

Book 2 Against Eutropius: Loeb Translation (pp178-229)
(XIX) preface

The nobly born Eutropius who but lately wielded the reins of supreme power once more fears the familiar blows; and, soon to feel the wonted shackles about his halting feet, he laments that his threats against his masters have idly vanished. Fortune, having had enough of her mad freak, has thrust him forth from his high office and restored him to his old way of life. He now prepares to hew wood with axe other than the consular and is at last scourged with the rods he once proudly carried. To the punishment set in motion by him when consul he himself as consul succumbed; the year that brought him his robe of office brought him his exile. That omen of evil augury for the people turns against itself, the portent of that consulship brings ruin to the consul. That name erased, our annals breathe once more, and better health is restored to the palace now that it has at last vomited forth its poison. His friends deny him, his accomplices abandon him; in his fall is involved all the eunuch band, overcome not in battle, subdued not by strife—they may not die a man's death. A mere stroke of the pen has wrought their undoing, a simple letter has fulfilled Mars' savage work.

The unsexed tyrant has been routed from out his fastness in the women's quarters and, driven from the bedchamber, has lost his power. Thus sadly, when her lover's fidelity wavers and a former favourite has been recalled, does a mistress leave his house. With handfuls of dust he sprinkles his scanty hairs and floods his wrinkles with senile tears; as he lies in humble supplication before the altars of the gods his trembling voice seeks to soften the anger of the women. His countless masters gather around, each demanding back his slave, useless except for chastisement. For loathsome though he is and fouler in mind even than in face, yet the very anger they feel against him will make them pay; he is worth buying simply to punish.

What land or country wilt thou now visit, eunuch? Here hate surrounds thee, there thy popularity is fled; both courts have uttered thy condemnation in either half of the world; never wert thou of the West, now the East repudiates thee too. I marvel that thou, blind Sibyl,¹ who foretold'st the fates of others, art silent about thine own. No longer does fallacious Nile interpret thy dreams; no longer, poor wretch, do thy prophets see visions. What doth thy sister? Will she dare to embark with thee and bear thee faithful company over the distant seas? Mayhap she scorns the couch of an impoverished eunuch, and now that she herself is rich will not love thee who now art poor. Thou dost confess thou wert the first to cut a eunuch's throat, but the example will not secure thine own death. Live on that destiny may blush. Lo! this is he whom so many cities have held in awe, whose yoke so many peoples have borne. Why lament the loss of that wealth thy son shall inherit? In no other way couldst thou have been father to an emperor.¹ Why insatiably weary heaven with a woman's complaints? A haven of refuge is prepared for thee on the shores of Cyprus. Thou hast plunged the world in war with barbarity; the sea, believe me, is safer than the land.

No longer wilt thou strike terror into the Armenians with javelin and bow, no more scour the plain on thy fleet charger. The senate of Byzantium has been deprived of thy loved voice; uncertainty holds the august assembly that is now deprived of thy counsels. Hang up thy toga, retired consul; hang up thy quiver, veteran soldier; return to Venus' service; that is thy true calling. The pander's hand knows not to serve Mars featly; Cytherea will right gladly take back her slave. Dancing fills the island of Cyprus, home of the happy loves; there purity commands no respect. Paphian maidens gaze forth from the high cliffs, anxious till the wave has brought thy bark safe to land. Yet fear I lest the Tritons detain thee in the deep to teach them how they may seduce the sportive Nereids, or that those same winds which hindered Gildo's flight may seek to drown thee in the sea. Tabraca owes its fame to the overthrow of the Moor; may Cyprus win prestige from thy shipwreck. In vain will thy last breath be spent in calling on the dolphin to carry thee to shore: his back bears only men.² Hereafter should any eunuch attempt to emulate thine actions let him turn his eye towards Cyprus and abate his pride.

Book 2 (XX):

Ashes of Phrygia and you last remnants of the ruined East (if any such remain), the augury was but too true, too clear the threats of heaven: now that the blow has fallen what use to learn the presagings of this year of portents? The sailor is more cautious; he foresees the violence of the North wind and hauls in his canvas before the swelling storm. Of what avail to acknowledge a mistake when his vessel is already sunk? Can tears extenuate a crime? The sinister auspices of your consul live on; the atonement due to unmoved fate remains fixed. Ere the deed was done you should have realized its horror; you should have erased the blot ere it had dried. When the body is overwhelmed by long-standing disease 'tis all in vain that thou makest use of healing medicines. When an ulcer has penetrated to the marrow of the bones the touch of a hand is useless, steel and fire must sane the place that the wound heal not on the surface, like any moment to re-open. The flame must penetrate to the quick to make a way for the foul humours to escape; in order that, once the veins are emptied of corrupted blood, the fountain-head of the evil may be dried up. Nay, even limbs are amputated to assure the healthy life of the rest of the body. Think you the Court fitly cleansed by Eutropius' exile in Cyprus? The world avenged by the banishment of a eunuch? Can any ocean wash away that stain? any age bring forgetfulness of so great a crime?

Ere yet he had donned the consul's robe there came a rumbling from the bowels of the earth; a hidden madness shook the subterranean caverns and buildings crashed one on another. Chalcedon, shaken to the foundations, tottered like a drunken man, and Bosphorus, straying from his course, flooded the cities on his either bank. The shores of the strait came together and the sailors once more had to avoid the Clashing Rocks, torn from their foundation and errant. Surely such presages were sent by the sister deities of Styx, rejoicing that under this consul at last all peoples were delivered into their hands. Soon arose divers forms of ruin: here the fire-god spread his flames; there Nereus, god of the sea, brake his bounds. Here men's homes were burned, there flooded. Ye gods, what punishment do ye hold in store for the scoundrel whose rise to power was marked by such portents? O'ercome us, Neptune, with thy trident and overwhelm our defiled soil along with all the guilt. One city we yield to the Furies, a scapegoat for the sins of the world.

Once the way was open for portents, prodigies of every sort hastened to disclose themselves. Rain of blood fell, children of weird form were born and offspring discordant with their breed. Statues wept, not seldom the herds dared to speak, and wild beasts braved an entrance into the city. Then seers raved strangely and frenzied hearts were everywhere ablaze, stirred by the fires of the dread god Phoebus. Yet even had no god warned us, whose mind shall be so dull as to doubt that the year of an emasculate consul must be fatal to those lands? Blind folly ever accompanies crime; of the future no account is taken; sufficient for the day is its short-lived pleasure; heedless of loss passion plunges into forbidden joys, counting the postponement of punishment a gain and believing distant the retribution that even now o'erhangs. In face of such portents I would not have entrusted Camillus' self with the fasces, let alone a sexless slave (oh! the shame of it!), to yield it to whom were, for men, a disgrace, even though every oracle decreed it, and the insistent deities gave pledges of prosperity.

Look back in the annals of crime, read o'er all past history, unroll the volumes of Rome's story. What can the Capri of Tiberius' old age, what can Nero's theatre offer like to this?¹ A eunuch, clad in the cloak of Romulus, sat within the house of the emperors; the staled palace lay open to the eager throng of visitors; hither hasten senators, mingling with the populace, anxious generals and magistrates of every degree; all are fain to be the first to fall at his feet and to touch his hand; the prayer of all is to set kisses on those hideous wrinkles. He is called defender of the laws, father of the emperor, and the court deigns to acknowledge a slave as its overlord. Ye who come after, acknowledge that it is true! Men must needs erect monuments to celebrate this infamy; on many an anvil groans the bronze that is to take upon it the form of this monster. Here gleams his statue as a judge, there as a consul, there as a warrior. On every side one sees that figure of his mounted on his horse; before the very doors of the senate-house behold a eunuch's countenance. As though to rob virtue of any place where she might sojourn undefiled, men labour to befoul every street with this

vile image. May they rest for ever undisturbed, indisputable proofs of our eternal shame; such is my prayer. Beneath the statues one reads flattering titles and praises too great even for men. Do they tell of his noble race and lineage while his owners are still alive? What soldier brooks to read that single-handed he, Eutropius, won great battles? Are Byzas¹ and Constantine to be told that he is the third founder of Rome? Meanwhile the arrogant pander prolongs his revels till the dawn, stinking of wine and scattering money amid the crowd to buy their applause. He spends whole days of amusement in the theatres, prodigal of another's money. But his sister and spouse (if such a prodigy can be conceived) wins the favour of Rome's matrons by entertainments, and, like a chaste wife, sings the praises of her eunuch husband. 'Tis her he loves, her he consults on all matters of importance, be it of peace or war, to her care he entrusts the keys of the palace, as one would of a stable or empty house. Is the guardianship of a mighty empire thus naught? Is it thus he makes a mockery of a world's obedience?

Winter, passing into spring, had now felt the returning warmth of Zephyrus' breezes and the earliest flowers had oped their buds when, in the lap of peace, they were preparing the annual journey to thy walls, Ancyra. 'Twas Eutropius' device that weariness of the sea² might not come upon him, but a roaming summer might slide away in pleasure journeys. But so magnificent was their return, you would have imagined they brought conquered Persia in their train and had drunk of the waters of Indus. Look you! Mars, returning from the distant lands of the yellow-haired Geloni, was re-seeking the lands of Thrace in his bloody chariot. Pangaeus subsided beneath his wheels, the mountain snows cried out under his sounding axle. Scarce had the father stayed on Haemus' summit and, reining in his coursers, looked upon the toga-clad woman, when he smiled a cruel smile and shook his gleaming crested helm; then he addressed Bellona, implacable goddess, who, her raiment all stained with blood, was combing her snake-hair, fattened on the slaughter of Illyrians.

"Sister, shall we never succeed in curing the East of effeminacy? Will this corrupt age never learn true manliness? Argaeus yet reeks with those heaps of dead Cappadocians not yet cold; Orontes is still pale from misery. But they only remember evil while they suffer it; give them a moment's respite and all their slaughter fades from their minds unfelt; little they reck of bloodshed that is past.

"Seest thou this foul deed? Why veil thy face with thine hair? See what crimes a short spell of peace has wrought! what a curse has the sheathed sword proved! The year that has known no war has had a eunuch for its consul. The consulship would have been at an end had a like spirit animated Italy; this age-long office had fallen amid mockery and no traces been left of its trampled rights, had not Stilicho, heedful of the empire and of the character and morals of a past age, banished from Tiber's city this shameful name and kept Rome unsullied by an unheard of crime. He has given us a harbour to which the exiled majesty of Latium and the disgraced fasces might retire; he has given us annals wherein, abandoning the East, an age polluted with servile stains might find a refuge.

"How like to its lord the inhabitants of the palace! Turn your eyes to the city walls. Surely they at least mutter disapprobation, though fear forbids them speak out? Do they not condemn him in their hearts? No: list the plaudits of the senate, of the lords of Byzantium, of the Grecian citizens of Rome. O people worthy of such a senate, senate worthy of such a consul! To think that all these bear arms and use them not, that manly indignation reminds not of their sex those many whose thighs bear a sword! Has my descendants' robe of office sunk so low? Is Brutus' renown thus brought to scorn?

"Romulus, forgive thy sire for coming so tardy an avenger of those outraged fasces. Right soon will I make them pay for this joy with liberal tears. Why delayest thou, Bellona, to sound the trumpet of hell and to arm thyself with the scythe wherewith thou mowest the people to the ground? Foment discord, banish pleasures. I am weary of the devastation of Thrace and Macedon, of vengeance twice wreaked on races already buried. Arouse less accustomed destruction; spread fire and sword beyond the seas, make a beginning of new devastation. Seek not now thy foe on Rhiphaeus' heights: what boots it to rouse the storm of war amid Caucasia's ravines? Ostrogoths and Gruthungi together inhabit the land of Phrygia; 'twill need but a touch to precipitate them into revolt; readily does nature return to her old ways. So be it. Since our soldiers' valour is numbed and

they have learned to obey an unmanned master, let a stranger from the north avenge our outraged laws and barbarian arms bring relief to disgraced Rome.”

So spake he and thundered with his shield nigh as loud as the ruler of the gods when he shakes his aegis from out the lowering cloud. Athos replies, Haemus re-echoes; again and again shaken Rhodope repeats the hoarse uproar. Hebrus raised from out the wondering waters his horns hoary with frost, and bloodless Ister froze in fear. Then the god cast his javelin,¹ heavy with steel, and stiff with knotted shaft, a mighty weapon such as none other god could wield. The clouds part before its onset and give it free passage; through the air it speeds o’er seas and mountains by one mighty cast and comes to earth amid the plains of Phrygia. The ground felt the shock; Hermus blessed with Dionysus’ vines groaned thereat, Pactolus’ golden urn shuddered, all Dindymus bent his forest fleece and wept.

Bellona, too, hastens forth with speed no less than that of Mars’ whistling spear; a hundred ways of hurt she pondered and at last approached Tarbigilus,² fierce leader of the Getic squadron. It chanced he had but late returned with empty hands from a visit to Eutropius; disappointment and indignation aggravated his ferocity, and poverty, that can incite the gentlest heart to crime, inflamed his savage breast. Taking upon her the similitude of his wife she comes to meet him; proudly she steps forth like the barbarian queen, clothed in linen raiment. Close to her breast a brooch fastened her dress that trailed behind her; she had bound her locks into a coil that a polished circlet confined, and bidden her green snakes turn to gold. She hastens to greet him on his return and throws her snowy arms about his neck, instilling the poison of the furies into his soul by her kisses. Guilefully to stir his rage she asks if the great man has been generous to him; if he brings back rich presents. With tears he recounts his profitless journey, his useless toil, the pride and insults, moreover, which he had to bear at the eunuch’s hands. At once she seized the favourable moment, and tearing her cheek with her nails, discloses her complaints.

“Go then, busy thyself with the plough, cleave the soil, bid thy followers lay aside their swords and sweat o’er the harrow. The Gruthungi will make good farmers and will plant their vines in due season. Happy those other women whose glory is seen in the towns their husbands have conquered, they whose adornment is the spoils so hardly won from an enemy, whose servants are fair captives of Argos or Thessaly, and who have won them slaves from Sparta. Fate has mated me with too timid, too indolent a husband, a degenerate who has forgotten the valour of Ister’s tribes, who deserts his country’s ways, whom a vain reputation for justice attracts, while he longs to live as a husbandman by favour rather than as a prince by plunder. Why give fair names to shameful weakness? Cowardice is called loyalty; fear, a sense of justice. Wilt thou submit to humiliating poverty though thou bearest arms? Wilt thou weep unavenged, though so many cities open to thee their undefended gates?

“Dost thou fear the consequences? Rome’s old way was to reward merit and vent on rebels a hate that knew no bound. Now he who breaks a treaty wins riches, while he who observes one lives in want. The ravager of Achaea and recent devastator of defenceless Epirus is lord of Illyria¹; he now enters as a friend within the walls to which he was laying siege, and administers justice to those whose wives he has seduced and whose children he has murdered. Such is the punishment meted out to an enemy, such the vengeance exacted for wholesale slaughter—and dost thou still hesitate? Hast thou regard to the small numbers of thy followers? Nay, have done with peace: war will give thee allies. Nor would I urge thee so instantly hadst thou to face men. It is another sex that is in arms against thee; the world has entrusted itself to the protection of eunuchs; ’tis such leaders the eagles and standards of Rome follow. Time it is thou didst return to a barbarian life; be thou in thy turn an object of terror, and let men marvel at thy crimes who despised thy virtues. Laden with booty and plunder thou shalt be a Roman when it pleases thee.”

So saying she suddenly changed into an ill-omened bird, a loathsome sight with its hooked beak and plumage blacker than Hell’s darkness, and perched, a sinister augury, on an old tomb. So soon as repose from terror came to his freed heart, and his stiffened hair sank down again, he made all haste to carry out the commands of the goddess. He told his followers all that he had seen

and urged them to follow him. Rebellious Barbary had found a champion and openly threw off the Latin yoke.

That part of Phrygia which lies towards the north beneath the cold constellation of the Wain borders on Bithynia; that towards the sunset on Ionia, and that towards the sunrise on Galatia. On two sides runs the transverse boundary of Lydia while the fierce Pisidians hem it in to the south. All these peoples once formed one nation and had one name: they were of old called the Phrygians, but (what changes does time not bring about?) after the reign of a king Maeon, were known as Maeones. Then the Greeks settled on the shores of the Aegean, and the Thyni from Thrace cultivated the region now called Bithynia. Not long since a vast army of Gauls, nomad hitherto, came at last to rest in the district; these laid by their spears, clothed them in the civilized robe of Greece and drank no longer from Rhine's, but from Halys', waters. All antiquity gives priority to the Phrygian, even Egypt's king had perforce to recognize it when the babe, nourished at no human breast, first opened his lips to lisp the Phrygian tongue.¹

Here fell the pipe once hurled into the marshes of Libya, what time the stream reflected Minerva's disfigured countenance.² Here, too, there perished, conquered by Apollo's lyre, the shepherd Marsyas whose flayed skin brought renown to the city of Celaenae. Hence flow four broad auriferous rivers. Small wonder that the waters in which King Midas bathed so often glitter with the rare metal. Two flow north, two southwards. Dindymus gives birth to the river Sangarius, which, swollen by the clear stream of the Gallus, hastens on to the Euxine, the sea of the Amazon. The conjoined streams of Marsyas and Meander make for the Icarian main and Mycale's strand. Marsyas flows fast and straight while his course is his own; mingled with thy waters, Meander, he goes slowly—unlike the Saône whose waters are hastened by the Rhone's inflowing. Between these rivers is a sun-kissed plain; kindly is it to the corn, thick-set with vines and displaying the fruit of the grey-green olive; rich, too, in horses, fertile in flocks, and wealthy with the purple-veined marble that Synnada quarries.

Such was Phrygia then when the gods allowed it to be ravaged by Getic brigands. The barbarian burst in upon those cities so peaceful, so easy of capture. There was no hope of safety, no chance of escape. Long and peaceful ages had made the crumbling stones of their battlements to fall.

Meanwhile Cybele was seated amid the hallowed rocks of cold Ida, watching, as is her wont, the dance, and inciting the joyous Curetes to brandish their swords at the sound of the drum, when, lo, the golden - turreted crown, the eternal glory of her blessed hair, fell from off her head and, rolling from her brow, the castellated diadem is profaned in the dust. The Corybantes stopped in amazement at this omen; general alarm checked their orgies and silenced their pipes. The mother of the gods wept; then spake thus in sorrow.

"This is the portent that agèd Lachesis foretold long years ago. My fallen crown assures me that Phrygia's final crisis is upon her. Alas for the blood that shall redden Sangarius' waves; for all the corpses that shall retard Meander's slow stream. The hour is fixed irrevocably; such, long since, was my son's, the Thunderer's, will. A like disaster awaits the neighbouring peoples; in vain does Lydia invoke the thyrsus of Bacchus in her defence. Now fare thee well, land of Phrygia, farewell, walls doomed to the flames, walls that now rear aloft proud towers but will soon be levelled with the ground and the bare earth. Farewell, dear rivers: never more shall I hold my inspired revels in your grottoes; no more shall my chariot leave the traces of its wheels on Berecynthus' heights." So spake she, and turned her drums to strains of mourning. Attis filled his devoted country with holy lamentations and Cybele's tawny lions burst into tears.

Eutropius, although this terrible revolt could not be hid and although rumour had spread everywhere the dread news, none the less affects to ignore it and shuts his eyes to the empire's peril. 'Twas some poor troop of wandering brigands; such wretches call for punishment not war; a judge—so he brags—not a general should crush their strength. Even so the great Libyan bird, hard pressed by the

cries of its pursuers, runs o'er the burning sands and flies through the dust, curving its wings like sails to catch the breeze; but when it clearly hears the footsteps close behind it, it forgets its flight,

standing with closed eyes and hiding its head, believing, poor fool, it cannot be seen by those whom itself cannot see. None the less Eutropius sends towering promises with new gifts, if haply his foe may pause at his entreaty. But the barbarian, in whose heart was once waked the old love of plunder, refuses to submit to a slave; for him the gifts of fear have no charm; haughtily he disdains any rank,¹ even the highest, for under such a consul what honour would not be disgrace? When Eutropius saw that no prayers could move him nor any gold win him over; when messenger after messenger returned, his mission unfulfilled, and all hopes of an alliance were at an end, he at last recognized the necessity for war and summoned the council to his palace. Thither they came—wanton lads and debauched greybeards whose greatest glory was gluttony, and whose pride it was to diversify the outraged banquet. Their hunger is only aroused by costly meats, and they tickle their palates with foods imported from overseas, the flesh of the many-eyed fowl of Juno,² or of that coloured bird brought from farthest Ind that knows how to speak. Not the Aegean, not deep Propontis, not Maeotis' lake afar can sate their appetites with fish. Perfumed garments are their care, their pride to move foolish laughter with their silly jests. On their adornment and toilette they bestow a woman's care and find even the silk they wear too heavy a burden. Should the Hun, the Sarmatian, strike at the city's gates yet trouble they for nought but the theatre. Rome they despise and reserve their admiration for their own houses—may Bosphorus' waters overwhelm them! Skilful dancers they and clever judges of charioteers.

Some sprung from the dregs of the people are generals; some magistrates—though their legs and ankles are still scarred and livid with their wearing of the fetters of servitude and though their branded foreheads deny their owners' right to office and disclose their true title. Among them Eutropius holds the first place; Hosius, on whom he relies, comes next. He of a truth is more popular, a cunning artificer of justice who knows well how to steam his cases; at times boiling with anger, yet well able to render down that anger when aroused.¹ These sit enthroned, joint rulers of the eastern empire, the one a cook the other a pander. The backs of both are scarred with the whip, each was a slave though of a different kind. The one had been bought and sold a hundred times, the other brought up a dependant in a Spanish household.

When, therefore, the chief men were gathered together for consultation in this strait and to comfort the sickness of the state, forthwith they forget Phrygia and, setting aside the question of war, start their accustomed fooling and engage in disputes about the Circus. With heat as fierce as it is pointless they wrangle what boy can best whirl quivering limbs in an easy somersault or sweep the marble floor with his drooping locks; who can most twist his flanks into a boneless arch; who can best suit his gestures to his words and his eyes to his character. Some recite speeches from tragedy, others chant the play of Tereus, others again that of Agave, never before staged. Eutropius chides them; the present moment, says he, demands other spectacles than these; it is war which now should claim all their care. For his part (for he is an old man and a weary) it is enough to defend the frontiers of Armenia; singlehanded he cannot cope with all these perils. They must pardon his age and send younger men to the war:—it is as though a hated forewoman were sitting among a crowd of poor working-girls and bidding them in her raucous voice ply the loom and gain their livelihood, while they beg to be allowed the enjoyment of a holiday, to lay aside their tasks and visit their friends; angered at her refusal and wearied of their work they crush the threads in their hands and wipe away their gentle tears with the cloth.

Sudden from out that trembling throng upleaps bold Leo¹ with his vast bulk, he whose single prowess Cyclopean hunger could scarce match, whom starving Celaeno could not outvie. 'Tis to this fact that he is said to have owed his name. Bold (when his foe was absent), brave (as a speaker), great in bulk but small of heart, once a highly skilled spinner of thread and a cunning carder, none other could so well cleanse the dirt from out the fleece and fill the baskets, none other pull the thick wool over the iron teeth of the comb as could he. He was then Eutropius' Ajax and far and near he raged, shaking not a huge shield compact of seven layers of ox-hide, but that belly of his, laden with continuous feasting, as he sat lazily among old dames and distaffs. At length he arose and, panting, said, "What unwonted sluggishness is this, my friends? How long must we sit

closeted in the women's apartments and suffer our perils to increase by reason of our sloth? Fate weaves for us a network of ill while we waste our time in useless vows. This difficult task demands my action; never was my hand slow to use iron. Let but Minerva favour mine attempts and the work begun will be the work completed. Now will I render proud Tarbigilus, whose madness has caused all this turmoil, of less weight than a ball of wool, the faithless Gruthungi I will drive before me like a flock of wretched sheep; and when I have restored peace I will set the women of Phrygia once more beside their ancient spinning."

So saying he sat down again. Great clamour and applause filled the council-chamber, applause such as rises from the rows of spectators in the theatre when some curled youth impersonates Niobe turned to stone, or Hecuba in tears. Straightway Leo unfolds his banners and starts on the journey whence there is to be no return. To the accompaniment of the screech-owl's ill-omened cry he bids march the host destined so soon to feed the vultures of Mygdonia. 'Tis a well-favoured army, enamoured of the city's shade, ever present at the games, anxious to shine in the baths, not to bear sun-scorch and rain, and oh! how different to that former army who, 'neath the leadership of Stilicho, endured under arms the frosts of Thrace and were wont to winter in the open air and break with their axes the frozen waters of Hebrus for a draught. Changed is the leader and changed their character. Byzantium's luxury and Ancyra's pomp¹ have destroyed their vigour. No longer does the cavalry ride ahead of the foot; suitable ground is not chosen for camps; no constant change of sentries safeguards the ramparts, no scouts are sent forward to discover which roads to take or which to avoid; their evolutions are performed without drill or discipline, in confusion they stray hither and thither amid dark forests, along narrow paths in unexplored valleys. So goes a horse that has lost his rider, thus a ship whose helmsman has been drowned is swept to the abyss, chance guiding her and not the stars. So too the sea monster¹ is dashed to pieces against the rocks when it has lost the comrade fish that swam before it and guided its course through the waves, piloting the great beast with the motion of its tiny tail according to the compact which is between it and its huge companion. Aimlessly the monster swims all unguided through the deep; then, surprised in the shallow water and knowing not how to return to the sea, pants and to no purpose dashes its gaping jaws against the rocks.

Tarbigilus feigns retreat and raises the presumptuous hopes of Leo, then suddenly he bursts all unexpected upon the wine-sodden army, as, overcome by the heavy feast, they brag over their cups of leading the foe in chains. Some are slain as they lift their sluggish limbs from the couch, others know not any break between sleep and death. Others rush pell-mell into a neighbouring swamp and heap the marsh high with their dead bodies. Leo himself, swifter than deer or antelope, fled trembling on his foam-flecked horse, and it falling under his weight Leo sank in the mire and on all fours fought his way through the clinging slime. Held up at first by the thick mud, his fat body gradually settles down panting like a common pig, which, destined to grace the coming feast, squeals when Hosius arms him with flashing knife, and gathers up his garments, pondering the while what portions he will transfix with spits, which pieces of the flesh he will boil and how much sea-urchin stuffing will be needed to fill the empty skin. The work of preparation goes on apace, Bosphorus echoes to many a blow and the savoury smell envelops Chalcedon. Suddenly a gentle breeze stirs the foliage behind Leo's back. He thinks it an arrow, and terror, taking a missile's place, does duty for a wound. Untouched and stricken only by fear he breathes his last. Degenerate Roman, by whose advice didst thou exchange the comb for the sword, thine ancestral calling for the field of battle? How much better to praise in safety the work of the weavers at their looms and keep out. the cold by means of morning feasts. Here thou hast suffered a wretched death; here, while thou soughtest to shirk thy spinning, the Fates have at last spun for thee the final thread.

Now spreading rumour shakes the palace, pale with terror upon terror. It told how that the army was destroyed, the troops butchered, the plain of Maeonia red with slaughter, Pamphylia and Pisidia o'errun by the enemy. On all sides rings the dread name of Tarbigilus. He is now said to be bearing down upon Galatia, now to be meditating an attack on Bithynia. Some say he has crossed the Taurus and is descending upon Cilicia, others that he has possessed himself of a fleet and is

advancing both by land and sea. Truth is doubled by panic's fancy; they say that from the ships far cities are seen ablaze, that the straits are aglow and that ashes driven by the wind catch in the sails of every ship at sea.

Amid all this confusion comes a yet more terrible rumour—that Babylon is again in arms and, under a new monarch,¹ threatens our Empire; the Parthians, long inactive, and now scorning slothful ease, seek to put an end to the peace imposed by Rome. Rare among the Medes is the murder of a king, for punishment falls on the regicide's whole family. Thus equal obedience is offered to their overlords, cruel as well as kind. But what would not the year of Eutropius' consulship dare? 'Tis that has stricken down our faithful ally Sapor and roused the Persians' swords against their own king; that has cast the torch of the Furies across the Euphrates, there to kindle rebellion, that no quarter of the globe may escape carnage.

Then indeed men's hearts failed them, their courage ebbed away amid all these storms; surrounded as they were on every side by the din of war, at last they recognized the wrath of heaven and their consul's evil omen, learning too late—schooled by the stubborn issue—their now irrevocable doom. They say that the twin sons of Iapetus formed our first parents of the same materials but with unequal skill. Those whom Prometheus fashioned, and with whose clay he mingled abundant ether, foresee the distant future and, thanks to their more careful making by a better workman, are thus prepared to meet what fate has in store for them. Those framed of baser clay by the sorry artificer the Greek poets so well call Epimetheus, men through whose limbs no ethereal vigour spreads—these, like sheep, cannot avoid the dangers that o'erhang them, nor foresee aught. Not till the blow has fallen do they protest and weep too late the accomplished deed. There now shone forth but one hope of salvation—Stilicho. Him the expectation of whose visits the consciousness of deeds ill-done had ever rendered bitter and unpleasant, him whose approach even as far as the Alps afflicted the Byzantines with fear of death and punishment, all now wish to come, repentant of their former wrongdoing. To him they look as to a star amid this universal shipwreck of war; to him innocent and guilty alike address their prayers. So children whose sire carries merchandise across the sea, wrapt up in their amusements and heedless of their studies, wander afield more joyfully now that their guardian is absent, yet, should a dangerous neighbour invade their defenceless home and seek to drive them forth unprotected as they are from their fireside, then they beg their father's help, call upon his name with useless cries and all to no purpose direct their gaze towards the shore.

All admit that they deserve punishment and death for deserting Stilicho and entrusting themselves to the governance of slaves. Long they stood dazed with altered thoughts, and as their senses slowly return they marvel at the results of their own madness and turn away their eyes; flinging down his rods the lictor shudders, and the dishonoured axes fall of their own accord. Even so the Maenads returning to Thebes from the Aonian mount, their thyrses dripping with Pentheus' blood, learning the true character of their dreadful hunting and seeing the head cast by the mother herself, hide them in the darkness and lament the end of their madness. Thereupon suppliant Aurora turned her flight towards powerful Italy, her hair no longer aureole-crowned and she no more bright of countenance nor clothed with the saffron of the dawn. She stands wan with woe, even as when she buried Memnon in his Phrygian grave. Stilicho recognized her and stayed, well knowing the reason of her visit. Long time she clasped his victorious hand and at length amid tears and sighs addressed him.

"Why art thou so wearied of the world whereon I shine? Leavest thou me thus to be the sport and laughing-stock of slaves and carest only for Italy, thou that wert once my guide and my leader? Since thy victory over the tyrant Eugenius I have not seen thee. Has victory thus robbed me of thee and given thee to Gaul? Rufinus was the prime cause of the trouble; 'twas he who wrought disunion between the two empires. But when he aimed at more there met him an army returning in righteous wrath, an army still strong, still mindful of its former prowess. For a moment I was dazzled by the mirage of liberty: I hoped that Stilicho would once more hold the reins of our empire. Alas for my short-sighted happiness! The world had begun to form one single empire under the rule of the two brothers (for who, with the awful example¹ so fresh in his mind, would dare

embark upon a like venture?) when suddenly (it is a monstrous story which scarce bears the telling) a eunuch came forward as Rufinus' heir. Thus fortune brought back my former miseries with this one difference—that of changing my master's sex.

At first he kept his crimes hidden behind the doors of his chamber, an unseen and timid ruler; power was his that all envied, yet only a eunuch's, nor dared he yet arrogate to himself the right of governing the state or of trampling on the laws. But when he had banished the good and, retaining the dregs of the people, had chosen therefrom advisers of no worth; when his creature Hosius stood on his one side and Leo on the other, then indeed his self-confidence waxed and his lust for power broke forth into open flame. Patrician and consul he brought defilement on the honours he sold;

even greater defilement on those he carried himself. The very standards and trumpets of war grew feeble; a palsy seized upon our swords. What wonder the nations rejoiced and we became the easy prey of any who would subdue us? Gone are ploughs and ploughmen; the East is more a desert than Thrace and snowy Haemus. Alas! how many cities, how long unused to war's alarms, have perished in a single invasion! Not long since a mounted band coming from Araxes' farthest banks threatened the walls of Antioch and all but set fire to the chief city of the fair province of Syria. Laden with spoil and rejoicing in the vast carnage it had wrought the band returned with none to bar its passage; now it pursues its victorious career inflicting on me wound upon wound. 'Tis not now Caucasus nor cold Phasis that send forces against me; wars arise in the very centre of my empire. Time was when the Gruthungi formed a Roman legion; conquered we gave them laws; fields and dwelling-places we apportioned them. Now they lay waste with fire Lydia and the richest cities of Asia, ay, and everything that escaped the earlier storm. 'Tis neither on their own valour or numbers that they rely; it is our cowardice urges them on, cowardice and the treason of generals, through whose guilt our soldiers now flee before their own captives, whom, as Danube's stream well knows, they once subdued; and those now fear a handful who once could drive back all.

Meanwhile the palace devotes its attention to dances and feastings, and cares not what be lost so something remain. But lest our salesman lose aught by this dismemberment of the empire he has divided each remaining province into two, and forces the two halves, each under its own governor, to compensate him for the loss of other provinces. 'Tis thus they give me back my lost peoples: by this ingenious device they increase the number of my rulers while the lands they should rule are lost.

In thee is now my only hope; in place of Minerva's supplicating branch I offer thee my tears. Help me in my distress. Save me from this tyranny of a slave master; do not condemn all for the fault of a few, and let not a recent offence cancel former merits. Grant me now my request; extreme danger ever exonerates from blame. Camillus, though justly angered at his banishment, forebore not to succour his country when in flames. I seek not to draw thee away from Italy; thou art enough defence for both empires. Let both have the benefit of thine illustrious arms; let the same shield defend us and one hero work the salvation of a twofold world"