The Sassanians (New Persia) [1]

By George Rawlinson

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10. Struggles with Rome

The prince on whom the government of the Roman empire, and consequently the direction of the Persian war, devolved by the death of Constantius, was in the flower of his age, proud, self-confident, and full of energy. He had been engaged for a period of four years in a struggle with the rude and warlike tribes of Germany, had freed the whole country west of the Rhine from the presence of those terrible warriors, and had even carried fire and sword far into the wild and savage districts on the right bank of the river, and compelled the Alemanni and other powerful German tribes to make their submission to the majesty of Rome. Personally brave, by temperament restless, and inspired with an ardent desire to rival or eclipse the glorious deeds of those heroes of former times who had made themselves a name in history, he viewed the disturbed condition of the East at the time of his accession not as a trouble, not as a drawback upon the delights of empire, but as a happy circumstance, a fortunate opportunity for distinguishing himself by some great achievement. Of all the Greeks, Alexander appeared to him the most illustrious; of all his predecessors on the imperial throne, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were those whom he most wished to emulate. But all these princes had either led or sent expeditions into the far East, and had aimed at uniting in one the fairest provinces of Europe and Asia. Julian appears, from the first moment that he found himself peaceably established upon the throne, to have resolved on undertaking in person a great expedition against Sapor, with the object of avenging upon Persia the ravages and defeats of the last sixty years, or at any rate of obtaining such successes as might justify his assuming the title of "Persicus." Whether he really entertained any hope of rivalling Alexander, or supposed it possible that he should effect "the final conquest of Persia," may be doubted. Acquainted, as he must have been, with the entire course of Roman warfare in these parts from the attack of Crassus to the last defeat of his own immediate predecessor, he can scarcely have regarded the subjugation of Persia as an easy matter, or have expected to do much more than strike terror into the "barbarians" of the East, or perhaps obtain from them the cession of another province. The sensible officer, who, after accompanying him in his expedition, wrote the history of the campaign, regarded his actuating motives as the delight that he took in war, and the desire of a new title. Confident in his own military talent, in his training, and in his power to inspire enthusiasm in an army, he no doubt looked to reap laurels sufficient to justify him in making his attack; but the wild schemes ascribed to him, the conquest of the Sassanian kingdom, and the subjugation of Hyrcania and

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India, are figments (probably) of the imagination of his historians.

Julian entered Constantinople on the 11th of December, A.D. 361; he quitted it towards the end of May,12 A.D. 362, after residing there less than six months. During this period, notwithstanding the various important matters in which he was engaged, the purifying of the court, the depression of the Christians, the restoration and revivification of Paganism, he found time to form plans and make preparations for his intended eastern expedition, in which he was anxious to engage as soon as possible. Having designated for the war such troops as could be spared from the West, he committed them and their officers to the charge of two generals, carefully chosen, Victor, a Roman of distinction, and the Persian refugee, Prince Hormisdas, who conducted the legions without difficulty to Antioch. There Julian himself arrived in June or July 14 after having made a stately progress through Asia Minor; and it would seem that he would at once have marched against the enemy, had not his counsellors strongly urged the necessity of a short delay, during which the European troops might be rested, and adequate preparations made for the intended invasion. It was especially necessary to provide stores and ships, since the new emperor had resolved not to content himself with an ordinary campaign upon the frontier, but rather to imitate the examples of Trajan and Severus, who had carried the Roman eagles to the extreme south of Mesopotamia. Ships, accordingly, were collected, and probably built during the winter of A.D. 362-3; provisions were laid in; warlike stores, military engines, and the like accumulated; while the impatient monarch, galled by the wit and raillery of the gay Antiochenes, chafed at his compelled inaction, and longed to exchange the war of words in which he was engaged with his subjects for the ruder contests of arms wherewith use had made him more familiar.

It must have been during the emperor's stay at Antioch that he received an embassy from the court of Persia, commissioned to sound his inclinations with regard to the conclusion of a peace. Sapor had seen, with some disquiet, the sceptre of the Roman world assumed by an enterprising and courageous youth, inured to warfare and ambitious of military glory. He was probably very well informed as to the general condition of the Roman State and the personal character of its administrator; and the tidings which he received concerning the intentions and preparations, of the new prince were such as caused him some apprehension, if not actual alarm. Under these circumstance she sent an embassy with overtures, the exact nature of which is not known, but which, it is probable, took for their basis the existing territorial limits of the two countries. At least, we hear of no offer of surrender or submission on Sapor's part; and we can scarcely suppose that, had such offers been made, the Roman writers would have passed them over in silence. It is not surprising that Julian lent no favorable ear to the envoys, if these were their instructions; but it would have been better for his reputation had he replied to them with less of haughtiness and rudeness. According to one authority, he tore up before their faces the autograph letter of their master; while, according to another, he responded, with a contemptuous smile, that "there was no occasion for an exchange of thought between him and the Persian king by messengers, since he intended very shortly to treat with him in person." Having received this rebuff, the envoys of Sapor took their departure, and conveyed to their sovereign the intelligence that he must prepare himself to resist a serious invasion.

About the same time various offers of assistance reached the Roman emperor from the independent or semi-independent princes and chieftains of the regions adjacent to Mesopotamia. Such overtures were sure to be made by the heads of the plundering desert tribes to any powerful invader, since it would

be hoped that a share in the booty might be obtained without much participation in the danger. We are told that Julian promptly rejected these offers, grandly saying that it was for Rome rather to give aid to her allies than to receive assistance from them. It appears, however, that at least two exceptions were made to the general principle thus magniloquently asserted. Julian had taken into his service, ere he quitted Europe, a strong body of Gothic auxiliaries; and, while at Antioch, he sent to the Saracens, reminding them of their promise to lend him troops, and calling upon them to fulfil it. If the advance on Persia was to be made by the line of the Euphrates, an alliance with these agile sons of the desert was of first-rate importance, since the assistance which they could render as friends was considerable, and the injury which they could inflict as enemies was almost beyond calculation. It is among the faults of Julian in this campaign that he did not set more store by the Saracen alliance, and make greater efforts to maintain it; we shall find that after a while he allowed the brave nomads to become disaffected, and to exchange their friendship with him for hostility. Had he taken more care to attach them cordially to the side of Rome, it is quite possible that his expedition might have had a prosperous issue.

There was another ally, whose services Julian regarded himself as entitled not to request, but to command. Arsaces, king of Armenia, though placed on his throne by Sapor, had (as we have seen) transferred his allegiance to Constantius, and voluntarily taken up the position of a Roman feudatory. Constantius had of late suspected his fidelity; but Arsaces had not as yet, by any overt act, justified these suspicions, and Julian seems to have regarded him as an assured friend and ally. Early in A.D. 363 he addressed a letter to the Armenian monarch, requiring him to levy a considerable force, and hold himself in readiness to execute such orders as he would receive within a short time. The style, address, and purport of this letter were equally distasteful to Arsaces, whose pride was outraged, and whose indolence was disturbed, by the call thus suddenly made upon him. His own desire was probably to remain neutral; he felt no interest in the standing quarrel between his two powerful neighbors; he was under obligations to both of them; and it was for his advantage that they should remain evenly balanced. We cannot ascribe to him any earnest religious feeling; but, as one who kept up the profession of Christianity, he could not but regard with aversion the Apostate, who had given no obscure intimation of his intention to use his power to the utmost in order to sweep the Christian religion from the face of the earth. The disinclination of their monarch to observe the designs of Julian was shared, or rather surpassed, by his people, the more educated portion of whom were strongly attached to the new faith and worship. If the great historian of Armenia is right in stating that Julian at this time offered an open insult to the Armenian religion, we must pronounce him strangely imprudent. The alliance of Armenia was always of the utmost importance to Rome in any attack upon the East. Julian seems to have gone out of his way to create offence in this quarter, where his interests required that he should exercise all his powers of conciliation.

The forces which the emperor regarded as at his disposal, and with which he expected to take the field, were the following. His own troops amounted to 83,000 or (according to another account) to 95,000 men. They consisted chiefly of Roman legionaries, horse and foot, but included a strong body of Gothic auxiliaries. Armenia was expected to furnish a considerable force, probably not less than 20,000 men; and the light horse of the Saracens would, it was thought, be tolerably numerous. Altogether, an army of above a hundred thousand men was about to be launched on the devoted Persia, which was believed unlikely to offer any effectual, if even any serious, resistance.

The impatience of Julian scarcely allowed him to await the conclusion of the winter. With the first breath of spring he put his forces in motion, and, quitting Antioch, marched with all speed to the Euphrates. Passing Litarbi, and then Hiapolis, he crossed the river by a bridge of boats in the vicinity that place, and proceeded by Batnee to the important city of Carrhae, once the home of Abraham. Here he halted for a few days and finally fixed his plans. It was by this time well known to the Romans that there were two, and two only, convenient roads whereby Southern Mesopotamia was to be reached, one along the line of the Mons Masius to the Tigris, and then along the banks of that stream, the other down the valley of the Euphrates to the great alluvial plain on the lower course of the rivers. Julian had, perhaps, hitherto doubted which line he should follow in person. The first had been preferred by Alexander and by Trajan, the second by the younger Cyrus, by Avidius Cassius, and by Severus. Both lines were fairly practicable; but that of the Tigris was circuitous, and its free employment was only possible under the condition of Armenia being certainly friendly. If Julian had cause to suspect, as it is probable that he had, the fidelity oL the Armenians, he may have felt that there was one line only which he could with prudence pursue. He might send a subsidiary force by the doubtful route which could advance to his aid if matters went favorably, or remain on the defensive if they assumed a threatening aspect; but his own grand attack must be by the other. Accordingly he divided his forces. Committing a body of troops, which is variously estimated at from 18,000 to 30,000, into the hands of Procopius, a connection of his own, and Sebastian, Duke of Egypt, with orders that they should proceed by way of the Mons Masius to Armenia, and, uniting themselves with the forces of Arsaces, invade Northern Media, ravage it, and then join him before Ctesiphon by the line of the Tigris, he reserved for himself and for his main army the shorter and more open route down the valley of the Euphrates. Leaving Carrhae on the 26th of March, after about a week's stay, he marched southward, at the head of 65,000 men, by Davana and along the course of the Belik, to Callinicus or Nicophorium, near the junction of the Belik with the Euphrates. Here the Saracen chiefs came and made their submission, and were graciously received by the emperor, to whom they presented a crown of gold. At the same time the fleet made its appearance, numbering at least 1100 vessels, of which fifty were ships of war, fifty prepared to serve as pontoons, and the remaining thousand, transports laden with provisions, weapons, and military engines.

From Callinicus the emperor marched along the course of the Euphrates to Circusium, or Circesium, at the junction of the Khabour with the Euphrates, arriving at this place early in April. Thus far he had been marching through his own dominions, and had had no hostility to dread. Being now about to enter the enemy's country, he made arrangements for the march which seem to have been extremely judicious. The cavalry was placed under the command of Arinthseus and Prince Hormisdas, and was stationed at the extreme left, with orders to advance on a line parallel with the general course of the river. Some picked legions under the command of Nevitta formed the right wing, and, resting on the Euphrates, maintained communication with the fleet. Julian, with the main part of his troops, occupied the space intermediate between these two extremes, marching in a loose column which from front to rear covered a distance of above nine miles. A flying corps of fifteen hundred men acted as an avant-guard under Count Lucilianus, and explored the country in advance, feeling on all sides for the enemy. The rear was covered by a detachment under Secundinus, Duke of Osrhoene, Dagalaiphus, and Victor.

Having made his dispositions, and crossed the broad stream of the Khabour, on the 7th of April, by a bridge of boats, which he immediately broke up, Julian continued his

advance along the course of the Euphrates, supported by his fleet, which was not allowed either to outstrip or to lag behind the army. The first halt was at Zaitha, famous as the scene of the murder of Gordian, whose tomb was in its vicinity. Here Julian encouraged his soldiers by an eloquent speech, in which he recounted the past successes of the Roman arms, and promised them an easy victory over their present adversary. He then, in a two days' march, reached Dura, a ruined city, destitute of inhabitants, on the banks of the river; from which a march of four days more brought him to Anathan, the modern Anah, a strong fortress on an island in the mid-stream, which was held by a Persian garrison. An attempt to surprise the place by a night attack having failed, Julian had recourse to persuasion, and by the representations of Prince Hormisdas induced its defenders to surrender the fort and place themselves at his mercy. It was, perhaps, to gall the Antiochenes with an indication of his victorious progress that he sent his prisoners under escort into Syria, and settled them in the territory of Chalcis, at no great distance from the city of his aversion. Unwilling further to weaken his army by detaching a garrison to hold his conquest, he committed Anathan to the flames before proceeding further down the river.

About eight miles below Anathan, another island and another fortress were held by the enemy. Thilutha is described as stronger than Anathan, and indeed as almost impregnable. Julian felt that he could not attack it with any hope of success, and therefore once more submitted to use persuasion. But the garrison, feeling themselves secure, rejected his overtures; they would wait, they said, and see which party was superior in the approaching conflict, and would then attach themselves to the victors. Meanwhile, if unmolested by the invader, they would not interfere with his advance, but would maintain a neutral attitude. Julian had to determine whether he would act in the spirit of an Alexander, and, rejecting with disdain all compromise, compel by force of arms an entire submission, or whether he would take lower ground, accept the offer made to him, and be content to leave in his rear a certain number of unconquered fortresses. He decided that prudence required him to take the latter course, and left Thilutha unassailed. It is not surprising that, having admitted the assumption of a neutral position by one town, he was forced to extend the permission to others, and so to allow the Euphrates route to remain, practically, in the hands of the Persians.

A. five days' march from Thilutha brought the army to a point opposite Diacira, or Hit, a town of ancient repute, and one which happened to be well provided with stores and provisions. Though the place lay on the right bank of the river, it was still exposed to attack, as the fleet could convey any number of troops from one shore to the other. Being considered untenable, it was deserted by the male inhabitants, who, however, left some of their women behind them. We obtain an unpleasant idea of the state of discipline which the philosophic emperor allowed to prevail, when we find that his soldiers, "without remorse and without punishment, massacred these defenceless persons." The historian of the war records this act without any appearance of shame, as if it were a usual occurrence, and no more important than the burning of the plundered city which followed.

From Hit the army pursued its march, through Sitha and Megia, to Zaragardia or Ozogardana, where the memory of Trajan's expedition still lingered, a certain pedestal or pulpit of stone being known to the natives as "Trajan's tribunal." Up to this time nothing had been seen or heard of any Persian opposing army; one man only on the Roman side, so far as we hear, had been killed. No systematic method of checking the advance had been adopted; the corn was everywhere found standing; forage was plentiful; and there were magazines of grain in the towns. No difficulties had delayed the invaders but

such as Nature had interposed to thwart them, as when a violent storm on one occasion shattered the tents, and on another a sudden swell of the Euphrates wrecked some of the corn transports, and interrupted the right wing's line of march. But this pleasant condition of things was not to continue. At Hit the rolling Assyrian plain had come to an end, and the invading army had entered upon the low alluvium of Babylonia, a region of great fertility, intersected by numerous canals, which in some places were carried the entire distance from the one river to the other. The change in the character of the country encouraged the Persians to make a change in their tactics. Hitherto they had been absolutely passive; now at last they showed themselves, and commenced the active system of perpetual harassing warfare in which they were adepts. A surena, or general of the first rank, appeared in the field, at the head of a strong body of Persian horse, and accompanied by a sheikh of the Saracenic Arabs, known as Malik (or "King") Rodoseces. Retreating as Julian advanced, but continually delaying his progress, hanging on the skirts of his army, cutting off his stragglers, and threatening every unsupported detachment, this active force changed all the conditions of the march, rendering it slow and painful, and sometimes stopping it altogether. We are told that on one occasion Prince Hormisdas narrowly escaped falling into the surena's hands. On another, the Persian force, having allowed the Roman vanguard to proceed unmolested, suddenly showed itself on the southern bank of one of the great canals connecting the Euphrates with the Tigris, and forbade the passage of Julian's main army. It was only after a day and a night's delay that the emperor, by detaching troops under Victor to make a long circuit, cross the canal far to the east, recall Lucilianus with the vanguard, and then attack the surena's troops in the rear, was able to overcome the resistance in his front, and carry his army across the cutting.

Having in this way effected the passage, Julian continued his march along the Euphrates, and in a short time came to the city of Perisabor (Mruz Shapur), the most important that he had yet reached, and reckoned not much inferior to Otesiphon. As the inhabitants steadily refused all accommodation, and insulted Hormisdas, who was sent to treat with them, by the reproach that he was a deserter and a traitor, the emperor determined to form the siege of the place and see if he could not compel it to a surrender. Situated between the Euphrates and one of the numerous canals derived from it, and further protected by a trench drawn across from the canal to the river, Perisabor occupied a sort of island, while at the same time it was completely surrounded with a double wall. The citadel, which lay towards the north, and overhung the Euphrates, was especially strong; and the garrison was brave, numerous, and full of confidence. The walls, however, composed in part of brick laid in bitumen, were not of much strength; and the Roman soldiers found little difficulty in shattering with the ram one of the corner towers, and so making an entrance into the place. But the real struggle now began. The brave defenders retreated into the citadel, which was of imposing height, and from this vantage-ground galled the Romans in the town with an incessant shower of arrows, darts, and stones. The ordinary catapults and balistae of the Romans were no match for such a storm descending from such a height; and it was plainly necessary, if the place was to be taken, to have recourse to some other device. Julian, therefore, who was never sparing of his own person, took the resolution, on the second day of the siege, of attempting to burst open one of the gates. Accompanied by a small band, who formed a roof over his head with their shields, and by a few sappers with their tools, he approached the gate-tower, and made his men commence their operations. The doors, however, were found to be protected with iron, and the fastenings to be so strong that no immediate

impression could be made; while the alarmed garrison, concentrating its attention on the threatened spot, kept up a furious discharge of missiles on their daring assailants. Prudence counselled retreat from the dangerous position which had been taken up; and the emperor, though he felt acutely the shame of having failed, retired. But his mind, fertile in resource, soon formed a new plan. He remembered that Demetrius Poliorcetes had acquired his surname by the invention and use of the "Helepolis," a movable tower of vast height, which placed the assailants on a level with the defenders even of the loftiest ramparts. He at once ordered the construction of such a machine; and, the ability of his engineers being equal to the task, it rapidly grew before his eyes. The garrison saw its growth with feelings very opposite to those of their assailant; they felt that they could not resist the new creation, and anticipated its employment by a surrender, Julian agreed to spare their lives, and allowed them to withdraw and join their countrymen, each man taking with him a spare garment and a certain sum of money. The other stores contained within the walls fell to the conquerors, who found them to comprise a vast quantity of corn, arms, and other valuables. Julian distributed among his troops whatever was likely to be serviceable; the remainder, of which he could make no use, was either burned or thrown into the Euphrates.

The latitude of Ctesiphon was now nearly reached, but Julian still continued to descend the Euphrates, while the Persian cavalry made occasional dashes upon his extended line, and sometimes caused him a sensible loss. At length he came to the point where the Nahr-Malcha, or "Royal river," the chief of the canals connecting the Euphrates with the Tigris, branched off from the more western stream, and ran nearly due east to the vicinity of the capital. The canal was navigable by his ships, and he therefore at this point quitted the Euphrates, and directed his march eastward along the course of the cutting, following in the footsteps of Severus, and no doubt expecting, like him, to capture easily the great metropolitan city. But his advance across the neck of land which here separates the Tigris from the Euphrates was painful and difficult, since the enemy laid the country under water, and at every favorable point disputed his progress. Julian, however, still pressed forward, and advanced, though slowly. By felling the palms which grew abundantly in this region, and forming with them rafts supported by inflated skins, he was able to pass the inundated district, and to approach within about eleven miles of Ctesiphon. Here his further march was obstructed by a fortress, built (as it would seem) to defend the capital, and fortified with especial care. Ammianus calls this place Maoga-malcha, while Zosimus gives it the name of Besuchis; but both agree that it was a large town, commanded by a strong citadel, and held by a brave and numerous garrison. Julian might perhaps have left it unassailed, as he had left already several towns upon his line of march; but a daring attempt made against himself by a portion of the garrison caused him to feel his honor concerned in taking the place; and the result was that he once more arrested his steps, and, sitting down before the walls, commenced a formal siege. All the usual arts of attack and defence were employed on either side for several days, the chief novel feature in the warfare being the use by the besieged of blazing balls of bitumen, which they shot from their lofty towers against the besiegers' works and persons. Julian, however, met this novelty by a device on his side which was uncommon; he continued openly to assault the walls and gates with his battering rams, but he secretly gave orders that the chief efforts of his men should be directed to the formation of a mine, which should be carried under both the walls that defended the place, and enable him to introduce suddenly a body of troops into the very heart of the city. His orders were successfully executed; and while a general attack upon the defences occupied the

attention of the besieged, three corps introduced through the mine suddenly showed themselves in the town itself, and rendered further resistance hopeless. Maogamalcha, which a little before had boasted of being impregnable, and had laughed to scorn the vain efforts of the emperor, suddenly found itself taken by assault and undergoing the extremities of sack and pillage. Julian made no efforts to prevent a general massacre, and the entire population, without distinction of age or sex, seems to have been put to the sword. The commandant of the fortress, though he was at first spared, suffered death shortly after on a frivolous charge. Even a miserable remnant, which had concealed itself in caves and cellars, was hunted out, smoke and fire being used to force the fugitives from their hiding-places, or else cause them to perish in the darksome dens by suffocation. Thus there was no extremity of savage warfare which was not used, the fourth century anticipating some of the horrors which have most disgraced the nineteenth.

Nothing now but the river Tigris intervened between Julian and the great city of Ctesiphon, which was plainly the special object of the expedition. Ctesiphon, indeed, was not to Persia what it had been to Parthia; but still it might fairly be looked upon as a prize of considerable importance. Of Parthia it had been the main, in later times perhaps the sole, capital; to Persia it was a secondary rather than a primary city, the ordinary residence of the court being Istakr, or Persepolis. Still the Persian kings seem occasionally to have resided at Ctesiphon; and among the secondary cities of the empire it undoubtedly held a high rank. In the neighborhood were various royal hunting-seats, surrounded by shady gardens, and adorned with paintings or bas-reliefs; while near them were parks or "paradises," containing the game kept for the prince's sport, which included lions, wild boars, and bears of remarkable fierceness. As Julian advanced, these pleasaunces fell, one after another, into his hands, and were delivered over to the rude soldiery, who trampled the flowers and shrubs under foot, destroyed the wild beasts, and burned the residences. No serious resistance was as yet made by any Persian force to the progress of the Romans, who pressed steadily forward, occasionally losing a few men or a few baggage animals, but drawing daily nearer to the great city, and on their way spreading ruin and desolation over a most fertile district, from which they drew abundant supplies as they passed through it, while they left it behind them blackened, wasted, and almost without inhabitant. The Persians seem to have had orders not to make, as yet, any firm stand. One of the sons of Sapor was now at their head, but no change of tactics occurred. As Julian drew near, this prince indeed quitted the shelter of Ctesiphon, and made a reconnaissance in force; but when he fell in with the Roman advanced guard under Victor, and saw its strength, he declined an engagement, and retired without coming to blows.

Julian had now reached the western suburb of Ctesiphon, which had lost its old name of Seleucia and was known as Coche. The capture of this place would, perhaps, not have been difficult; but, as the broad and deep stream of the Tigris flowed between it and the main town, little would have been gained by the occupation. Julian felt that, to attack Ctesiphon with success, he must, like Trajan and Severus, transport his army to the left bank of the Tigris, and deliver his assault upon the defences that lay beyond that river. For the safe transport of his army he trusted to his fleet, which he had therefore caused to enter the Nahr-Malcha, and to accompany his troops thus far. But at Coche he found that the Nahr-Malcha, instead of joining the Tigris, as he had expected, above Ctesiphon, ran into it at some distance below. To have pursued this line with both fleet and army would have carried him too far into the enemy's country, have endangered his communications, and especially have cut him off from the Armenian

army under Procopius and Sebastian, with which he was at this time looking to effect a junction. To have sent the fleet into the Tigris below Coche, while the army occupied the right bank of the river above it, would, in the first place, have separated the two, and would further have been useless, unless the fleet could force its way against the strong current through the whole length of the hostile city. In this difficulty Julian's book-knowledge was found of service. He had studied with care the campaigns of his predecessors in these regions, and recollected that one of them at any rate had made a cutting from the Nahr-Malcha, by which he had brought his fleet into the Tigris above Ctesiphon. If this work could be discovered, it might, he thought, in all probability be restored. Some of the country people were therefore seized, and, inquiry being made of them, the line of the canal was pointed out, and the place shown at which it had been derived from the Nahr-Malcha. Here the Persians had erected a strong dam, with sluices, by means of which a portion of the water could occasionally be turned into the Roman cutting. Julian had the cutting cleared out, and the dam torn down; whereupon the main portion of the stream rushed at once into the old channel, which rapidly filled, and was found to be navigable by the Roman vessels. The fleet was thus brought into the Tigris above Coche; and the army advancing with it encamped upon the right bank of the river.

The Persians now for the first time appeared in force. As Julian drew near the great stream, he perceived that his passage of it would not be unopposed. Along the left bank, which was at this point naturally higher than the right, and which was further crowned by a wall built originally to fence in one of the royal parks, could be seen the dense masses of the enemy's-horse and foot, stretching away to right and left, the former encased in glittering armor, the latter protected by huge wattled shields. Behind these troops were discernible the vast forms of elephants, looking (says the historian) like moving mountains, and regarded by the legionaries with extreme dread. Julian felt that he could not ask his army to cross the stream openly in the face of a foe thus advantageously posted. He therefore waited the approach of night. When darkness had closed in, he made his dispositions; divided his fleet into portions; embarked a number of his troops; and, despite the dissuasions of his officers, gave the signal for the passage to commence. Five ships, each of them conveying eighty soldiers, led the way, and reached the opposite shore without accident. Here, however, the enemy received them with a sharp fire of burning darts, and the two foremost were soon in flames. At the ominous sight the rest of the fleet wavered, and might have refused to proceed further, had not Julian, with admirable presence of mind, exclaimed aloud--"Our men have crossed and are masters of the bank--that fire is the signal which I bade them make if they were victorious." Thus encouraged, the crews plied their oars with vigor, and impelled the remaining vessels rapidly across the stream. At the same time, some of the soldiers who had not been put on board, impatient to assist their comrades, plunged into the stream, and swam across supported by their shields. Though a stout resistance was offered by the Persians, it was found impossible to withstand the impetuosity of the Roman attack. Not only were the half-burned vessels saved, the flames extinguished, and the men on board rescued from their perilous position, but everywhere the Roman troops made good their landing, fought their way up the bank against a storm of missile weapons, and drew up in good order upon its summit. A pause probably now occurred, as the armies could not see each other in the darkness; but, at dawn of day, Julian, having made a fresh arrangement of his troops, led them against the dense array of the enemy, and engaged in a hand-to-hand combat, which lasted from morning to midday, when it was terminated by the flight of the Persians. Their leaders, Tigranes, Narseus, and the Surena, are said to

have been the first to quit the field and take refuge within the defences of Ctesiphon. The example thus set was universally followed; and the entire Persian army, abandoning its camp and baggage, rushed in the wildest confusion across the plain to the nearest of the city gates, closely pursued by its active foe up to the very foot of the walls. The Roman writers assert that Ctesiphon might have been entered and taken, had not the general, Victor, who was wounded by a dart from a catapult, recalled his men as they were about to rush in through the open gateway. It is perhaps doubtful whether success would really have crowned such audacity. At any rate the opportunity passed--the runaways entered the town--the gate closed upon them; and Ctesiphon was safe unless it were reduced by the operations of a regular siege.

But the fruits of the victory were still considerable. The entire Persian army collected hitherto for the defence of Ctesiphon had been defeated by one-third of the Roman force under Julian. The vanquished had left 2,500 men dead upon the field, while the victors had lost no more than seventy-five. A rich spoil had fallen into the hands of the Romans, who found in the abandoned camp couches and tables of massive silver, and on the bodies of the slain, both men and horses, a profusion of gold and silver ornaments, besides trappings and apparel of great magnificence. A welcome supply of provisions was also furnished by the lands and houses in the neighborhood of Ctesiphon; and the troops passed from a state of privation to one of extreme abundance, so that it was feared lest they might suffer from excess.

Affairs had now reached a point when it was necessary to form a definite resolution as to what should be the further aim and course of the expedition. Hitherto all had indicated an intention on the part of Julian to occupy Ctesiphon, and thence dictate a peace. His long march, his toilsome canal-cutting, his orders to his second army, his crossing of the Tigris, his engagement with the Persians in the plain before Ctesiphon, were the natural steps conducting to such a result, and are explicable on one hypothesis and one hypothesis only. He must up to this time have designed to make himself master of the great city, which had been the goal of so many previous invasions, and had always fallen whenever Rome attacked it. But, having overcome all the obstacles in his path, and having it in his power at once to commence the siege, a sudden doubt appears to have assailed him as to the practicability of the undertaking. It can scarcely be supposed that the city was really stronger now than it had been under the Parthians; much less can it be argued that Julian's army was insufficient for the investment of such a place. It was probably the most powerful army with which the Romans had as yet invaded Southern Mesopotamia; and it was amply provided with all the appurtenances of war. If Julian did not venture to attempt what Trajan and Avidius Cassius and Septimius Severus had achieved without difficulty, it must have been because the circumstances under which he would have had to make the attack were different from those under which they had ventured and succeeded. And the difference--a most momentous one--was this. They besieged and captured the place after defeating the greatest force that Parthia could bring into the field against them. Julian found himself in front of Ctesiphon before he had crossed swords with the Persian king, or so much as set eyes on the grand army which Sapor was known to have collected. To have sat down before Ctesiphon under such circumstances would have been to expose himself to great peril; while he was intent upon the siege, he might at any time have been attacked by a relieving army under the Great King, have been placed between two fires, and compelled to engage at extreme disadvantage. It was a consideration of this danger that impelled the council of war, whereto he submitted the question, to pronounce the siege of Ctesiphon too

hazardous an operation, and to dissuade the emperor from attempting it.

But, if the city were not to be besieged, what course could with any prudence be adopted? It would have been madness to leave Ctesiphon unassailed, and to press forward against Susa and Persepolis. It would have been futile to remain encamped before the walls without commencing a siege. The heats of summer had arrived, and the malaria of autumn was not far off. The stores brought by the fleet were exhausted; and there was a great risk in the army's depending wholly for its subsistence on the supplies that it might be able to obtain from the enemy's country. Julian and his advisers must have seen at a glance that if the Romans were not to attack Ctesiphon, they must retreat. And accordingly retreat seems to have been at once determined on. As a first step, the whole fleet, except some dozen vessels, was burned, since twelve was a sufficient number to serve as pontoons, and it was not worth the army's while to encumber itself with the remainder. They could only have been tracked up the strong stream of the Tigris by devoting to the work some 20,000 men; thus greatly weakening the strength of the armed force, and at the same time hampering its movements. Julian, in sacrificing his ships, suffered simply a pecuniary loss--they could not possibly have been of any further service to him in the campaign.

Retreat being resolved upon, it only remained to determine what route should be followed, and on what portion of the Roman territory the march should be directed. The soldiers clamored for a return by the way whereby they had come; but many valid objections to this course presented themselves to their commanders. The country along the line of the Euphrates had been exhausted of its stores by the troops in their advance; the forage had been consumed, the towns and villages desolated. There would be neither food nor shelter for the men along this route; the season was also unsuitable for it, since the Euphrates was in full flood, and the moist atmosphere would be sure to breed swarms of flies and mosquitoes. Julian saw that by far the best line of retreat was along the Tigris, which had higher banks than the Euphrates, which was no longer in flood, and which ran through a tract that was highly productive and that had for many years not been visited by an enemy. The army, therefore, was ordered to commence its retreat through the country lying on the left bank of the Tigris, and to spread itself over the fertile region, in the hope of obtaining ample supplies. The march was understood to be directed on Cordyene (Kurdistan), a province now in the possession of Rome, a rich tract, and not more than about 250 miles distant from Ctesiphon.

Before, however, the retreat commenced, while Julian and his victorious army were still encamped in sight of Ctesiphon, the Persian king, according to some writers, sent an embassy proposing terms of peace. Julian's successes are represented as having driven Sapor to despair--"the pride of his royalty was humbled in the dust; he took his repasts on the ground; and the grief and anxiety of his mind were expressed by the disorder of his hair." He would, it is suggested, have been willing "to purchase, with one half of his kingdom, the safety of the remainder, and would have gladly subscribed himself, in a treaty of peace, the faithful and dependent ally of the Roman conqueror." Such are the pleasing fictions wherewith the rhetorician of Antioch, faithful to the memory of his friend and master, consoled himself and his readers after Julian's death. It is difficult to decide whether there underlies them any substratum of truth. Neither Ammianus nor Zosimus makes the slightest allusion to any negotiations at all at this period; and it is thus open to doubt whether the entire story told by Libanius is not the product of his imagination. But at any rate it is quite impossible that the Persian king can have made any abject offers of submission, or have been in a state of mind at all akin to despair. His great army, collected from all quarters,

was intact; he had not yet condescended to take the field in person; he had lost no important town, and his adversary had tacitly confessed his inability to form the siege of a city which was far from being the greatest in the empire. If Sapor, therefore, really made at this time overtures of peace, it must have been either with the intention of amusing Julian, and increasing his difficulties by delaying his retreat, or because he thought that Julian's consciousness of his difficulties would induce him to offer terms which he might accept.

The retreat commenced on June 16. Scarcely were the troops set in motion, when an ominous cloud of dust appeared on the southern horizon, which grew larger as the day advanced; and, though some suggested that the appearance was produced by a herd of wild asses, and others ventured the conjecture that it was caused by the approach of a body of Julian's Saracenic allies, the emperor himself was not deceived, but, understanding that the Persians had set out in pursuit, he called in his stragglers, massed his troops, and pitched his camp in a strong position. Day-dawn showed that he had judged aright, for the earliest rays of the sun were reflected from the polished breastplates and cuirasses of the Persians, who had drawn up at no great distance during the night. A combat followed in which the Persian and Saracenic horse attacked the Romans vigorously, and especially threatened the baggage, but were repulsed by the firmness and valor of the Roman foot. Julian was able to continue his retreat after a while, but found himself surrounded by enemies, some of whom, keeping in advance of his troops, or hanging upon his flanks, destroyed the corn and forage that his men so much needed; while others, pressing upon his rear, retarded his march, and caused him from time to time no inconsiderable losses. The retreat under these circumstances was slow; the army had to be rested and recruited when it fell in with any accumulation of provisions; and the average progress made seems to have been not much more than ten miles a day. This tardy advance allowed the more slow-moving portion of the Persian army to close in upon the retiring Romans; and Julian soon found himself closely followed by dense masses of the enemy's troops, by the heavy cavalry clad in steel panoplies, and armed with long spears, by large bodies of archers, and even by a powerful corps of elephants. This grand army was under the command of a general whom the Roman writers call Meranes, and of two sons of Sapor. It pressed heavily upon the Roman rearguard; and Julian, after a little while, found it necessary to stop his march, confront his pursuers, and offer them battle. The offer was accepted, and an engagement took place in a tract called Maranga. The enemy advanced in two lines--the first composed of the mailed horsemen and the archers intermixed, the second of the elephants. Julian prepared his army to receive the attack by disposing it in the form of a crescent, with the centre drawn back considerably; but as the Persians advanced into the hollow space, he suddenly led his troops forward at speed, allowing the archers scarcely time to discharge their arrows before he engaged them and the horse in close combat. A long and bloody struggle followed; but the Persians were unaccustomed to hand-to-hand fighting and disliked it; they gradually gave ground, and at last broke up and fled, covering their retreat, however, with the clouds of arrows which they knew well how to discharge as they retired. The weight of their arms, and the fiery heat of the summer sun, prevented the Romans from carrying the pursuit very far. Julian recalled them quickly to the protection of the camp, and suspended his march for some days while the wounded had their hurts attended to.

The Persian troops, having suffered heavily in the battle, made no attempt to storm the Roman camp. They were content to spread themselves on all sides, to destroy or carry off all the forage and provisions, and to make the country, through which the Roman army must retire, a desert. Julian's forces were

already suffering severely from scarcity of food, and the general want was but very slightly relieved by a distribution of the stores set apart for the officers and for the members of the imperial household. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Julian's firmness deserted him, and that he began to give way to melancholy forebodings, and to see visions and omens which portended disaster and death. In the silence of his tent, as he studied a favorite philosopher during the dead of night, he thought he saw the Genius of the State, with veiled head and cornucopia, stealing away through the hangings slowly and sadly. Soon afterwards, when he had just gone forth into the open air to perform averting sacrifices, the fall of a shooting star seemed to him a direct threat from Mars, with whom he had recently quarrelled. The soothsayers were consulted, and counselled abstinence from all military movement; but the exigencies of the situation caused their advice to be for once contemned. It was only by change of place that there was any chance of obtaining supplies of food; and ultimate extrication from the perils that surrounded the army depended on a steady persistence in retreat.

At dawn of day, therefore, on the memorable 26th of June, A.D. 363, the tents were struck, and the Roman army continued its march across the wasted plain, having the Tigris at some little distance on its left, and some low hills upon its right. The enemy did not anywhere appear; and the troops advanced for a time without encountering opposition. But, as they drew near the skirts of the hills, not far from Samarah, suddenly an attack was made upon them. The rearguard found itself violently assailed; and when Julian hastened to its relief, news came that the van was also engaged with the enemy, and was already in difficulties. The active commander now hurried towards the front, and had accomplished half the distance, when the main Persian attack was delivered upon his right centre, and to his dismay he found himself entangled amid the masses of heavy horse and elephants, which had thrown his columns into confusion. The suddenness of the enemy's appearance had prevented him from donning his complete armor; and as he fought without a breastplate, and with the aid of his light-armed troops restored the day, falling on the foe from behind and striking the backs and houghs of the horses and elephants, the javelin of a horseman, after grazing the flesh of his arm, fixed itself in his right side, penetrating-through the ribs to the liver. Julian, grasping the head of the weapon, attempted to draw it forth, but in vain--the sharp steel cut his fingers, and the pain and loss of blood caused him to fall fainting from his steed. His guards, who had closed around him, carefully raised him up, and conveyed him to the camp, where the surgeons at once declared the wound mortal. The sad news spread rapidly among the soldiery, and nerved them to desperate efforts--if they must lose their general, he should, they determined, be avenged. Striking their shields with their spears, they everywhere rushed upon the enemy with incredible ardor, careless whether they lived or died, and only seeking to inflict the greatest possible loss on those opposed to them. But the Persians, who had regarded the day as theirs, resisted strenuously, and maintained the fight with obstinacy till evening closed in and darkness put a stop to the engagement. The losses were large on both sides; the Roman right wing had suffered greatly; its commander, Anatolius, master of the offices, was among the slain, and the prefect Sallust was with difficulty saved by an attendant. The Persians, too, lost their generals Meranes and Nohodares; and with them no fewer than fifty satraps and great nobles are said to have perished. The rank and file no doubt suffered in proportion; and the Romans were perhaps justified in claiming that the balance of advantage upon the day rested with them. But such advantage as they could reasonably assert was far more than counterbalanced by the loss of their commander, who died in his tent towards midnight on the day of the battle. Whatever

we may think of the general character of Julian, or of the degree of his intellectual capacity, there can be no question as to his excellence as a soldier, or his ability as a commander in the field. If the expedition which he had led into Persia was to some extent rash--if his preparations for it had been insufficient, and his conduct of it not wholly faultless; if consequently he had brought the army of the East into a situation of great peril and difficulty--yet candor requires us to acknowledge that of all the men collected in the Roman camp he was the fittest to have extricated the army from its embarrassments, and have conducted it, without serious disaster or loss of honor, into a position of safety. No one, like Julian, possessed the confidence of the troops; no one so combined experience in command with the personal activity and vigor that was needed under the circumstances. When the leaders met to consult about the appointment of a successor to the dead prince, it was at once apparent how irreparable was their loss. The prefect Sallust, whose superior rank and length of service pointed him out for promotion to the vacant post, excused himself on account of his age and infirmities. The generals of the second grade--Arinthseus, Victor, Nevitta, Dagalaiphus--had each their party among the soldiers, but were unacceptable to the army generally. None could claim any superior merit which might clearly place him above the rest; and a discord that might have led to open strife seemed impending, when a casual voice pronounced the name of Jovian, and, some applause following the suggestion, the rival generals acquiesced in the choice; and this hitherto insignificant officer was suddenly invested with the purple and saluted as "Augustus" and "Emperor." Had there been any one really fit to take the command, such an appointment could not have been made; but, in the evident dearth of warlike genius, it was thought best that one whose rank was civil rather than military should be preferred, for the avoidance of jealousies and contentions. A deserter carried the news to Sapor, who was not now very far distant, and described the new emperor to him as effeminate and slothful. A fresh impulse was given to the pursuit by the intelligence thus conveyed; the army engaged in disputing the Roman retreat was reinforced by a strong body of cavalry; and Sapor himself pressed forward with all haste, resolved to hurl his main force on the rear of the retreating columns.

It was with reluctance that Jovian, on the day of his elevation to the supreme power (June 27, A.D. 363), quitted the protection of the camp, and proceeded to conduct his army over the open plain, where the Persians were now collected in great force, prepared to dispute the ground with him inch by inch. Their horse and elephants again fell upon the right wing of the Romans, where the Jovians and Herculians were now posted, and, throwing those renowned corps into disorder, pressed on, driving them across the plain in headlong flight and slaying vast numbers of them. The corps would probably have been annihilated, had they not in their flight reached a hill occupied by the baggage train, which gallantly came to their aid, and, attacking the horse and elephants from higher ground, gained a signal success. The elephants, wounded by the javelins hurled down upon them from above, and maddened with the pain, turned upon their own side, and, roaring frightfully, carried confusion among the ranks of the horse, which broke up and fled. Many of the frantic animals were killed by their own riders or by the Persians on whom they were trampling, while others succumbed to the blows dealt them by the enemy. There was a frightful carnage, ending in the repulse of the Persians and the resumption of the Roman march. Shortly before night fell, Jovian and his army reached Samarah, then a fort of no great size upon the Tigris, and, encamping in its vicinity, passed the hours of rest unmolested. The retreat now continued for four days along the left bank of the Tigris, the progress made each day being

small, since the enemy incessantly obstructed the march, pressing on the columns as they retired, but when they stopped drawing off, and declining an engagement at close quarters. On one occasion they even attacked the Roman camp, and, after insulting the legions with their cries, forced their way through the preatorian gate, and had nearly penetrated to the royal tent, when they were met and defeated by the legionaries. The Saracenic Arabs were especially troublesome. Offended by the refusal of Julian to continue their subsidies, they had transferred their services wholly to the other side, and pursued the Romans with a hostility that was sharpened by indignation and resentment. It was with difficulty that the Roman army, at the close of the fourth day, reached Dura, a small place upon the Tigris, about eighteen miles north of Samarah. Here a new idea seized the soldiers. As the Persian forces were massed chiefly on the left bank of the Tigris, and might find it difficult to transfer themselves to the other side, it seemed to the legionaries that they would escape half their difficulties if they could themselves cross the river, and place it between them and their foes. They had also a notion that on the west side of the stream the Roman frontier was not far distent, but might be reached by forced marches in a few days. They therefore begged Jovian to allow them to swim the stream. It was in vain that he and his officers opposed the project; mutinous cries arose; and, to avoid worse evils, he was compelled to consent that five hundred Gauls and Sarmatians, known to be expert swimmers, should make the attempt. It succeeded beyond his hopes. The corps crossed at night, surprised the Persians who held the opposite bank, and established themselves in a safe position before the dawn of day. By this bold exploit the passage of the other troops, many of whom could not swim, was rendered feasible, and Jovian proceeded to collect timber, brushwood, and skins for the formation of large rafts on which he might transport the rest of his army.

These movements were seen with no small disquietude by the Persian king. The army which he had regarded as almost a certain prey seemed about to escape him. He knew that his troops could not pass the Tigris by swimming; he had, it is probable, brought with him no boats, and the country about Dura could not supply many; to follow the Romans, if they crossed the stream, he must construct a bridge, and the construction of a bridge was, to such unskilful engineers as the Persians, a work of time. Before it was finished the legions might be beyond his reach, and so the campaign would end, and he would have gained no advantage from it. Under these circumstances he determined to open negotiations with the Romans, and to see if he could not extract from their fears some important concessions. They were still in a position of great peril, since they could not expect to embark and cross the stream without suffering tremendous loss from the enemy before whom they would be flying. And it was uncertain what perils they might not encounter beyond the river in traversing the two hundred miles that still separated them from Roman territory. The Saracenic allies of Persia were in force on the further side of the stream; and a portion of Sapor's army might be conveyed across in time to hang on the rear of the legions and add largely to their difficulties. At any rate, it was worth while to make overtures and see what answer would be returned. If the idea of negotiating were entertained at all, something would be gained; for each additional day of suffering and privation diminished the Roman strength, and brought nearer the moment of absolute and complete exhaustion. Moreover, a bridge might be at once commenced at some little distance, and might be pushed forward, so that, if the negotiations failed, there should be no great delay in following the Romans across the river.

Such were probably the considerations which led Sapor to send as envoys to the Roman camp at Dura the Surena and another great

noble, who announced that they came to offer terms of peace. The great king, they said, having respect to the mutability of human affairs, was desirous of dealing mercifully with the Romans, and would allow the escape of the remnant which was left of their army, if the Caesar and his advisers accepted the conditions that he required. These conditions would be explained to any envoys whom Jovian might empower to discuss them with the Persian plenipotentiaries. The Roman emperor and his council gladly caught at the offer; and two officers of high rank, the general Arinthseus and the prefect Sallust, were at once appointed to confer with Sapor's envoys, and ascertain the terms on which peace would be granted. They proved to be such as Roman pride felt to be almost intolerable; and great efforts were made to induce Sapor to be content with less. The negotiations lasted for four days; but the Persian monarch was inexorable; each day diminished his adversary's strength and bettered his own position; there was no reason why he should make any concession at all; and he seems, in fact, to have yielded nothing of his original demands, except points of such exceedingly slight moment that to insist on them would have been folly.

The following were the terms of peace to which Jovian consented. First, the five provinces east of the Tigris, which had been ceded to Rome by Narses, the grandfather of Sapor, after his defeat by Galerius, were to be given back to Persia, with their fortifications, their inhabitants, and all that they contained of value. The Romans in the territory were, however, to be allowed to withdraw and join their countrymen. Secondly, three places in Eastern Mesopotamia, Nisibis, Singara, and a fort called "the Camp of the Moors," were to be surrendered, but with the condition that not only the Romans, but the inhabitants generally, might retire ere the Persians took possession, and carry with them such of their effects as were movable. The surrender of these places necessarily involved that of the country which they commanded, and can scarcely imply less than the withdrawal of Rome from any claim to dominion over the region between the Tigris and the Khabour. Thirdly, all connection between Armenia and Rome was to be broken off; Arsaces was to be left to his own resources; and in any quarrel between him and Persia Rome was precluded from lending him aid. On these conditions a peace was concluded for thirty years; oaths to observe it faithfully were interchanged; and hostages were given and received on either side, to be retained until the stipulations of the treaty were executed.

The Roman historian who exclaims that it would have been better to have fought ten battles than to have conceded a single one of these shameful terms, commands the sympathy of every reader, who cannot fail to recognize in his utterance the natural feeling of a patriot. And it is possible that Julian, had he lived, would have rejected so inglorious a peace, and have preferred to run all risks rather than sign it. But in that case there is every reason to believe that the army would have been absolutely destroyed, and a few stragglers only have returned to tell the tale of disaster. The alternative which Ammianus suggests--that Jovian, instead of negotiating, should have pushed on to Cordyene, which he might have reached in four days--is absurd; for Cordyeno was at least a hundred and fifty miles distant from Dura, and, at the rate of retreat which Jovian had found possible (four and a half miles a day), would have been reached in three days over a month! The judgment of Eutropius, who, like Ammianus, shared in the expedition, is probably correct--that the peace, though disgraceful, was necessary. Unless Jovian was prepared to risk not only his own life, but the lives of all his soldiers, it was essential that he should come to terms; and the best terms that he could obtain were those which he has been blamed for accepting.

It is creditable to both parties that the peace, once made, was faithfully observed, all its stipulations being honestly and speedily

executed. The Romans were allowed to pass the river without molestation from Sapor's army, and, though they suffered somewhat from the Saracens when landing on the other side, were unpursued in their retreat, and were perhaps even, at first, supplied to some extent with provisions. Afterwards, no doubt, they endured for some days great privations; but a convoy with stores was allowed to advance from Roman Mesopotamia into Persian territory, which met the famished soldiers at a Persian military post, called Ur or Adur, and relieved their most pressing necessities. On the Roman side, the ceded provinces and towns were quietly surrendered; offers on the part of the inhabitants to hold their own against the Persians without Roman aid were refused; the Roman troops were withdrawn from the fortresses; and the Armenians were told that they must henceforth rely upon themselves, and not look to Rome for help or protection. Thus Jovian, though strongly urged to follow ancient precedent, and refuse to fulfil the engagements contracted under the pressure of imminent peril, stood firm, and honorably performed all the conditions of the treaty. The second period of struggle between Rome and Persia had thus a termination exactly the reverse of the first. Rome ended the first period by a great victory and a great diplomatic success. At the close of the second she had to relinquish all her gains, and to draw back even behind the line which she occupied when hostilities first broke out. Nisibis, the great stronghold of Eastern Mesopotamia, had been in her possession ever since the time of Verus. Repeatedly attacked by Parthia and Persia, it had never fallen; but once, after which it had been soon recovered; and now for many years it had come to be regarded as the bulwark of the Roman power in the East, and as carrying with it the dominion of Western Asia.102 A fatal blow was dealt to Roman prestige when a city held for near two hundred years, and one honored with the name of "colony," was wrested from the empire and occupied by the most powerful of its adversaries. Not only Amida and Carrhae, but Antioch itself, trembled at a loss which was felt to lay open the whole eastern frontier to attack, and which seemed ominous of further retrogression. Although the fear generally felt proved to be groundless, and the Roman possessions in the East were not, for 200 years, further curtailed by the Persians, yet Roman influence in Western Asia from this time steadily declined, and Persia came to be regarded as the first power in these regions. Much credit is due to Sapor II. for his entire conduct of the war with Constantius, Julian, and Jovian. He knew when to attack and when to remain upon the defensive, when to press on the enemy and when to hold himself in reserve and let the enemy follow his own devices. He rightly conceived from the first the importance of Nisibis, and resolutely persisted in his determination to acquire possession of it, until at last he succeeded. When, in A.D. 337, he challenged Rome to a trial of strength, he might have seemed rash and presumptuous. But the event justified him. In a war which lasted twenty-seven years, he fought numerous pitched battles with the Romans, and was never once defeated. He proved himself greatly superior as a general to Constantius and Jovian, and not unequal to Julian. By a combination of courage, perseverance, and promptness, he brought the entire contest to a favorable issue, and restored Persia, in A.D. 363, to a higher position than that from which she had descended two generations earlier. If he had done nothing more than has already come under our notice, he would still have amply deserved that epithet of "Great" which, by the general consent of historians, has been assigned to him. He was undoubtedly among the greatest of the Sassanian monarchs, and may properly be placed above all his predecessors, and above all but one of those who succeeded him.

11. War Between Sapor and Rome

The successful issue of Sapor's war with Julian and Jovian resulted in no small degree from the attitude which was assumed by Armenia soon after Julian commenced his invasion. We have seen that the emperor, when he set out upon his expedition, regarded Armenia as an ally, and in forming his plans placed considerable dependence on the contingent which he expected from Arsaces, the Armenian monarch. It was his intention to attack Ctesiphon with two separate armies, acting upon two converging lines. While he himself advanced with his main force by way of the Euphrates valley and the Nahr-Malcha, he had arranged that his two generals, Procopius and Sebastian, should unite their troops with those of the Armenian king, and, after ravaging a fertile district of Media, make their way towards the great city, through Assyria and Adiabene, along the left bank of the Tigris. It was a bitter disappointment to him when, on nearing Ctesiphon, he could see no signs and hear no tidings of the northern army, from which he had looked for effectual aid at this crisis of the campaign. We have now to consider how this failure came about, what circumstances induced that hesitation and delay on the part of Sebastian and Procopius which had at any rate a large share in frustrating Julian's plans and causing the ill-success of his expedition.

It appears that the Roman generals, in pursuance of the orders given them, marched across Northern Mesopotamia to the Armenian borders, and were there joined by an Armenian contingent which Arsaces sent to their assistance. The allies marched together into Media, and carried fire and sword through the fruitful district known as Chiliacomus, or "the district of the Thousand Villages." They might easily have advanced further; but the Armenians suddenly and without warning drew off and fell back towards their own country. According to Moses of Chorene, their general, Zurseus, was actuated by a religious motive; it seemed to him monstrous that Armenia, a Christian country, should embrace the cause of an apostate, and he was prepared to risk offending his own sovereign rather than lend help to one whom he regarded as the enemy of his faith. The Roman generals, thus deserted by their allies, differed as to the proper course to pursue. While one was still desirous of descending the course of the Tigris, and making at least an attempt to effect a junction with Julian, the other forbade his soldiers to join in the march, and insisted on falling back and re-entering Mesopotamia. As usual in such cases, the difference of opinion resulted in a policy of inaction. The attempt to join Julian was given up; and the second army, from which he had hoped so much, played no further part in the campaign of A.D. 363.

We are told that Julian heard of the defection of the Armenians while he was still on his way to Ctesiphon, and immediately sent a letter to Arsacos, complaining of his general's conduct, and threatening to exact a heavy retribution on his return from the Persian war, if the offence of Zurseus were not visited at once with condign punishment. Arsaces was greatly alarmed at the message; and, though he made no effort to supply the shortcomings of his officer by leading or sending fresh troops to Julian's assistance, yet he hastened to acquit himself of complicity in the misconduct of Zurseus by executing him, together with his whole family. Having thus, as he supposed, secured himself against Julian's anger, he took no further steps, but indulged his love of ease and his distaste for the Roman alliance by remaining wholly passive during the rest of the year.

But though the attitude taken by Armenia was thus, on the whole, favorable to the Persians,and undoubtedly contributed to Sapor's success, he was himself so far from satisfied with the conduct of Arsaces that he resolved at once to invade his country and endeavor to strip him of his crown. As Rome had by the recent treaty relinquished her

protectorate over Armenia, and bound herself not to interfere in any quarrel between the Armenians and the Persians, an opportunity was afforded for bringing Armenia into subjection which an ambitious monarch like Sapor was not likely to let slip. He had only to consider whether he would employ art or violence, or whether he would rather prefer a judicious admixture of the two. Adopting the last-named course as the most prudent, he proceeded to intrigue with a portion of the Armenian satraps, while he made armed incursions on the territories of others, and so harassed the country that after a while the satraps generally went over to his side, and represented to Arsaces that no course was open to him but to make his submission. Having brought matters to this point, Sapor had only further to persuade Arsaces to surrender himself, in order to obtain the province which he coveted, almost without striking a blow. He therefore addressed Arsaces a letter which, according to the only writer who professes to give its terms, was expressed as follows:

"Sapor, the offspring of Ormazd, comrade of the sun, king of kings, sends greeting to his dear brother, Arsaces, king of Armenia, whom he holds in affectionate remembrance. It has come to our knowledge that thou hast approved thyself our faithful friend, since not only didst thou decline to invade Persia with Caesar, but when he took a contingent from thee thou didst send messengers and withdraw it. Moreover, we have not forgotten how thou actedst at the first, when thou didst prevent him from passing through thy territories, as he wished. Our soldiers, indeed, who quitted their post, sought to cast on thee the blame due to their own cowardice. But we have not listened to them: their leader we punished with death, and to thy realm, I swear by Mithra, we have done no hurt. Arrange matters then so that thou mayest come to us with all speed, and consult with us concerning our common advantage. Then thou canst return home."

Arsaces, on receiving this missive, whatever suspicions he may have felt, saw no course open to him but to accept the invitation. He accordingly quitted Armenia and made his way to the court of Sapor, where he was immediately seized and blinded. He was then fettered with chains of silver, according to a common practice of the Persians with prisoners of distinction, and was placed in strict confinement in a place called "the Castle of Oblivion."

But the removal of their head did not at once produce the submission of the people. A national party declared itself under, Pharandzem, the wife, and Bab (or Para), the son of Arsaces, who threw themselves into the strong fortress of Artogerassa (Ardakers), and there offered to Sapor a determined resistance. Sapor committed the siege of this place to two renegade Armenians, Cylaces and Artabannes, while at the same time he proceeded to extend his influence beyond the limits of Armenia into the neighboring country of Iberia, which was closely connected with Armenia, and for the most part followed its fortunes.

Iberia was at this time under the government of a king bearing the name of Sauromaces, who had received his investiture from Rome, and was consequently likely to uphold Roman interests. Sapor invaded Iberia, drove Sauromaces from his kingdom, and set up a new monarch in the person of a certain Aspacures, on whose brow he placed the coveted diadem. He then withdrew to his own country, leaving the complete subjection of Armenia to be accomplished by his officers, Cylaces and Artabannes, or, as the Armenian historians call them, Zig and Garen.

Cylaces and Artabannes commenced the siege of Artogerassa, and for a time pressed it with vigor, while they strongly urged the garrison to make their submission. But, having entered within the walls to negotiate, they were won over by the opposite side, and joined in planning a treacherous attack on the besieging force, which was surprised at night

and compelled to retire. Para took advantage of their retreat to quit the town and throw himself on the protection of Valens, the Roman emperor, who permitted him to reside in regal state at Neocaesarea. Shortly afterwards, however, by the advice of Cylaces and Artabannes, he returned into Armenia, and was accepted by the patriotic party as their king, Rome secretly countenancing his proceedings. Under these circumstances the Persian monarch once more took the field, and, entering Armenia at the head of a large army, drove Para, with his counsellors Cylaces and Artabannes, to the mountains, renewed the siege of Artogerassa, and forced it to submit, captured the queen Pharandzem, together with the treasure of Arsaces, and finally induced Para to come to terms, and to send him the heads of the two arch-traitors. The resistance of Armenia would probably now have ceased, had Rome been content to see her old enemy so aggrandized, or felt her hands absolutely tied by the terms of the treaty of Dura.

But the success of Sapor thus far only brought him into greater difficulties. The Armenians and Iberians, who desired above all things liberty and independence, were always especially hostile to the power from which they felt that they had for the time being most to fear. As Christian nations, they had also at this period an additional ground of sympathy with Rome, and of aversion from the Persians, who were at once heathens and intolerant. The patriotic party in both countries was thus violently opposed to the establishment of Sapor's authority over them, and cared little for the artifices by which he sought to make it appear that they still enjoyed freedom and autonomy. Above all, Rome, being ruled by monarchs who had had no hand in making the disgraceful peace of A.D. 363, and who had no strong feeling of honor or religious obligation in the matter of treaties with barbarians, was preparing herself to fly in the face of her engagements, and, regarding her own interest as her highest law, to interfere effectually in order to check the progress of Persia in North-Western Asia.

Rome's first open interference was in Ibera. Iberia had perhaps not been expressly named in the treaty, and support might consequently be given to the expelled Sauromaces without any clear infraction of its conditions. The duke Terentius was ordered, therefore, towards the close of A.D. 370, to enter Iberia with twelve legions and replace upon his throne the old Roman feudatory. Accordingly he invaded the country from Lazica, which bordered it upon the north, and found no difficulty in conquering it as far as the river Cyrus. On the Cyrus, however, he was met by Aspacures, the king of Sapor's choice, who made proposals for an accommodation. Representing himself as really well-inclined to Rome, and only prevented from declaring himself by the fact that Sapor held his son as a hostage, he asked Terentius' consent to a division of Iberia between himself and his rival, the tract north of the Cyrus being assigned to the Roman claimant, and that south of the river remaining under his own government. Terentius, to escape further trouble, consented to the arrangement; and the double kingdom was established. The northern and western portions of Iberia were made over to Sauromaces; the southern and eastern continued to be ruled by Aspacures.

When the Persian king received intelligence of these transactions he was greatly excited. To him it appeared clear that by the spirit, if not by the letter, of the treaty of Dura, Rome had relinquished Iberia equally with Armenia; and he complained bitterly of the division which had been made of the Iberian territory, not only without his consent, but without his knowledge. He was no doubt aware that Rome had not really confined her interference to the region with which she had some excuse for intermeddling, but had already secretly intervened in Armenia, and was intending further intervention. The count Arinthseus had been sent with an army to the Armenian frontier about the same time that

Terentius had invaded Iberia, and had received positive instructions to help the Armenians if Sapor molested them. It was in vain that the Persian monarch appealed to the terms of the treaty of Dura--Rome dismissed his ambassadors with contempt, and made no change in her line of procedure. Upon this Sapor saw that war was unavoidable; and accordingly he wasted no more time in embassies, but employed himself during the winter, which had now begun, in collecting as large a force as he could, in part from his allies, in part from his own subjects, resolving to take the field in the spring, and to do his best to punish Rome for her faithlessness.

Rome on her part made ready to resist the invasion which she knew to be impending. A powerful army was sent to guard the East under count Trajan, and Vadomair, ex-king of the Alemanni; but so much regard for the terms of the recent treaty was still felt, or pretended, that the generals received orders to be careful not to commence hostilities, but to wait till an attack was made on them. They were not kept long in expectation. As soon as winter was over, Sapor crossed the frontier (A.D. 371) with a large force of native cavalry and archers, supported by numerous auxiliaries, and attacked the Romans near a place called Vagabanta. The Roman commander gave his troops the order to retire; and accordingly they fell back under a shower of Persian arrows, until, several having been wounded, they felt that they could with a good face declare that the rupture of the peace was the act of the Persians. The retreat was then exchanged for an advance, and after a brief engagement the Romans were victorious, and inflicted a severe loss upon their adversaries. But the success was not followed by results of any importance. Neither side seems to have been anxious for another general encounter; and the season for hostilities was occupied by a sort of guerilla warfare, in which the advantage rested alternately with the Persians and the Romans. At length, when the summer was ended, the commanders on either side entered into negotiations; and a truce was made which allowed Sapor to retire to Ctesiphon, and the Roman emperor, who was now personally directing the war, to go into winter quarters at Antioch.

After this the war languished for two or three years. Valens was wholly deficient in military genius, and was quite content if he could maintain a certain amount of Roman influence in Armenia and Iberia, while at the same time he protected the Roman frontier against Persian invasion. Sapor was advanced in years, and might naturally desire repose, having been almost constantly engaged in military expeditions since he reached the age of sixteen. Negotiations seem to have alternated with hostilities during the interval between A.D. 371 and 376; but they resulted in nothing, until, in this last-named year, a peace was made, which gave tranquillity to the East during the remainder of the reign of Sapor.

The terms upon which this peace was concluded are obscure. It is perhaps most probable that the two contracting powers agreed to abstain from further interference with Iberia and Armenia, and to leave those countries to follow their own inclinations. Armenia seems by the native accounts to have gravitated towards Rome under these circumstances, and Iberia is likely to have followed her example. The tie of Christianity attached these countries to the great power of the West; and, except under compulsion, they were not likely at this time to tolerate the yoke of Persia for a day. When Jovian withdrew the Roman protection from them, they were forced for a while to submit to the power which they disliked; but no sooner did his successors reverse his policy, and show themselves ready to uphold the Armenians and Iberians against Persia, than they naturally reverted to the Roman side, and formed an important support to the empire against its Eastern rival.

The death of Sapor followed the peace of A.D. 376 within a few years. He died A.D. 379 or 380, after having reigned seventy years. It is curious that, although possessing the crown for so long a term, and enjoying a more brilliant reign than any preceding monarch, he neither left behind him any inscriptions, nor any sculptured memorials. The only material evidences that we possess of his reign are his coins, which are exceedingly numerous. According to Mordtmann, they may be divided into three classes, corresponding to three periods in his life. The earliest have on the reverse the fire-altar, with two priests, or guards, looking towards the altar, and with the flame rising from the altar in the usual way. The head on the obverse is archaic in type, and very much resembles that of Sapor I. The crown has attached to it, in many cases, that "cheek-piece" which is otherwise confined to the first three monarchs of the line. These coins are the best from an artistic point of view; they greatly resemble those of the first Sapor, but are distinguishable from them, first, by the guards looking towards the altar instead of away from it; and, secondly, by a greater profusion of pearls about the king's person. The coins of the second period lack the "cheek-piece," and have on the reverse the fire-altar without supporters; they are inferior as works of art to those of the first period, but much superior to those of the third. These last, which exhibit a marked degeneracy, are especially distinguished by having a human head in the middle of the flames that rise from the altar. Otherwise they much resemble in their emblems the early coins, only differing from them in being artistically inferior. The ordinary legends upon the coins are in no respect remarkable; but occasionally we find the monarch taking the new and expressive epithet of Toham, "the Strong."

12. Artaxerxes III; Sapor III; Varahran IV

The glorious reign of Sapor II., which carried the New Persian Empire to the highest point whereto it had yet attained, is followed by a time which offers to that remarkable reign a most complete contrast. Sapor had occupied the Persian throne for a space approaching nearly to three-quarters of a century; the reigns of his next three successors amounted to no more than twenty years in the aggregate. Sapor had been engaged in perpetual wars, had spread the terror of the Persian arms on all sides, and ruled more gloriously than any of his predecessors. The kings who followed him were pacific and unenterprising; they were almost unknown to their neighbors, and are among the least distinguished of the Sassanian monarchs. More especially does this character attach to the two immediate successors of Sapor II., viz. Artaxerxes II. and Sapor III. They reigned respectively four and five years; and their annals during this period are almost a blank. Artaxerxes II., who is called by some the brother of Sapor II., was more probably his son. He succeeded his father in A.D. 379, and died at Ctesiphon in A.D. 383. He left a character for kindness and amiability behind him, and is known to the Persians as Nihoukar, or "the Beneficent," and to the Arabs as Al Djemil, "the Virtuous." According to the "Modjmel-al-Tewarikh," he took no taxes from his subjects during the four years of his reign, and thereby secured to himself their affection and gratitude. He seems to have received overtures from the Armenians soon after his accession, and for a time to have been acknowledged by the turbulent mountaineers as their sovereign. After the murder of Bab, or Para, the Romans had set up, as king over Armenia, a certain Varaztad (Pharasdates), a member of the Arsacid family, but no near relation of the recent monarchs, assigning at the same time the real direction of affairs to an Armenian noble named Moushegh, who belonged to the illustrious family of the Mamigonians. Moushegh ruled Armenia with vigor, but was suspected of maintaining over-friendly relations with the Roman emperor, Valens, and of designing to undermine and supplant

his master. Varaztad, after a while, having been worked on by his counsellors, grew suspicious of him, and caused him to be executed at a banquet. This treachery roused the indignation of Moushegh's brother Manuel, who raised a rebellion against Varaztad, defeated him in open fight, and drove him from his kingdom. Manuel then brought forward the princess Zermandueht, widow of the late king Para, together with her two young sons, Arsaces and Valarsaces, and, surrounding all three with royal pomp, gave to the two princes the name of king, while he took care to retain in his own hands the real government of the country. Under these circumstances he naturally dreaded the hostility of the Roman emperor, who was not likely to see with patience a monarch, whom he had set upon the throne, deprived of his kingdom by a subject. To maintain the position which he had assumed, it was necessary that he should contract some important alliance; and the alliance always open to Armenia when she had quarrelled with Rome was with the Persians. It seems to have been soon after Artaxerxes II. succeeded his father, that Manuel sent an embassy to him, with letters and rich gifts, offering, in return for his protection, to acknowledge him as lord-paramount of Armenia, and promising him unshakable fidelity. The offer was, of course, received with extreme satisfaction; and terms were speedily arranged. Armenia was to pay a fixed tribute, to receive a garrison of ten thousand Persians and to provide adequately for their support, to allow a Persian satrap to divide with Manuel the actual government of the country, and to furnish him with all that was necessary for his court and table. On the other hand, Arsacos and Valarsaces, together (apparently) with their mother, Zermandueht, were to be allowed the royal title and,honors; Armenia was to be protected in case of invasion; and Manuel was to be maintained in his office of Sparapet or generalissimo of the Armenian forces. We cannot say with certainty how long this arrangement remained undisturbed; most probably, however, it did not continue in force more than a few years. It was most likely while Artaxerxes still ruled Persia, that the rupture described by Faustus occurred. A certain Meroujan, an Armenian, noble, jealous of the power and prosperity of Manuel, persuaded him that the Persian commandant in Armenia was about to seize his person, and either to send him a prisoner to Artaxerxes, or else to put him to death. Manuel, who was so credulous as to believe the information, thought it necessary for his own safety to anticipate the designs of his enemies, and, falling upon the ten thousand Persians with the whole of the Armenian army, succeeded in putting them all to the sword, except their commander, whom he allowed to escape. War followed between Persia and Armenia with varied success, but on the whole Manuel had the advantage; he repulsed several Persian invasions, and maintained the independence and integrity of Armenia till his death, without calling in the aid of Rome. When, however, Manuel died, about A.D. 383, Armenian affairs fell into confusion; the Romans were summoned to give help to one party, the Persians to render assistance to the other; Armenia became once more the battle-ground between the two great powers, and it seemed as if the old contest, fraught with so many calamities, was to be at once renewed. But the circumstances of the time were such that neither Rome nor Persia now desired to reopen the contest. Persia was in the hands of weak and unwarlike sovereigns, and was perhaps already threatened by Scythic hordes upon the east. Rome was in the agonies of a struggle with the ever-increasing power of the Goths; and though, in the course of the years A.D. 379-382, the Great Theodosius had established peace in the tract under his rule, and delivered the central provinces of Macedonia and Thrace from the intolerable ravages of the barbaric invaders, yet the deliverance had been effected at the cost of introducing large bodies of Goths into the heart of the empire, while still along the

northern frontier lay a threatening cloud, from which devastation and ruin might at any time burst forth and overspread the provinces upon the Lower Danube. Thus both the Roman emperor and the Persian king were well disposed towards peace. An arrangement was consequently made, and in A.D. 384, five years after he had ascended the throne, Theodosius gave audience in Constantinople to envoys from the court of Persepolis, and concluded with them a treaty whereby matters in Armenia were placed on a footing which fairly satisfied both sides, and the tranquillity of the East was assured. The high contracting powers agreed that Armenia should be partitioned between them. After detaching from the kingdom various outlying districts, which could be conveniently absorbed into their own territories, they divided the rest of the country into two unequal portions. The smaller of these, which comprised the more western districts, was placed under the protection of Rome, and was committed by Theodosius to the Arsaces who had been made king by Manuel, the son of the unfortunate Bab, or Para, and the grandson of the Arsaces contemporary with Julian. The larger portion, which consisted of the regions lying towards the east, passed under the suzerainty of Persia, and was confided by Sapor III., who had succeeded Artaxerxes II., to an Arsacid, named Chosroes, a Christian, who was given the title of king, and received in marriage at the same time one of Sapor's sisters. Such were the terms on which Rome and Persia brought their contention respecting Armenia to a conclusion. Friendly relations were in this way established between the two crowns, which continued undisturbed for the long space of thirty-six years (A.D. 384-420).

Sapor III. appears to have succeeded his brother Artaxerxes in A.D. 383, the year before the conclusion of the treaty. It is uncertain whether Artaxerxes vacated the throne by death, or was deposed in consequence of cruelties whereof he was guilty towards the priests and nobles. Tabari and Macoudi, who relate his deposition, are authors on whom much reliance cannot be placed; and the cruelties reported accord but ill with the epithets of "the Beneficent" and "the Virtuous," assigned to this monarch by others. Perhaps it is most probable that he held the throne till his death, according to the statements of Agathias and Eutychius. Of Sapor III., his brother and successor, two facts only are recorded--his conclusion of the treaty with the Romans in A.D. 384, and his war with the Arabs of the tribe of Yad, which must have followed shortly afterwards. It must have been in consequence of his contest with the latter, whom he attacked in their own country, that he received from his countrymen the appellation of "the Warlike," an appellation better deserved by either of the other monarchs who had borne the same name.

Sapor III. left behind him a sculptured memorial, which is still to be seen in the vicinity of Kermanshah. It consists of two very similar figures, looking towards each other, and standing in an arched frame. On either side of the figures are inscriptions in the Old Pehlevi character, whereby we are enabled to identify the individuals represented with the second and the third Sapor. The inscriptions run thus:--_"Pathkell zani mazdisn shahia Shahpuhri, malkan malJca Allan ve Anilan, minuchitli min yazdan, bari mazdisn shahia Auhr-mazdi, malkan malka Allan ve Anilan, minuchitli min yazdan, napi shahia Narshehi malkan malka;"_ and _"Pathkeli mazdisn shahia Shahpuhri, malkan mallca Allan ve Anilan, minuchitli min yazdan, bari mazdisn shahia Shahpuhri, malkan malka Allan ve Anilan, minuchitli min yazdan, napi shahia Auhrmazdi, malkan malka."_ They are, it will be seen, identical in form, with the exception that the names in the right-hand inscription are "Sapor, Hormisdas, Narses," while those in the left-hand one are "Sapor, Sapor, Hormisdas." It has been supposed that the right-hand figure was erected by Sapor II., and the other afterwards added by Sapor III.; but the unity of the whole sculpture, and its

inclusion under a single arch, seem to indicate that it was set up by a single sovereign, and was the fruit of a single conception. If this be so, we must necessarily ascribe it to the later of the two monarchs commemorated, i.e. to Sapor III., who must be supposed to have possessed more than usual filial piety, since the commemoration of their predecessors upon the throne is very rare among the Sassanians.

The coins of Sapor III. and his predecessor, Artaxerxes II., have little about them that is remarkable. Those of Artaxerxes bear a head which is surmounted with the usual inflated ball, and has the diadem, but is without a crown--a deficiency in which some see an indication that the prince thus represented was regent rather than monarch of Persia. The legends upon the coins are, however, in the usual style of royal epigraphs, running commonly--_"Mazdisn bag Artah-shetri malkan malka Air an ve Aniran,"_ or "the Ormazd-worshipping divine Artaxerxes, king of the kings of Iran and Turan." They are easily distinguishable from those of Artaxerxes I., both by the profile, which is far less marked, and by the fire-altar on the reverse, which has always two supporters, looking towards the altar. The coins of Sapor III. present some unusual types. On some of them the king has his hair bound with a simple diadem, without crown or cap of any kind. On others he wears a cap of a very peculiar character, which has been compared to a biretta, but is really altogether _sui generis_. The cap is surmounted by the ordinary inflated ball, is ornamented with jewels, and is bound round at bottom with the usual diadem. The legend upon the obverse of Sapor's coins is of the customary character; but the reverse bears usually, besides the name of the king, the word _atur_, which has been supposed to stand for Aturia or Assyria; this explanation, however, is very doubtful.

The coins of both kings exhibit marks of decline, especially on the reverse, where the drawing of the figures that support the altar is very inferior to that which we observe on the coins of the kings from Sapor I. to Sapor II. The characters on both obverse and reverse are also carelessly rendered, and can only with much difficulty be deciphered.

Sapor III. died A.D. 388, after reigning a little more than five years. He was a man of simple tastes, and is said to have been fond of exchanging the magnificence and dreary etiquette of the court for the freedom and ease of a life under tents. On an occasion when he was thus enjoying himself, it happened that one of those violent hurricanes, to which Persia is subject, arose, and, falling in full force on the royal encampment, blew down the tent wherein he was sitting. It happened unfortunately that the main tent-pole struck him, as it fell, in a vital part, and Sapor died from the blow. Such at least was the account given by those who had accompanied him, and generally believed by his subjects. There were not, however, wanting persons to whisper that the story was untrue--that the real cause of the catastrophe which had overtaken the unhappy monarch was a conspiracy of his nobles, or his guards, who had overthrown his tent purposely, and murdered him ere he could escape from them.

The successor of Sapor III. was Varahran IV., whom some authorities call his brother and others his son. This prince is known to the oriental writers as "Varahran Kerm-an-sh-ah," or "Varahran, king of Carmania." Agathias tells us that during the lifetime of his father he was established as governor over Kerman or Carmania, and thus obtained the appellation which pertinaciously adhered to him. A curious relic of antiquity, fortunately preserved to modern times amid so much that has been lost, confirms this statement. It is the seal of Varahran before he ascended the Persian throne, and contains, besides his portrait, beautifully cut, an inscription, which is read as follows:--_"Varahran Kerman malka, bari mazdisn bag Shahpuh-rimalkan malka Axran ve Aniran, minuchitri min

yazclan,"_ or "Varahran, king of Kerman, son of the Ormazd-worshipping divine Sapor, king of the kings of Iran and Turan, heaven-descended of the race of the gods." Another seal, belonging to him probably after he had become monarch of Persia, contains his full-length portrait, and exhibits him as trampling under foot a prostrate figure, supposed to represent a Roman, by which it would appear that he claimed to have gained victories or advantages over Rome. It is not altogether easy to understand how this could have been. Not only do the Roman writers mention no war between the Romans and Persians at this time, but they expressly declare that the East remained in profound repose during the entire reign of Varahran, and that Rome and Persia continued to be friends. The difficulty may, however, be perhaps explained by a consideration of the condition of affairs in Armenia at this time; for in Armenia Rome and Persia had still conflicting interests, and, without having recourse to arms, triumphs might be obtained in this quarter by the one over the other.

On the division of Armenia between Arsaces and Chosroes, a really good understanding had been established, which had lasted for about six years. Arsaces had died two years after he became a Roman feudatory; and, at his death, Rome had absorbed his territories into her empire, and placed the new province under the government of a count. No objection to the arrangement had been made by Persia, and the whole of Armenia had remained for four years tranquil and without disturbance. But, about A.D. 390, Chosroes became dissatisfied with his position, and entered into relations with Rome which greatly displeased the Armenian monarch. Chosroes obtained from Theodosius his own appointment to the Armenian countship, and thus succeeded in uniting both Roman and Persian Armenia under his government. Elated with this success, he proceeded further to venture on administrative acts which trenched, according to Persian views, on the rights of the lord paramount. Finally, when Varahran addressed to him a remonstrance, he replied in insulting terms, and, renouncing his authority, placed the whole Armenian kingdom under the suzerainty and protection of Rome. War between the two great powers must now have seemed imminent, and could indeed only have been avoided by great moderation and self-restraint on the one side or the other. Under these circumstances it was Rome that drew back. Theodosius declined to receive the submission which Chosroes tendered, and refused to lift a finger in his defence. The unfortunate prince was forced to give himself up to Varahan, who consigned him to the Castle of Oblivion, and placed his brother, Varabran-Sapor, upon the Armenian throne. These events seem to have fallen into the year A.D. 391, the third year of Varahran, who may well have felt proud of them, and have thought that they formed a triumph over Rome which deserved to be commemorated.

The character of Varahran IV. is represented variously by the native authorities. According to some of them, his temper was mild, and his conduct irreproachable. Others say that he was a hard man, and so neglected the duties of his station that he would not even read the petitions or complaints which were addressed to him. It would seem that there must have been some ground for these latter representations, since it is generally agreed that the cause of his death was a revolt of his troops, who surrounded him and shot at him with arrows. One shaft, better directed than the rest, struck him in a vital part, and he fell and instantly expired. Thus perished, in A.D. 399, the third son of the Great Sapor, after a reign of eleven years.