pleasure, carried off a vast number of prisoners and an enormous booty into their own country. Soon after this, Volagases must have died. The coins of his successor commence in June, A.D. 78, and thus he cannot have outlived by more than three years the irruption of the Alani. If he died, as is most probable, in the spring of A.D. 78, his reign would have covered the space of twenty-seven years. It was an eventful one for Parthia. It brought the second period of struggle with the Romans to an end by compromise which gave to Rome the shadow and to Parthia the substance of victory. And it saw the first completed disintegration of the Empire in the successful revolt of Hyrcania--an event of evil portent. Volagases was undoubtedly a monarch of considerable ability. He conducted with combined prudence and firmness the several campaigns against Corbulo; he proved himself far superior to Paetus; exposed to attacks in various quarters from many different enemies, he repulsed all foreign invaders and, as against them, maintained intact the ancient dominions of the Arsacidae. He practically added Arminia to the Empire. Everywhere success attended him, except against a domestic foe. Hyrcania seceded during his reign, and it may be doubted whether Parthia ever afterwards recovered it. An example was thus set of successful Arian revolt against the hitherto irresistible Turanians, which may have tended in no slight degree to produce the insurrection which eventually subverted the Parthian Empire.

The successor of Volagases I. was Pacorus, whom most writers on Parthian history have regarded as his son. There is, however, no evidence of this relationship; and the chief reason for regarding Pacorus as belonging even to the same branch of the Arsacidse with Volagases I. is his youth at his accession, indicated by the beardless head upon his early coins, which is no doubt in favor of his having been a near relation of the preceding king. PLATE III., Fig 1. The Parthian coins show that his reign continued at least till A.D. 93; it may have lasted considerably longer, for the earliest date on any coin of Chosroes is AEr. Seleuc. 421, or A.D. 110. The accession of Chosroes has been conjecturally assigned to A.D. 108, which would allow to Pacorus the long reign of thirty years. Of this interval it can only be said that, so far as our knowledge goes, it was almost wholly uneventful. We know absolutely nothing of this Pacorus except that he gave encouragement to a person who pretended to be Nero; that he enlarged and beautified Otesiphon; that he held friendly communications with Decebalus, the great Dacian chief, who was successively the adversary of Domitian and Trajan; and that he sold the sovereignty of Osrhoene at a high price to the Edessene prince who was cotemporary with him. The Pseudo-Nero in question appears to have taken refuge with the Parthians in the year A.D. 89, and to have been demanded as an impostor by Domitian. Pacorus was at first inclined to protect and to even assist him, but after a while was induced to give him up, probably by a threat of hostilities. The communication with the Dacian chief was most likely earlier. The Dacians, in one of those incursions into Maesia which they made during the first years of Domitian, took captive a certain Callidromus, a Greek, if we may judge by his name, slave to a Roman of some rank, named Liberius Maximus. This prisoner Decebalus (we are told) sent as a present to Pacorus, in whose service and favor he remained for a number of years. This circumstance, insignificant enough in itself,

acquires an interest from the indication which it gives of intercommunication between the enemies of Rome, even when they were separated by vast spaces, and might have been thought to have been wholly ignorant of each other's existence. Decebalus can scarcely have been drawn to Pacorus by any other attraction than that which always subsists between enemies of any great dominant power. He must have looked to the Parthian monarch as a friend who might make a diversion on his behalf upon occasion; and that monarch, by accepting his gift, must be considered to have shown a willingness to accept this kind of relation.

The sale of the Osrhoene territory to Abgarus by Pacorus was not a fact of much consequence. It may indicate an exhaustion of his treasury, resulting from the expenditure of vast sums on the enlargement and adornment of the capital, but otherwise it has no bearing on the general condition of the Empire. Perhaps the Parthian feudatories generally paid a price for their investiture. If they did not, and the case of Abgarus was peculiar, still it does not appear that his purchase at all altered his position as a Parthian subject. It was not until they transferred their allegiance to Rome that the Osrhoene princes struck coins, or otherwise assumed the status of kings. Up to the time of M. Aurelius they continued just as much subject to Parthia as before, and were far from acquiring a position of independence.

There is reason to believe that the reign of Pacorus was a good deal disturbed by internal contentions. We hear of an Artabanus as king of Parthia in A.D. 79; and the Parthian coins of about this period present us with two very marked types of head, both of them quite unlike that of Pacorus, which must be those of monarchs who either contended with Pacorus for the crown, or ruled contemporaneously with him over other portions of the Parthian Empire. [PLATE III., Fig. 2.] Again, towards the close of Pacorus's reign, and early in that of his recognized successor, Chosroes, a monarch called Mithridates is shown by the coins to have borne sway for at least six years--from A.D. 107 to 113. This monarch commenced the practice of placing a Semitic legend upon his coins, which would seem to imply that he ruled in the western rather than the eastern provinces. The probability appears, on the whole, to be that the disintegration which has been already noticed as having commenced under Volagases I. was upon the increase. Three or four monarchs were ruling together in different portions of the Parthian world, each claiming to be the true Arsaces, and using the full titles of Parthian sovereignty upon his coins. The Romans knew but little of these divisions and contentions, their dealings being only with the Arsacid who reigned at Ctesiphon and bore sway over Mesopotamia and Adiabene.

Pacorus must have died about A.D. 108, or a little later. He left behind him two sons, Exedares and Parthamasiris, but neither of these two princes was allowed to succeed him. The Parthian Megistanes assigned the crown to Chosroes, the brother of their late monarch, perhaps regarding Exedares and Parthamasiris as too young to administer the government of Parthia satisfactorily. If they knew, as perhaps they did, that the long period of peace with Rome was coming to an end, and that they might expect shortly to be once more attacked by their old enemy, they might well desire to have upon the throne a prince of ripe years and approved judgment. A raw youth would certainly have been unfit to cope with the age, the experience, and the military genius of Trajan.

CHAPTER XVIII. Reign of Chosroes.

The general state of Oriental affairs at the accession of Chosroes seems to have been the following. Upon the demise of Tiridates (about A.D. 100) Pacorus had established upon the Armenian throne one of his sons, named Exedares, or Axidares, and this prince had thenceforth reigned as king of Armenia without making any application to Rome for

investiture, or acknowledging in any way the right of the Romans to interfere with the Armenian succession. Trajan, sufficiently occupied in the West, had borne this insult. When, however, in A.D. 114, the subjugation of Dacia was completed, and the Roman Emperor found his hands free, he resolved to turn his arms towards Asia, and to make the Armenian difficulty a pretext for a great military expedition, designed to establish unmistakably the supremacy of Rome throughout the East. The condition of the East at once called for the attention of Rome, and was eminently favorable for the extension of her influence at this period. Disintegrating forces were everywhere at work, tending to produce a confusion and anarchy which invited the interposition of a great power, and rendered resistance to such a power difficult. Christianity, which was daily spreading itself more and more widely, acted as a dissolvent upon the previously-existing forms of society, loosening the old ties, dividing man from man by an irreconcilable division, and not giving much indication as yet of its power to combine and unite. Judaism, embittered by persecution, had from a nationality become a conspiracy; and the disaffected adherents of the Mosaic system, dispersed through all the countries of the East, formed an explosive element in the population which involved the constant danger of a catastrophe. The Parthian political system was also, as already remarked, giving symptoms of breaking up. Those bonds which for two centuries and a half had sufficed to hold together a heterogeneous kingdom extending from the Euphrates to the Indus, and from the Oxus to the Southern Ocean, were beginning to grow weak, and the Parthian Empire appeared to be falling to pieces. There seemed to be at once a call and an opportunity for a fresh arrangement of the East, for the introduction of a unifying power, such as Rome recognized in her own administrative system, which should compel the crumbling atoms of the Oriental world once more into cohesion.

To this call Trajan responded. His vast ambition had been whetted, rather than satiated, by the conquest of a barbarous nation, and a single, not very valuable, province. In the East he might hope to add to the Roman State half a dozen countries of world-wide repute, the seats of ancient empires, the old homes of Asiatic civilization, countries associated with the immortal names of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus, Cyrus, Darius, and Alexander. The career of Alexander had an attraction for him, which he was fain to confess; and he pleased himself by imitating, though he could not hope at his age to equal it. His Eastern expedition was conceived very much in the same spirit as that of Crassus; but he possessed the military ability in which the Triumvir was deficient, and the enemy whom he had to attack was grown less formidable.

Trajan commenced his Eastern expedition in A.D. 114, seven years after the close of the Dacian War. He was met at Athens in the autumn of that year by envoys from Chosroes, who brought him presents, and made representations which, it was hoped, would induce him to consent to peace. Chosroes stated that he had deposed his nephew, Exedares, the Armenian prince whose conduct had been offensive to Rome; and proposed that, as the Armenian throne was thereby vacant, it should be filled by the appointment of Parthamasiris, Exedares's brother. This prince would be willing, he said, to receive investiture at the hands of Rome; and he requested that Trajan would transmit to him the symbol of sovereignty. The accommodation suggested would have re-established the relations of the two countries towards Armenia on the basis on which they had been placed by the agreement between Volagases and Nero. It would have saved the credit of Rome, while it secured to Parthia the substantial advantage of retaining Armenia under her authority and protection. Trajan might well have consented to it, had his sole object been to reclaim the rights or to vindicate the honor of his country. But he had

distinctly made up his mind to aim, not at the re-establishment of any former condition of things, but at the placing of matters in the East on an entirely new footing. He therefore gave the ambassadors of Chosroes a cold reception, declined the gifts offered him, and replied to the proposals of accommodation that the friendship of kings was to be measured by deeds rather than by words--he would therefore say nothing, but when he reached Syria would act in a becoming manner. The envoys of the Parthian monarch were obliged to return with this unsatisfactory answer; and Chosroes had to wait and see what interpretation it would receive from the course of events.

During the later months of autumn, Trajan advanced from Athens to Antioch. At that luxurious capital, he mustered his forces and prepared for the campaign of the ensuing year. Abgarus, the Osrhoene prince who had lately purchased his sovereignty from Pacorus, sent an embassy to him in the course of the winter, with presents and an offer of friendship. Parthamasiris also entered into communications with him, first assuming the royal title, and then, when his letter received no answer, dropping it, and addressing the Roman Emperor as a mere private person. Upon this act of self-humiliation, negotiations were commenced. Parthamasiris was encouraged to present himself at the Roman camp, and was given to understand that he would there receive from Trajan, as Tiridates had received from Nero, the emblem of sovereignty and permission to rule Armenia. The military preparations were, however, continued. Vigorous measures were taken to restore the discipline of the Syrian legions, which had suffered through the long tranquillity of the East and the enervating influence of the climate. With the spring Trajan commenced his march. Ascending the Euphrates, to Samosata, and receiving as he advanced the submission of various semi-independent dynasts and princes, he took possession of Satala and Elegeia, Armenian cities on or near the Euphrates, and establishing himself at the last-named place, waited for the arrival of Parthamasiris. That prince shortly rode into the Roman camp, attended by a small retinue; and a meeting was arranged, at which the Parthian, in the sight of the whole Roman army, took the diadem from his brows and laid it at the feet of the Roman Emperor, expecting to have it at once restored to him. But Trajan had determined otherwise. He made no movement; and the army, prepared no doubt for the occasion, shouted with all their might, saluting him anew as Imperator, and congratulating him on his "bloodless victory." Parthamasiris felt that he had fallen into a trap, and would gladly have turned and fled; but he found himself surrounded by the Roman troops and virtually a prisoner. Upon this he demanded a private audience, and was conducted to the Emperor's tent, where he made proposals which were coldly rejected, and he was given to understand that he must regard his crown as forfeited. It was further required of him that, to prevent false rumors, he should present himself a second time at the Emperor's tribunal, prefer his requests openly, and hear the Imperial decision. The Parthian consented. With a boldness worthy of his high descent, he affirmed that he had neither been defeated nor made prisoner, but had come of his own free will to hold a conference with the Roman chief, in the full expectation of receiving from him, as Tiridates had received from Nero, the crown of Armenia, confident, moreover, that in any case he would "suffer no wrong, but be allowed to depart in safety." Trajan answered that he did not intend to give the crown of Armenia to any one--the country belonged to the Romans, and should have a Roman governor. As for Parthamasiris, he was free to go whithersoever he pleased, and his Parthian attendants might accompany him. The Armenians, however, must remain. They were Roman subjects, and owed no allegiance to Parthia.

The tale thus told, with no appearance of shame, by the Roman historian, Dio Cassius, is

sufficiently disgraceful to Trajan, but it does not reveal to us the entire baseness of his conduct. We learn from other writers, two of them contemporary with the events, that the pompous dismissal of Parthamasiris, with leave to go wherever he chose, was a mere pretence. Trajan had come to the conclusion, if not before the interview, at any rate in the course of it, that the youth was dangerous, and could not be allowed to live. He therefore sent troops to arrest him as he rode off from the camp, and when he offered resistance caused him to be set upon and slain. This conduct he afterwards strove to justify by accusing the young prince of having violated the agreement made at the interview; but even the debased moral sense of his age was revolted by this act, and declared the grounds whereon he excused it insufficient. Good faith and honor had been sacrificed (it was said) to expediency--the reputation of Rome had been tarnished--it would have been better, even if Parthamasiris were guilty, to have let him escape, than to have punished him at the cost of a public scandal. So strongly was the disgrace felt that some (it seems) endeavored to exonerate Trajan from the responsibility of having contrived the deed, and to throw the blame of it on Exedares, the ex-king of Armenia and brother of Parthamasiris. But Trajan had not sunk so low as to shift his fault on another. He declared openly that the act was his own, and that Exedares had had no part in it.

The death of Parthamasiris was followed by the complete submission of Armenia. Chosroes made no attempt to avenge the murder of his nephew, or to contest with Trajan the possession of the long-disputed territory. A little doubt seems for a short time to have been entertained by the Romans as to its disposal. The right of Exedares to be reinstated in his former kingdom was declared by some to be clear; and it was probably urged that the injuries which he had suffered at the hands of Chosroes would make him a sure Roman ally. But these arguments had no weight with Trajan. He had resolved upon his course. An end should be put, at once and forever, to the perpetual intrigues and troubles inseparable from such relations as had hitherto subsisted between Rome and the Armenian kingdom. The Greater and the Lesser Armenia should be annexed to the Empire, and should form a single Roman province. This settled, attention was turned to the neighboring countries. Alliance was made with Anchialus, king of the Heniochi and Macheloni, and presents were sent to him in return for those which his envoys had brought to Trajan. A new king was given to the Albanians. Friendly relations were established with the chiefs of the Iberi, Sauro-matse, Golchi, and even with the tribes settled on the Cimmerian Bosphorus. The nations of these parts were taught that Rome was the power which the inhabitants even of the remote East and North had most to fear; and a wholesome awe was instilled into them which would, it was hoped, conduce to the general tranquillity of the Empire.

But the objects thus accomplished, considerable as they were, did not seem to the indefatigable Emperor sufficient for one year. Having settled the affairs of the North-east, and left garrisons in the chief Armenian strongholds, Trajan marched southwards to Edessa, the capital of the province of Gsrhoene, and there received the humble submission of Abgarus, who had hitherto wavered between the two contending powers. Manisares, a satrap of these parts, who had a quarrel of his own with Chosroes, also embraced his cause, while other chiefs wavered in their allegiance to Parthia, but feared to trust the invader. Hostilities were commenced by attacks in two directions--southward against the tract known as Anthemusia, between the Euphrates and the Khabour; and eastward against Batnas, Nisibis, and the mountain region known as Gordyene, or the Mons Masius. Success attended both these movements; and, before winter set in, the Romans had made themselves masters of the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, and had even pushed

southwards as far as Singara, a town on the skirts of the modern Sinjar mountain-range. Mesopotarnia was at once, like Armenia, "reduced into the form of a Roman province." Medals were issued representing the conqueror with these subject countries at his foot and the obsequious Senate conferred the title of "Parthicus" upon the Imperator, who had thus robbed the Parthians of two provinces.

According to some, the headquarters of Trajan during the ensuing winter were at Nisibis or Edessa, but the nexus of the narrative in Dio seems rather to require, and the other ancient notices to allow, the belief that he returned to Syria and wintered at Antioch, leaving his generals in possession of the conquered regions, with orders to make every preparation for the campaign of the next year. Among other instructions which they received was the command to build a large fleet at Nisibis, where good timber was abundant, and to prepare for its transport to the Tigris, at the point where that stream quits the mountains and enters on the open country. Meanwhile, in the month of December, the magnificent Syrian capital, where Trajan had his headquarters, was visited by a calamity of a most appalling character. An earthquake, of a violence and duration unexampled in ancient times, destroyed the greater part of its edifices, and buried in their ruins vast multitudes of the inhabitants and of the strangers that had flocked into the town in consequence of the Imperial presence. Many Romans of the highest rank perished, and among them M. Virgilianus Pedo, one of the consuls for the year. The Emperor himself was in danger, and only escaped by creeping through a window of the house in which he resided; nor was his person quite unscathed. Some falling fragments struck him; but fortunately the injuries that he received were slight, and had no permanent consequence. The bulk of the surviving inhabitants, finding themselves houseless, or afraid to enter their houses if they still stood, bivouacked during the height of the winter in the open air, in the Circus, and elsewhere about the city. The terror which legitimately followed from the actual perils was heightened by imaginary fears. It was thought that the Mons Casius, which towers above Antioch to the south-west, was about to be shattered by the violence of the shocks, and to precipitate itself upon the ruined town.

Nor were the horrors of the catastrophe confined to Antioch. The earthquake was one of a series which carried destruction and devastation through the greater part of the East. In the Roman province of Asia, four cities were completely destroyed--Eleia, Myrina, Pitane, and Cyme. In Greece two towns were reduced to ruins, namely, Opus in Locris, and Oritus. In Galatia three cities, unnamed, suffered the same fate. It seemed as if Providence had determined that the new glories which Rome was gaining by the triumphs of her arms should be obscured by calamities of a kind that no human power could avert or control, and that despite the efforts of Trajan to make his reign a time of success and splendor, it should go down to posterity as one of gloom, suffering, and disaster.

Trajan, however, did not allow himself to be diverted from the objects that he had set before him by such trifling matters as the sufferings of a certain number of provincial towns. With the approach of spring (A.D. 116) he was up and doing. His officers had obeyed his orders, and a fleet had been built at Nisibis during the winter amply sufficient for the purpose for which it was wanted. The ships were so constructed that they could be easily taken to pieces and put together again. Trajan had them conveyed on wagons to the Tigris at Jezireh, and there proceeded to make preparations for passing the river and attacking Adiabene. By embarking on board some of his ships companies of heavy-armed and archers, who protected his working parties, and at the same time threatening with other ships to cross at many different

points, he was able, though with much difficulty, to bridge the stream in the face of a powerful body of the enemy, and to land his troops safely on the opposite bank. This done, his work was more than half accomplished. Chosroes remained aloof from the war, either husbanding his resources, or perhaps occupied by civil feuds, and left the defence of his outlying provinces to their respective governors. Mobarsapes, the Adiabenian monarch, had set his hopes on keeping the invader out of his kingdom by defending the line of the Tigris, and when that was forced he seems to have despaired, and to have made no further effort. His towns and strongholds were taken one after another, without their offering any serious resistance. Nineveh, Arbela, and Gaugamala fell into the enemy's hands. Adenystrse, a place of great strength, was captured by a small knot of Roman prisoners, who, when they found their friends near, rose upon the garrison, killed the commandant, and opened the gates to their countrymen. In a short time the whole tract between the Tigris and the Zagros mountains was overrun; resistance ceased; and the invader was able to proceed to further conquests.

It might have been expected that an advance would have at once been directed on Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital; but Trajan, for some reason which is not made clear to us, determined otherwise. He repassed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, took Hatra (now el-Hadhr), at that time one of the most considerable places in those parts, and then, crossing to the Euphrates, descended its course to Hit and Babylon. No resistance was offered him, and he became master of the mighty Babylon without a blow. Seleucia seems also to have submitted; and it remained only to attack and take the capital in order to have complete possession of the entire region watered by the two great rivers. For this purpose a fleet was again necessary, and, as the ships used on the upper Tigris had, it would seem, been abandoned, Trajan conveyed a flotilla, which had descended the Euphrates, across Mesopotamia on rollers, and launching it upon the Tigris, proceeded to the attack of the great metropolis. Here again the resistance that he encountered was trivial. Like Babylon and Seleucia, Ctesiphon at once opened its gates. The monarch had departed with his family and his chief treasures,6 and had placed a vast space between himself and his antagonist. He was prepared to contend with his Roman foe, not in battle array, but by means of distance, natural obstacles, and guerilla warfare. He had evidently determined neither to risk a battle nor stand a siege. As Trajan advanced, he retreated, seeming to yield all, but no doubt intending, if it should be necessary, to turn to bay at last, and in the meantime diligently fomenting that spirit of discontent and disaffection which was shortly to render the further advance of the Imperial troops impossible.

But, for the moment, all appeared to go well with the invaders. The surrender of Ctesiphon brought with it the submission of the whole region on the lower courses of the great rivers, and gave the conqueror access to the waters of a new sea. Trajan may be excused if he overrated his successes, regarded himself as another Alexander, and deemed that the great monarchy, so long the rival of Rome, was now at last swept away, and that the entire East was on the point of being absorbed into the Roman Empire. The capture by his lieutenants of the golden throne of the Parthian kings may well have seemed to him emblematic of this change; and the flight of Chosroes into the remote and barbarous regions of the far East may have helped to lull his adversary into a feeling of complete security. Such a feeling is implied in the pleasure voyage of the conqueror down the Tigris to the Persian Gulf, in his embarkation on the waters of the Southern Sea, in the inquiries which he instituted with respect to Indian affairs, and in the regret to which he gave utterance, that his advanced years prevented him from making India the term of his labors. No shadow of his coming

troubles seems to have flitted before the eyes of the Emperor during the weeks that he was thus occupied--weeks which he passed in self-complacent contemplation of the past and dreams of an impossible future.

Suddenly, tidings of a most alarming kind dispelled his pleasing visions, and roused him to renewed exertions. Revolt, he found, had broken out everywhere in his rear. At Seleucia, at Hatra, at Nisibis, at Edessa, the natives had flown to arms; his entire line of retreat was beset by foes, and he ran a risk of having his return cut off, and of perishing in the land which he had invaded. Trajan had hastily to retrace his stops, and to send his generals in all directions to check the spread of insurrection. Seleucia was recovered by Erucius Clarus and Julius Alexander, who punished its rebellion by delivering it to the flames. Lucius Quietus retook Nisibis, and plundered and burnt Edessa. Maximus, on the contrary, was defeated and slain by the rebels, who completely destroyed the Roman army under his orders. Trajan, perceiving how slight his hold was upon the conquered populations, felt compelled to change his policy, and, as the only mode of pacifying, even temporarily, the growing discontent, instead of making Lower Mesopotamia into a Roman province, as he had made Armenia, Upper Mesopotamia, and Adiabene (or Assyria), he proceeded with much pomp and display to set up a native king. The prince selected was a certain Parthamaspates, a member of the royal family of the Arsacidse, who had previously sided with Rome against the reigning monarch. In a plain near Ctesiphon, where he had had his tribunal erected, Trajan, after a speech wherein he extolled the greatness of his own exploits, presented to the assembled Romans and natives this youth as King of Parthia, and with his own hand placed the diadem upon his brow.

Under cover of the popularity acquired by this act the aged Emperor now commenced his retreat. The line of the Tigris was no doubt open to him, and along this he might have marched in peace to Upper Mesopotamia or Armenia; but either he preferred the direct route to Syria by way of Hatra and Singara, or the insult offered to the Roman name by the independent attitude which the people of the former place still maintained induced him to diverge from the general line of his course, and to enter the desert in order to chastise their presumption. Hatra was a small town, but strongly fortified. The inhabitants at this time belonged to that Arabian immigration which was always more and more encroaching upon Mesopotamia. They were Parthian subjects, but appear to have had their own native kings. On the approach of Trajan, nothing daunted, they closed their gates, and prepared themselves for resistance. Though he battered down a portion of the wall, they repulsed all the attempts of his soldiers to enter through the breach, and when he himself came near to reconnoitre, they drove him off with their arrows. His troops suffered from the heat, from the want of provisions and fodder, from the swarms of flies which disputed with them every morsel of their food and every drop of their drink, and finally from violent hail and thunderstorms. Trajan was forced to withdraw after a time without effecting anything, and to own himself baffled and defeated by the garrison of a petty fortress.

The year, A.D. 116, seems to have closed with this memorable failure. In the following spring, Chosroes, learning the retreat of the Romans, returned to Ctesiphqn, expelled Parthamaspates, who retired into Roman territory, and re-established his authority in Susiana and Southern Mesopotamia. The Romans, however, still held Assyria (Adiabene) and Upper Mesopotamia, as well as Armenia, and had the strength of the Empire been exerted to maintain these possessions, they might have continued in all probability to be Roman provinces, despite any efforts that Parthia could have made to recover them. But in August, A.D. 117, Trajan died; and his successor, Hadrian, was deeply

impressed with the opinion that Trajan's conquests had been impolitic, and that it was unsafe for Rome to attempt under the circumstances of the time any extension of the Eastern frontier. The first act of Hadrian was to relinquish the three provinces which Trajan's Parthian war had added to the Empire, and to withdraw the legions within the Euphrates. Assyria and Mesopotamia were at once reoccupied by the Parthians. Armenia appears to have been made over by Hadrian to Parthamaspates, and to have thus returned to its former condition of a semi-independent kingdom, leaning alternately on Rome and Parthia. It has been asserted that Osrhoene was placed likewise upon the same footing; but the numismatic evidence adduced in favor of this view is weak; and upon the whole it appears most probable that, like the other Mesopotamian countries, Osrhoene again fell under the dominion of the Arsacidae. Rome therefore gained nothing by the great exertions which she had made, unless it were a partial recovery of her lost influence in Armenia, and a knowledge of the growing weakness of her Eastern rival--a knowledge which, though it produced no immediate fruit, was of importance, and was borne in mind when, after another half-century of peace, the relations of the two empires became once more unsatisfactory.

The voluntary withdrawal of Hadrian from Assyria and Mesopotamia placed him on amicable terms with Parthia during the whole of his reign. Chosroes and his successor could not but feel themselves under obligations to the monarch who, without being forced to it by a defeat, had restored to Parthia the most valuable of her provinces. On one occasion alone do we hear of any, even threatened, interruption of the friendly relations subsisting between the two powers; and then the misunderstanding, whatever it may have been, was easily rectified and peace maintained. Hadrian, in A.D. 122, had an interview with Chosroes on his eastern frontier, and by personal explanations and assurances averted, we are told, an impending outbreak. Not long afterwards (A.D. 130, probably) he returned to Chosroes the daughter who had been captured by Trajan, and at the same time promised the restoration of the golden throne, on which the Parthians appear to have set a special value.

It must have been soon after he received back his daughter that Chosroes died. His latest coins bear a date equivalent to A.D. 128; and the Roman historians give Volagases II. as king of Parthia in A.D. 133. It has been generally supposed that this prince was Chosroes' son, and succeeded him in the natural course; but the evidence of the Parthian coins is strong against these suppositions. According to them, Volagases had been a pretender to the Parthian throne as early as A.D. 78, and had struck coins both in that year and the following one, about the date of the accession of Pacorus. His attempt had, however, at that time failed, and for forty-one years he kept his pretensions in abeyance; but about A.D. 119 or 120 he appears to have again come forward, and to have disputed the crown with Chosroes, or reigned contemporaneously with him over some portion of the Parthian kingdom, till about A.D. 130, when--probably on the death of Chosroes--he was acknowledged as sole king by the entire nation. Such is the evidence of the coins, which in this case are very peculiar, and bear the name of Volagases from first to last. It seems to follow from them that Chosroes was succeeded, not by a son, but by a rival, an old claimant of the crown, who cannot have been much younger than Chosroes himself.

CHAPTER XIX. Reign of Volagases II.

Volagases II. appears to have occupied the Parthian throne, after the death of Chosroes, for the space of nineteen years. His reign has a general character of tranquillity, which agrees well with the advanced period of life at which, according to the coins, he first became actual king of Parthia. It was disturbed by only one actual outbreak of hostilities, an occasion upon which Volagases stood upon

the defensive; and on one other occasion was for a brief period threatened with disturbance. Otherwise it seems to have been wholly peaceful. So far as appears, no pretenders troubled it. The coins show, for the years between A.D. 130 and A.D. 149, the head of but one monarch, a head of a marked type, which is impossible to be mistaken.

The occasion upon which actual hostilities disturbed the repose of Volagases was in A.D. 133, when, by the intrigues of Pharasmanes, king of the Iberians, a great horde of Alani from the tract beyond the Caucasus was induced to pour itself through the passes of that mountain chain upon the territories of both the Parthians and the Romans Pharasmanes had previously shown contempt for the power of Rome by refusing to pay court to Hadrian, when, in A.D. 130, he invited the monarchs of Western Asia generally to a conference. He had also, it would seem, been insulted by Hadrian, who, when Pharasmanes sent him a number of cloaks made of cloth-of-gold, employed them in the adornment of three hundred convicts condemned to furnish sport to the Romans in the amphitheatre. What quarrel he had with the Parthians we are not told; but it is related that at his instigation the savage Alani, introduced within the mountain barrier, poured at one and the same time into Media Atropatene, which was a dependency of Parthia; into Armenia, which was under Parthamaspates; and into the Roman province of Cappadocia. Volagases sent an embassy to Rome complaining of the conduct of Pharasmanes, who appears to have been regarded as ruling under Roman protection; and that prince was summoned to Rome in order to answer for his conduct. But the Alanian inroad had to be dealt with at once. The Roman governor of Cappadocia, who was Arrian, the historian of Alexander, by a mere display of force drove the barbarians from his province. Volagases showed a tamer spirit; he was content to follow an example, often set in the East, and already in one instance imitated by Rome, but never adopted by any nation as a settled policy without fatal consequences, and to buy at a high price the retreat of the invaders.

It was to have been expected that Rome would have punished severely the guilt of Pharasmanes in exposing the Empire and its allies to horrors such as always accompany the inroads of a barbarous people. But though the Iberian monarch was compelled to travel to Rome and make his appearance before the Emperor's tribunal, yet Hadrian, so far from punishing him, was induced to load him with benefits and honors. He permitted him to sacrifice in the Capitol, placed his equestrian statue in the temple of Bellona, and granted him an augmentation of territory. Volagases can scarcely have been pleased at these results of his complaints; he bore them, however, without murmuring, and, when (in A.D. 138) Hadrian died and was succeeded by his adopted son, T. Aurelius, better known as Antoninus Pius, Volagases sent to Rome an embassy of congratulation, and presented the new monarch with a crown of gold.

It was probably at this same time that he ventured to make an unpleasant demand. Hadrian had promised that the golden throne which Trajan had captured, in his expedition, and by which the Parthians set so much store, should be surrendered to them; but this promise he had failed to perform. Volagases appears to have thought that his successor might be more facile, and accordingly instructed his envoys to re-open the subject, to remind Antoninus of the pledged faith of his adopted father, and to make a formal request for the delivery of the valued relic. Antoninus, however, proved as obdurate as Hadrian. He was not to be persuaded by any argument to give back the trophy; and the envoys had to return with the report that their representations upon the point had been in vain, and had wholly failed to move the new Emperor.

The history of Volagases II. ends with this transaction. No events are assignable to the last ten years of his reign, which was

probably a season of profound repose, in the East as it was in the West--a period having (as our greatest historian observes of it) "the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history," which is, indeed (as he says), "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." The influence of Rome extended beyond his borders. As in modern times it has become a proverb that when a particular European nation is satisfied the peace of the world is assured, so in the days whereof we are treating it would seem that Rome had only to desire repose, for the surrounding nations to find themselves tranquil. The inference appears to be that not only were the wars which occurred between Rome and her neighbors for the most part stirred up by herself, but that even the civil commotions which disturbed States upon her borders had very generally their origin in Roman intrigues, which, skilfully concealed from view, nevertheless directed the course of affairs in surrounding States, and roused in them, when Rome thought her interests required it, civil differences, disorders, and contentions.

The successor of Volagasos II. was Volagases III., who was most probably his son, although of this there is no direct evidence. The Parthian coins show that Volagases III. ascended the throne in A.D. 148 or 149, and reigned till A.D. 190 or 191--a space of forty-two years. We may assume that he was a tolerably young man at his accession, though the effigy upon his earliest coins is well bearded, and that he was somewhat tired of the long inactivity which had characterized the period of his father's rule. He seems very early to have meditated a war with Rome, and to have taken certain steps which betrayed his intentions; but, upon their coming to the knowledge of Antoninus, and that prince writing to him on the subject, Volagases altered his plans, and resolved to wait, at any rate, until a change of Emperor at Rome should give him a chance of taking the enemy at a disadvantage. Thus it was not till A.D. 161--twelve years after his accession--that his original design was carried out, and the flames of war were once more lighted in the East to the ruin and desolation of the fairest portion of Western Asia.

The good Antoninus was succeeded in the spring of A.D. 161 by his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, who at once associated with him in the government the other adopted son of Antoninus, Lucius Verus. Upon this, thinking that the opportunity for which he had been so long waiting had at last arrived, Volagases marched his troops suddenly into Armenia, expelled Sosemus, the king protected by the Romans, and established in his place a certain Tigranes, a scion of the old royal stock, whom the Armenians regarded as their rightful monarch. News of this bold stroke soon reached the governors of the adjacent Roman provinces, and Severianus, prefect of Cappadocia, a Gaul by birth, incited by the predictions of a pseudo-prophet of those parts, named Alexander, proceeded at the head of a legion into the adjoining kingdom, in the hope of crushing the nascent insurrection and punishing at once the Armenian rebels and their Parthian supporters. Scarcely, however, had he crossed the Euphrates, when he found himself confronted by an overwhelming force, commanded by a Parthian called Chosroes, and was compelled to throw himself into the city of Elegeia, where he was immediately surrounded and besieged. Various tales were told of his conduct under these circumstances, and of the fate which overtook him the most probable account being that after holding out for three days he and his troops were assailed on all sides, and, after a brave resistance, were shot down almost to a man. The Parthians then crossed the Euphrates, and carried fire and sword through Syria. Attidius Cornelianus, the proconsul, having ventured to oppose them, was repulsed. Vague thoughts of flying to arms and shaking off the Roman yoke possessed the minds of the Syrians, and threatened to lead to some overt act. The

Parthians passed through Syria into Palestine, and almost the whole East seemed to lie open to their incursions. When these facts were reported at Rome, it was resolved to send Lucius Verus to the East. He was of an age to undergo the hardships of campaigning, and therefore better fitted than Marcus Aurelius to undertake the conduct of a great war. But, as his military talent was distrusted, it was considered necessary to place at his disposal a number of the best Roman generals of the time, whose services he might use while he claimed as his own their successes. Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius, and Martius Verus, were the most important of these officers; and it was by them, and not by Verus himself, that the military operations were, in fact, conducted. It was not till late in the year A.D. 162 that Verus, having with reluctance torn himself from Italy, appeared, with his lieutenants, upon the scene in Syria, and, after vainly offering them terms of peace, commenced hostilities against the triumphant Parthians. The young Emperor did not adventure his own person in the field, but stationed himself at Antioch, where he could enjoy the pleasures and amusements of a luxurious capital, while he committed to his lieutenants the task of recovering Syria and Armenia, and of chastising the invaders. Avidius Cassius, to whom the Syrian legions were entrusted, had a hard task to bring them into proper discipline after their long period of inaction, but succeeded after a while by the use of almost unexampled severities. Attacked by Volagases within the limits of his province, he made a successful defence, and in a short time was able to take the offensive, to defeat Volagases in a great battle near Europus, and (A.D. 163) to drive the Parthians across the Euphrates. The Armenian war was at the same time being pressed by Statius Priscus, who advanced without a check from the frontier to the capital, Artaxata, which he took and (as it seems) destroyed. He then built a new city, which he strongly garrisoned with Roman troops, and sent intelligence of his successes to Rome, whither Soaemus, the expelled monarch, had betaken himself. Soasmus was upon this replaced on the Armenian throne, the task of settling him in the government being deputed to a certain Thucydides, by whose efforts, together with those of Martius Verus, all opposition to the restored monarch was suppressed, and the entire country tranquillized.

Rome had thus in the space of two years recovered her losses, and shown Parthia that she was still well able to maintain the position in Western Asia which she had acquired by the victories of Trajan. But such a measure of success did not content the ambitious generals into whose hands the incompetence of Verus had thrown the real direction of the war. Military distinction at this time offered to a Roman a path to the very highest honors, each successful general becoming at once by force of his position a candidate for the Imperial dignity. Of the various able officers employed under Verus, the most distinguished and the most ambitious was Cassius--a chief who ultimately raised the standard of revolt against Aurelius, and lost his life in consequence. Cassius, after he had succeeded in clearing Syria of the invaders, was made by Aurelius a sort of generalissimo; and being thus free to act as he chose, determined to carry the war into the enemy's country, and to try if he could not rival, or outdo, the exploits of Trajan fifty years previously. Though we have no continuous narrative of his expedition, we may trace its course with tolerable accuracy in the various fragmentary writings which bear upon the history of the time--from Zeugma, when he crossed the Euphrates into Mesopotamia, to Nicephorium, near the junction of the Belik with the Euphrates; and thence down the course of the stream to Sura (Sippara?) and Babylon. At Sura a battle was fought, in which the Romans were victorious; and then the final efforts were made, which covered Cassius with glory. The great city of Seleucia, upon the Tigris, which had a population of 400,000 souls, was

besieged, taken, and burnt, to punish an alleged treason of the inhabitants. Ctesiphon, upon the opposite side of the stream, was occupied, and the summer palace of Volagases there situated was levelled with the ground. The various temples were plundered; secret places, where it was thought treasure might be hid, were examined, and a rich booty was carried off by the invaders. The Parthians, worsted in every encounter, ceased to resist; and all the conquests made by Trajan were recovered. Nor was this all. The Roman general, after conquering the Mesopotamian plain, advanced into the Zagros mountains, and occupied, at any rate, a portion of Media, thereby entitling his Imperial masters to add to the titles of "Armeniacus," and "Parthicus," which they had already assumed, the further and wholly novel title of "Medicus."

But Rome was not to escape the Nemesis which is wont to pursue the over-fortunate. During the stay of the army in Babylonia a disease was contracted of a strange and terrible character, whereto the superstitious fears of the soldiers assigned a supernatural origin. The pestilence, they said, had crept forth from a subterranean cell in the temple of Comsean Apollo at Seleucia, which those who were plundering the town rashly opened in the hope of its containing treasure, but which held nothing except this fearful scourge, placed there in primeval times by the spells of the Chaldaeans. Such a belief, however fanciful, was calculated to increase the destructive-power of the malady, and so to multiply its victims. Vast numbers of the soldiers perished, we are told, from its effects during the march homeward; their sufferings being further aggravated by the failure of supplies, which was such that; many died of famine. The stricken army, upon entering the Roman territory, communicated the infection to the inhabitants, and the return of Verus and his troops to Rome was a march of Death through the provinces. The pestilence raged with special force throughout Italy, and spread as far as the Rhine and the Atlantic Ocean. According to one writer more than one half of the entire population, and almost the whole Roman army, was carried off by it.

But though Rome suffered in consequence of the war, its general result was undoubtedly disadvantageous to the Parthians. The expedition of Cassius was the first invasion of Parthia in which Rome had been altogether triumphant. Trajan's campaign had brought about the submission of Armenia to the Romans; but it did not permanently deprive Parthia of any portion of her actual territory. And the successes of the Emperor in his advance were almost balanced by the disasters which accompanied his retreat--disasters so serious as to cause a general belief that Hadrian's concessions sprang more from prudence than from generosity. The war of Verus produced the actual cession to Rome of a Parthian province, which continued thenceforth for centuries to be an integral portion of the Roman Empire. Western Mesopotamia, or the tract between the Euphrates and the Khabour, passed under the dominion of Rome at this time; and, though not reduced to the condition of a province, was none the less lost to Parthia, and absorbed by Rome into her territory. Parthia, moreover, was penetrated by the Roman arms more deeply at this time than she had ever been previously, and was made to feel, as she had never felt before, that in contending with Rome she was fighting a losing battle. It added to the disgrace of her defeats, and to her own sense of their decisive character, that they were inflicted by a mere general, a man of no very great eminence, and one who was far from possessing the free command of those immense resources which Rome had at her disposal.

Parthia had now, in fact, entered upon the third stage of her decline. The first was reached when she ceased to be an aggressive and was content to become a stationary power; the second set in when she began to lose territory by the revolt of her own subjects; the third--which commences at this

point--is marked by her inability to protect herself from the attacks of a foreign assailant. The causes of her decline were various. Luxury had no doubt done its ordinary work upon the conquerors of rich and highly-civilized regions, softening down their original ferocity, and rendering them at once less robust in frame and less bold and venturesome in character.

The natural law of exhaustion, which sooner or later affects all races of any distinction, may also not improbably have come into play, rendering the Parthians of the age of Verus very degenerate descendants of those who displayed such brilliant qualities when they contended with Crassus and Mark Antony. Loyalty towards the monarch, and the absolute devotion of every energy to his service, which characterized, the earlier times, dwindled and disappeared as the succession became more and more disputed, and the kings less worthy of their subjects' admiration. The strength needed against foreign enemies was, moreover, frequently expended in civil broils; the spirit of patriotism declined; and tameness under insult and indignity took the place of that fierce pride and fiery self-assertion which had once characterized the people.

The war with Rome terminated in the year A.D. 165. Volagases survived its close for at least twenty-five years; but he did not venture at any time to renew the struggle, or to make any effort for the recovery of his lost territory. Once only does he appear to have contemplated an outbreak. When, about the year A.D. 174 or 175, Aurelius being occupied in the west with repelling the attacks of the wild tribes upon the Danube, Avidius Cassius assumed the purple in Syria, and a civil war seemed to be imminent, Volagases appears to have shown an intention of once more taking arms and trying his fortune. A Parthian war was at this time expected to break out by the Romans. But the crisis passed without an actual explosion. The promptness of Aurelius, who, on hearing the news, at once quitted the Danube and marched into Syria, together with the rapid collapse of the Cassian revolt, rendered it imprudent for Volagases to persist in his project. He therefore laid aside all thought of renewing hostilities with Rome; and, on the arrival of Aurelius in Syria, sent ambassadors to him with friendly assurances, who were received favorably by the philosophic Emperor.

Four years after this Marcus Aurelius died, and was succeeded in the purple by his youthful son, Lucius Aurelius Commodus. It might have been expected that the accession of this weak and inexperienced prince would have induced Volagases to resume his warlike projects, and attempt the recovery of Mesopotamia. But the scanty history of the time which has come down to us shows no trace of his having entertained any such design. He had probably reached the age at which repose becomes a distinct object of desire, and is infinitely preferred to active exertion. At any rate, it is clear that he made no effort. The reign of Gommodus was from first to last untroubled by Oriental disturbance. Volgases III. was for ten years contemporary with this mean and unwarlike prince; but Rome was allowed to retain her Parthian conquests unmolested. At length, in A.D. 190 or 191, Volagases died,56 and the destinies of Parthia passed into the hands of a new monarch.