

EPITOME OF BOOK LXVIII

AFTER Domitian, the Romans appointed Nerva A.D. 96 Cocceius emperor. Because of the hatred felt for Domitian, his images, many of which were of silver and many of gold, were melted down; and from this source large amounts of money were obtained. The arches, too, of which a very great number were being erected to this one man, were torn down. Nerva also released all who were on trial for *maiestas* and restored the exiles; moreover, he put to death all the slaves and the freedmen who had conspired against their masters and allowed that class of persons to lodge no complaint whatever against their masters; and no persons were permitted to accuse anybody of *maiestas* or of adopting the Jewish mode of life. Many of those who had been informers were condemned to death, among others Seras,¹ the philosopher. When, now, no little commotion was occasioned by the fact that everybody was accusing everybody else, Fronto, the consul, is said to have remarked that it was bad to have an emperor under whom nobody was permitted to do anything, but worse to have one under whom everybody was permitted to do everything; and Nerva, on hearing this, ordered that this condition of affairs should cease for the future. Now Nerva was so old and so feeble in health (he always, for instance, had to vomit up his food) that he was rather weak. He also forbade the making of gold or silver statues in his honour. To those who had been deprived of their property without cause under Domitian he gave back all that was still to be found in the imperial treasury. To the very poor Romans he granted allotments of land worth 80,000,000 sesterces, putting some senators in charge of their purchase and distribution. When he ran short of funds, he sold much wearing apparel and many vessels of silver and gold, besides furniture, both his own and that which belonged to the imperial residence, and many estates and houses—in fact, everything except what was indispensable. He did not, however, haggle over the price, but in this very matter benefited many persons. He abolished many sacrifices, many horse-races, and some other spectacles, in an attempt to reduce expenditures as far as possible. In the senate he took oath that he would not slay any of the senators, and he kept his pledge in spite of plots against himself. Moreover, he did nothing without the advice of the foremost men. Among his various laws were those prohibiting the castration of any man, and the marrying by any man of his own niece. When consul he did not hesitate A.D. 97 to take as his colleague Virginius Rufus, though this man had often been saluted as emperor. After Rufus' death an inscription was placed on his tomb to the effect that, after conquering Vindex, he had claimed the power, not for himself, but for his country.¹

Nerva ruled so well that he once remarked: "I

have done nothing that would prevent my laying down the imperial office and returning to private life in safety." When Calpurnius Crassus, a descendant of the famous Crassi, had formed a plot with some others against him, he caused them to sit beside him at a spectacle (they were still ignorant of the fact that they had been informed upon) and gave them swords, ostensibly to inspect and see if they were sharp (as was often done), but really in order to show that he did not care even if he died then and there.

Casperius Aelianus, who had become commander of the Praetorians under him as he had been under Domitian, incited the soldiers to mutiny against him, after having induced them to demand certain persons for execution.¹ Nerva resisted them stoutly, even to the point of baring his collar-bone and presenting to them his throat; but he accomplished nothing, and those whom Aelianus wished were put out of the way. Nerva, therefore, finding himself held in such contempt by reason of his old age, ascended the Capitol and said in a loud voice: "May good success attend the Roman senate and people and myself. I hereby adopt Marcus Ulpius Nerva Trajan."²

Afterwards in the senate he appointed him Caesar and sent a message to him written with his own hand (Trajan was governor of Germany):

"May the Danaans by thy shafts requite my tears."¹

Thus Trajan became Caesar and later emperor, although there were relatives of Nerva living. But Nerva did not esteem family relationship above the safety of the State, nor was he less inclined to adopt Trajan because the latter was a Spaniard instead of an Italian or Itallot,³ inasmuch as no foreigner had previously held the Roman sovereignty; for he believed in looking at a man's ability rather than at his nationality. Soon after this act he passed away, A.D. 98 having ruled one year, four months and nine days; his life prior to that time had comprised sixty-five years, ten months and ten days.

Trajan, before he became emperor, had had a dream of the following nature. He thought that an old man in purple-bordered toga and vesture and with a crown upon his head, as the senate is represented in pictures, impressed a seal upon him with a finger ring, first on the left side of his neck and then on the right. When he became emperor, he sent a letter to the senate, written with his own hand, in which he declared, among other things, that he would not slay nor disfranchise any good man; and he confirmed this by oaths not only at the time but also later.

He sent for Aelianus and the Praetorians who had mutinied against Nerva, pretending that he was going to employ them for some purpose, and then put them out of the way. When he came to Rome, A.D. 99 he did much to reform the administration of affairs and much to please the better element; to the

public business he gave unusual attention, making many grants, for example, to the cities in Italy for the support of their children, and upon the good citizens he conferred many favours. When Plotina, his wife, first entered the palace, she turned round so as to face the stairway and the populace and said: "I enter here such a woman as I would fain be when I depart." And she conducted herself during the entire reign in such manner as to incur no censure.

The ambassadors who came from the various kings were given seats by Trajan in the senatorial section at spectacles.

After spending some time in Rome he made a campaign against the Dacians; for he took into account their past deeds and was grieved at the amount of money they were receiving annually, and he also observed that their power and their pride were increasing. Decebalus, learning of his advance, became frightened, since he well knew that on the former occasion it was not the Romans that he had conquered, but Domitian, whereas now he would be fighting against both Romans and Trajan, the emperor.

Trajan was most conspicuous for his justice, for his bravery, and for the simplicity of his habits. He was strong in body, being in his forty-second year when he began to rule, so that in every enterprise he toiled almost as much as the others; and his mental powers were at their highest, so that he had neither the recklessness of youth nor the sluggishness of old age. He did not envy nor slay any one, but honoured and exalted all good men without exception, and hence he neither feared nor hated any one of them. To slanders he paid very little heed and he was no slave of anger. He refrained equally from the money of others and from unjust murders. He expended vast sums on wars and vast sums on works of peace; and while making very many urgently needed repairs to roads and harbours and public buildings, he drained no one's blood for any of these undertakings. He was so high-minded and generous that, after enlarging and embellishing the Circus, which had crumbled away in places, he merely inscribed on it a statement that he had made it adequate for the Roman people. For these deeds, now, he took more pleasure in being loved than in being honoured. His association with the people was marked by affability and his intercourse with the senate by dignity, so that he was loved by all and dreaded by none save the enemy. He joined others in the chase and in banquets, as well as in their labours and plans and jests. Often he would take three others into his carriage, and he would enter the houses of citizens, sometimes even without a guard, and enjoy himself there. Education in the strict sense he lacked, when it came to speaking, but its substance he both knew and applied; and there was no quality which he did not possess in a high degree.

I know, of course, that he was devoted to boys and to wine, but if he had ever committed or endured any base or wicked deed as the result of this, he would have incurred censure; as it was, however, he drank all the wine he wanted, yet remained sober, and in his relation with boys he harmed no one. And even if he did delight in war, nevertheless he was satisfied when success had been achieved, a most bitter foe overthrown and his countrymen exalted. Nor did the result which usually occurs in such circumstances—conceit and arrogance on the part of the soldiers—ever manifest itself during his reign; with such a firm hand did he rule them.

For these reasons, then, Decebalus had good cause to fear him. When Trajan in his campaign against the Dacians had drawn near Tapae,¹ where the barbarians were encamped, a large mushroom was brought to him on which was written in Latin characters a message to the effect that the Buri and other allies advised Trajan to turn back and keep the peace. Nevertheless he engaged the foe, and saw many wounded on his own side and killed many of the enemy. And when the bandages gave out, he is said not to have spared even his own clothing, but to have cut it up into strips. In honour of the soldiers who had died in the battle he ordered an altar to be erected and funeral rites to be performed annually.

Decebalus had sent envoys even before his defeat, not the long-haired men this time, as before, but the noblest among the cap-wearers.¹ These threw down their arms, and casting themselves upon the ground, begged Trajan that, if possible, Decebalus himself should be permitted to meet and confer with him, promising that he would do everything that was commanded; or, if not, that someone at least should be sent to agree upon terms with him. Those sent were Sura and Claudius Livianus, the prefect; but nothing was accomplished, since Decebalus did not dare to meet them either, but sent envoys also on this occasion. Trajan seized some fortified mountains and on them found the arms and the captured engines, as well as the standard which had been taken in the time of Fuscus. Decebalus, because

of this, coupled with the fact that Maximus had at this same time captured his sister and also a strong position, was ready to agree without exception to every demand that had been made—not that he intended to abide by his agreement, but in order that he might secure a respite from his temporary reverses. So he reluctantly engaged to surrender his arms, engines and engine-makers, to give back the deserters, to demolish the forts, to withdraw from captured territory, and furthermore to consider the same persons enemies and friends as the Romans did, and neither to give shelter to any of the deserters nor to employ any soldier from the Roman empire; for he had been acquiring the largest and best part of his force by persuading men to come to him from Roman territory. This was after he had come to Trajan, fallen upon the ground and done obeisance and thrown away his arms. He also sent envoys in the matter to the senate, in order that he might secure the ratification of the peace by that body. After concluding this compact the emperor left the camp at Zermizegethussa, and having stationed garrisons here and there throughout the remainder of the territory, returned to Italy.

The envoys from Decebalus, upon being brought into the senate, laid down their arms, clasped their hands in the attitude of captives, and spoke some words of supplication; thus they obtained peace and received back their arms. Trajan celebrated a triumph and was given the title of Dacicus; in the theatre he held contests of gladiators, in whom he delighted, and he brought the dancers of pantomimes back into the theatre, being enamoured of Pylades, one of their number. He did not, however, as might have been expected of a warlike man, pay any less attention to the civil administration nor did he dispense justice any the less; on the contrary, he conducted trials, now in the Forum of Augustus, now in the Portico of Livia, as it was called, and often elsewhere on a tribunal.

Inasmuch as Decebalus was reported to him to be

personality profile

wine & boys

A.D. 100(?)

A.D. 101
-108(?)

A.D. 109

A.D. 108

acting contrary to the treaty in many ways, was collecting arms, receiving those who deserted, repairing the forts, sending envoys to his neighbours and injuring those who had previously differed with him, even going so far as to annex a portion of the territory of the Iazyges (which Trajan later would not give back to them when they asked for it), therefore the senate again declared him an enemy, ^{A.D. 104} and Trajan once more conducted the war against him in person instead of entrusting it to others.

As numerous Dacians kept transferring their allegiance to Trajan, and also for certain other reasons, Decebalus again sued for peace. But since he could not be persuaded to surrender both his arms and himself, he proceeded openly to collect troops and summon the surrounding nations to his aid, declaring that if they deserted him they themselves would be imperilled, and that it was safer and easier for them, by fighting on his side before suffering any harm, to preserve their freedom, than if they should allow his people to be destroyed and then later be subjugated themselves when bereft of allies.

Though Decebalus was faring badly in open conflict, nevertheless by craft and deceit he almost compassed Trajan's death. He sent into Moesia some deserters to see if they could make away with him, inasmuch as the emperor was generally accessible and now, on account of the exigencies of warfare, admitted to a conference absolutely every one who desired it. But they were not able to carry out this plan, since one of them was arrested on suspicion and under torture revealed the entire plot. Decebalus then sent an invitation to Longinus, a leader of the Roman army who had made himself a terror to the king in the wars, and persuaded him to meet him, on the pretext that he would do whatever should be demanded. He then arrested him and questioned him publicly about Trajan's plans, and when Longinus refused to admit anything, he took him about with him under guard, though not in bonds. And sending an envoy to Trajan, he asked that he might receive back his territory as far as the Ister and be indemnified for all the money he had spent on the war, in return for restoring Longinus to him. An ambiguous answer was returned, of such a nature as not to cause Decebalus to believe that Trajan regarded Longinus as either of great importance or yet of slight importance, the object being to prevent his being destroyed, on the one hand, or being preserved to them on excessive terms, on the other. So Decebalus delayed, still considering what he should do. In the meantime Longinus, having secured poison with the aid of the freedman, promised Decebalus to win Trajan over, hoping the king would thus have no suspicion of what he was going to do and so would not keep a very strict watch over him; also, in order to enable the freedman to gain safety, he wrote a letter containing a petition in his behalf and gave it to him to carry to Trajan. Then, when the other had gone, he drank the poison at night and died. Thereupon Decebalus demanded the freedman from Trajan, promising to give him in return the body of Longinus and ten captives. He at once sent the centurion who had been captured with Longinus, in order that he might arrange the matter; and it was from the centurion that the whole story of Longinus was learned. However, Trajan neither sent him back nor surrendered the freedman, deeming his safety more important for the dignity of the empire than the burial of Longinus.

Trajan constructed over the Ister a stone bridge for which I cannot sufficiently admire him. Brilliant,

indeed, as are his other achievements, yet this surpasses them. For it has twenty piers of squared stone one hundred and fifty feet in height above the foundations and sixty feet in width, and these, standing at a distance of one hundred and seventy feet from one another, are connected by arches. How, then, could one fail to be astonished at the expenditure made upon them, or at the way in which each of them was placed in a river so deep, in water so full of eddies, and on a bottom so muddy? For it was impossible, of course, to divert the stream anywhere. I have spoken of the width of the river; but the stream is not uniformly so narrow, since it covers in some places twice, and in others thrice as much ground, but the narrowest point and the one in that region best suited to building a bridge has the width named. Yet the very fact that the river in its descent is here contracted from a great flood to such a narrow channel, after which it again expands into a greater flood, makes it all the more violent and deep, and this feature must be considered in estimating the difficulty of constructing the bridge. This too, then, is one of the achievements that show the magnitude of Trajan's designs, though the bridge is of no use to us; for merely the piers are standing, affording no means of crossing, as if they had been erected for the sole purpose of demonstrating that there is nothing which human ingenuity cannot accomplish. Trajan built the bridge because he feared that some time when the Ister was frozen over war might be made upon the Romans on the further side, and he wished to facilitate access to them by this means. Hadrian, on the contrary, was afraid that it might also make it easy for the barbarians, once they had overpowered the guard at the bridge, to cross into Moesia, and so he removed the superstructure.

Trajan, having crossed the Ister by means of this ^{A.D. 108} bridge, conducted the war with safe prudence rather than with haste, and eventually, after a hard struggle, vanquished the Dacians. In the course of the campaign he himself performed many deeds of good generalship and bravery, and his troops ran many risks and displayed great prowess on his behalf. It was here that a certain horseman, after being carried, badly wounded, from the battle in the hope that he could be healed, when he found that he could not recover, rushed from his tent (for his injury had not yet reached his heart) and, taking his place once more in the line, perished after displaying great feats of valour. Decebalus, when his capital and all his territory had been occupied and he was himself in danger of being captured, committed suicide; and his head was brought to Rome. In this way Dacia became subject to the Romans, and Trajan founded cities there. The treasures of Decebalus were also discovered, though hidden beneath the river Sargetia, which ran past his palace. With the help of some captives Decebalus had diverted the course of the river, made an excavation in its bed, and into the cavity had thrown a large amount of silver and gold and other objects of great value that could stand a certain amount of moisture; then he had heaped stones over them and piled on earth, afterwards bringing the river back into its course. He also had caused the same captives to deposit his robes and other articles of a like nature in caves, and after accomplishing this had made away with them to prevent them from disclosing anything. But Bicilis, a companion of his who knew what had been done, was seized and gave information about these things.

About this same time, Palma, the governor of Syria, subdued the part of Arabia around Petra¹ and

made it subject to the Romans.

Upon Trajan's return to Rome ever so many A.D. 107 embassies came to him from various barbarians, including the Indi. And he gave spectacles on one hundred and twenty-three days, in the course of which some eleven thousand animals, both wild and tame, were slain, and ten thousand gladiators fought. *animals*

At this same period he built a road of stone A.D. 110 through the Pontine marshes and provided the roads with most magnificent buildings and bridges. He also caused all the money that was badly worn to be melted down.

He had taken an oath that he would not shed blood and he made good his promise by his deeds in spite of plots formed against him. For by nature he was not at all inclined to duplicity or guile or harshness, but he loved, greeted and honoured the good, and the others he ignored; moreover, he had become milder as the result of age.

When Licinius Sura died, Trajan bestowed upon him a public funeral and a statue. This man had attained to such a degree of wealth and pride that he had built a gymnasium for the Romans; yet so great was the friendship and confidence which he showed toward Trajan and Trajan toward him, that, although he was often slandered,—as naturally happens in the case of all those who possess any influence with the emperors,—Trajan never felt any suspicion or hatred toward him. On the contrary, when those who envied Sura became very insistent, the emperor went uninvited to his house to dinner, and having dismissed his whole body-guard, he first called Sura's physician and caused him to anoint his eyes, and then his barber, whom he caused to shave his chin (for the emperors themselves as well as all the rest used to follow this ancient practice; it was Hadrian who first set the fashion of wearing a beard); and after doing all this, he next took a bath and had dinner. Then on the following day he said to his friends who were in the habit of constantly making disparaging remarks about Sura: "If Sura had desired to kill me, he would have killed me yesterday." Now he did a fine thing in running this risk in the case of a man who had been calumniated, but a much finer thing still in believing that he never should be harmed by him. Thus it was that the confidence of his conviction was strengthened by his personal knowledge of Sura's conduct rather than by the conjectures of others.

Indeed, when he first handed to the man¹ who was to be prefect of the Praetorians the sword which this official was required to wear at his side, he bared the blade and holding it up said: "Take this sword, in order that, if I rule well, you may use it for me, but if ill, against me."

He also set up images of Sosius, Palma and Celsus,² so greatly did he esteem them above the rest. Those, however, who conspired against him, among them Crassus, he brought before the senate and caused them to be punished.

He also built libraries. And he set up in the A.D. 113 Forum³ an enormous column, to serve at once as a monument to himself and as a memorial of his work in the Forum. For that entire section had been hilly and he had cut it down for a distance equal to the height of the column, thus making the Forum level.

Next he made a campaign against the Armenians and Parthians on the pretext that the Armenian king⁴ had obtained his diadem, not at his hands, but from the Parthian king,⁵ though his real reason was a desire to win renown.

When Trajan had set out against the Parthians A.D. 113 and had got as far as Athens, an embassy from Osroes met him, asking for peace and proffering gifts. For upon learning of his advance the king had become terrified, because Trajan was wont to make good his threats by his deeds. Accordingly, he humbled his pride and sent to implore him not to make war upon him, and at the same time he asked that Armenia be given to Parthamasiris, who was likewise a son of Pacorus, and requested that the diadem be sent to him; for he had deposed Exedares, he said, inasmuch as he had been satisfactory neither to the Romans nor to the Parthians. The emperor neither accepted the gifts nor returned any answer, either oral or written, save the statement that friendship is determined by deeds and not by words, and that accordingly when he should reach Syria he would do all that was proper. And being of this mind, he proceeded through Asia, Lycia and the adjoining provinces to Seleucia. Upon his arrival in Antioch, Abgarus of Osroene sent gifts and a message of friendship, though he did not appear in person; for, as he dreaded both Trajan and the Parthians alike, he was trying to be neutral and for that reason would not come to confer with him.

Lusius Quietus was a Moor and likewise ranked as a leader of the Moors and as commander of a troop in the cavalry; but, having been condemned for base conduct, he had been dismissed from the service at the time and disgraced. Later, however, when the Dacian war came on and Trajan needed the assistance of the Moors, he came to him of his own accord and displayed great deeds of prowess. Being honoured for this, he performed far greater and more numerous exploits in the second war, and finally advanced so far in bravery and good fortune during this present war that he was enrolled among the ex-praetors, became consul, and then governor of Palestine. To this chiefly were due the jealousy and hatred felt for him and his destruction.

When Trajan had invaded the enemy's territory, A.D. 114 the satraps and princes of that region came to meet him with gifts. One of these gifts was a horse that had been taught to do obeisance; it would kneel on its fore legs and place its head beneath the feet of whoever stood near.

Parthamasiris behaved in a rather violent fashion. In his first letter he had signed himself "king," but when no answer came, he wrote again, omitting this title, and asked that Marcus Junius, the governor of Cappadocia, be sent to him, implying that he wished to prefer some request through him. Trajan accordingly sent to him the son of Junius, while he himself proceeded to Arsamosta, of which he took possession without a struggle. Then he came to Satala and rewarded with gifts Anchialus, the king of the Heniochi and Machelones. At Elegeia in Armenia he received Parthamasiris, seated upon a tribunal in the camp. The prince saluted him, took his diadem from off his head and laid it at his feet, then stood there in silence, expecting to receive it back. At this the soldiers shouted aloud and hailed Trajan *imperator*, as if because of some victory. (They termed it a crownless¹ and bloodless victory, to see the king, a descendant of Arsaces, a son of Pacorus, and a nephew of Osroes, standing before Trajan without a diadem, like a captive.) The shout terrified the prince, who thought that it was intended as an insult and meant his destruction; and he turned about as if to flee, but seeing that he was hemmed

in on all sides, he begged that he might not be forced to speak before the crowd. Accordingly he was conducted into the tent, where he obtained none of the things he wished. So out he rushed in a rage, and thence out of the camp; but Trajan sent for him, and again ascending the tribunal, bade him say in the hearing of all everything that he desired. This was in order to prevent anybody, ignorant of what had been said in private conference, from making up a different report. On hearing this command Parthamasiris no longer kept silence, but spoke with great frankness, declaring among other things that he had not been defeated or captured, but had come there voluntarily, believing that he should not be wronged and should receive back the kingdom, as Tiridates had received it from Nero.³ Trajan made fitting replies to all his remarks, and in particular declared that he would surrender Armenia to no one; for it belonged to the Romans and was to have a Roman governor. He would, however, allow Parthamasiris to depart to any place he pleased. So he sent the prince away together with his Parthian companions and gave them an escort of cavalry to make sure that they should associate with no one and should begin no rebellion; but he commanded all the Armenians who had come with the prince to remain where they were, on the ground that they were already his subjects.

When he had captured the whole country of the Armenians and had won over many of the kings also, some of whom, since they voluntarily submitted, he treated as friends, while others, though disobedient, he subdued without a battle, the senate voted to him all the usual honours in great plenty and furthermore bestowed upon him the title of *Optimus*, or *Most Excellent*. He always marched on foot with the rank and file of his army, and he attended to the ordering and disposition of the troops throughout the entire campaign, leading them sometimes in one order and sometimes in another; and he forded all the rivers that they did. Sometimes he even caused his scouts to circulate false reports, in order that the soldiers might at one and the same time practise military manœuvres and become fearless and ready for any dangers. After he had captured Nisibis and Batnae he was given the name of *Parthicus*; but he took much greater pride in the title of *Optimus* than in all the rest, inasmuch as it referred rather to his character than to his arms.

Leaving garrisons at opportune points, Trajan came to *Edessa*, and there saw *Abgarus* for the first time. For, although *Abgarus* had previously sent envoys and gifts to the emperor on numerous occasions, he himself, first on one excuse and then another, had failed to put in an appearance, as was also the case with *Mannus*, the ruler of the neighbouring portion of Arabia, and *Sporaces*, the ruler of *Anthemusia*. On this occasion, however, induced partly by the persuasions of his son *Arbandes*, who was handsome and in the prime of youth and therefore in favour with Trajan, and partly by his fear of the latter's presence, he met him on the road, made his apologies and obtained pardon, for he had a powerful intercessor in the boy. Accordingly he became Trajan's friend and entertained him at a banquet; and during the dinner he brought in his boy to perform some barbaric dance or other.

When Trajan had come into *Mesopotamia*, *Mannus* A.D. 118 sent a herald to him, and *Manisarus* also dispatched envoys to seek peace, because *Osroes* was making

a campaign against him, and he was ready to withdraw from the parts of Armenia and *Mesopotamia* that he had captured. Trajan replied that he would not believe him until he should come to him as he kept promising to do, and confirm his offers by his deeds. He was also suspicious of *Mannus*, the more so as this king had sent an auxiliary force to *Mebarsapes*, king of *Adiabene*, on which occasion he had lost it all at the hands of the Romans. Therefore Trajan at this time also did not wait for them to draw near, but made his way to them at *Adiabene*. Thus it came about that *Singara* and some other places were occupied by *Lusius* without a battle.

While the emperor was tarrying in *Antioch* a terrible earthquake occurred; many cities suffered injury, but *Antioch* was the most unfortunate of all. Since Trajan was passing the winter there and many soldiers and many civilians had flocked thither from all sides in connexion with law-suits, embassies, business or sightseeing, there was no nation or people that went unscathed; and thus in *Antioch* the whole world under Roman sway suffered disaster. There had been many thunderstorms and portentous winds, but no one would ever have expected so many evils to result from them. First there came, on a sudden, a great bellowing roar, and this was followed by a tremendous quaking. The whole earth was upheaved, and buildings leaped into the air; some were carried aloft only to collapse and be broken in pieces, while others were tossed this way and that as if by the surge of the sea; and overturned, and the wreckage spread out over a great extent even of the open country. The crash of grinding and breaking timbers together with tiles and stones was most frightful; and an inconceivable amount of dust arose, so that it was impossible for one to see anything or to speak or hear a word. As for the people, many even who were outside the houses were hurt, being snatched up and tossed violently about and then dashed to the earth as if falling from a cliff; some were maimed and others were killed. Even trees in some cases leaped into the air, roots and all. The number of those who were trapped in the houses and perished was past finding out; for multitudes were killed by the very force of the falling debris, and great numbers were suffocated in the ruins. Those who lay with a part of their body buried under the stones or timbers suffered terribly, being able neither to live any longer nor to find an immediate death.

Nevertheless, many even of these were saved, as was to be expected in such a countless multitude; yet not all such escaped unscathed. Many lost legs or arms, some had their heads broken, and still others vomited blood; *Pedo* the consul was one of these, and he died at once. In a word, there was no kind of violent experience that those people did not undergo at that time. And as *Heaven* continued the earthquake for several days and nights, the people were in dire straits and helpless, some of them crushed and perishing under the weight of the buildings pressing upon them, and others dying of hunger, whenever it so chanced that they were left alive either in a clear space, the timbers being so inclined as to leave such a space, or in a vaulted colonnade. When at last the evil had subsided, someone who ventured to mount the ruins caught sight of a woman still alive. She was not alone, but had also an infant; and she had survived by feeding both herself and her child with her milk. They dug her out and resuscitated her together with her babe,

earthquake

and after that they searched the other heaps, but were not able to find in them anyone still living save a child sucking at the breast of its mother, who was dead. As they drew forth the corpses they could no longer feel any pleasure even at their own escape.

So great were the calamities that had overwhelmed Antioch at this time. Trajan made his way out through a window of the room in which he was staying. Some being of greater than human stature, had come to him and led him forth, so that he escaped with only a few slight injuries; and as the shocks extended over several days, he lived out of doors in the hippodrome. Even Mt. Casius itself was so shaken that its peaks seemed to lean over and break off and to be falling upon the very city. Other hills also settled, and much water not previously in existence came to light, while many streams disappeared.

Trajan at the beginning of spring hastened into the enemy's country. And since the region near the Tigris is bare of timber suitable for building ships, he brought his boats, which had been constructed in the forests around Nisibis, to the river on waggons; for they had been built in such a way that they could be taken apart and put together again. He had great difficulty in bridging the stream opposite the Gordyæan mountains, as the barbarians had taken their stand on the opposite bank and tried to hinder him. But Trajan had a great abundance of both ships and soldiers, and so some vessels were fastened together with great speed while others lay moored in front of them having heavy infantry and archers aboard, and still others kept making dashes this way and that, as if they intended to cross. In consequence of these tactics and because of their very consternation at seeing so many ships appear all at once out of a land destitute of trees, the barbarians gave way. And the Romans crossed over and gained possession of the whole of Adiabene. This is a district of Assyria in the vicinity of Ninus;¹ and Arbela and Gaugamela, near which places Alexander conquered Darius, are also in this same country. Adiabene, accordingly, has also been called Atyria in the language of the barbarians, the double S being changed to T.

Adenystrae was a strong post to which Sentius, a centurion, had been sent as an envoy to Mebaraspea. He was imprisoned by the latter there, but later, at the approach of the Romans, he arranged with some of his fellow-prisoners, and with their aid escaped from his bonds, killed the commander of the garrison and opened the gates to his countrymen.

After this they advanced as far as Babylon itself, being quite free from molestation, since the Parthian power had been destroyed by civil conflicts and was still at this time a subject of strife.

Cassius Dio Cocceianus in writings concerning the Latins has written that this city [Babylon] had a circuit of four hundred stades.

(Semiramis . . . built . . . a city) having a perimeter of four hundred stades, according to Cassius Dio Cocceianus.

Here, moreover, Trajan saw the asphalt out of which the walls of Babylon had been built. When used in connexion with baked bricks or small stones this material affords so great security as to render them stronger than any rock or iron. He also looked at the opening¹ from which issues a deadly vapour that destroys any terrestrial animal and any winged creature that so much as inhales a breath of it. Indeed, if it extended far above ground or spread out far round about, the place would not

be habitable; but, as it is, the vapour circles about within itself and remains stationary. Hence creatures that fly high enough above it and those that graze at one side are safe. I saw another opening like it at Hierapolis in Asia, and tested it by means of birds; I also bent over it myself and saw the vapour myself. It is enclosed in a sort of cistern and a theatre had been built over it. It destroys all living things save human beings that have been emasculated. The reason for this I cannot understand; I merely relate what I saw as I saw it and what I heard as I heard it.

Trajan had planned to conduct the Euphrates through a canal into the Tigris, in order that he might take his boats down by this route and use them to make a bridge. But learning that this river has a much higher elevation than the Tigris, he did not do so, fearing that the water might rush down in a flood and render the Euphrates un-navigable. So he used hauling-engines to drag the boats across the very narrow space that separates the two rivers (the whole stream of the Euphrates empties into a marsh and from there somehow joins the Tigris); then he crossed the Tigris and entered Ctesiphon. When he had taken possession of this place he was saluted imperator and established his right to the title of Parthicus. In addition to other honours voted to him by the senate, he was granted the privilege of celebrating as many triumphs as he should desire.

After capturing Ctesiphon he conceived a desire to sail down to the Erythraean Sea.¹ This is a part of the ocean, and has been so named from a person who formerly ruled on its shores.² He easily won over Mesene, the island in the Tigris of which Athambelus was king; but as the result of a storm, combined with the strong current of the Tigris and the tide coming in from the ocean, he found himself in serious danger.

Athambelus, the ruler of the island in the Tigris, remained loyal to Trajan, even though ordered to pay tribute, and the inhabitants of the Pallade of Spasinus, as it is called, received him kindly; they were subject to the dominion of Athambelus.

Then he came to the ocean itself, and when he had learned its nature and had seen a ship sailing to India, he said: "I should certainly have crossed over to the Indi, too, if I were still young." For he began to think about the Indi and was curious about their affairs, and he counted Alexander a lucky man. Yet he would declare that he himself had advanced farther than Alexander, and would so write to the senate, although he was unable to preserve even the territory that he had subdued. For this achievement he obtained among other honours the privilege of celebrating a triumph for as many nations as he pleased; for by reason of the large number of the peoples of whom he was constantly writing to them they were unable in some cases to follow him intelligently or even to use the names correctly. So the people in Rome were preparing for him a triumphal arch besides many other tributes in his own forum and were getting ready to go forth an unusual distance to meet him on his return. But he was destined never to reach Rome again nor to accomplish anything comparable to his previous exploits, and furthermore to lose even those earlier acquisitions. For during the time that he was sailing down to the ocean and returning from there again all the conquered districts were thrown into turmoil and revolted, and the garrisons placed among the various peoples were either expelled or slain.

Trajan learned of this at Babylon; for he had gone there¹ both because of its fame—though he saw

Trajan escapes thru divine aid

Persia?

Arch

nothing but mounds and stones and ruins to justify this—and because of Alexander, to whose spirit he offered sacrifice in the room where he had died. When he learned of the revolt, he sent Lusius and Maximus against the rebels. The latter was defeated in battle and perished; but Lusius, in addition to many other successes, recovered Nisibis, and besieged and captured Edessa, which he sacked and burned. Seleucia was also captured by Erucius Clarus and Julius Alexander, lieutenants, and was burned. Trajan, fearing that the Parthians, too, might begin a revolt, desired to give them a king of their own. Accordingly, when he came to Ctesiphon, he called together in a great plain all the Romans and likewise all the Parthians that were there at the time; then he mounted a lofty platform, and after describing in grandiloquent language what he had accomplished, he appointed Parthaspates king over the Parthians and set the diadem upon his head.

When Vologaesus, the son of Sanatruces, had arrayed himself against Severus and his army and before joining battle asked and secured an armistice, Trajan sent envoys to him and granted him a portion of Armenia in return for peace.¹

Next he came into Arabia and began operations against the people of Hatra, since they, too, had revolted. This city is neither large nor prosperous, and the surrounding country is mostly desert and has neither water (save a small amount and that poor in quality) nor timber nor fodder. These very disadvantages, however, afford it protection, making impossible a siege by a large multitude, as does also the Sun-god, to whom it is consecrated; for it was taken neither at this time by Trajan nor later by Severus, although they both overthrew parts of its wall. Trajan sent the cavalry forward against the wall, but failed in his attempt, and the attackers were hurled back into the camp. Indeed, the emperor himself barely missed being wounded as he was riding past, in spite of the fact that he had laid aside his imperial attire to avoid being recognized; but the enemy, seeing his majestic gray head and his august countenance, suspected his identity, shot at him and killed a cavalryman in his escort. There

were peals of thunder, rainbow tints showed, and lightnings, rain-storms, hail and thunderbolts descended upon the Romans as often as they made assaults. And whenever they ate, flies settled on their food and drink, causing discomfort everywhere. Trajan therefore departed thence; and a little later began to fail in health.

Meanwhile the Jews in the region of Cyrene had put a certain Andreas at their head, and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would eat the flesh of their victims, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood and wear their skins for clothing; many they sawed in two, from the head downwards; others they gave to wild beasts, and still others they forced to fight as gladiators. In all two hundred and twenty thousand persons perished. In Egypt, too, they perpetrated many similar outrages, and in Cyprus, under the leadership of a certain Artemion. There, also, two hundred and forty thousand perished, and for this reason no Jew may set foot on that island, but even if one of them is driven upon its shores by a storm he is put to death. Among others who subdued the Jews was Lusius, who was sent by Trajan.

Trajan was preparing to make a fresh expedition ^{A.D. 117} into Mesopotamia, but, as his malady began to afflict him sorely, he set out, intending to sail to Italy, leaving Publius Aelius Hadrian with the army in Syria. Thus it came about that the Romans in conquering Armenia, most of Mesopotamia, and the Parthians had undergone their hardships and dangers all for naught, for even the Parthians rejected Parthaspates and began to be ruled once more in their own fashion. Trajan himself suspected that his sickness was due to poison that had been administered to him; but some state that it was because the blood, which descends every year into the lower parts of the body, was in his case checked in its flow. He had also suffered a stroke, so that a portion of his body was paralyzed, and he was dropsical all over. On coming to Selinus in Cilicia, which we also call Traianopolis, he suddenly expired, after reigning nineteen years, six months and fifteen days.

Trajan
reigned

194/2 yrs

d. 117