

SUETONIUS
THE LIFE OF TITUS

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M.D.

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VITA DIVI TITI

(465) I. Titus, who had the same cognomen with his father, was the darling and delight of mankind; so much did the natural genius, address, or good fortune he possessed tend to conciliate the favour of all. This was, indeed, extremely difficult, after he became emperor, as before that time, and even during the reign of his father, he lay under public odium and censure. He was born upon the third of the calends of January, [30th Dec.] in the year remarkable for the death of Caius [776], near the Septizonium [777], in a mean house, and a very small and dark room, which still exists, and is shown to the curious.

II. He was educated in the palace with Britannicus, and instructed in the same branches of learning, and under the same masters. During this time, they say, that a physiognomist being introduced by Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, to examine the features of Britannicus [778], positively affirmed that he would never become emperor, but that Titus, who stood by, would. They were so familiar, that Titus being next him at table, is thought to have tasted of the fatal potion which put an end to Britannicus's life, and to have contracted from it a distemper which hung about him a long time. In remembrance of all these circumstances, he afterwards erected a golden statue of him in the Palatium, and dedicated to him an equestrian statue of ivory; attending it in the Circensian procession, in which it is still carried to this day.

(466) III. While yet a boy, he was remarkable for his noble endowments both of body and mind; and as he advanced in years, they became still more conspicuous. He had a fine person, combining an equal mixture of majesty and grace; was very strong, though not tall, and somewhat corpulent. Gifted with an excellent memory, and a capacity for all the arts of peace and war; he was a perfect master of the use of arms and riding; very ready in the Latin and Greek tongues, both in verse and prose; and such was the facility he possessed in both, that he would harangue and versify extempore. Nor was he unacquainted with music, but could both sing and play upon the harp sweetly and scientifically. I have likewise been informed by many persons, that he was remarkably quick in writing short-hand, would in merriment and jest engage with his secretaries in the imitation of any hand-writing he saw, and often say, "that he was admirably qualified for forgery."

IV. He filled with distinction the rank of a military tribune both in Germany and Britain, in which he conducted himself with the utmost activity, and no less modesty and reputation; as appears evident from the great number of statues, with honourable inscriptions, erected to him in various parts of both those provinces. After serving in the wars, he frequented the courts of law, but with less assiduity than applause. About the same time, he married Arricidia, the daughter of Tertullus, who was only a knight, but had formerly been prefect of the pretorian guards. After her decease, he married Marcia Furnilla, of a very noble family, but afterwards divorced her, taking from her the daughter he had by her. Upon the expiration of his quaestorship, he was raised to the rank of commander of a legion [\[779\]](#), and took the two strong cities of Tarichaea and Gamala, in Judaea; and having his horse killed under him in a battle, he mounted another, whose rider he had encountered and slain.

V. Soon afterwards, when Galba came to be emperor, he was sent to congratulate him, and turned the eyes of all people upon himself, wherever he came; it being the general opinion amongst them, that the emperor had sent for him with a design to adopt him for his son. But finding all things again in confusion, he turned back upon the road; and going to consult (467) the oracle of Venus at Paphos about his voyage, he received assurances of obtaining the empire for himself. These hopes were speedily strengthened, and being left to finish the reduction of Judaea, in the final assault of Jerusalem, he slew seven of its defenders, with the like number of arrows, and took it upon his daughter's birth-day [\[780\]](#). So great was the joy and attachment of the soldiers, that, in their congratulations, they unanimously saluted him by the title of Emperor [\[781\]](#); and, upon his quitting the province soon afterwards, would needs have detained him, earnestly begging him, and that not without threats, "either to stay, or take them all with him." This occurrence gave rise to the suspicion of his being engaged in a design to rebel against his father, and claim for himself the government of the East; and the suspicion increased, when, on his way to Alexandria, he wore a diadem at the consecration of the ox Apis at Memphis; and, though he did it only in compliance with an ancient religious usage of the country, yet there was some who put a bad construction upon it. Making, therefore, what haste he could into Italy, he arrived first at Rhegium, and sailing thence in a merchant ship to Puteoli, went to Rome with all possible expedition. Presenting himself unexpectedly to his father, he said, by way of contradicting the strange reports raised concerning him, "I am come, father, I am come."

VI. From that time he constantly acted as colleague with his father, and, indeed, as regent of the empire. He triumphed [782] (468) with his father, bore jointly with him the office of censor [783], and was, besides, his colleague not only in the tribunitian authority [784], but in seven consulships [785]. Taking upon himself the care and inspection of all offices, he dictated letters, wrote proclamations in his father's name, and pronounced his speeches in the senate in place of the quaestor. He likewise assumed the command of the pretorian guards, although no one but a Roman knight had ever before been their prefect. In this he conducted himself with great haughtiness and violence, taking off without scruple or delay all those he had most reason to suspect, after he had secretly sent his emissaries into the theatres and camp, to demand, as if by general consent, that the suspected persons should be delivered up to punishment. Among these, he invited to supper A. Caecina, a man of consular rank, whom he ordered to be stabbed at his departure, immediately after he had gone out of the room. To this act, indeed, he was provoked by an imminent danger; for he had discovered a writing under the hand of Caecina, containing an account of a plot hatched among the soldiers. By these acts, though he provided for his future security, yet for the present he so much incurred the hatred of the people, that scarcely ever any one came to the empire with a more odious character, or more universally disliked.

VII. Besides his cruelty, he lay under the suspicion of giving (469) way to habits of luxury, as he often prolonged his revels till midnight with the most riotous of his acquaintance. Nor was he unsuspected of lewdness, on account of the swarms of catamites and eunuchs about him, and his well-known attachment to queen Berenice [786], who received from him, as it is reported, a promise of marriage. He was supposed, besides, to be of a rapacious disposition; for it is certain, that, in causes which came before his father, he used to offer his interest for sale, and take bribes. In short, people publicly expressed an unfavourable opinion of him, and said he would prove another Nero. This prejudice, however, turned out in the end to his advantage, and enhanced his praises to the highest pitch when he was found to possess no vicious propensities, but, on the contrary, the noblest virtues. His entertainments were agreeable rather than extravagant; and he surrounded himself with such excellent friends, that the succeeding princes adopted them as most serviceable to themselves and the state. He immediately sent away Berenice from the city, much against both their inclinations. Some of his old eunuchs, though such accomplished dancers, that they bore an uncontrollable sway upon the stage, he

was so far from treating with any extraordinary kindness, that he would not so much as witness their performances in the crowded theatre. He violated no private right; (470) and if ever man refrained from injustice, he did; nay, he would not accept of the allowable and customary offerings. Yet, in munificence, he was inferior to none of the princes before him. Having dedicated his amphitheatre [787], and built some warm baths [788] close by it with great expedition, he entertained the people with most magnificent spectacles. He likewise exhibited a naval fight in the old Naumachia, besides a combat of gladiators; and in one day brought into the theatre five thousand wild beasts of all kinds. [789]

(471) VIII. He was by nature extremely benevolent; for whereas all the emperors after Tiberius, according to the example he had set them, would not admit the grants made by former princes to be valid, unless they received their own sanction, he confirmed them all by one general edict, without waiting for any applications respecting them. Of all who petitioned for any favour, he sent none away without hopes. And when his ministers represented to him that he promised more than he could perform, he replied, "No one ought to go away downcast from an audience with his prince." Once at supper, reflecting that he had done nothing for any that day, he broke out into that memorable and justly-admired saying, "My friends, I have lost a day." [790] More particularly, he treated the people on all occasions with so much courtesy, that, on his presenting them with a show of gladiators, he declared, "He should manage it, not according to his own fancy, but that of the spectators," and did accordingly. He denied them nothing, and very frankly encouraged them to ask what they pleased. Espousing the cause of the Thracian party among the gladiators, he frequently joined in the popular demonstrations in their favour, but without compromising his dignity or doing injustice. To omit no opportunity of acquiring popularity, he sometimes made use himself of the baths he had erected, without excluding the common people. There happened in his reign some dreadful accidents; an eruption of Mount Vesuvius [791], in Campania, and a fire in Rome, which continued during three days and three nights [792]; besides a plague, such as was scarcely ever known before. Amidst these many great disasters, he not only manifested the concern (472) which might be expected from a prince but even the affection of a father, for his people; one while comforting them by his proclamations, and another while relieving them to the utmost of his power. He chose by lot, from amongst the men of consular rank, commissioners for repairing the losses in Campania. The estates

of those who had perished by the eruption of Vesuvius, and who had left no heirs, he applied to the repair of the ruined cities. With regard to the public buildings destroyed by fire in the City, he declared that nobody should be a loser but himself. Accordingly, he applied all the ornaments of his palaces to the decoration of the temples, and purposes of public utility, and appointed several men of the equestrian order to superintend the work. For the relief of the people during the plague, he employed, in the way of sacrifice and medicine, all means both human and divine. Amongst the calamities of the times, were informers and their agents; a tribe of miscreants who had grown up under the licence of former reigns. These he frequently ordered to be scourged or beaten with sticks in the Forum, and then, after he had obliged them to pass through the amphitheatre as a public spectacle, commanded them to be sold for slaves, or else banished them to some rocky islands. And to discourage such practices for the future, amongst other things, he prohibited actions to be successively brought under different laws for the same cause, or the state of affairs of deceased persons to be inquired into after a certain number of years.

IX. Having declared that he accepted the office of Pontifex Maximus for the purpose of preserving his hands undefiled, he faithfully adhered to his promise. For after that time he was neither directly nor indirectly concerned in the death of any person, though he sometimes was justly irritated. He swore "that he would perish himself, rather than prove the destruction of any man." Two men of patrician rank being convicted of aspiring to the empire, he only advised them to desist, saying, "that the sovereign power was disposed of by fate," and promised them, that if there was any thing else they desired of him, he would grant it. He also immediately sent messengers to the mother of one of them, who was at a great distance, and in deep anxiety about her son, to assure her of his safety. Nay, he not only invited them to sup with (473) him, but next day, at a show of gladiators, purposely placed them close by him; and handed to them the arms of the combatants for his inspection. It is said likewise, that having had their nativities cast, he assured them, "that a great calamity was impending on both of them, but from another hand, and not from his." Though his brother was continually plotting against him, almost openly stirring up the armies to rebellion, and contriving to get away, yet he could not endure to put him to death, or to banish him from his presence; nor did he treat him with less respect than before. But from his first accession to the empire, he constantly declared him his partner in it, and that he

should be his successor; begging of him sometimes in private, with tears in his eyes, "to return the affection he had for him."

X. Amidst all these favourable circumstances, he was cut off by an untimely death, more to the loss of mankind than himself. At the close of the public spectacles, he wept bitterly in the presence of the people, and then retired into the Sabine country [793], rather melancholy, because a victim had made its escape while he was sacrificing, and loud thunder had been heard while the atmosphere was serene. At the first resting-place on the road, he was seized with a fever, and being carried forward in a litter, they say that he drew back the curtains, and looked up to heaven, complaining heavily, "that his life was taken from him, though he had done nothing to deserve it; for there was no action of his that he had occasion to repent of, but one." What that was, he neither disclosed himself, nor is it easy for us to conjecture. Some imagine that he alluded to the connection which he had formerly had with his brother's wife. But Domitia solemnly denied it on oath; which she would never have done, had there been any truth in the report; nay, she would certainly have gloried in it, as she was forward enough to boast of all her scandalous intrigues.

XI. He died in the same villa where his father had died (474) before him, upon the Ides of September [the 13th of September]; two years, two months, and twenty days after he had succeeded his father; and in the one-and-fortieth year of his age [794]. As soon as the news of his death was published, all people mourned for him, as for the loss of some near relative. The senate assembled in haste, before they could be summoned by proclamation, and locking the doors of their house at first, but afterwards opening them, gave him such thanks, and heaped upon him such praises, now he was dead, as they never had done whilst he was alive and present amongst them.

COMMENTARY

TITUS FLAVIUS VESPASIAN, the younger, was the first prince who succeeded to the empire by hereditary right; and having constantly acted, after his return from Judaea, as colleague with his father in the administration, he seemed to be as well qualified by experience as he was by abilities, for conducting the affairs of the empire. But with respect to his natural disposition, and moral behaviour, the expectations entertained by the public were not equally flattering. He was immoderately addicted to luxury; he had betrayed a strong inclination to cruelty; and he lived in the habitual practice of lewdness, no less unnatural than intemperate. But, with a degree of virtuous resolution unexampled in history, he had no sooner taken into his hands the entire reins of government, than he renounced every vicious attachment. Instead of wallowing in luxury, as before, he became a model of temperance; instead of cruelty, he displayed the strongest proofs of humanity and benevolence; and in the room of lewdness, he exhibited a transition to the most unblemished chastity and virtue. In a word, so sudden and great a change was never known in the character of mortal; and he had the peculiar glory to receive the appellation of "the darling and delight of mankind."

Under a prince of such a disposition, the government of the empire could not but be conducted with the strictest regard to the public welfare. The reform, which was begun in the late reign, he prosecuted with the most ardent application; and, had he lived for a longer time,

it is probable that his authority and example would have produced the most beneficial effects upon the manners of the Romans.

During the reign of this emperor, in the seventy-ninth year of (475) the Christian era, happened the first eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which has ever since been celebrated for its volcano. Before this time, Vesuvius is spoken of, by ancient writers, as being covered with orchards and vineyards, and of which the middle was dry and barren. The eruption was accompanied by an earthquake, which destroyed several cities of Campania, particularly Pompeii and Herculaneum; while the lava, pouring down the mountain in torrents, overwhelmed, in various directions, the adjacent plains. The burning ashes were carried not only over the neighbouring country, but as far as the shores of Egypt, Libya, and even Syria. Amongst those to whom this dreadful eruption proved fatal, was Pliny, the celebrated naturalist, whose curiosity to examine the phenomenon led him so far within the verge of danger, that he could not afterwards escape.

PLINY, surnamed the Elder, was born at Verona, of a noble family. He distinguished himself early by his military achievements in the German war, received the dignity of an Augur, at Rome, and was afterwards appointed governor of Spain. In every public character, he acquitted himself with great reputation, and enjoyed the esteem of the several emperors under whom he lived. The assiduity with which he applied himself to the collection of information, either curious or useful, surpasses all example. From an early hour in the

morning, until late at night, he was almost constantly employed in discharging the duties of his public station, in reading or hearing books read by his amanuensis, and in extracting from them whatever seemed worthy of notice. Even during his meals, and while travelling in his carriage upon business, he prosecuted with unremitting zeal and diligence his taste for enquiry and compilation. No man ever displayed so strong a persuasion of the value of time, or availed himself so industriously of it. He considered every moment as lost which was not employed in literary pursuits. The books which he wrote, in consequence of this indefatigable exertion, were, according to the account transmitted by his nephew, Pliny the younger, numerous, and on various subjects. The catalogue of them is as follows: a book on Equestrian Archery, which discovered much skill in the art; the Life of Q. Pomponius Secundus; twenty books of the Wars of Germany; a complete treatise on the Education of an Orator, in six volumes; eight books of Doubtful Discourses, written in the latter part of the reign of Nero, when every kind of moral discussion was attended with danger; with a hundred and sixty volumes of remarks on the writings of the various authors which he had perused. For the last-mentioned production only, and before it was brought near to its accomplishment, we are told, that he (476) was offered by Largius Licinius four hundred thousand sesterces, amounting to upwards of three thousand two hundred pounds sterling; an enormous sum for the copyright of a book before the invention of printing! But the only surviving work of this voluminous author is his Natural History, in thirty-seven books, compiled from the various writers who had treated of that extensive and interesting subject.

If we estimate this great work either by the authenticity of the information which it contains, or its utility in promoting the advancement of arts and sciences, we should not consider it as an object of any extraordinary encomiums; but when we view it as a literary monument, which displays the whole knowledge of the ancients, relative to Natural History, collected during a period of about seven hundred years, from the time of Thales the Milesian, it has a just claim to the attention of every speculative enquirer. It is not surprising, that the progress of the human mind, which, in moral science, after the first dawn of enquiry, was rapid both amongst the Greeks and Romans, should be slow in the improvement of such branches of knowledge as depended entirely on observation and facts, which were peculiarly difficult of attainment. Natural knowledge can only be brought to perfection by the prosecution of enquiries in different climates, and by a communication of discoveries amongst those by whom it is cultivated. But neither could enquiries be prosecuted, nor discoveries communicated, with success, while the greater part of the world was involved in barbarism, while navigation was slow and limited, and the art of printing unknown. The consideration of these circumstances will afford sufficient apology for the imperfect state in which natural science existed amongst the ancients. But we proceed to give an abstract of their extent, as they appear in the compilation of Pliny.

This work is divided into thirty-seven books; the first of which contains the Preface, addressed to the emperor Vespasian, probably the father, to whom the author pays high compliments. The second book treats of the world, the elements, and the stars. In respect to the world, or

rather the universe, the author's opinion is the same with that of several ancient philosophers, that it is a Deity, uncreated, infinite, and eternal. Their notions, however, as might be expected, on a subject so incomprehensible, are vague, confused, and imperfect. In a subsequent chapter of the same book, where the nature of the Deity is more particularly considered, the author's conceptions of infinite power are so inadequate, that, by way of consolation for the limited powers of man, he observes that there are many things even beyond the power of the Supreme Being; such, for instance, as the annihilation of his own existence; to which the author adds, the power (477) of rendering mortals eternal, and of raising the dead. It deserves to be remarked, that, though a future state of rewards and punishments was maintained by the most eminent among the ancient philosophers, the resurrection of the body was a doctrine with which they were wholly unacquainted.

The author next treats of the planets, and the periods of their respective revolutions; of the stars, comets, winds, thunder, lightning, and other natural phenomena, concerning all which he delivers the hypothetical notions maintained by the ancients, and mentions a variety of extraordinary incidents which had occurred in different parts of the world. The third book contains a general system of geography, which is continued through the fourth, fifth, and sixth books. The seventh treats of conception, and the generation of the human species, with a number of miscellaneous observations, unconnected with the general subject. The eighth treats of quadrupeds; the ninth, of aquatic animals; the tenth, of birds; the eleventh, of insects and reptiles; the twelfth, of trees; the thirteenth, of ointments, and of trees which grow near

the sea-coast; the fourteenth, of vines; the fifteenth, of fruit-trees; the sixteenth, of forest-trees; the seventeenth, of the cultivation of trees; the eighteenth, of agriculture; the nineteenth, of the nature of lint, hemp, and similar productions; the twentieth, of the medicinal qualities of vegetables cultivated in gardens; the twenty-first, of flowers; the twenty-second, of the properties of herbs; the twenty-third, of the medicines yielded by cultivated trees; the twenty-fourth, of medicines derived from forest-trees; the twenty-fifth, of the properties of wild herbs, and the origin of their use; the twenty-sixth, of other remedies for diseases, and of some new diseases; the twenty-seventh, of different kinds of herbs; the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth, of medicines procured from animals; the thirty-first and thirty-second, of medicines obtained from aquatic animals, with some extraordinary facts relative to the subject; the thirty-third, of the nature of metals; the thirty-fourth, of brass, iron, lead, and tin; the thirty-fifth, of pictures, and observations relative to painting; the thirty-sixth, of the nature of stones and marbles; the thirty-seventh, of the origin of gems. To the contents of each book, the author subjoins a list of the writers from whom his observations have been collected.

Of Pliny's talents as a writer, it might be deemed presumptuous to form a decided opinion from his Natural History, which is avowedly a compilation from various authors, and executed with greater regard to the matter of the work, than to the elegance of composition. Making allowance, however, for a degree of credulity, common to the human mind in the early stage of physical (478) researches, he is far from being deficient in the essential qualifications of a

writer of Natural History. His descriptions appear to be accurate, his observations precise, his narrative is in general perspicuous, and he often illustrates his subject by a vivacity of thought, as well as by a happy turn of expression. It has been equally his endeavour to give novelty to stale disquisitions, and authority to new observations. He has both removed the rust, and dispelled the obscurity, which enveloped the doctrines of many ancient naturalists; but, with all his care and industry, he has exploded fewer errors, and sanctioned a greater number of doubtful opinions, than was consistent with the exercise of unprejudiced and severe investigation.

Pliny was fifty-six years of age at the time of his death; the manner of which is accurately related by his nephew, the elegant Pliny the Younger, in a letter to Tacitus, who entertained a design of writing the life of the naturalist.

FOOTNOTES

[776]

Caligula. Titus was born A.U.C. 794; about A.D. 49.

[777]

The Septizonium was a circular building of seven stories. The remains of that of Septimus Severus, which stood on the side of the Palatine Hill, remained till the time of Pope Sixtus V., who removed it, and employed thirty-eight of its columns in ornamenting the church of St. Peter. It does not appear whether the Septizonium here mentioned as existing in the time of Titus, stood on the same spot.

[778]

Britannicus, the son of Claudius and Messalina.

[779]

A.U.C. 820.

[780]

Jerusalem was taken, sacked, and burnt, by Titus, after a two years' siege, on the 8th September, A.U.C. 821, A.D. 69; it being the Sabbath. It was in the second year of the reign of

Vespasian, when the emperor was sixty years old, and Titus himself, as he informs us, thirty. For particulars of the siege, see Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.* vi. and vii.; Hegesippus, *Excid. Hierosol.* v.; Dio, lxxvi.; Tacitus, *Hist.* v.; Orosius, vii. 9.

[781]

For the sense in which Titus was saluted with the title of Emperor by the troops, see JULIUS CAESAR, c. lxxvi.

[782]

The joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus, which was celebrated A.U.C. 824, is fully described by Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.* vii. 24. It is commemorated by the triumphal monument called the Arch of Titus, erected by the senate and people of Rome after his death, and still standing at the foot of the Palatine Hill, on the road leading from the Colosseum to the Forum, and is one of the most beautiful as well as the most interesting models of Roman art. It consists of four stories of the three orders of architecture, the Corinthian being repeated in the two highest. Some of the bas-reliefs, still in good preservation, represent the table of the shew-bread, the seven-branched golden candlestick, the vessel of incense, and the silver trumpets, which were taken by Titus from the Temple at Jerusalem, and, with the book of the law, the veil of the temple, and other spoils, were carried in the triumph. The fate of these sacred relics is rather interesting. Josephus says, that the veil and books of the law were deposited in the Palatium, and the rest of the spoils in the Temple of Peace. When that was burnt, in the reign of

Commodus, these treasures were saved, and they were afterwards carried off by Genseric to Africa. Belisarius recovered them, and brought them to Constantinople, A.D. 520. Procopius informs us, that a Jew, who saw them, told an acquaintance of the emperor that it would not be advisable to carry them to the palace at Constantinople, as they could not remain anywhere else but where Solomon had placed them. This, he said, was the reason why Genseric had taken the Palace at Rome, and the Roman army had in turn taken that of the Vandal kings. Upon this, the emperor was so alarmed, that he sent the whole of them to the Christian churches at Jerusalem.

[783]

A.U.C. 825.

[784]

A.U.C. 824.

[785]

A.U.C. 823, 825, 827-830, 832.

[786]

Berenice, whose name is written by our author and others Beronice, was daughter of Agrippa the Great, who was by Aristobulus, grandson of Herod the Great. Having been contracted to

Mark, son of Alexander Lysimachus, he died before their union, and Agrippa married her to Herod, Mark's brother, for whom he had obtained from the emperor Claudius the kingdom of Chalcis. Herod also dying, Berenice, then a widow, lived with her brother, Agrippa, and was suspected of an incestuous intercourse with him. It was at this time that, on their way to the imperial court at Rome, they paid a visit to Festus, at Caesarea, and were present when St. Paul answered his accusers so eloquently before the tribunal of the governor. Her fascinations were so great, that, to shield herself from the charge of incest, she prevailed on Polemon, king of Cilicia, to submit to be circumcised, become a Jew, and marry her. That union also proving unfortunate, she appears to have returned to Jerusalem, and having attracted Vespasian by magnificent gifts, and the young Titus by her extraordinary beauty, she followed them to Rome, after the termination of the Jewish war, and had apartments in the palace, where she lived with Titus, "to all appearance, as his wife," as Xiphilinus informs us; and there seems no doubt that he would have married her, but for the strong prejudices of the Romans against foreign alliances. Suetonius tells us with what pain they separated.

[787]

The Colosseum: it had been four years in building. See VESPAS. c. ix.

[788]

The Baths of Titus stood on the Esquiline Hill, on part of the ground which had been the gardens of Mecaenas. Considerable remains of them are still found among the vineyards;

vaulted chambers of vast dimensions, some of which were decorated with arabesque paintings, still in good preservation. Titus appears to have erected a palace for himself adjoining; for the Laocoon, which is mentioned by Pliny as standing in this palace, was found in the neighbouring ruins.

[789]

If the statements were not well attested, we might be incredulous as to the number of wild beasts collected for the spectacles to which the people of Rome were so passionately devoted. The earliest account we have of such an exhibition, was A.U.C. 502, when one hundred and forty- two elephants, taken in Sicily, were produced. Pliny, who gives this information, states that lions first appeared in any number, A.U.C. 652; but these were probably not turned loose. In 661, Sylla, when he was praetor, brought forward one hundred. In 696, besides lions, elephants, and bears, one hundred and fifty panthers were shown for the first time. At the dedication of Pompey's Theatre, there was the greatest exhibition of beasts ever then known; including seventeen elephants, six hundred lions, which were killed in the course of five days, four hundred and ten panthers, etc. A rhinoceros also appeared for the first time. This was A.U.C. 701. The art of taming these beasts was carried to such perfection, that Mark Antony actually yoked them to his carriage. Julius Caesar, in his third dictatorship, A.U.C. 708, showed a vast number of wild beasts, among which were four hundred lions and a cameleopard. A tiger was exhibited for the first time at the dedication of the Theatre of Marcellus, A.U.C. 743. It was kept in a cage. Claudius afterwards exhibited four

together. The exhibition of Titus, at the dedication of the Colosseum, here mentioned by Suetonius, seems to have been the largest ever made; Xiphilinus even adds to the number, and says, that including wild-boars, cranes, and other animals, no less than nine thousand were killed. In the reigns of succeeding emperors, a new feature was given to these spectacles, the Circus being converted into a temporary forest, by planting large trees, in which wild animals were turned loose, and the people were allowed to enter the wood and take what they pleased. In this instance, the game consisted principally of beasts of chase; and, on one occasion, one thousand stags, as many of the ibex, wild sheep (mouflions from Sardinia?), and other grazing animals, besides one thousand wild boars, and as many ostriches, were turned loose by the emperor Gordian.

[790]

"Diem perdidit." This memorable speech is recorded by several other historians, and praised by Eusebius in his Chronicles.

[791]

A.U.C. 832, A.D. 79. It is hardly necessary to refer to the well-known Epistles of Pliny the younger, vi. 16 and 20, giving an account of the first eruption of Vesuvius, in which Pliny, the historian, perished. And see hereafter, p. 475.

[792]

The great fire at Rome happened in the second year of the reign of Titus. It consumed a large portion of the city, and among the public buildings destroyed were the temples of Serapis and Isis, that of Neptune, the baths of Agrippa, the Septa, the theatres of Balbus and Pompey, the buildings and library of Augustus on the Palatine, and the temple of Jupiter in the Capitol.

[793]

See VESPASIAN, cc. i. and xxiv. The love of this emperor and his son Titus for the rural retirement of their paternal acres in the Sabine country, forms a striking contrast to the vicious attachment of such tyrants as Tiberius and Caligula for the luxurious scenes of Baiae, or the libidinous orgies of Capri.

[794]

A.U.C. 834, A.D. 82.