he determined to put affairs in train for the attainment of this object. He made a thorough inspection of the great lines of defence between the Danube and the Rhine, and framed and partly carried out a vast scheme for strengthening and securing them.

The policy of opposing uncivilized tribes by the construction of the *limes,* a raised embankment of earth or other material, intersected here and there by fortifications, was not his invention, but it owed in great measure its development to him. It is probable that the northernmost part of the great *limes Germaniae,* from the Rhine at Rheinbrohl, nearly midway between Coblenz and Bonn, to a point on the Main east of Frankfort, where that river suddenly changes its course from north to west, was begun by Domitian. The extension of this great barrier southwards to the point at which it met the *limes Rαetiαe* was undertaken by Trajan, though we cannot say how far he carried the work, which was not entirely completed till long after his time. We may without hesitation follow the opinion of Mommsen, who maintains that the *limes* was not intended, like Hadrian’s Wall between the Tyne and the Solway, and like the great wall of China, to oppose an absolute barrier against incursions from the outside. It was useful as marking definitely the boundary of the Roman sway, and as assuring the Romans that no inroad could be made without intelligence being had of it beforehand, while the *limes* itself and the system of roads behind it enabled troops to be directed rapidly to any threatened point, and the fortified positions could be held against large numbers till reinforcements arrived. Great importance was no doubt attached to the perfection of the lines of communication bearing on the *limes.* Among a people of roadmakers, Trajan was one of the greatest, and we have definite evidence from inscriptions that some of the military roads in this region were constructed by him. The more secure control which the Romans now maintained over the territory. within the *limes* tended to its rapid civilization, and the Roman influence, if not the Roman arms, soon began to affect powerfully the regions beyond.

After his careful survey of the Rhine end of the frontier defences, Trajan proceeded to strengthen them in the direction of the Danube. From the age of Tiberius onwards the Romans possessed the whole southern bank of the river from its source to the Euxine. But the precarious tenure of their possession had been deeply impressed on them by the disasters and humiliations they had undergone in these districts during the reign of Domitian. A prince had arisen among the Dacians, Decebalus by name, worthy to be placed at the head of all the great barbarian antagonists of Rome. Like Maroboduus, he was able to combine the forces of tribes commonly hostile to each other, and his military ability almost went the length of genius. Domitian attacked him but was compelled to make an ignominious peace. He agreed to pay to Decebalus an annual subsidy, and to supply him with engineers and craftsmen skilled in all kinds of construction, but particularIy in the erection of fortifications and defensive works. During the nine or ten years which had elapsed since the conclusion of this remarkable treaty the Dacian prince had immensely strengthened the approaches to his kingdom from the Roman side. He had also equipped and drilled his formidable army after the Roman fashion. It was impossible for a soldier like Trajan to endure the conditions accepted by Domitian; but the conquest of Dacia had become one of the most formidable tasks that had ever confronted the empire. Trajan no doubt planned a war before he left the Danube for Rome late in 99.

The arrival of the emperor had been awaited in the capital with an impatience which is expressed by Pliny and by Martial.@@1 As he entered the city and went on foot to the Capitol the plaudits of the people were unmistakably genuine. During his stay in the city he riveted more firmly still the affections both of the senate and of the people. The reconciliation of the empire with liberty, inaugurated, as Tacitus says, by Nerva, seemed now to be securely achieved. Trajan was absolutely open and simple, and lived with men at Rome as he had lived with his soldiers while on service. He realized the senate’s ideal of the citizen ruler. The assurance that no senator should suffer was renewed by oath. All the old republican formalities were most punctiliously observed—even those attendant on the emperor’s election to the consulate, so far as they did not involve a restoration of the old order of voting at the comitia. The veneration for republican tradition is curiously attested by the reproduction of many republican types of coin struck

by senatorial officers. Trajan seized every opportunity for emphasizing his view that the *princeps* was merely the greatest of the magistrates, and so was not above but under the laws. He was determined, he said, to be to his subjects such a ruler as he had desired for himself when a subject. Real power and influence were accorded to the senate, which had now, by the incorporation of members whose origin was provincial, become in a manner representative of the whole empire. Trajan associated with the senators on equal terms, and enjoyed in their company every kind of recreation. All pomp was distasteful to him and discarded by him. There was practically no court, and no intrigues of any kind were possible. The approach to his house was free, and he loved to pass through the city unattended and to pay unexpected visits to his friends. He thirsted for no senator’s blood, and used severity against the *delatores* alone. There was but one insignificant conspiracy against him during his whole reign. Though not literary himself, Trajan conciliated the literary men, who at all times had close relations with the senate. His intimate, M. Licinius, played an excellent Maecenas to his Augustus. In his efforts to win the affections of Roman society Trajan was aided by his wife Plotina, who was as simple as her husband, benevolent, pure in character, and entirely unambitious. The hold which Trajan acquired over the people was no less firm than that which he maintained upon the army and the senate. His largesses, his distributions of food, his public works, and his spectacles were all on a generous scale. The exhibitions in the arena were perhaps at their zenith during his tenure of power. Though, for some unexplained reason, he abolished the mimes, so beloved of the populace, at the outset of his reign, he availed himself of the occasion of his first triumph to restore them again. The people were delighted by the removal of the imperial *exedra* (a large chamber with open front) in the circus, whereby five thousand additional places were provided. Taxa- tion was in many directions reduced, and the financial exactions of the imperial officers controlled by the erection of a special court. Elaborate precautions were taken to save Italy from famine; it is said that corn for seven years’ consumption at the capital was retained in the granaries. Special encourage­ment was given to merchants to import articles of food. The corporation of bakers was organized and made more effective for the service of the public. The internal trade of Italy was powerfully stimulated by the careful maintenance and extension of the different lines of road. But the most striking evidence of Trajan’s solicitude for his people’s welfare is found in his institution of the *alimenta,* whereby means were provided for the rearing of poor and orphan children in Italy. The method had been sketched out by Nerva, but its great development was due to Trajan. The moneys allotted by the emperor were in many cases supplemented by private benevolence. As a soldier, Trajan realized the need of men for the maintenance of the empire against the outer barbarians, and he preferred that these men should be of Italian birth. He was only carrying a step farther the policy of Augustus, who by a system of rewards and penalties had tried to encourage marriage and the nurture of children. The actual effect of Trajan’s regulations is hard to measure; they were probably more effectual for their object than those of Augustus. The foundations were confiscated by Pertinax, after they had existed less than a century.

On the 1st of September in the year 100, when Trajan was consul for the third time, Pliny, who had been designated consul for a part of the year, was appointed to deliver the “ Panegyric ’’ which has come down to us, and forms a most important source of our knowledge concerning this emperor. Pliny’s eulogy of Trajan and his denunciation of Domitian are alike couched in extravagant phrases, but the former perhaps rests more uniformly on a basis of truth and justice than the latter. The tone of the “ Panegyric ” certainly lends itself to the supposition of some historians that Trajan was inordinately vain. That the emperor had an honest and soldierly satisfaction in his own well-doing is clear; but if he had had anything like the vanity of a Domitian,

@@@1 It has been conjectured, not improbably, that the *Germania* of Tacitus, written at this period, had for one of its aims the enlightenment of the Romans concerning the formidable character of the Germans, so that they might at once bear more readily with the emperor’s prolonged absence and be prepared for the necessity of decisive action on the frontier.