

**SUETONIUS**  
**THE LIFE OF VITELLIUS**

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## VITA VETELLII

(427) I. Very different accounts are given of the origin of the Vitellian family. Some describe it as ancient and noble, others as recent and obscure, nay, extremely mean. I am inclined to think, that these several representations have been made by the flatterers and detractors of Vitellius, after he became emperor, unless the fortunes of the family varied before. There is extant a memoir addressed by Quintus Eulogius to Quintus Vitellius, quaestor to the Divine Augustus, in which it is said, that the Vitellii were descended from Faunus, king of the aborigines, and Vitellia [689], who was worshipped in many places as a goddess, and that they reigned formerly over the whole of Latium: that all who were left of the family removed out of the country of the Sabines to Rome, and were enrolled among the patricians: that some monuments of the family continued a long time; as the Vitellian Way, reaching from the Janiculum to the sea, and likewise a colony of that name, which, at a very remote period of time, they desired leave from the government to defend against the Aequicolae [690], with a force raised by their own family only: also that, in the time of the war with the Samnites, some of the Vitellii who went with the troops levied for the security of Apulia, settled at Nuceria [691], and their descendants, a long time afterwards, returned again to Rome, and were admitted (428) into the patrician order. On the other hand, the generality of writers say that the founder of the family was a freedman. Cassius Severus [692] and some others relate that he was likewise a cobbler, whose son having made a considerable fortune by agencies and dealings in confiscated property, begot, by a common strumpet, daughter of one Antiochus, a

baker, a child, who afterwards became a Roman knight. Of these different accounts the reader is left to take his choice.

II. It is certain, however, that Publius Vitellius, of Nuceria, whether of an ancient family, or of low extraction, was a Roman knight, and a procurator to Augustus. He left behind him four sons, all men of very high station, who had the same cognomen, but the different praenomina of Aulus, Quintus, Publius, and Lucius. Aulus died in the enjoyment of the consulship [693], which office he bore jointly with Domitius, the father of Nero Caesar. He was elegant to excess in his manner of living, and notorious for the vast expense of his entertainments. Quintus was deprived of his rank of senator, when, upon a motion made by Tiberius, a resolution passed to purge the senate of those who were in any respect not duly qualified for that honour. Publius, an intimate friend and companion of Germanicus, prosecuted his enemy and murderer, Cneius Piso, and procured sentence against him. After he had been made proctor, being arrested among the accomplices of Sejanus, and delivered into the hands of his brother to be confined in his house, he opened a vein with a penknife, intending to bleed himself to death. He suffered, however, the wound to be bound up and cured, not so much from repenting the resolution he had formed, as to comply with the importunity of his relations. He died afterwards a natural death during his confinement. Lucius, after his consulship [694], was made governor of Syria [695], and by his politic management not only brought Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to give him an interview, but to worship the standards of the Roman legions. He afterwards filled two ordinary consulships [696], and also the censorship [697] jointly with

the emperor Claudius. Whilst that (429) prince was absent upon his expedition into Britain [698], the care of the empire was committed to him, being a man of great integrity and industry. But he lessened his character not a little, by his passionate fondness for an abandoned freedwoman, with whose spittle, mixed with honey, he used to anoint his throat and jaws, by way of remedy for some complaint, not privately nor seldom, but daily and publicly. Being extravagantly prone to flattery, it was he who gave rise to the worship of Caius Caesar as a god, when, upon his return from Syria, he would not presume to accost him any otherwise than with his head covered, turning himself round, and then prostrating himself upon the earth. And to leave no artifice untried to secure the favour of Claudius, who was entirely governed by his wives and freedmen, he requested as the greatest favour from Messalina, that she would be pleased to let him take off her shoes; which, when he had done, he took her right shoe, and wore it constantly betwixt his toga and his tunic, and from time to time covered it with kisses. He likewise worshipped golden images of Narcissus and Pallas among his household gods. It was he, too, who, when Claudius exhibited the secular games, in his compliments to him upon that occasion, used this expression, "May you often do the same."

III. He died of palsy, the day after his seizure with it, leaving behind him two sons, whom he had by a most excellent and respectable wife, Sextilia. He had lived to see them both consuls, the same year and during the whole year also; the younger succeeding the elder for the last six months [699]. The senate honoured him after his decease with a funeral at the public

expense, and with a statue in the Rostra, which had this inscription upon the base: "One who was steadfast in his loyalty to his prince." The emperor Aulus Vitellius, the son of this Lucius, was born upon the eighth of the calends of October [24th September], or, as some say, upon the seventh of the ides of September [7th September], in the consulship of Drusus Caesar and Norbanus Flaccus [700]. His parents were so (430) terrified with the predictions of astrologers upon the calculation of his nativity, that his father used his utmost endeavours to prevent his being sent governor into any of the provinces, whilst he was alive. His mother, upon his being sent to the legions [701], and also upon his being proclaimed emperor, immediately lamented him as utterly ruined. He spent his youth amongst the catamites of Tiberius at Capri, was himself constantly stigmatized with the name of Spintria [702], and was supposed to have been the occasion of his father's advancement, by consenting to gratify the emperor's unnatural lust.

IV. In the subsequent part of his life, being still most scandalously vicious, he rose to great favour at court; being upon a very intimate footing with Caius [Caligula], because of his fondness for chariot-driving, and with Claudius for his love of gaming. But he was in a still higher degree acceptable to Nero, as well on the same accounts, as for a particular service which he rendered him. When Nero presided in the games instituted by himself, though he was extremely desirous to perform amongst the harpers, yet his modesty would not permit him, notwithstanding the people entreated much for it. Upon his quitting the theatre, Vitellius

fetches him back again, pretending to represent the determined wishes of the people, and so affords him the opportunity of yielding to their in treaties.

V. By the favour of these three princes, he was not only advanced to the great offices of state, but to the highest dignities of the sacred order; after which he held the proconsulship of Africa, and had the superintendence of the public works, in which appointment his conduct, and, consequently, his reputation, were very different. For he governed the province with singular integrity during two years, in the latter of which he acted as deputy to his brother, who succeeded him. But in his office in the city, he was said to pillage the temples of their gifts and ornaments, and to have exchanged brass and tin for gold and silver. [703]

VI. He took to wife Petronia, the daughter of a man of consular rank, and had by her a son named Petronius, who was blind of an eye. The mother being willing to appoint this youth her heir, upon condition that he should be released from his father's authority, the latter discharged him accordingly; but shortly after, as was believed, murdered him, charging him with a design upon his life, and pretending that he had, from consciousness of his guilt, drank the poison he had prepared for his father. Soon afterwards, he married Galeria Fundana, the daughter of a man of pretorian rank, and had by her both sons and daughters. Among the former was one who had such a stammering in his speech, that he was little better than if he had been dumb.

VII. He was sent by Galba into Lower Germany [704], contrary to his expectation. It is supposed that he was assisted in procuring this appointment by the interest of Titus Junius, a man of great influence at that time; whose friendship he had long before gained by favouring the same set of charioteers with him in the Circensian games. But Galba openly declared that none were less to be feared than those who only cared for their bellies, and that even his enormous appetite must be satisfied with the plenty of that province; so that it is evident he was selected for that government more out of contempt than kindness. It is certain, that when he was to set out, he had not money for the expenses of his journey; he being at that time so much straitened in his circumstances, that he was obliged to put his wife and children, whom he left at Rome, into a poor lodging which he hired for them, in order that he might let his own house for the remainder of the year; and he pawned a pearl taken from his mother's earring, to defray his expenses on the road. A crowd of creditors who were waiting to stop him, and amongst them the people of Sineussa and Formia, whose taxes he had converted to his own use, he eluded, by alarming them with the apprehension of false accusation. He had, however, sued a certain freedman, who was clamorous in demanding a debt of him, under pretence that he had kicked him; which action he would not withdraw, until he had wrung from the freedman fifty thousand sesterces. Upon his arrival in the province, the army, (432) which was disaffected to Galba, and ripe for insurrection, received him with open arms, as if he had been sent them from heaven. It was no small recommendation to their favour, that he was the son of a man who had been thrice consul, was in the prime of life, and of an easy, prodigal disposition. This opinion, which had been long entertained of him, Vitellius confirmed

by some late practices; having kissed all the common soldiers whom he met with upon the road, and been excessively complaisant in the inns and stables to the muleteers and travellers; asking them in a morning, if they had got their breakfasts, and letting them see, by belching, that he had eaten his.

VIII. After he had reached the camp, he denied no man any thing he asked for, and pardoned all who lay under sentence for disgraceful conduct or disorderly habits. Before a month, therefore, had passed, without regard to the day or season, he was hurried by the soldiers out of his bed-chamber, although it was evening, and he in an undress, and unanimously saluted by the title of EMPEROR [705]. He was then carried round the most considerable towns in the neighbourhood, with the sword of the Divine Julius in his hand; which had been taken by some person out of the temple of Mars, and presented to him when he was first saluted. Nor did he return to the pretorium, until his dining-room was in flames from the chimney's taking fire. Upon this accident, all being in consternation, and considering it as an unlucky omen, he cried out, "Courage, boys! it shines brightly upon us." And this was all he said to the soldiers. The army of the Upper Province likewise, which had before declared against Galba for the senate, joining in the proceedings, he very eagerly accepted the cognomen of Germanicus, offered him by the unanimous consent of both armies, but deferred assuming that of Augustus, and refused for ever that of Caesar.



IX. Intelligence of Galba's death arriving soon after, when he had settled his affairs in Germany he divided his troops into two bodies, intending to send one of them before him against Otho, and to follow with the other himself. The army he sent forward had a lucky omen; for, suddenly, an eagle came flying up to them on the right, and having hovered (433) round the standards, flew gently before them on their road. But, on the other hand, when he began his own march, all the equestrian statues, which were erected for him in several places, fell suddenly down with their legs broken; and the laurel crown, which he had put on as emblematical of auspicious fortune, fell off his head into a river. Soon afterwards, at Vienne [706], as he was upon the tribunal administering justice, a cock perched upon his shoulder, and afterwards upon his head. The issue corresponded to these omens; for he was not able to keep the empire which had been secured for him by his lieutenants.

X. He heard of the victory at Bedriacum [707], and the death of Otho, whilst he was yet in Gaul, and without the least hesitation, by a single proclamation, disbanded all the pretorian cohorts, as having, by their repeated treasons, set a dangerous example to the rest of the army; commanding them to deliver up their arms to his tribunes. A hundred and twenty of them, under whose hands he had found petitions presented to Otho, for rewards of their service in the murder of Galba, he besides ordered to be sought out and punished. So far his conduct deserved approbation, and was such as to afford hope of his becoming an excellent prince, had he not managed his other affairs in a way more corresponding with his own disposition, and his former manner of life, than to the imperial dignity. For, having begun his

march, he rode through every city in his route in a triumphal procession; and sailed down the rivers in ships, fitted out with the greatest elegance, and decorated with various kinds of crowns, amidst the most extravagant entertainments. Such was the want of discipline, and the licentiousness both in his family and army, that, not satisfied with the provision every where made for them at the public expense, they committed every kind of robbery and insult upon the inhabitants, setting slaves at liberty as they pleased; and if any dared to make resistance, they dealt blows and abuse, frequently wounds, and sometimes slaughter amongst them. When he reached the plains on which the battles (434) were fought [708], some of those around him being offended at the smell of the carcasses which lay rotting upon the ground, he had the audacity to encourage them by a most detestable remark, "That a dead enemy smelt not amiss, especially if he were a fellow-citizen." To qualify, however, the offensiveness of the stench, he quaffed in public a goblet of wine, and with equal vanity and insolence distributed a large quantity of it among his troops. On his observing a stone with an inscription upon it to the memory of Otho, he said, "It was a mausoleum good enough for such a prince." He also sent the poniard, with which Otho killed himself, to the colony of Agrippina [709], to be dedicated to Mars. Upon the Appenine hills he celebrated a Bacchanalian feast.

XI. At last he entered the City with trumpets sounding, in his general's cloak, and girded with his sword, amidst a display of standards and banners; his attendants being all in the military habit, and the arms of the soldiers unsheathed. Acting more and more in open violation of all laws, both divine and human, he assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, upon the day of the

defeat at the Allia [710]; ordered the magistrates to be elected for ten years of office; and made himself consul for life. To put it out of all doubt what model he intended to follow in his government of the empire, he made his offerings to the shade of Nero in the midst of the Campus Martius, and with a full assembly of the public priests attending him. And at a solemn entertainment, he desired a harper who pleased the company much, to sing something in praise of Domitius; and upon his beginning some songs of Nero's, he started up in presence of the whole assembly, and could not refrain from applauding him, by clapping his hands.

XII. After such a commencement of his career, he conducted (435) his affairs, during the greater part of his reign, entirely by the advice and direction of the vilest amongst the players and charioteers, and especially his freedman Asiaticus. This fellow had, when young, been engaged with him in a course of mutual and unnatural pollution, but, being at last quite tired of the occupation, ran away. His master, some time after, caught him at Puteoli, selling a liquor called Posca [711], and put him in chains, but soon released him, and retained him in his former capacity. Growing weary, however, of his rough and stubborn temper, he sold him to a strolling fencing-master; after which, when the fellow was to have been brought up to play his part at the conclusion of an entertainment of gladiators, he suddenly carried him off, and at length, upon his being advanced to the government of a province, gave him his freedom. The first day of his reign, he presented him with the gold rings at supper, though in the morning, when all about him requested that favour in his behalf, he expressed the utmost abhorrence of putting so great a stain upon the equestrian order.

XIII. He was chiefly addicted to the vices of luxury and cruelty. He always made three meals a day, sometimes four: breakfast, dinner, and supper, and a drunken revel after all. This load of victuals he could well enough bear, from a custom to which he had enured himself, of frequently vomiting. For these several meals he would make different appointments at the houses of his friends on the same day. None ever entertained him at less expense than four hundred thousand sesterces [712]. The most famous was a set entertainment given him by his brother, at which, it is said, there were served up no less than two thousand choice fishes, and seven thousand birds. Yet even this supper he himself outdid, at a feast which he gave upon the first use of a dish which had been made for him, and which, for its extraordinary size, he called "The Shield of Minerva." In this dish there were tossed up together the livers of char-fish, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, with the tongues of flamingos, and the entrails of lampreys, which had been brought in ships of war as far as (436) from the Carpathian Sea, and the Spanish Straits. He was not only a man of an insatiable appetite, but would gratify it likewise at unseasonable times, and with any garbage that came in his way; so that, at a sacrifice, he would snatch from the fire flesh and cakes, and eat them upon the spot. When he travelled, he did the same at the inns upon the road, whether the meat was fresh dressed and hot, or what had been left the day before, and was half-eaten.

XIV. He delighted in the infliction of punishments, and even those which were capital, without any distinction of persons or occasions. Several noblemen, his school-fellows and companions, invited by him to court, he treated with such flattering caresses, as seemed to indicate an

affection short only of admitting them to share the honours of the imperial dignity; yet he put them all to death by some base means or other. To one he gave poison with his own hand, in a cup of cold water which he called for in a fever. He scarcely spared one of all the usurers, notaries, and publicans, who had ever demanded a debt of him at Rome, or any toll or custom upon the road. One of these, while in the very act of saluting him, he ordered for execution, but immediately sent for him back; upon which all about him applauding his clemency, he commanded him to be slain in his own presence, saying, "I have a mind to feed my eyes." Two sons who interceded for their father, he ordered to be executed with him. A Roman knight, upon his being dragged away for execution, and crying out to him, "You are my heir," he desired to produce his will: and finding that he had made his freedman joint heir with him, he commanded that both he and the freedman should have their throats cut. He put to death some of the common people for cursing aloud the blue party in the Circensian games; supposing it to be done in contempt of himself, and the expectation of a revolution in the government. There were no persons he was more severe against than jugglers and astrologers; and as soon as any one of them was informed against, he put him to death without the formality of a trial. He was enraged against them, because, after his proclamation by which he commanded all astrologers to quit home, and Italy also, before the calends [the first] of October, a bill was immediately posted about the city, with the following words:-- "TAKE NOTICE: [713] The Chaldaeans also decree that Vitellius Germanicus shall be no more, by the day of the said calends." He was even suspected of being accessory to his mother's death, by forbidding sustenance to be given her when she was unwell; a German witch [714],

whom he held to be oracular, having told him, "That he would long reign in security if he survived his mother." But others say, that being quite weary of the state of affairs, and apprehensive of the future, she obtained without difficulty a dose of poison from her son.

XV. In the eighth month of his reign, the troops both in Moesia and Pannonia revolted from him; as did likewise, of the armies beyond sea, those in Judaea and Syria, some of which swore allegiance to Vespasian as emperor in his own presence, and others in his absence. In order, therefore, to secure the favour and affection of the people, Vitellius lavished on all around whatever he had it in his power to bestow, both publicly and privately, in the most extravagant manner. He also levied soldiers in the city, and promised all who enlisted as volunteers, not only their discharge after the victory was gained, but all the rewards due to veterans who had served their full time in the wars. The enemy now pressing forward both by sea and land, on one hand he opposed against them his brother with a fleet, the new levies, and a body of gladiators, and in another quarter the troops and generals who were engaged at Bedriacum. But being beaten or betrayed in every direction, he agreed with Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, to abdicate, on condition of having his life spared, and a hundred millions of sesterces granted him; and he immediately, upon the palace-steps, publicly declared to a large body of soldiers there assembled, "that he resigned the government, which he had accepted reluctantly;" but they all remonstrating against it, he deferred the conclusion of the treaty. Next day, early in the morning, he came down to the Forum in a very mean habit, and with many tears repeated the (438) declaration from a writing which he held in his hand; but

the soldiers and people again interposing, and encouraging him not to give way, but to rely on their zealous support, he recovered his courage, and forced Sabinus, with the rest of the Flavian party, who now thought themselves secure, to retreat into the Capitol, where he destroyed them all by setting fire to the temple of Jupiter, whilst he beheld the contest and the fire from Tiberius's house [715], where he was feasting. Not long after, repenting of what he had done, and throwing the blame of it upon others, he called a meeting, and swore "that nothing was dearer to him than the public peace;" which oath he also obliged the rest to take. Then drawing a dagger from his side, he presented it first to the consul, and, upon his refusing it, to the magistrates, and then to every one of the senators; but none of them being willing to accept it, he went away, as if he meant to lay it up in the temple of Concord; but some crying out to him, "You are Concord," he came back again, and said that he would not only keep his weapon, but for the future use the cognomen of Concord.

XVI. He advised the senate to send deputies, accompanied by the Vestal Virgins, to desire peace, or, at least, time for consultation. The day after, while he was waiting for an answer, he received intelligence by a scout, that the enemy was advancing. Immediately, therefore, throwing himself into a small litter, borne by hand, with only two attendants, a baker and a cook, he privately withdrew to his father's house, on the Aventine hill, intending to escape thence into Campania. But a groundless report being circulated, that the enemy was willing to come to terms, he suffered himself to be carried back to the palace. Finding, however, nobody there, and those who were with him stealing away, he girded round his waist a belt full of gold

pieces, and then ran into the porter's lodge, tying the dog before the door, and piling up against it the bed and bedding.

XVII. By this time the forerunners of the enemy's army had broken into the palace, and meeting with nobody, searched, as was natural, every corner. Being dragged by them out of his cell, and asked "who he was?" (for they did not recognize him), "and if he knew where Vitellius was?" he deceived them by a falsehood. But at last being discovered, he begged hard to be detained in custody, even were it in a prison; pretending to have something to say which concerned Vespasian's security. Nevertheless, he was dragged half-naked into the Forum, with his hands tied behind him, a rope about his neck, and his clothes torn, amidst the most contemptuous abuse, both by word and deed, along the Via Sacra; his head being held back by the hair, in the manner of condemned criminals, and the point of a sword put under his chin, that he might hold up his face to public view; some of the mob, meanwhile, pelting him with dung and mud, whilst others called him "an incendiary and glutton." They also upbraided him with the defects of his person, for he was monstrously tall, and had a face usually very red with hard-drinking, a large belly, and one thigh weak, occasioned by a chariot running against him, as he was attending upon Caius [716], while he was driving. At length, upon the Scalae Gemoniae, he was tormented and put to death in lingering tortures, and then dragged by a hook into the Tiber.



XVIII. He perished with his brother and son [717], in the fifty-seventh year of his age [718], and verified the prediction of those who, from the omen which happened to him at Vienne, as before related [719], foretold that he would be made prisoner by some man of Gaul. For he was seized by Antoninus Primus, a general of the adverse party, who was born at Toulouse, and, when a boy, had the cognomen of Becco [720], which signifies a cock's beak.

## COMMENTARY

(440) After the extinction of the race of the Caesars, the possession of the imperial power became extremely precarious; and great influence in the army was the means which now invariably led to the throne. The soldiers having arrogated to themselves the right of nomination, they either unanimously elected one and the same person, or different parties supporting the interests of their respective favourites, there arose between them a contention, which was usually determined by an appeal to arms, and followed by the assassination of the unsuccessful competitor. Vitellius, by being a parasite of all the emperors from Tiberius to Nero inclusively, had risen to a high military rank, by which, with a spirit of enterprise, and large promises to the soldiery, it was not difficult to snatch the reins of government, while they were yet fluctuating in the hands of Otho. His ambition prompted to the attempt, and his boldness was crowned with success. In the service of the four preceding emperors, Vitellius had imbibed the principal vices of them all: but what chiefly distinguished him was extreme voraciousness, which, though he usually pampered it with enormous luxury,

could yet be gratified by the vilest and most offensive garbage. The pusillanimity discovered by this emperor at his death, forms a striking contrast to the heroic behaviour of Otho.

## FOOTNOTES

[689]

Faunus was supposed to be the third king who reigned over the original inhabitants of the central parts of Italy, Saturn being the first. Virgil makes his wife's name Marica--

Hunc Fauna, et nympha genitum Laurente Marica Accipimus.     --Aen. vii. 47.

Her name may have been changed after her deification; but we have no other accounts than those preserved by Suetonius, of several of the traditions handed down from the fabulous ages respecting the Vitellian family.

[690]

The Aequicolae were probably a tribe inhabiting the heights in the neighbourhood of Rome. Virgil describes them, Aen. vii. 746.

[691]

Nuceria, now Nocera, is a town near Mantua; but Livy, in treating of the war with the Samnites, always speaks of Luceria, which Strabo calls a town in Apulia.

[692]

Cassius Severus is mentioned before, in AUGUSTUS, c. lvi.; CALIGULA, c. xvi., etc.

[693]

A.U.C. 785.

[694]

A.U.C. 787.

[695]

He is frequently commended by Josephus for his kindness to the Jews. See, particularly, Antiq. VI. xviii.

[696]

A.U.C. 796, 800.

[697]

A.U.C. 801.

[698]

A.U.C. 797. See CLAUDIUS, c. xvii.

[699]

A.U.C. 801.

[700]

A.U.C. 767; being the year after the death of the emperor Augustus; from whence it appears that Vitellius was seventeen years older than Otho, both being at an advanced age when they were raised to the imperial dignity.

[701]

He was sent to Germany by Galba.

[702]

See TIBERIUS, c. xliii.

[703]

Julius Caesar, also, was said to have exchanged brass for gold in the Capitol, Junius, c. liv. The tin which we here find in use at Rome, was probably brought from the Cassiterides, now the Scilly islands. whence it had been an article of commerce by the Phoenicians and Carthaginians from a very early period.

[704]

A.U.C. 821.

[705]

A.U.C. 822.

[706]

Vienne was a very ancient city of the province of Narbonne, famous in ecclesiastical history as the early seat of a bishopric in Gaul.

[707]

See OTHO, c. ix.

[708]

See OTHO, c. ix.

[709]

Agrippina, the wife of Nero and mother of Germanicus, founded a colony on the Rhine at the place of her birth. Tacit. Annal. b. xii. It became a flourishing city, and its origin may be traced in its modern name, Cologne.

[710]

A dies non fastus, an unlucky day in the Roman calendar, being the anniversary of their great defeat by the Gauls on the river Allia, which joins the Tiber about five miles from Rome. This disaster happened on the 16th of the calends of August [17th July].

[711]

Posca was sour wine or vinegar mixed with water, which was used by the Roman soldiery as their common drink. It has been found beneficial in the cure of putrid diseases.

[712]

Upwards of 4000 pounds sterling. See note, p. 487.

[713]

In imitation of the form of the public edicts, which began with the words, BONUM FACTUM.

[714]

Catta muliere: The Catti were a German tribe who inhabited the present countries of Hesse or Baden. Tacitus, *De Mor. Germ.*, informs us that the Germans placed great confidence in the prophetic inspirations which they attributed to their women.

[715]

Suetonius does not supply any account of the part added by Tiberius to the palace of the Caesars on the Palatine, although, as it will be recollected, he has mentioned or described the works of Augustus, Caligula, and Nero. The banquetting-room here mentioned would easily command a view of the Capitol, across the narrow intervening valley. Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, was prefect of the city.

[716]

Caligula.

[717]

Lucius and Germanicus, the brother and son of Vitellius, were slain near Terracina; the former was marching to his brother's relief.

[718]

A.U.C. 822.

[719]

c. ix.

[720]

Becco, from whence the French bec, and English beak; with, probably, the family names of Bec or Bek. This distinguished provincial, under his Latin name of Antoninus Primus, commanded the seventh legion in Gaul. His character is well drawn by Tacitus, in his usual terse style, Hist. XI. 86. 2.