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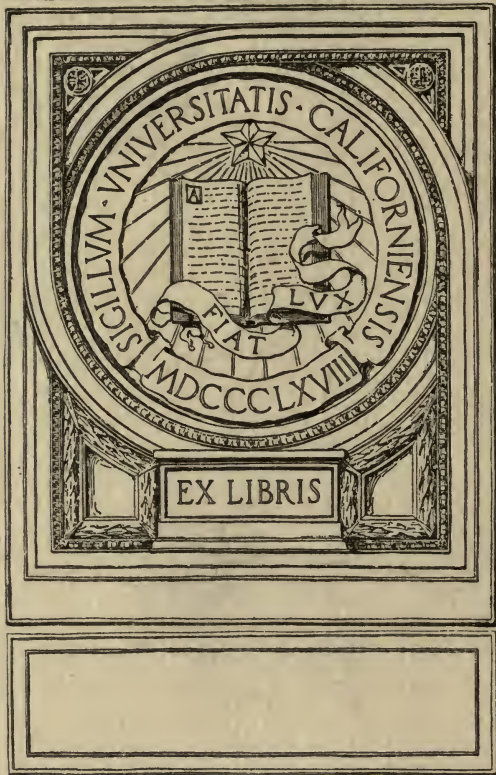
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THE REIGN OF
THE EMPEROR PROBUS

J. H. E. CREES, D.LIT.

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THE EMPEROR PROBUS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CLAUDIAN AS AN HISTORICAL
AUTHORITY

The Thirlwall Prize Essay, 1907. Cambridge
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THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR PROBUS

BY

J. H. E. CREES, M.A. CAMB., D.LIT. LOND.

LATE SCHOLAR OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; THIRLWALL
PRIZEMAN AND MEDALLIST, 1907; HEAD MASTER OF
THE CRYPT GRAMMAR SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER

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PREFACE

THIS essay deals chiefly with the Reign of the Emperor Probus. But the essential preliminary to an investigation of the reign of any emperor who ruled between A.D. 117 and 285 is an examination of the Augustan History, and therefore considerable space has necessarily been devoted to a discussion of the views which have been put forward, from time to time, by so many scholars. The controversy as to the date and authenticity of the Augustan History has been maintained chiefly by German, Italian and French scholars, and, so far as I am aware, no monograph dealing with the subject has yet appeared in England. Miss Orma Fitch Butler, of the Oxford College for Women (Ohio), in *Studies in the Life of Heliogabalus* has recently discussed the question of the authorship of the Augustan History. The conclusions to which I have come were arrived at before I had had the advantage of seeing her work.

The following books have been consulted :—

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Gloucester,
September 1911.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the country, from the earliest times to the present. It is written in a clear and concise style, and is well illustrated with maps and drawings. The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed description of the country, and is also well illustrated. The third part of the book is devoted to a description of the people and their customs. The fourth part of the book is devoted to a description of the government and the laws of the country. The fifth part of the book is devoted to a description of the commerce and industry of the country. The sixth part of the book is devoted to a description of the education and literature of the country. The seventh part of the book is devoted to a description of the religion and philosophy of the country. The eighth part of the book is devoted to a description of the art and architecture of the country. The ninth part of the book is devoted to a description of the music and drama of the country. The tenth part of the book is devoted to a description of the science and technology of the country. The eleventh part of the book is devoted to a description of the history of the country. The twelfth part of the book is devoted to a description of the future of the country.

THE REIGN OF PROBUS

CHAPTER I

EMPIRES, like individuals, have their vicissitudes. The ship of state rides now on the crest of the billows, now sinks deep in the trough. Rome, if any state, had experienced both the smiles of fortune and the tribulation of adversity. Vopiscus,¹ in one of those few passages which have any pretensions to literary merit, elaborates this thesis, and traces Rome's chequered fortunes from the earliest dawn of its history down to his own day. Rome had been well-nigh overwhelmed by the Gallic cataclysm, yet a new city rose, phoenix-like, from the ruins of the old. The varied fortune of the Punic wars was followed by a long

¹ Vopiscus, *Carus*, 1. 1, *seq.* "fato rem publicam regi, eamque nunc ad summum evehi, nunc ad minima retrahi Probi mors satis prodidit, nam cum ducta per tempora variis vel erecta motibus, vel afflicta, nunc tempestate aliqua nunc felicitate variata . . . videbatur post diversitatem malorum iam secuta continuata felicitatis mensura . . . adolevit deinde usque ad tempora Gallicani belli sed quasi quodam mersa naufragio, capta praeter arcem urbe plus paene mali sensit quam tunc boni habuerat . . . longum est quae sequuntur universa connectere. invidet Claudio longinquitatem imperii, amans varietatum prope et semper inimica fortuna iustitiae, sic enim Aurelianus occisus est, et sic Tacitus absumptus, sic Probus caesus, ut appareat nihil tam gratum esse fortunae quam ut ea quae sunt in publicis actibus, eventuum varietate mutentur."

spell of stagnation, a time of superficial prosperity,¹ in which the destruction of the republic was being prepared, and, again, the reigns of terror under the earlier Emperors were followed by those halcyon days of the Antonines which Gibbon justly celebrates.² The period, however, between the death of Marcus Aurelius and the accession of Diocletian is the most miserable and the most inglorious century in Roman history. An evil destiny dogged Rome. The Roman spirit and the Roman virtues seemed buried in an unnatural slumber. Routine doubtless accomplished its daily round, stolidly indifferent to the horrors and calamities which encompassed it, but this squalid and unhappy period seems, like some ghastly nightmare, to interrupt the even tenor of the Roman rule, an episode unrelated either to the peaceful epoch of the Antonines, or to the order and stern restraint of the age of Diocletian and Constantine. It is a time rather of internal strife than of external troubles. The soldiery, like children wearied of their toys, set up an interminable succession of puppet-emperors. The Emperor was a despot, but a despot helpless in the hands of his janissaries. Some there were who, in this time of turbulence and anarchy, strove to restore the elements of good government, and some, like Severus, were partly successful. But the annals of the time contain chiefly a record of a succession of rulers, stained by the vilest vices, and profitless stewards of the imperial resources, or

¹ Mommsen, *History of Rome*, ii. 36.

² Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (the first paragraph).

well-intentioned men honourably endeavouring to restore Rome's prestige, but foredoomed to failure, since the soldiery had lost, with all their other virtues, the special military virtue of "modestia." Thus, the characters which appear before us are pitiless, mistrustful, and reckless, or virtuously futile. Never might the Furies, pointing to the world, have with greater exultation bidden Justice abandon humanity and seek the stars.¹

Yet Rome began slowly and painfully to recover from its century-long malady. In the latter half of the third century the barbarians began again to press upon the frontiers more insistently and to better purpose, and under the chastening influence of adversity, the necessity of order and discipline became apparent even to the most turbulent legionary. Gradually, not without many difficulties and checks, the Emperors reasserted their ancient prestige. This tendency, which is seen at work under Aurelian, Probus and Tacitus, triumphs at length under Diocletian and his successors, nor was imperial authority again degraded to its former level. The difference between the treatment of Probus by his troops, and that of Honorius, an incomparably weaker personality, marks another stage in the history of the Empire. The sanctity of the Emperor, the immeasurable difference between him and his subjects, and, as a corollary, the assertion of the hereditary principle against the principle of election by the Senate, or selection at the caprice of tumultuous legions, are

¹ Cf. Claudian, *In Rufinum*, i. 363.

"linque homines, sortemque meam, pete sidera."

the consequences of the new spirit which pervades Roman affairs.

The sterile annals of the age between the death of Antoninus Pius and the accession of Diocletian are a proof that History can occasionally approximate to the Newgate Calendar. It was the golden age of the desperado and the cut-throat, and the imperial succession was handed down from one Jack Sheppard to another, whose only merit was the shortness of his rule. There is a certain spaciousness about the Roman Empire which distinguishes it from all others, and even this century of chaos and misrule, which seems to have neither an ancestral connection with the palmy days of the Antonines, nor a sequel in the strict and orderly government of Diocletian, viewed in its true perspective appears but as a troublous episode in Rome's history. Yet in spite of the appalling phantasmagoria of anarchy and crime,¹ which is almost all that has been handed down for us to perceive, the Roman Empire contrived to preserve its existence and its continuity, and historians have with reason refused entirely to abandon their researches into the history of this age, but have turned from superficial things to the inner hidden life of the Roman Empire as revealed in inscriptions and other records. Even during these years the Roman Empire was developing, and tendencies previously originated were marching

¹ Hopkins, *Alexander Severus*. "A bid for empire, the acclamation of the soldiery, a meteoric Imperial career, death by the swords of the mutinous army, that is the epitome of the life of the majority of the Caesars."

onward to their accomplishment. To understand fully the Empire of the time of Probus it is well to turn back a moment to some Emperors of the past.

The reign of Severus (A.D. 193–211) has rightly been said¹ to mark an epoch in the history of autocracy. The imperial power was based henceforth upon the army, and upon the army alone, and the fiction of the dyarchy, a partnership between Emperor and Senate, was allowed to fall into oblivion. The soldier, who became such an important personage, was pampered and allowed to disregard the claims of discipline. He lived in plenty and in the bosom of his family.² The rest of the world under this rule of militarism became mere ciphers. Italy lost her coveted privilege of sole eligibility for admission to the praetorian guards, and of keeping its soil free from the presence of barbarian soldiers, and the *Ius Italicum* was bestowed upon many cities in the provinces. The Senate dared not oppose the slightest wish of its imperial master, and lost most of its revenues, owing to the reduction of the *aerarium* to insignificance. When Alexander Severus (A.D. 222–235), a prince of the best intentions and favourably disposed to the Senate, was invested with the imperial power, there was little change. He desired to restore the prestige of the Senate, but he carried out this policy in a half-hearted manner.³

¹ Stuart Jones, *The Roman Empire*, p. 252.

² Restrictions upon marriage were now abolished, legionaries wore gold rings and received frequent donatives.

³ Hopkins, *Alexander Severus*, p. 223. "Half-blindly,

Militarism was now fully established, and the good intentions of a weak-minded emperor could not overcome an irresistible tendency. Then followed a series of Emperors or "tyrants"—the difference was immaterial—"transient and embarrassed phantoms," all of them. Under Valerian and Gallienus Rome reached its nadir¹ and both Postumus in Gaul² and Odaenathus³ in the East might justly despise the master whom they had disowned. But the frenzy of militarism had now almost spent itself, and the Empire might now seem a prize scarcely worth snatching at. Claudius (A.D. 268–270) brought with him a transient gleam of sunshine. He fought bravely with the difficulties which confronted him—and truly few men have had to cope with more. Gaul, Spain and Britain in the West had gone, Zenobia, though discreet and outwardly unaggressive, had practically annexed the far-Eastern portion of the Empire, while the Alamanni and the Goths had broken through the Illyrian limes in Raetia and Dacia respectively. The Alamanns were defeated near Lake Benacus, and Spain returned to her allegiance. In spite of the Alaman-

with enthusiasm tempered by weakness, he trod the path of reaction, only to find the Senate a broken reed, and the army the real autocrat of all the world."

¹ Vopiseus, *Carus*, 3. 4. "nihil post haec praeter Severi diligentiam usque ad Alexandrum Mammeam sensit bonum. uti enim Valeriano principe non potuit et Gallienum per quindecim annos passa est."

² Proclaimed Emperor A.D. 258. Established an "Empire of the Gauls," but this empire was Roman in all its characteristics. He won victories over the Germans, as coins show.

³ Ruler of Palmyra. It is too much, perhaps, to say that he disowned Gallienus, though his allegiance was only nominal. On his death, his wife Zenobia succeeded to his power.

nine victory, Claudius did not march northwards into Gaul,¹ where Postumus had been succeeded as ruler by Victorinus, who in turn was slain at Köln (A.D. 269). The huge preparations of the Goths—it is said that the men alone in their host amounted to 320,000—rendered it necessary for him to take the field against them. They were, however, defeated at Naissus (A.D. 269). Claudius, who had refused Zenobia all recognition, would next, probably, have gone to the East, but died at Sirmium, attacked by the plague which was then raging.²

The attempt to replace Claudius by his brother Quintillus proved abortive, and Aurelian was proclaimed Emperor by the Pannonian legions. It is said that Aurelian would have been chosen on the death of Gallienus, but for his strictness.³ However, the Senate, though it strongly disliked Aurelian, had in reality gained nothing from Claudius, who, angered by their considering the death of Gallienus as a victory for their order, compelled them to deify the murdered Emperor, and jealously guarded all his prerogatives, while, however, avoiding an open quarrel. Aurelian, by his harshness, caused the Senate to look back with

¹ Claudius acted prudently. Homo justly regards it as Claudius's merit "ut dilata imperii restitutione consilia viresque ad barbaros repellendos unice intenderit."

² He received the honour of deification. In later times it was sought to connect Claudius with Constantius Chlorus. Pollio, in his life of Claudius, invents oracles to prove that the descendants of Claudius shall reign for ever (*Claudius*, 3. 6, 10. 1-7. In 11. 9 Claudius's pedigree is even traced to Dardanus of Ilium). Vopiscus accepts this descent, *Aurelian*, 44. 5.

³ Homo, *De Claudio Gothico*, p. 29.

longing upon the days of his predecessor,¹ and as the history of the time is deeply tinged with senatorial prejudices, Aurelian's reputation suffered. In spite, however, of such paltry depreciation, Aurelian must be regarded as Rome's saviour, and in his short reign (A.D. 270-275) the Empire regained its proper limits. A treaty was made with the Goths, and Aurelian, recognizing the difficulty of defending a trans-Danubian province, surrendered Dacia.² Some of the inhabitants were taken across the Danube to Moesia, and Aurelian called this region his Dacia. The Alamanns were defeated after three severe battles, and Tetricus, a Roman senator who had been made, against his will, ruler of Gaul, entered into secret communications with Aurelian and went over to his side on the field of battle (A.D. 273). Meanwhile Aurelian had experienced trouble at Rome. He had displaced the Senate, and had still more seriously offended the corrupt vested interest of the minters, who for a long period now had been debasing the coin, to their own great profit.³ Aurelian ruthlessly

¹ Yet Claudius yielded nothing. The Senate were still excluded from a military career, and Claudius quietly encroached upon their privileges. The "legati" of the provinces were supposed to be senators. No equestrian "legati" were appointed, but we find "vices agentes legati," and "vices agentes legatorum pro praetore," and these deputies needed not to be senators. *Homo*, p. 71.

² Vopiscus, *Aurelian*, 39. 7. "cum vastatum Illyricum ac Moesiam deperditam videret, provinciam trans Danubium Daciam a Traiano constitutam sublato exercitu et provincialibus reliquit, desperans eam posse retineri; abductosque ex ea populos in Moesiam collocavit, appellavitque suam Daciam, quae nunc duas Moesias dividit." Lécrivain, p. 362, would read instead "*eam*," after Eutropius, 9. 15.

³ Mommsen, *Roman Coinage* (French translation), iv.

closed the mint at Rome, and the cowardly and corrupt officials whose misfeasance had so long been tolerated, treacherously seized the opportunity of external troubles to revolt. There was a pitched battle on the Caelian hill, which ended in the destruction of the rebellious faction, whose strength was unfortunately augmented by Aurelian's unpopularity.

Aurelian now turned to the East, where his last great achievement awaited him. A long and arduous conflict resulted in the complete overthrow of Zenobia's power,¹ and Palmyra, which again rebelled, was blotted out from the list of Roman cities. Aurelian celebrated a glorious triumph, in which Zenobia was the general cynosure (A.D. 274).

Aurelian again set out for the East, but, at Caenofrurium near Byzantium, met his death by the hands of conspirators who were the dupes of Eros, the Emperor's secretary.² The Senate, as we have said, disliked Aurelian,³ and were shocked

62-112. Felicissimus seems to have been the captain of this unscrupulous gang.

¹ There were Roman victories near Antioch and Emesa. After a long siege Palmyra was taken, in spite of a Persian attempt at relief.

² He told them, falsely, that the Emperor had decided upon their destruction. In self-defence, therefore, they assassinated him. Vopiscus calls it "calliditas servi nequissimi, error militarium."

³ Vopiscus says (*Aurelian*, 44. 1.), "Aurelianum quidem multi neque inter bonos neque inter malos principes ponunt, idcirco quod ei, clementia, imperatorum dos prima, defuerit." Yet he strangely says, "populus autem Romanus *amavit*, senatus et timuit." Diocletian is said to have censured Aurelian's savagery ("ferocitas"). Perhaps he had a lively apprehension that his predecessor would be a serious rival for the applause of posterity.

by the sight of Tetricus, a senator, in the train of captives at Aurelian's triumph. Vopiscus hesitates whether to place Aurelian among the good or the bad Emperors; modern historians have fewer scruples and fewer doubts.

The brief reign of Tacitus owes such importance as it possesses to a temporary revival of senatorial pretensions. The army had an uneasy feeling that some one had blundered, and realized in an unwonted fit of repentance that perhaps assassination was not the due and proper reward of the restoration of the Empire. It determined that the murderers, whom it abstained from punishing for their mistaken action, should not derive any advantage from their witlessness. It therefore remitted the choice of an Emperor to the Senate,¹ which, not to be outdone in courtesy, wisely declined the doubtful honour, and six months passed before the Senate and the army ceased to bandy compliments. This interregnum is celebrated by Vopiscus in a specimen of his choicest fustian, in order that future ages may have some record of this astounding self-control, and that aspirants to the purple may learn the lesson not to be too precipitate. One might have thought that this period of calm proved that an Emperor was superfluous. However, on the

¹ Vopiscus, *Aurelian*, 40. 2. "de imperatore deligendo exercitus rettulit ad senatum, idcirco quod nullum de his faciendum putabat qui tam bonum principem occiderant." Vopiscus gives a letter of the army, doubtless apocryphal, *Aurelian*, 41.

Tacitus, 2. "senatus sciens lectos a se principes militibus non placere, rem ad milites rettulit, dumque id saepius fit, sextus est peractus mensis."

twenty-fifth of September A.D. 275, the Senate addressed itself to the momentous task of choosing an Emperor.¹ The consul Gordianus, after haranguing the fathers on the need of immediate action, in view of the movements of the Germans on the frontier of the Rhine and the threatening attitude of the Persians,² called upon M. Claudius Tacitus, who seems to have been "princeps senatus."³

¹ The evidence of coins seems to explode the story of an interregnum. The Alexandrine coins show that Aurelian was alive after August 29, 275, his seventh year according to the Alexandrine mode of reckoning. Poole, *Alexandrian Coins*. 2402-2408 belong to Tacitus. The tradition that Tacitus began to reign in September seems trustworthy. The interregnum, then, becomes a trivial matter of three or four weeks, the time necessary for an exchange of opinions between the Senate and the army. The reigns of Tacitus and Florian were so short that they might be considered as an interregnum between the reigns of Aurelian and Probus. *C. I. L.*, ii. 4635, 4636 and xiii. 5563 show that Tacitus was Emperor before December 10.

² Vopiscus gives a full account, which purports to be taken from the proceedings of the Senate. Velius Cornificius Gordianus is only given in the *Prosopographia* as mentioned in this passage. "imperator est deligendus . . . limitem trans Rhenum Germani rupisse dicuntur, occupasse urbes validas, nobiles, divites et potentes. iam si nihil de Persicis motibus nuntiatur, cogitate leves esse mentes Syrorum," etc. If the interregnum only lasted three weeks, these movements are less likely, another argument against the authenticity of the speech. Still the account, in its outlines, seems perfectly natural and credible.

³ It was Tacitus who, at the former meeting of the Senate, had been first called upon and had proposed the deification of Aurelian. Meanwhile the senators must have discussed possible candidates amongst themselves, and Tacitus had modestly sought retirement at Baiae. He was brought back, however. In Tacitus, 7, it is stated that he was there two months. This is improbable. It is supposed that at this time the Emperors had given up the title of "princeps senatus," which Augustus had originally adopted.

But the conclave had already come to a decision, and in elaborate and doubtless carefully-rehearsed terms acclaimed as Emperor the blushing and confused Tacitus. They knew well whom they had chosen, as Tacitus naïvely remarked. In vain he urged his age, his inexperience, his unfitness for the arduous tasks which awaited the successor of Aurelian. What mattered these slight deficiencies? ¹ Trajan had succeeded to the Empire as an elderly man, and Hadrian and Antoninus also; they desired a statesman, not a warrior. The hall resounded with cries of "Heaven preserve Tacitus Augustus." ² Rome had had enough of boy-emperors, whose pens had to be guided by their tutors, yet one speaker revealed the secret of this action by an adjuration to Tacitus not to nominate his children as heirs, but to imitate Nerva and Trajan. ³

Tacitus's sole claim to the imperial office was his

¹ *Tacitus*. "incertum quam sententiam vellet dicere, omnis senatus acclamavit." Ch. 4 . . . "scit senatus quem principem fecerit." 9. 6.

² *Ibid.*, 4. 5. "miror in locum Aureliani fortissimi principis senem velle principem." . . . "vix munia senatus implemus, vix sententias edicimus." . . . "an probaturos senem imperatorem milites creditis." The reply was "imperatorum non militem facimus. habes prudentiam et bonum fratrem." (It seems to be assumed that Florian would assist his brother, but we have nothing to prove that he was "capable.") "Tacite Auguste, dii te servant."

³ *Ibid.*, 6. 5. "dii avertant principes pueros, et patres patriae dici impuberes. et quibus ad subscribendum magistri litterarii manus teneant" . . . "teque, Tacite, convenio, petens ne parvulos tuos facias heredes Romani imperii ne sic rempublicam patresque conscriptos populumque Romanum, ut villulam tuam, ut colonos tuos, ut servos relinquant quare circumspice, imitare Nervas Traianos, Hadrianos."

lack of distinction and his insignificance¹—even his descent from the historian was a fiction—and such a claim was, in the eyes of the Senate, too strong to be rejected. He was intended merely to be the Senate's instrument, and if his election resulted in Rome's catastrophe, "after them the deluge." Invested with the purple, he bore himself with the same humility and modesty which had led him, when his elevation was first mooted, to retire to Baiae.² He urged Probus, whom the Fates destined to be his successor, not to relax his zeal for the State, reminded him how much depended upon his services, and spoke of his tried capacity.³ He did not take umbrage when difficulties were put in the way of his brother Florian receiving a consulship in the ensuing year, A.D. 276. The Senate proved by the letters which it dispatched to Carthage, Antioch, Corinth, and other important

¹ He was a senator and an ex-consul, and, as the Senate were excluded from the military profession, without experience of warfare. He is said to have read "ad stuporem." The use of literature as a narcotic had apparently already been discovered. He was very fond of lettuces, and other pieces of "chaste information" may be found in Vopiscus.

² Zonaras, xii. 28, says Tacitus was elected when in Campania. Vopiscus is aware of this variant account, but seems to give the correct story, though his appeal to Tacitus's signature in the 6th armarium of the Ulpian library will convince no one.

³ *Probus*, 7. 3. "attamen sciendum tibi est tuis nunc humeris magis incubuisse rem publicam, qui et quantus sis omnes novimus." The consulship for next year, A.D. 276, was offered him, but Vopiscus rightly says that the formula "te manet Capitolina palmata" could not be an omen of empire, as it was the usual phrase in such cases. Unfortunately the "ducatu totius Orientis" which is offered to Probus is an office which did not exist.

cities, in what small account it held its nominee. The power of appointing the Emperor had reverted to it (if a prerogative which it had never enjoyed could do so), and also the right to hear appeals. The State was restored to its original constitution¹ and the laws of Romulus had returned.² Indolent and invalid senators were urged to assume fresh vigour and strength for the duties which it behoved them to perform.

Such was the blindness of the Senate nine years before the accession of Diocletian, and its folly is only matched by the fatuity of its chronicler. If any evidence were needed of the entire incapacity of the Senate to hold together a falling Empire, there is ample proof in the choice, in succession to Aurelian, of a weak, undistinguished, good-natured old man to take arms against the sea of troubles which compassed Rome about on every side. Truly the Senate knew whom it had chosen. It chose

¹ *Tacitus*, 18. 2. "quod bonum, faustum, felix, salutareque sit rei publicae orbique Romani, dandi ius imperii, appellandi principis, nuncupandi Augusti, ad nos revertit, ad nos igitur referte quae magna sunt." To Carthage, and similarly to Antioch, Aquileia, Milan, Alexandria, Thessalonica, Corinth and Athens. There is a private letter from Autronius Tiberianus to his father urging him to resume his attendance at meetings, and another to Cerrius Metianus, which significantly says, "possumus et prohibere, qui coepimus facere; dictum sapienti sat est." With his usual carelessness Vopiscus puts these letters in a kind of appendix at the end of the life of Florian. It is evident that Peter is right in considering the lives of Tacitus and Florian as one. These two letters have, of course, been rejected. If not "ben vero," they are certainly "ben trovato."

² Cf. Claudian, "Romuleas leges rediisse fatemur." One evidence of the Senate's activity is the reappearance of the letters S.C. on the coins of this reign.

with open eyes, and by its choice it pronounced its own condemnation.¹

¹ Aurelius Victor has an uneasy feeling that the Senate acted badly. 36, "quae tamen laetitia brevis neque exitu tolerabilis fuit . . . *refici militia* potuit . . . neque iudicio manipularium imperium daretur, *amplissimo ac tanto ordine in castris degente*. verum dum oblectantur otio simulque divitiis pavent, munivere militaribus et paene barbaris viam in se ac posteros dominandi."

CHAPTER II

AUTHORITIES OTHER THAN THE "AUGUSTAN HISTORY"

THE reign of Probus, like the other reigns of this period, has been narrated in scant and incompetent fashion, and such is our dearth of material that an examination of this reign almost resolves itself into an appraisalment of authorities. The authorities are as follow:—

A number of inscriptions, which have been found in different provinces, give us the name and titles of the Emperor, and in some cases enable us to date them with precision, and to confirm or reject statements made by the other authorities.¹ Tacitus's

¹ The following inscriptions refer to Probus. *C. I. L.*, vol. ii., Spain, 1116, 1673, 2071, 3738, 4507, 4881; vol. iii., Dalmatia, etc., 1805, 6433, 8707, 10488, 14019, and 14184³⁵ (Supplement); vol. viii., Africa, 100, 1329, 1353, 5516, 10068, 10085, 10281; vol. ix., Italy, 2329; vol. x., 3728; vol. xii., Gaul, 5437, 5467, 5472. Dessau, i. 1210, has an inscription naming Virius Lupus, who was praefectus urbi A.D. 278–280 and consul A.D. 278, and 1213 one which names Caecilius Rufus Volusianus, who was "corrector Italiae" in A.D. 283 and 284. Also *Ephemeris epigraphica*, vii. 591, 638 (?), 693. Mionnet, *Alexandrian Coins*, vi. 3546–3581, and (quoted in Pauly) *Wien. Num. Zeitschrift*, 1877, pp. 303–322. It may not be out of place to add those referring to the preceding reigns. Tacitus, *C. I. L.*, ii. 4635, 4636, 4638, 4959, 6197 (Florian, 1115); iii. 3204, and Supplement, 14207³⁶ (Florian, 15086); vii. (Florian, 1156); viii. 10072, 10089; ix. 2328; xii. 5563, 5676. Dessau, i. 588 = *Ephemeris epigraphica*, iii. 117, and 589. = *Ibid.*, vii. 590. *Ephemeris epigraphica*, vii. 612, 613, 619, 629 (Florian, 1116). Mionnet, vi. 3539–3545. Supplement, ix. 619, and a few others mentioned in Pauly.

name is given as Claudius always, and this fact seems to dispose of his boasted descent from the historian. Another (xii. 5563) celebrates the reign of liberty, and styles him "verae libertatis auctor." His encounter with the Goths is mentioned (xii. 5676), where he is called "Gothicus Maximus." And two inscriptions at least (ii. 4635, and xii. 5676) show that his tribunician power was held by him over two official years. Four inscriptions show that Florian in his short rule contrived to gain recognition in Britain, Spain and Dalmatia, and assumed all the usual titles of the Emperor. M. Aurelius Probus is given the titles "Imperator," "Pater Patriae," and "Pontifex Maximus." Reference is also made to his tribunician and proconsular powers.¹ These inscriptions show that the Emperors still followed the precedent which Augustus had created, and based their authority (in theory at any rate) upon the various powers which the Senate conferred upon them at their accession.

We have a much larger number of coins (Cohen gives 684). Similarly in the case of his predecessor Tacitus, 174 coins have survived which were struck in his short reign of six months, while there are 108 which commemorate Florian's two months' usurpation. The coins of Probus do not give us much help in chronological matters, and do not

¹ Cf. ii. 2071: "imperatorii Caes. M. Aur. Probo. Pio. Felici invicto. Aug.," and 4507: "P. M. Trib. Pot." Here Probus's name is erased. 4881: "Pont. M. Trib. P.P.P. Procos." The years of the tribunician power start from December 9. Thus ii. 1673, trib. potestatis VI. Cos. IV. is quite correct.

often refer to consulships and other powers.¹ They confirm the statement of Vopiscus that Probus was granted the titles of "Augustus" and "Pater Patriae," and that he held the office of "Pontifex Maximus," as did all the Emperors, following the example of Augustus. He is described somewhat rarely as Lord (cf. 161, "Imperatorio deo et domino Probo Augusto"), a title which became much more the vogue in later times. He is also a few times described as "perpetuus" or "bonus imperator." The coins give some record of his consulships. It would seem that Probus desired to show his "civilitas" by assuming the consulship year after year. His tribunician power is recorded on some coins.² There are numerous legends on the coins. Probus's qualities are commemorated by legends describing his virtue, clemency, humanity and invincibility.³ His victories over the Germans and Goths are mentioned.⁴

¹ Cohen, vol. v. 40, 222, 371, refer to Probus's first consulship; 69, 89, 112, 221, 267, 285, 298, 375, 437, 588-596 refer to his second; 27, 359, 381-384, 412, 455-461, 477-479, 492, 589, 597 to his third; 67, 83, 355, 397, 403, 462 to his fourth; 68, 385 to his fifth. Lépaulle deals with the coins of Probus very fully. See Appendix.

² *Ibid.*, 27, 40, 371-376, 381. The Alexandrian (Greek) coins are of importance, chronologically speaking, as they give the year of the Emperor's reign. On one we find the symbol denoting 8. Therefore, as the Alexandrian year began on August 29 (or 30 in a leap year), Probus succeeded before the end of August, 276, and was not slain till after August 29, 282. Thus we get, according to the Alexandrian reckoning, eight years.

³ "Virtus Probi," 53, 58, 216, 233, 248, 596-7. "Clementia," 148, 152, 160. "Humanitas," 292. "Indulgentia," 293. "Piaetas" (*sic*), 367. His invincibility, 2, 51, 67. "Pacator Orbis," 25.

⁴ "Victoria Germanorum," 47, 48, 568. "Victoria Gothis," 555.

But these medals, unfortunately, do not mention his consulships, and thus chronological data are lacking. He is often compared, perhaps in allusion to his travels, to Hercules, and there are the customary panegyrics on the happiness of the times.¹ The dubious attitude of the troops might explain the legend "adlocutio militum," which must often have been needed. There are also references to "fides militum," a quality too rarely manifested, to eternal peace, a consummation which the Emperor vainly sought to achieve, and once to the Muse of Augustus, who had many an inglorious epic to write.² Visits to towns are referred to in the inscription "adventus Augusti."³ We have no coins of the tyrants Saturninus and Proculus, but a few of Bonosus, and these are characterized by clumsy workmanship.

We have two enactments of Probus which have been preserved for us in the Code of Justinian,⁴ one of which shows that Probus was at Sirmium on May 5, A.D. 277. This is the sum-total of our contemporary evidence.

Our other authorities are slight in bulk, and their scanty information becomes still scantier after possible truth has been separated from certain fabrication.

Aurelius Victor and Eutropius both give short

¹ Cohen, 39, 80, "temporum felicitas." 546, "tempora felicia." 287, "Herculi Pacifero." 329, "Marti Pacifero."

² "adlocutio militum," 1, 111, 112; "fides militum," 2, 66, 261-267, 333; "concordia militum," 183; "concordia exercitus," 182; "Calliope Augusti," 151.

³ "adventus Augusti," 8.

⁴ *Cod. Justin.*, viii. 56, 2; viii. 54, 4.

notices of the reign. Victor in his *Caesars* gives biographies of all the Emperors down to Constantius. His attitude is that of a senator, and he dwells on all matters which might increase the greatness of the Senate. He wrote about A.D. 360. His biographies can be supplemented in a few details by an epitome whose author must have consulted other authorities besides Victor. Eutropius (A.D. 364–387), who wrote at much the same time, is the author of a history in outline of Rome from its foundation. Its shortness has led some to believe that we have only a summary of it and not the real work, but there is no justification for this view.¹

Orosius, who wrote (about A.D. 417) a history designed to show that Providence was always against the Pagans, passes over the reign in a single paragraph and, as he tells us nothing fresh, need not delay us more than a moment.

Zosimus, on the other hand, is an authority of first-rate importance. His *Historia Nova* was written after A.D. 425, and, it has been proved,² follows in its first part Eunapius as authority, a writer whose history ended with the year A.D. 408. His account of the reign omits many things which we find in Vopiscus, and is fuller than the latter in other cases. Unfortunately, we have not the whole of the reign from Zosimus. The MSS. suddenly stop³ after narrating Probus's

¹ Bechmann and Ulrici thought the history an abbreviation. See Ennman, p. 399.

² See Mendelssohn's edition.

³ The first book ends suddenly with chapter 71. ταῦτα διαταξαμένῳ τῷ Πρόβῳ καλῶς τε καὶ δικαίως οἰκονομήσαντι τὴν ἀρχὴν. Book II. starts in A.D. 305.

dealings with the East and Ptolemais, and we thus lose the end of his first book and the beginning of the second. It appears, however, that his account would not have been prolonged to a much greater length, though it is likely that his account of the death of Probus differed from that of Vopiscus.¹

Zonaras wrote an epitome of histories in the twelfth century. He seems to have followed Zosimus, and probably contented himself with one authority. His account does not seem of much value, and he has little historical ability.

But Zonaras and John of Antioch (of whom we have four fragments relating to the reign) practically prove that Zosimus, whom they followed slavishly, recorded another account of the end of Probus. John says (fragment 160 Müller) that after a successful and just reign, Probus learnt that the troops of Rhaetia and Noricum had revolted and invested Carus with the purple. The troops sent against Carus went over to him, and the deserted Emperor was put to death. The writer who continued Dio writes to the same effect.

The Chronicles of this time are very confused. The accepted dates for the reign of Probus are A.D. 276 (for his accession) and A.D. 282 (for his death). These dates are given only by the Chronicler of A.D. 354 and by Prosper. In these confused times the Fasti seem to have been carelessly compiled, and often, no doubt, it was difficult for the compiler to attain to any certainty. Eusebius has three redundant years from A.D. 192 to the accession of

¹ This may be inferred from Zonaras, who elsewhere seems to follow Zosimus.

Diocletian, and puts Probus's reign in the years 278–285.¹ The *Chronica Constantinopolitana* and the *Consularia Italica* put the reign in the years A.D. 277–283, one year late. Cassiodorus later has a still different inaccuracy, and assigns the reign to the years A.D. 278–285 (a reign of seven years). It is worthy of remark that no chronicler gives only five years to the reign, as Vopiscus and Aurelius Victor do. The chronological data for the events between Probus's accession and his death are very slight, and those chroniclers who do give more than the consular *Fasti* are at variance with one another. Our longer authorities avoid chronology altogether.

It is comparatively easy to examine and appreciate the authorities so far considered. But there remains the still-vexed question of the value of Vopiscus's biography of Probus, bound up with which is the difficult and involved problem of the Augustan History, its author or authors, their sources, its date and trustworthiness. Around all these questions the fiercest controversies have raged, and yet many points are still left awaiting their final solution. In our next chapter we shall attempt a survey of the controversy of the Augustan History, and briefly indicate the views of the chief disputants.

¹ Cf. Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, vol. i. Eusebius gives Probus one year too much. Vopiscus gives Probus only five years. This blunder may be due to the fact that Probus died in the year of his fifth Consulship

CHAPTER III

THE CONTROVERSY

HISTORY, like all literary forms, has its modes and fashions, and different conceptions of the function of the historian have succeeded and dethroned one another, alike in the ancient and in the modern world. Herodotus, the "father of History," as he has been called, was succeeded in a few years by Thucydides, who with his totally different envisagement of History as a series of events proceeding according to laws always and everywhere of like validity, was the originator of scientific History. So at Rome, Livy, the narrator of Rome's growth and conquests, is followed by Tacitus, a writer entirely different in style and standpoint. But History, like the other forms of literature, degenerated, partly owing to political causes. The decadence may be traced even in the great work of Tacitus. The predominance of the Emperors affected History in two ways. The omnipotence of the Emperors rendered their characters and personalities a theme of absorbing interest to their subjects, and, secondly, the senatorial class, who chiefly wrote History, caring little about an Empire which in one sense was no longer theirs, neglected external affairs, and in their

histories concerned themselves chiefly with court intrigues or petty senatorial controversies. Tacitus's greatest fault is this "parochialism," which leads him to ignore the provinces, unless they become the seat of a war, and to concentrate himself upon trivial matters of senatorial prestige. But with Suetonius History descended a degree lower.

Suetonius's importance lies in his substitution of Biography for History. The difference is tremendous. History regards the tendency as omnipotent. It sees in all events an over-mastering and irresistible current which bears on inexorably all without distinction, a destiny which shapes men's ends, rough-hew them how they will. But the biographer is an individualist and a hero-worshipper. He is firmly convinced of the power a great man has to direct or check the course of events in the crises of History. Both the historian and the biographer have their place, but it was distinctly unfortunate that the biographer became triumphant, and that biography pure and simple passed as History.

The best examples of biography in the ancient world are the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch, who wrote shortly after Suetonius. His skill in the selection of his subjects and in the composition of his narratives was such that his Biographies are, and still more were in the centuries after the Renaissance, regarded as some of the most valuable relics of antiquity. But, to be highly successful, Biography must deal with men who sum up their epoch, or are at least representative of it in an especial degree. When this is not the case Biography has an irresistible tendency to sink down to the

level of mere anecdotage.¹ Such it was too often with Suetonius, the father of Biography. He had the distinction of founding a school, and nearly all historical writers for over a century seem to have regarded him as their exemplar.² But while they aped his mannerisms, they fell far short even of his standard. Some were not ashamed to indulge in the most trifling gossip about the subjects of their writings, and those who reprobated these methods did not always avoid the piquant anecdote which gave their narrative such zest.³

And thus it comes about that from the accession of Hadrian to the accession of Diocletian (A.D. 117–285) we depend largely upon the biographies which have been styled the *Augustan History*, a series which aimed at doing for the later Emperors what Suetonius had done for the early Caesars. Much of it is a striking example of how not to write Biography. And in that part of the History which

¹ De Quincey, *Works*, vi. 438, says one word sums the history up—Anecdotage. “They pursue Caesar not only to his fireside, but into his bed-chamber, into his bath, into his cabinet, nay (‘sit honor auribus’) into his cabinet d’aisance.”

² Cf. Vopiscus, *Probus*, 2. 7. “et mihi quidem id animi fuit non ut Sallustios, Livios, Tacitos, Trogos, atque omnes discretissimos imitarer viros . . . sed Marium Maximum, Suetonium Tranquillum, Fabium Marcellinum, Gargilium Martialem, Julium Capitolinum, Aelium Lampridium.” A still more striking proof than this allusion is the imitation of Suetonius’s method, which is found throughout the History.

³ Vopiscus, *Saturninus*, 11. 4. “longum est frivola quaeque connectere, et odiosum dicere quali statura fuerit, quo corpore, quo decore, quid biberit, quid comederit; ab aliis ista dicantur quae prope ad exemplum nihil prosunt.” Vopiscus introduces a revolting anecdote with these words: “quoniam minima quaeque iocunda sunt, et habent aliquid gratiae cum leguntur.” *Proculus*, 12. 6. Peter reads *iocunda*.

deals with those mushroom-like Emperors whose fall was almost simultaneous with their rise to power, the method was peculiarly unfortunate. No age was less suited to a method which *ex hypothesi* assumes that its subject is of some importance, or at least of some interest. Each life starts *de novo*, and we have thus the same fact chronicled in duplicate quite unnecessarily, in the biographies of succeeding Emperors. It was an age of persons, not of personalities, and the result is that these writers have incurred the well-merited contempt of all critics who have concerned themselves with them. "The great Muse of History had descended from Parnassus and was running about Caesar's palace in the bed-gown and slippers of a chambermaid." ¹

The History purports to have been written by six writers, Aelius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Aelius Lampridius, Volcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio and Flavius Vopiscus. Of these writers nothing is known, nor is there any mention of them elsewhere than in the pages of the History. It has been held that there are no traces of individual peculiarities in the History,² and that the whole of it is the work of a forger who assigned the different parts to writers of his own fabrication. There are certainly no strongly differentiating traits in the writers, but the character of their works would not have led us to expect this. They are all writers of one school, and all take Suetonius as

¹ De Quincey. Bernhardt, too, is scornful: "parem in litteris historicorum vel semidoctis neque Graeca antiquitas nec populus Romanus ostentat." ² Dessau, *Hermes*, xxiv. 382.

a common model.¹ Their talent is mediocre, and it is always difficult to distinguish between mediocrities. Yet there are some individual traits, and this especially applies to Vopiscus,² who has some marked mannerisms. We may therefore legitimately suppose that the *Augustan History* is really the work of those writers to whom it purports to belong, except, perhaps, in the case of Volcatius Gallicanus.³ It is not to be supposed that these writers consciously collaborated in a kind of historical syndicate to bridge over an historical gulf. The selection of these biographies and their arrangement in a single book must have been the work of one man, most probably one of the six authors whose names are connected with the work, Capitolinus or Lampridius have been suggested.⁴ Bernhardt was of opinion that the writers were of lowly origin,⁵ but there is really nothing to justify this view. Vopiscus, at any rate, if we may trust his account of his conversation with Tiberianus,

¹ Peter, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, p. 103.

² Klebs, *Rhein. Mus.*, 1892, p. 50. He has some good remarks on the great difference between the literary and the spoken idiom of the time. Authors wrote in a dead language and thus lost vigour of style.

³ Mommsen disbelieves in the existence of this writer. *Hermes*, xxiv. 245. We have only the life of Avidius Cassius, though he proposes a history of all the Augusti. *Cassius*, p. 41.

⁴ Peter, p. 146, thinks Capitolinus edited the History before A.D. 330. Lécivain similarly, p. 26: The "work was revised, and unimportant lives added to complete it." Giambelli suggests Lampridius, Wölfflin Vopiscus.

⁵ *Proœmium de Scriptoribus Historiae Augustae*. He calls them "opifices de plebe, qualiscunque sive artis sive consilii immunes, plebeios magistellos et historiarum quasi scrutariam factitantes, sordido dicendi genere inquinatos." Peter disagrees, *Philologus*, xliii. 138.

was intimate with high officials, and the view taken throughout is the senatorial view.

Most recent works on the *Scriptores* have originated either from a desire to support or oppose the views enunciated by *Dessau* in an article in *Hermes*, 1889, views which he also defends in *Hermes*, 1892. He points out some inaccuracies which render the accepted date difficult. He remarks that *Vopiscus* alludes to *Lampridius* and *Capitolinus*, writers who are supposed to have flourished after him, that *Tiberianus* was not Prefect at the time of the celebration of the *Hilaria*, that there is a reference to *Diocletian* after he had laid down the purple (A.D. 305) though *Vopiscus* is supposed to have written so soon after as A.D. 306, and that the references to *Byzantium* would be meaningless before the foundation of *Constantinople*. But the arguments to which he attaches the greatest weight are others. There is an allusion to the descendants of *Probus*, who live near *Verona* and are, so the prophets say, one day to regain their glory. This prophecy was fulfilled, he holds, by the distinctions which a *Probus* attained in the reign of *Theodosius*. It seems, too, that the *Scriptores* imitate *Victor*, who wrote A.D. 360, and *Eutropius*, who wrote under *Valens* (A.D. 364-378). The work is therefore to be assigned to the last third of the fourth century.

The second half of the theory is that the whole work has proceeded from a single pen. He finds many similarities of expression, and also similarity of method, and identity of point of view. The different authors know nothing of one another, and

though the different style of Vopiscus is admitted, it is simply the same author endeavouring to give greater interest to his work.

Mommsen in 1890 approached the question in *Hermes*. He professes at the outset to be in entire agreement with Dessau, and to write rather to supplement than to correct. But he leaves very little of Dessau's hypothesis unchanged. More scientific than Dessau, he attempts to settle the question by a very close examination to discover anachronisms. Christianity is still associated with Judaism, the geographical designations are those of the age before Diocletian, though there are some traces of the new nomenclature. There was certainly no "corrector Lucaniae" until A.D. 290, and such offices as "praeses Orientis," "praefectus annonae Orientis," "procurator aerarii maioris," are unknown. There is no reference to Diocletian's assigning the command of a legion to a single tribune or to the appointment of "magistri militum," though the office of "dux" is mentioned. The civil and military designations do not take much heed of the great changes under Diocletian, which were not yet firmly established. The History therefore belongs in all essentials to the age in which it purports to have been composed.

He then classifies the Lives in three divisions, the first containing all those biographies which are not attributed to Vopiscus and Pollio, the second the works of Pollio, the third those of Vopiscus. The last two series are genuine, but the first twenty-one biographies have considerable differences. The fourteen Lives of the Emperors are genuine, those

of the Tyrants spurious. The fourteen Lives can be divided into the biographies addressed to Diocletian (9) and those dedicated to Constantine (5), and are the work of only two authors. As the name of Volcatius Gallicanus is only once found we may set him aside, and also one of the three names, Spartianus, Lampridius, Capitolinus. We can accept the genuineness of Trebellius Pollio, who is mentioned by Vopiscus. He wrote before March 25, A.D. 304, the date of Vopiscus's conversation with Tiberianus. As regards the reference to the Hilaria, we must either refer this to the lesser Hilaria or emend. Vopiscus wrote when the four regents were alive; there is no reason to amend "vivorum" to "divorum" in a disputed passage. The forged Lives are the work of the compiler of the biographies dedicated to Constantine, and he made the collection essentially the work we have. This was done about A.D. 330, but the work was interpolated later, and contains allusions to persons of the age of Valentinian and Theodosius.

Dessau in the *Hermes* of 1892 replies to his critics. He does not assume the aggressive much, but stands rather on the defensive. He thinks the prophecies about Claudius's descendants could not have been written down with safety under Constantine, and that the "sortes Virgilianae" were not yet in use as a passage suggests. Valerius was not called so during his lifetime, but Valerius Maximianus or simply Maximianus. He makes some attempt to explain the motive for forgery, though he admits this may be hard to recognize. He points out the uncritical nature of the age, and the scanty

number of readers. With the aid of a few realistic touches, such as the apostrophes of Diocletian and Constantine, it was easy to impose upon readers.

Seeck (*Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pædagogik*, 1890) is still more fantastic. One allusion to Constantine induces him to assign the composition of the History to the reign of the tyrant Constantine (A.D. 407–411), in Gaul, of all places, at the time when it was overrun by the Vandals! Constantine was only a common soldier risen from the ranks, and he had little time to pay attention to history or to the genealogical researches of pedigree-makers. It is true that the Gauls are mentioned, but they are blamed more often than praised.

Klebs (*Rheinisches Museum*, 1890 and 1892) is the most thorough-going champion of the conservative view. He denies that it is proved that Probus came from Verona. All that we know is that he was a patron (*C. I. L.*, v. 33–44, vi. 1753), a different thing, and then the name is very common, and Vopiscus is ironical. It is very improbable that he would trace the pedigree of Constantine the usurper, as it is contrary to his theory that the Empire must not proceed by hereditary succession.

He then makes some valuable remarks about the similarity of the different writers, arising out of their common idiom. The gulf between the literary and the spoken idiom was now very great. It was an effort to write in this style, in this dead idiom; a model had to be followed closely, and this model was Suetonius. He admits some forgeries, but this was due to the habits and views of the time. Documents were composed, and the verses

inserted (whose badness it is sought to extenuate by bringing them forward as translations) are really the composition of the writers. Vopiscus's grandfather is mythical. He knew both Saturninus and Bonosus, though one tyrant arose in the East, the other in Gaul.

This similarity is found in other writings (compare the *Panegyrics* which we have). But it is incorrect to say that there are no individual peculiarities to be found. Klebs proceeds to show the individuality of Vopiscus. He is prejudiced against Christianity, and always refers to Jupiter with great reverence. He speaks often of fate, and has many resemblances to Cicero (given in detail). He has a number of phrases which the other writers have not, and he is throughout far more rhetorical than they; he is fond of alliteration and parallelism, and plays on words. Klebs argues from Vopiscus's individuality that the other writers, too, have their peculiarities (he leaves this point untouched), and that the History is a series composed by from two to six persons. The hypothesis of a later revision is untenable.

Peter has written a whole book on the *Scriptores*; the principal points will be noticed. The collection may be divided into three classes: (1) Lives dedicated to Diocletian, ranging from A.D. 284 to 305; (2) dedicated to friends, A.D. 298 to A.D. 311 or 316; (3) dedicated to Constantine, shortly after A.D. 324 or 325. He accepts the theory of one common source for the *Scriptores*, Victor, and Eutropius, composed under Diocletian. Suetonius is the model, and the similarity of the authors is

due to the imitation of one writer. Trebellius wrote from A.D. 298 to 303, Vopiscus later. We cannot take the reference to the Hilaria to mean the lesser Hilaria without express mention. We must therefore either emend, or regard the whole episode as mere embroidery. The reference to civil war is probably not to the struggle between Constantine and Maxentius, but to the mutiny in November, 307, at Carnuntum. Vopiscus probably wrote *Aurelian* and *Tacitus* between May, 305, and July, 306, *Probus*, etc., about 307, *Carus* by 311. There was finally an editor who arranged and altered the works as he pleased, and added a few biographies to complete the series. This was Capitolinus, and he completed the work about A.D. 330. Peter points out errors and inconsistencies in the speeches and documents. Aelius Scorpianus is mentioned as consul, but we have no other record of him. If the debate in the Senate took place on February 3, he would be a "consul ordinarius." Manlius Statianus, too, is unknown. We know of no third legion called "Felix," or Saracen cohorts. Hunila, given as the name of Bonosus's wife, is a man's name. These documents tell us nothing fresh, and if they had not come down to us we should have lost nothing. Peter seems to accept as genuine the authorities whom Vopiscus quotes (Callicrates, Theoclius, Acholius, Nicomachus, Suetonius Optatianus, Aurelius Festivus, Salvidienus, Onesimus, etc.) and regards the material as excellent. But Vopiscus destroys the sequence of events by his reflections, and gives us merely raw material. In some points Peter's views have changed since

his article in *Philologus*, 1884. He there praises the life of Probus as the best of Vopiscus's performances with regard to the order and completeness of matter; it is on a level with some biographies of Suetonius. There is a love of truth evident in the *Scriptores*. They never fabricate (?) or distort accounts owing to a preconceived bias. Bernhardt is wrong in saying that it is inconceivable that a man moving in the best circles should have left us such a bungling performance, when he had the use of such abundant sources; and Linsenbarth, too, is not justified in regarding our Lives as mere fragments and epitomes. On the whole, Peter thinks that even a better writer, with such material, would not have improved much upon Vopiscus. The speeches were perhaps embellished or invented afterwards, and the "acta" were perhaps made out by rhetoricians. The works were probably written in one decade.

Briinner (*Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaiser-Geschichte*, vol. ii.) examines the biographies of Vopiscus critically. He thinks that the conversation between Tiberianus and Vopiscus has the stamp of truth. Vopiscus wrote between May, 305, and the second half of A.D. 308, and the illusion of Lampridius and Capitolinus, who wrote after, must be interpolated. The reference to civil war should be referred to A.D. 307, not to 312, and the reference to Maximian's conquest of Persia is perhaps a gloss. After a discussion of Vopiscus's character, he proceeds to the sources. He enumerates fully the material at Vopiscus's disposal, and concludes that it was excellent. He discusses Vopiscus's authori-

ties, the proceedings of the Senate, which Vopiscus loosely calls "Senatus Consulta," the "Acta Populi," which were exhibited publicly on white tablets, the diaries and commentaries found in the "Libri Lintei," etc. Perhaps special permission was needed to examine these; there was a "procurator ab ephemeride." He has, however, no regard for the artistic arrangement of his matter, and often interrupts the sequence of his narrative. We must use him simply as raw material. Brünner's chronology for the reign of Probus differs from that generally accepted. Taking the statement that Tacitus was two months in Campania, he puts back his accession, shortening the Interregnum to the end of July. Tacitus, therefore, died about the middle or end of January, and a letter might reach the Senate from Probus, in Florian's lifetime, by February 3. But it is clear from Vopiscus that Florian was dead when Probus wrote to the Senate. This is a fatal flaw in the theory. Brünner believes that Probus's letter was written before Florian's death, and points out other inaccuracies in Vopiscus's account of the reign. His final judgment is that the writer has been more favourably criticized than he deserved. He has an appendix on the relation between Zosimus and Zonaras. He thinks that the latter did not use Zosimus, but perhaps his source, Eunapius, amongst others; and that the German campaign of Zosimus, i. 67, must not, for geographical reasons, be identified with Vopiscus's campaign in Germany.

Lécrivain (*Études sur l'Histoire Auguste*) discusses the various questions raised in an exhaustive

manner, and gives an elaborate and very useful bibliography. He thinks that most of the biographies were written between A.D. 293 and 306 by six traditional authors, but that Lampridius and Capitolinus wrote and revised after A.D. 325. The revision was due to Capitolinus. The biographies were written under Diocletian and Constantine, and revised in the latter part of Constantine's reign. He goes through all the speeches and documents one by one, and concludes that nearly all are forged. He then analyses the Lives one by one. He finds that there are three sources for the Life of Probus, the *Chronicon Imperiale*, a diary, and a Greek source. Much of the work is merely the composition of Vopiscus, and in representing Probus as a senatorial Emperor he does violence to facts. That Probus was an Emperor of merit is shown by the eulogy of Victor and Julian. The description of Saturninus's elevation is purely imaginary; the same statement holds good with regard to the proceedings of Proculus and Bonosus. Lécivain therefore holds very extreme views as to the trustworthiness of Vopiscus. Though it is only too true that Vopiscus is a dubious authority, Lécivain seems far too trenchant.

Enmann has subjected the *Scriptores*, Victor, and Eutropius, to a very close scrutiny. He finds throughout the *Scriptores* passages which have a very close correspondence with passages in Victor, or in Eutropius, or in both. Eutropius and Victor are both writers of individuality, especially the latter. We could from the Caesars construct a sketch of his character. Vopiscus, too, betrays his

own idiosyncrasies by his references to archives, his anecdotes and his platitudes. It is therefore more likely that these three authors all excerpted from one common authority than that the later copied from the earlier, as there are so large a number of discrepancies. (For instance, in the reign of Probus there are only three or four passages in which this very close resemblance can be detected.) Enmann therefore concludes that all excerpted from a chronicler who wrote in the age of Diocletian. He followed Suetonius's method. The writer was more skilful than any who copied from him and wrote at greater length. Enmann finds similar resemblances in the history of the years A.D. 284-357, and thinks this *Chronicon Imperiale* (as it is generally called) was continued to that date by some writer in Gaul, who wrote under Julian, and was the chief authority of Victor and Eutropius for those years.

This theory is worked out with much ability and has been generally accepted. Yet perhaps too much has been made of these resemblances. In the case of *Probus* the coincidences (the planting of the vine, and Probus's hint about disbanding the army, are the chief) are simply anecdotes which would naturally attract the attention of an historian in a reign of scarce material. Besides these scraps of anecdote there is nothing. And the cumulative weight of negative evidence is very strong. Vopiscus mentions no one who can be identified as the author of such a chronicle, though it must be admitted that ancient writers are often most reticent when referring to their leading authorities. Vopiscus's

references to the lack of information, and Tiberianus's suggestion that the gap should be filled, are surprising if we believe that at that very time there existed a work far surpassing in merit that which Vopiscus and his collaborators were to produce. The theory is too elaborate and ambitious for the explanation of passages which, in spite of their number, are in proportion only occasional. But Enmann, with the enthusiasm of a fond parent for his own bantling, regards our extant authors as only slices from the great banquet of the *Chronicon Imperiale*, a work of great historical merits, which suffered untimely decease. The character of the parallel passages would lead rather to the surmise that this *Chronicon Imperiale* was a meagre chronicle of events, eked out with anecdote. Enmann does not engage in the futile attempt to find an author for this chronicle, and we will not venture on a task before which even his hardihood quails. We may assume that some annalists and diarists had left memorials, however meagre, of the events of various reigns, which gave later writers the necessary bare framework. However, all that any particular resemblance proves is that in that single passage the authors followed a common authority. Without further proof, we are not entitled to assume that throughout this long period one authority only is followed, nor that one man single-handed had achieved the history of this age.

It may be added that, on the basis of Enmann's theory, it is still less likely that a writer at the end of the fourth century should write a feeble imitation

of the *Chronicon Imperiale*, with an admixture of his native banality, if such a chronicle existed.

Czwalina (*de Epistolarum Actorumque fide*, pt. i.) examines the documents in the *Scriptores* with a view to deciding whether they are genuine. His dissertation is incomplete and only deals with some of the earlier writers in the History. It is evident, however, that he considers the documents as forgeries throughout.

Rühl (*Rheinisches Museum*, 1888) examines soberly the evidence as to the date of Vopiscus, but, as he indulges in no rash speculations, other critics, who have been too busy flying their own kites, have ignored his careful examination of the evidence. He is highly impressed by the introduction to the *Aurelian*, but is constrained to admit that the fulfilment of Vopiscus is not equal to the promise. He comments on Vopiscus's mention of Lampridius and Capitolinus, although their work is generally attributed to a later date. Maximian's sternness is blamed in one passage, and therefore it seems unlikely that this passage was written for some time after A.D. 305. The generals mentioned in the *Probus* as trained by him are those whom "our fathers" admired. Many of these are not known, but Diocletian is one, and the passage suggests that it was written a generation after. He refers the allusion to civil war to that of A.D. 322-323 between Constantine and Licinius. It is surprising that the book was not dedicated to Tiberianus if it was published about A.D. 305.

In the *Rheinisches Museum* (vol. xlix.) Seeck endeavours to support Dessau's theory by pointing

out anachronisms. There is a very aggressive tone about his remarks, which makes many passages humorous reading. He is very contemptuous of the "beloved brackets," which are the first resort of so many scholars in cases of difficulty. He admits that there is a kind of individuality in the different parts of the History. Fools are more common than wise men (the remark seems to apply as much to the scholars of the nineteenth century as to the historians of the fourth), and a pack of half-a-dozen blockheads might have easily taken up the task, and would be more fitted for tricks of this kind. He discusses fully the "legio tertia felix" which Vopiscus mentions, and shows that the name implies a second and first "felix legio." We find a "secunda felix" in the *Notitia Dignitatum* only under Valens, and this involves a late origin for the "legio tertia felix." The use of the tribal designation Alamannicus, and the method in which sums of money are referred to, in gold, silver and copper—a method which he asserts was not used before A.D. 340—are also regarded as supports of his theory. Then the grandson of Aurelian is spoken of as a proconsul of Cilicia, a title impossible at this time, and one which had been picked up from a perusal of Cicero. Such are the anachronisms which Seeck finds, but they are only a selection.

The Augustan History has received considerable attention from Italian scholars, who have professed it their aim to seek the mean between irrational credulity and hypercritical exaggeration, to avoid the extravagances of many German scholars, while not accepting every statement made by the writers

of the History as gospel truth. De Sanctis is an able exponent of this conservative view (*Rivista di Storia antica*, 1895-6). He rightly dwells upon the large number of absurd mistakes as an argument favourable to the authenticity of the History. A forger of any ability would have taken good care not to leave such blunders as a moment's reference to some authority would avoid. For example, the conversation between Tiberianus and Vopiscus, which should be assigned to A.D. 303, is impossible, as Tiberianus was not "praefectus urbi" at the time when the Hilaria were celebrated. A forger could easily have settled this point; as it is, the error is merely an example of Vopiscus's treacherous memory. Again, why should a late forger be so anxious to connect Constantius Chlorus with Claudius? Maximian would not have been praised, as he is sixty or eighty years later. The passage about Probus's descendants, if it is written to curry favour, could as easily refer to other distinguished men named Probus, *e. g.* Petronius Probianus, or Sicorius Probus, consul in A.D. 310, as to the Anicianus Probus of the age of Theodosius. Constantius is styled "Imperator" in the life of Aurelian, "Caesar" in the Carinus, a folly of which a forger would have never been guilty. The celebrated passage "eant nunc qui ad civilia bella milites parant," etc., refers to A.D. 305, when Galerius and Constantius Chlorus were threatening war, and not to the age of Theodosius, when barbarians alone were disturbing the peace, and, as many legions were destroyed in the civil and foreign wars, it is not surprising that we have no record of the

third "legio felix." The reference to the works of Lampridius and Capitolinus by Vopiscus is difficult, but we need not have recourse to the theory of an interpolation. Some of the biographies might have been before Vopiscus, and the periods of the literary activity of the writers might have overlapped owing to some interruption.

Tropea takes as the starting-point of his hypotheses the passage in the life of Carus (8. 1) in which an allusion is made to the future conquest of Persia. This is assigned not to A.D. 297, as many scholars have assigned it, but to A.D. 336-337. He puts on one side, therefore, the conversation between Tiberianus and Vopiscus. He dates the authors as follow :—

Lampridius	A.D. 305-313
Trebellius Pollio	A.D. 293-305
Vopiscus, Aurelian, Tacitus	A.D. 323-329
Probus	A.D. 330
Firmus, etc.	A.D. 331-336
Carus, etc.	A.D. 336-337

He sees differences of style and method in the different authors, in spite of the similarity of aim.

Giri concentrates his attention upon Vopiscus, and, like Tropea, favours a somewhat later date. The Tiberianus conversation does not merit faith. If the story be true, why was not the work dedicated to him? If we read the episode carefully, we can discover without difficulty Vopiscus's state of mind. The whole thing is a "jeu d'esprit," and naturally a dead man was chosen as interlocutor, and this man in the course of the conversation playfully gives

Vopiscus permission to romance. Giri considers the passage already mentioned, "eant nunc," etc., to have reference to Constantius II, and Magnentius, and believes that it can have no better explanation than in the events of A.D. 350. He fixes the biography of Aurelian to (probably) A.D. 345 or 346, those of Tacitus and Florian, in which the indications are vague, to A.D. 346-349, and that of Probus to before the battle of Mursa, A.D. 351. The preparations for war mentioned refer to that date. The inaccuracies of Vopiscus are in some cases venial. He would not know the titles of all officials in the Empire. Nor is he a sycophant. He sincerely admires Probus, but yet he realizes how small is the number of good Emperors. He is an author who must be used with caution, but not with mistrust.

Leo has some general remarks upon the *Scriptores* in his suggestive work on Graeco-Roman Biography. He sees in Suetonius the original model of the biographies. There is a well-developed Suetonian method, but some of the Lives are hybrid in form, and we can recognize the influence of the peripatetic-Plutarchian type on the Augustan History, both in style and method and in arrangement and manner of narration. The *Aurelian* and the *Probus* of Vopiscus are specially marred by clumsy rhetoric and falsifications. Marius Maximus was of great use to the writers of the earlier lives, but Leo does not attempt to name the writer who was of similar assistance to the others.

Heer, Schulz and Kornemann have all been interested rather in the question of the original authority whom our authors have followed, and have

devoted much energy to analyses of the History in the endeavour to discover its source or sources. Heer takes the life of Commodus, and attempts to strip the biographical clothing from off the chronological skeleton, and concludes that this skeleton was obtained from an historian of greater merit than Dio Cassius, and the best authority of his time. The embellishments were obtained from Marius Maximus. In some places it is necessary to assume three or even four sources, and the interpolations of a "redaktor," these interpolations being often marked by catchwords and recurring phrases.

Otto Schulz similarly examines the reign of Hadrian and the events between the death of Commodus and that of Caracalla, and discovers an historian contemporary with Dio, but far surpassing him in acuteness and insight, such a writer as had never been imagined to have existed in that age. The analysis, which is elaborate, and often very acute, discovers also some portions which reveal "tendency." These were added by an editor under Diocletian and Constantine. In the Theodosian age also, some writer attempted to adorn these biographies by the addition of new biographical matter, the removal of matter no longer interesting, and by the insertions of fictions from family histories.

Kornemann also treats of the reign of Hadrian—and Rome's last historian. Whatever the conclusions may be, the book is more brightly written than most German works of learning. He explains that as he advanced in his studies of the period, the necessity was all the more borne in on him of attempting to reconstruct this historical work, and,

if possible, of rescuing the name of the author from undeserved oblivion, a task which required a wider investigation. He therefore examines the relation between "the Anonymus" and his plagiarist. He thinks that the task can be undertaken with fair prospects of success, and that it is better to examine by horizontal- than by cross-section. He compares, therefore, different passages of the same author, and does not, like other investigators, put side by side passages from different authors. By following out this method Kornemann attempts to show that the authors followed an anonymous writer, of whom we have only the skeleton. We can, however, recognize the compass, date of composition, and the strength and weakness of the work. The author wrote under Alexander Severus, in the age of the Senate's temporary restoration, and before Dio, who, as von Domaszewski wrongly thinks, attacked him in his History. The work ended with the praise of Alexander's rule (ch. 15, *seq.*), afterwards inferior and Greek sources were employed. The author therefore wrote before the death of Alexander, and probably before the death of Ulpian (A.D. 228).

There is a strong senatorial bias in the work, the senators are clearly marked off from the rest of the world ("homines"), and the Senate is sometimes placed even above the Emperor. To this is due the senatorial bias in the Augustan History, which was written at a time when the Senate was completely insignificant. The senatorial class took refuge, therefore, in literature, and the "laudatores temporis acti" found a treasure in this "Anonymus."

The strength and weakness of his work depended on this. Great interest is shown in domestic politics, and there is an anti-militaristic tone such as we should expect in the production of a senator, who was *ipso facto* excluded from the army. Our author was juristically trained, and perhaps belonged to the circle of Ulpian. He is an historian who may be coupled with Tacitus, and perhaps set himself to continue him. He should be identified with Lollius Urbicus, mentioned once in the life of Diadumenos (9. 2). From the very scanty information we can obtain about Lollius or his ancestors, Kornemann weaves some very ingenious theories.

Frankfurter and von Winterfeld¹ have analysed the authors in a similar way, but from a rhetorical and stylistic point of view. Frankfurter confines himself to the introduction, conclusions and digressions. He thinks that there were several authors, and that the works were "popular." Von Winterfeld examines the cadences, terminations of sentences, etc. He finds that Marius Maximus, the source of these authors' facts, was also their model in style, and that he was followed often verbatim except through involuntary inaccuracy. The authors did not trouble themselves much to attain to individuality of style.

This summary has been long, yet perhaps it is convenient to collect these different opinions to-

¹ Lessing's now complete Lexicon to the Augustan History, compiled, presumably, without "parti pris," gives us assistance in proving the individual existence of the authors. We find words and usages peculiar to one author, especially in the cases of Vopiscus and Trebellius Pollio.

gether. It shows the extent to which this question has disturbed the minds of scholars, and strikingly attests the variety of opinion which the materials at our disposal have given rise to. As many of the most distinguished scholars have subjected the poems of Homer to a most laborious analysis, and have dissected the Homeric poems, to their own satisfaction at least, so, with much less reason, a legion of scholars have in recent years swooped down upon the Augustan History, and have subjected its luckless authors to a merciless examination. Quellenforschung-mania has at length discovered that nowhere has it finer material to labour at than in this miserable and sorry collection of jejune biographies and platitudinous rhetoric, which has been rightly styled "an inartistic farrago of ill-ordered trivialities."¹ "Fervet opus." The classical world has long resounded with the hammer of the iconoclasts who, carried away by a well-merited contempt for the sorry productions of the History, have let their zeal outrun their discretion. Seeck and Dessau, two paladins amongst scholars, have made a terrific onslaught upon the History, they have dealt tremendous blows and performed prodigies of scholastic valour, yet the world has been dazzled rather than convinced. The negative results have been great. It is, undoubtedly, well that we should be impressed, even by one who is unduly emphatic, with the poor historical value of all that has long passed as History, and the series of hypotheses which we have briefly set out prove by their very

¹ Hopkins, *Alexander Severus*, p. xiii.

differences and disagreements that with an inventive genius anything can be made out of our material. All cannot be right, and modesty may lead us to the view that no one may be right. Almost every possible combination of possible explanations has been set forth in elaborately-worked-out hypotheses by scholars whose geese are all swans, yet little has been proved save the subtlety of the German intellect and the industry of German scholars. Instead of attempting to out-Kornemann Kornemann it seems better to stand fast more or less in the old ways, and to be content to affirm too little rather than too much. The History swarms with misleading statements. That is the one solid and unchallenged result of twenty years' investigation concentrated on this subject. Let us be chary, then, of building theories on what are only too probably unsafe foundations. If we cannot attain to certain knowledge, we can at least realize our ignorance.

On some questions, however, though we may not pretend to certainty, a working hypothesis is necessary. Unless the History is a colossal forgery it must have been written between A.D. 293 and 330. Yet when we examine the dedications, we are plunged at once into the quagmire of incertitude. Spartianus dedicates his Lives to Diocletian generally, but one (Antoninus Geta) to Constantine; Capitolinus dedicates two to Diocletian, four to Constantine Lampridius, one to Diocletian, two to Constantine; the other writers do not dedicate their work to any Emperor, but many passages contain plain indications that they were written after the abdication of Diocletian. We are at once

reduced to helplessness, unless we accept the somewhat unsatisfactory hypothesis that all these writers were practically contemporaneous, an explanation to which one passage of Vopiscus seems to run counter. Yet this is a slight matter compared with that theory which post-dates the whole History sixty or eighty years. A few stray passages have been the frail foundation upon which an imposing superstructure of hypothesis has been reared. An oracle had predicted great prosperity to the descendants of Probus, and this, according to Dessau, is the work of one who aimed at flattering that Probus who played such a distinguished part under Theodosius the Great.¹ Moreover, Verona, with which Probus was connected, was the place to which, as we are told, the descendants of the Emperor retired after his fall. Resemblances between Eutropius and Vopiscus have been taken as a proof that the latter wrote after the former. The reference to the Goths has also been considered an anachronism.

These arguments are wholly inadequate, and fail to prove a case which requires the strongest and most convincing reasons to be successful. The name Probus was common, and the connection

¹ The poem of Claudian on the consulship of the two sons of Probus is the best testimony to his greatness—

“quemcumque require
 hac de stirpe virum certum est de consule nasci.
 per fasces numerantur avi, semperque renata
 nobilitate virent, et prolem fata sequuntur.” v. 13 *seqq.*

“vivit adhuc completque vagis sermonibus aures
 gloria fusa Probi quam non ventura silebunt
 lustra nec ignota rapiet sub nube vetustas.” v. 31.

His generosity and the high offices he has held are mentioned.

between the later Probus and Verona seems only to have been that of patron and client.¹ A critic favourable to Dessau has worked through the History with a view to discovering anachronisms in the designation of officials, in the administration of the provinces, in the military arrangements, and in matters of coinage. His conclusion is that the references to such matters are such as would be made by writers of the period to which they profess to belong.²

The climax of all this theorizing is the hypothesis that the work was written in Gaul during the short reign of the usurper Constantine (A.D. 407). The latter was an Emperor who, risen from the ranks, had probably no literary interests, and certainly had scant opportunities to cultivate literature in his brief and troubled reign. The Gauls, too, are depreciated from time to time in the work. The scribe who achieved the whole History in those crowded years must have been as indefatigable as he was facile.

It is always easy to point out difficulties in established views, to emphasize slight matters of detail, and to frame ingenious hypotheses of what might have happened. To evolve a theory which will not give rise to many more difficulties than it solves is by no means so easy. One may fairly assert that the revolutionary critics in this case, always attack the unhappy writers of the *Augustan History* with a violent invective worthy of the Old Bailey. The attack in many cases fails from its very vehemence. The accusers credit the assumed forger with far

¹ See Klebs, *Rhein. Mus.*, 1890 and 1892, and also above for a fuller account.

² Mommsen, *Hermes*, 1890 and above.

more acumen and dexterity than we have any reason to suppose that he possessed. Even if we grant that the fabricator of the History was successful in the arduous task of constructing an historical fantasia, we are still confronted with the question why—*cui bono?* By the end of the fourth century the fashion of writing long genuinely historical works had set in again with Ammianus Marcellinus,¹ and we can see no reason² why a writer at this time should devote himself to this inglorious and unattractive period, though a writer of a century earlier would naturally have been prompted to rescue from oblivion a period which, though recent, was rapidly being forgotten, and to paint an age which had now passed away for ever. The commonplace character of the work, the non-entities with which it is associated, are not factors which would have increased the esteem of the work. The Augustan History is the proper historical representative of an age which had lost its literary sense and could no longer discriminate between good and bad work.³ In no other age would it have stood much chance of surviving, and our estimate of the literary perceptions of the age of Jerome, Symmachus and Claudian should prevent us from doing so grave an injustice to that brilliant period of literary renaissance as to believe that a forger of such fatuous dulness could have existed who was content to devote his life to such a thankless task, or that an

¹ He wrote about A.D. 380.

² Dessau himself admits that it is difficult to be certain as to the motives of the writer.

³ Its writers have one virtue, that of humility. Cf. Vopiscus, Introduction to *Probus*.

audience would have been found who would tolerate with the least indulgence this belated child of Rome's Dark Age.

On general *a priori* grounds, then, we may reject the view of Dessau, and also set aside as unnecessary and unproven the views of those Italian scholars who assign the History to *circa* A.D. 350. The late composition of the History has not been proved, nor has it been shown that the work was not written by the writers to whom it is ascribed, but the existence of the History, as a whole, seems to involve the existence of an editor, who collected these biographies, and perhaps added a few lines to round off the series, not later than A.D. 330. The personality of this editor has been disputed, but it would seem to be not Capitolinus or Lampridius, but, as Wölfflin suggested, Vopiscus, who appears to be the last in point of time of these writers.¹ The documents and speeches found in the History must always be distrusted, and generally are useless, and none of the authors can be said to have had a genuine love of truth, or to have been very conscientious in their methods of writing history.

Vopiscus mentions Capitolinus and Lampridius² as writers of the past, and seems to follow in the footsteps of Trebellius Pollio, whom he desires to emulate. It is therefore natural to suppose that he wrote last, but when we attempt to fix his date exactly we are in a difficulty. He speaks of the

¹ The personality of the editor is of minor importance, especially as the chronological succession of the various writers is so doubtful.

² Some regard this passage (*Probus*, 2) as an insertion.

generals whom Probus trained as "men whom our sires admired." Unfortunately, few of these men are known,¹ but those who are known are contemporaries of Diocletian; and as for Vopiscus's grandfather and father, a mythic halo surrounds these personages. In *Probus* (23. 5) he inveighs against those who prepare soldiers for civil wars, arm brother against brother, and parent against child, yet this reference is so vague that some critics have denied it any significance at all, and those who do attempt to date the allusion come to amazingly different conclusions. Similarly, the passage which refers to an impending conquest of Persia (*Carus*, 9. 3) has been construed in various ways.² Vopiscus refers to judgments upon Maximian uttered by Diocletian, which could hardly have been set down till after that Emperor's death, though in *Aurelius* (42. 3) he speaks of Diocletian and Maximian as

¹ *Probus*, 22. 3. "Carus, Diocletianus, Constantius, Asclepiodotus, Annibalianus, Leonides, Cecropides, Pisonianus, Herennianus, Gaudiosus, Ursinianus, Herculus, Maximianus quos patres nostri mirati sunt." Annibalianus was consul A.D. 292, and praef. urbi A.D. 297. Lécrivain identifies Cecropides with a general who was privy to the murder of Gallienus, surely wrongly. Leonides is mentioned, *Cod. Just.*, vii. 16, 27, A.D. 294-302, and a Herennianus was "legatus pro praetore" of Dalmatia under Philip. *C. I. L.*, iii. 10. 174 (Supplement). The *Prosopographia* knows little of these worthies. Asclepiodotus was praef. praetorio under Diocletian. Victor, 39. Eutropius 9. 22. Orosius, 7. 25.

² Peter thinks this civil war is that which broke out at the beginning of A.D. 306, with the succession of Maxentius; Lécrivain considers it only vague declamation; Rühl refers the passage to the civil war of A.D. 322, between Constantine and Licinius; Giri, to the war between Constantius and Magnentius, A.D. 351. The Persian war is assigned to A.D. 302 by Lécrivain, to A.D. 336 by Tropea.

Emperors regnant, and mentions Constantius (*Carinus*, 17. 6) as Caesar and (*Aurelian*, 44. 5) as Emperor. Some of these discrepancies may be explained by the hypothesis that Vopiscus's literary activity extended over many years, but even those who are staunch upholders of the authenticity of the History are sometimes constrained to take refuge in the hypothesis of a gloss, or even to have recourse to those brackets which rouse the ire of Seeck.

The search for the sources of the History is rather futile. Most of the speculations of scholars on this point have been limited to the first half of the Augustan History. Yet we must at least record our dissent from the conclusions which have been adopted. The source of any particular statement is of interest and of importance, but when it is inferred from a few similar passages in our authorities that they all had consulted one source (which is possible and even probable), and next that throughout their respective works they employed invariably this same authority, we feel that some stage in the proof of this sweeping assertion has been omitted. This is not the worst. There seems to be but one step from discovery to deification. Enmann is convinced that the author of his *Chronicon Imperiale* was an historian of unusual merit. Kornemann will rank the child of his imagination no lower than Tacitus. Even the fondness of a literary parent will not palliate this insensate arrogance. The creation of these mute, inglorious Taciti is nothing short of an historical outrage, for all that it is attempted to prove is that certain isolated statements, which sometimes form the skeleton, or the pith—which-

ever metaphor we prefer—of the narrative are found in all the authorities in common. Yet if we compared any two historians in any period treating of the same epoch, we should always find that the outer framework is very similar. It is unusual, however, to assign to the humble annalist who was probably the common source of these statements extravagant historical honours. The only answer to such speculations is “non historicos fingo.”

Accepting, then, the traditional view of the authorship of the History, we come now to Vopiscus, the author of the Lives of Aurelian, Tacitus, Florian, Probus, Carus, Carinus, Numerianus, and some tyrants. He is called Syracusius, but beyond one reference to Sicily¹ there is nothing which throws any light upon his origin. The genesis of his Lives was on this wise. He was riding on the occasion of the Hilaria in the chariot of Junius Tiberianus, prefect of the city. Conversation arose about the deeds of Aurelian, with whom Tiberianus was slightly connected. He expressed his surprise when he heard that no Roman, but a few Greeks, had related that Emperor's achievements, and urged Vopiscus to undertake the task, promising his own assistance.²

¹ *Aurelian*, 42. 2. “Aurelianus proconsul Ciliciae senator optimus, qui nunc in Sicilia vitam agit, eius est nepos.”

² *Ibid.*, 1. 1. “Hilaribus quibus omnia festa et fieri debere scimus et dici, impletis solennibus vehiculo suo me et iudiciali carpento praefectus urbis vir illustris et praefata reverentia nominandus, Iunius Tiberianus accepit . . . sermonem multum a Palatio usque ad hortos Valerianos instituit, et in ipso praecipue de vita principum, cui ego cum respondissem, neminem a me Latinorum, Graecorum aliquos lectitatos, dolorem profudit . . . ‘et tamen, si bene novi, ephemeridas illius viri

Doubt has been cast upon this interesting story. Tiberianus was prefect both in A.D. 291 and A.D. 303. The latter date seems the more suitable, but in that case he was not in office during the celebration of the ordinary Hilaria.¹ It is rather surprising, too, that no part of the work is dedicated to Tiberianus,² and that there is no further mention of him. Vopiscus's work starts, therefore, under suspicious circumstances.

He often professes that he is no stylist and does not aim at oratorical effect,³ yet in spite of this his treatment of his subject is far more pretentious than that of the other writers. He has a tedious

scriptas habemus, etiam bella caractere historico digesta, quae velim accipias, et per ordinem scribas, additis quae ad vitam pertinent, quae omnia ex libris linteis, in quibus ipse quotidiana sua scribi praeceperat, pro tua sedulitate condices. curabo autem ut tibi ex Ulpia bibliotheca proferantur. parui ipse quidem praeceptis; 'accepi libros Graecos, et omnia mihi necessaria in manum sumpsi.'

¹ The Hilaria took place on March 25, and were the third day of the seven-day festival of Cybele. But Tiberianus was not prefect in A.D. 303 till September. It is generally assumed that a minor festival, held on November 3, is meant, or emend "non. Ian." to "non. Iun." in the entry about Tiberianus (Mommsen, *Hermes*, xxv. 257). Lécivain takes this to be a conventional discourse with no pretensions to authenticity. Rühl is much struck by the prologue, but admits that the promise is not fulfilled. Peter thinks it an imitation of Suetonius.

² The reference to the domus Tiberiana (*Life of Probus*) is taken to refer to his library (Klebs). References to these libraries and to monuments lead us to infer that Vopiscus lived at Rome. Cf. Lécivain.

³ *Probus*, 2.7. "et mihi quidem id animi fuit ut Suetonium 'imitarer' ceterosque qui haec et talia non tam diserte quam vere memoriae tradiderunt . . . illud tantum contestatum volo, me et rem scripsisse, quam si quis voluerit honestius, eloquio celsiore demonstret." Klebs, *Rhein. Mus.*, 1892, points out some imitations of Cicero.

mannerism of digressing, and, in the middle of his oratorical excursion, of checking himself abruptly.¹ He loves a dignified exordium, which he suddenly leaves to plunge *in medias res*. One sometimes wishes that his style was more plain and less strained. He declares that he is "unus e curiosis," which appears to mean that he has a great liking for amassing petty detail and trivial anecdote, though he rebukes occasionally other practitioners of the same art.

Vopiscus makes a pompous parade of his historical methods. He is very particular to cite his authorities, he knows the value of investigations amongst archives, he quotes the evidence of coins and inscriptions,² and in a few discussions he shows some historical acumen.³ At first sight he is an historian whose methods are irreproachable, judged even by the standards of the modern orthodox historian. Yet a closer inspection reveals the hollowness of these splendid professions. All

¹ *Aurelian*, "ne multa et frivola proœmiis odiosis intexam." *Probus*, "ne diutius ea quae ad meum consilium pertinent loquar." *Carus*, "sed quorsum" (after a page of preamble) "talibus querelis et temporum casibus detinemur? veniamus ad Carum."

² *Firmus*, 2. 1. *seqq.* Firmus was styled Augustus on coins.

³ Lécivain is very severe on his pseudo-scientific prattle, his display of erudition and his attempts at historical criticism. He mentions the exact place in the library (the sixth Armarium) where a document may be found. *Tacitus*, 8. 1. Compare *Firmus*, 2. 1. There had been a keen discussion between Vopiscus and Rufus Celsus and Ccionius and Julianus and Fabius Sosianus and Fonteius, a dabbler in antiquities ("historiarum amator"), as to whether Firmus was really Emperor. The one side contended that Aurelian only called him "latrunculus." Vopiscus rightly points out that this does not prove the point.

critics, since the Augustan History has been subjected to close scrutiny, have been compelled to jettison the documents (speeches, letters, etc.) which he inserts, and his imposing parade of authorities is merely imposing. Like Suetonius, he has a father who has communicated valuable information to him, and a grandfather, and these tales of a grandfather must always be regarded with suspicion.

We shall now proceed to compare Vopiscus's account of the reign of Probus with the accounts of the other authorities, and after thus obtaining the historical "kernel," form a more precise estimate of the value of the authorities for the reign.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON OF AUTHORITIES WITH NOTES

VOPISCUUS.	AURELIUS VICTOR.	EPITOME.	EUTRÓPIUS.	OROSIUS.	ZOSIMUS.	ZONARAS.	CHRONICLES.
<p>Probus chosen by all the Eastern armies, wishing to anticipate the Senate.</p> <p>A discussion. Florian seizes the Empire as though an inheritance.</p>	<p>Florian waits neither for Senate nor soldiers.</p>	<p>Probus chosen in Illyricum.</p>			<p>Probus supported by Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Egypt.</p> <p>Florian has the rest.</p>	<p>Two emperors. Probus has Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine.</p> <p>Florian has the rest.</p>	
<p>Florian slain on soldiers' own initiative. He reigned scarcely two months.</p>	<p>Florian slain at Tarsus. He reigned scarcely one or two months.</p>	<p>Florian opened his veins. He reigned sixty days.</p>	<p>He reigned two months and twenty days.</p>	<p>Florian slain at Tarsus in the third month.</p>	<p>Florian leaves the Bosphorus and comes to Tarsus. He encamps there. Probus lets the war drag on. Florian's troops suffer. A trivial engagement. An emissary from Probus. Florian deposed and under guard; released owing to doubt of Probus's intentions. Later news causes his execution.</p>	<p>(Cf. John.)</p> <p>Florian slain by soldiers whom Probus is said to have suborned.</p>	

VOPISCUS.	AURELIUS VICTOR.	EPITOME.	EUTROPIUS.	OROSIUS.	ZOSIMUS.	ZONARAS.	CHRONICLES.
<p>Probus punishes the rest of Aurelian's murderers and those of Tacitus.</p>					<p>Probus puts to death the murderers of Aurelian and Tacitus. He invites them to a banquet. From an upper room he gives the word; they are attacked by soldiers. Only one escapes. He is taken afterwards and burnt.</p>	<p>Probus slays the murderers of Aurelian and Tacitus. He assembles them and reproaches them.</p>	
<p>A letter to the Senate (also called an oratio). Florian's followers spared.</p>							
<p>Probus attacks Gaul. An immense army. Victories.</p>		<p>Gaul occupied by barbarians. Very fortunate battles.</p>	<p>Gaul long occupied by Germans. Many serious battles. Foe annihilated.</p>	<p>Germany troubled by barbarians. Victories. A famine, grain falls from heaven. War ended easily. Other battles with the Logiones. The chief and his son taken.</p>	<p>Germany troubled by barbarians. Long war. A famine. A miracle.</p>	<p>Germans trouble Rome.</p>	<p>Gaul again occupied (Euseb.) in his second year.</p>

<p>Conditions of peace. His generals overcome the Franks. He attacks the Burgundians and Vandals in detail. Terms. Booty and prisoners not all given up. Probus attacks, seizes Igitlus, and sends prisoners to Britain, where they are useful in a rebellion.</p>		<p>Julian (seventy cities).</p>
<p>Sixty cities regained. 400,000 slain, great booty. The rest driven beyond the Neckar. Cities and camps established. Embassy of nine chiefs. Hostages given and corn. 16,000 recruits gained.</p>	<p>Rhaetia pacified. The Sarmatians in Illyria yield almost without war. Thrace regained.</p>	<p>He seeks the East. On the way takes and slays Palfurius and frees Isauria. Veterans settled there.</p>

VOPISCUUS.	AURELIUS VICTOR.	EPITOME.	EUTROPIUS.	OROSIUS.	ZOSIMUS.	ZONARAS.	CHRONICLES.
Pamphylia, etc., pacified.					Lydius over-runs Pamphylia and Lycia. Seizes Cremna. A siege. Lydius slain. The rest surrender.		
Subdues Blemyes. Captives sent to Rome. Coptos and Ptolemais taken from them.					Ptolemais revolts <i>in alliance</i> with the Blemyes. It is won back by the generals of Probus.		
The Parthians seek peace, terrified by the news of Ptolemais. Peace made.							
Probus goes to Thrace, settles the Bastarnae there. The Gepidae, Gauthni, Vandals settled there: during the trouble with the tyrants they wander over land and sea; at length they are checked, and return home.					He settles the Bastarnae and the Franks. Some seize a vessel. Their adventures in Greece and Italy. They are checked at Carthage and return home.		

<p>Saturninus made dux Orientalis limitis by Aurelian, proclaimed emperor at Alexandria.</p>	<p>Returns to Palestine, but assumes purple there. Probus sends conciliatory letters. Saturninus is besieged by Probus's generals, and slain without his orders. Gaul quiet after.</p>	<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>Saturninus crushed.</p>	<p>He revolts. The Eastern troops slay him before Probus's army arrives.</p>	<p>Saturninus, governor of Syria.</p>	<p>He revolts. The Eastern troops slay him before Probus's army arrives.</p>	<p>Magister exercitus (Eusebius).</p>	<p>Probus disbelieves. The soldiers slay him.</p>	<p>He attempts to found a state at Antioch (Euseb.) in his fifth year.</p>	<p>Slain at Apamea (Euseb.).</p>
<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>Saturninus in Egypt.</p>	<p>A revolt in Britain. Victorinus's error. He pretends to be a fugitive from Probus, he kills the tyrant by night.</p>	<p>A revolt in Britain. Victorinus's error. He kills the tyrant discreetly.</p>						

VOPISCU.	AURELIUS VICTOR.	EPITOME.	EUTROPIUS.	OROSIUS.	ZOSIMUS.	ZONARAS.	CHRONICLES.
<p>Proculus. The Lugdunenses urge him to rebel. Expedition against the Alamanni. He takes refuge with the Franks, and is betrayed and slain. He gained Spain, Britain and Gaul.</p>							
<p>Bonosus dux Rhetici limitis; assumes power owing to trouble on Rhine. Along and severe struggle. He hangs himself.</p>	<p>Bonosus at Agrippina.</p>						
<p>Elsewhere Proculus and Bonosus are joined together.</p>	<p>Bonosus at Agrippina.</p>	<p>Proculus and Bonosus at Agrippina.</p>	<p>Proculus and Bonosus; many battles.</p>	<p>Proculus and Bonosus conquered in many battles.</p>			

<p>Gaul, Spain and Britain allowed to have the vine. Mt. Alma and Aureus planted.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>Gaul and Pannonia allowed the vine. Mt. Alma near Sirmium planted, given to the provinces.</p>	<p>(Euseb.) Gaul and Pannonia have the vine. Mt. Alma and Mt. Aureus planted, given to the provinces, in Probus's fourth year.</p>
<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs over many peoples.</p>	<p>Probus triumphs over many peoples.</p>
<p>He comes to Sirmium, where a marsh was being drained. He flees into a high tower and is slain by the angry soldiers.</p>	<p>At Sirmium, where the city was being drained, he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium in an iron tower he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium in an iron tower he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium in an iron tower he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium in an iron tower he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium (Euseb.), in tower called Iron he is slain.</p>	<p>At Sirmium (Euseb.), in tower called Iron he is slain.</p>
<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus in the camp.</p>	<p>Carus compelled to become emperor. Probus sends generals against him. They are given up, and Probus is slain.</p>	<p>(John and Anon. post Dionem confirm Zonaras.)</p>
<p>In his fifth year.</p>	<p>In his fifth year.</p>	<p>In his fifth year.</p>	<p>In his fifth year.</p>	<p>In his fifth year.</p>	<p>In his sixth year.</p>	<p>In his sixth year.</p>	<p>6 yrs., 4 mths. (Euseb.) So Julian.</p>

A comparison of these accounts may prove instructive. Vopiscus alone mentions the debate of the army on the choice of an Emperor. He slurs over the death of Florian and, not desiring to blacken his hero, makes the former's death the result of the soldiers' spontaneous action. He alone mentions the letter to the Senate and Probus's amnesty to the followers of Florian. His account of the Gallic and Germanic campaign corresponds only in outline with that of Zosimus, and in chronology he entirely differs from that author. Peculiar to him is the mention of the recruits received from the Germans, and of the doings of Probus in Rhaetia, Illyria and Thrace. His account of the campaign in Isauria, etc., likewise presents considerable divergences from that of Zosimus. He represents the conquests of Coptos and Ptolemais as achieved by Probus himself, not by his generals, as Zosimus says, and alone mentions the Parthian negotiations. He gives a closer account of Saturninus's insurrection than the other authorities, and attributes his death, like that of Florian, to the impulse of his soldiers. He gives a certain amount of biographical detail about all the tyrants, but leaves us in confusion as to their relations with one another, and as to the sequence of events. He enters into details about the triumph of Probus, and represents his death as due to a sudden mutiny. His hazy chronological conception makes him declare that Probus was slain in his fifth year.

Vopiscus is our fullest authority and, as most of our authorities are brief and scanty, he cannot, unfortunately, often be checked by other accounts.

Where this can be done, the cause of his discrepancy from other writers seems to be twofold—(1) his “tendency,” (2) his use of different authorities. As an inhabitant of Rome he is interested in all things purely Roman—in the Senate and its action, and in such things as a triumph. Again, he has a tendency to hero-worship. He omits everything which is calculated to depreciate the subject of his biography, and occasionally gives the facts a slight twist. For instance, Probus, like other Emperors, had to consider the difficult problem of how to deal with an unsuccessful rival. Vopiscus passes over all unpleasant details, and exempts Probus from all complicity in the murder of Florian and Saturninus. The other divergences, which are more marked, lead us to believe that he has followed an authority who differed in important points from the authority whom Zosimus followed. The chronological sequence is altogether different, and the accounts of the Gallic and Eastern campaigns are so inconsistent that some perplexed critics have been led to believe that they refer to different campaigns.

Aurelius Victor deals with the reign in cursory fashion. He mentions Florian’s usurpation and end, the tyranny of Saturninus and his fall, and likewise that of Proculus and Bonosus. He mentions Probus’s gift of the vine to Gaul and Pannonia, and Probus’s death at Sirmium in his fifth year. He is supplemented by an epitomizer in a few places. The latter states that Probus was chosen Emperor in Illyricum, and that Florian committed suicide, which seems a mistake. He adds from another

authority that Probus took refuge in an iron tower at Sirmium.

Eutropius also tells us little. He mentions the fall of Florian and the Gallic campaign, and then the tyrannies of Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus. He mentions that Gaul and Pannonia were allowed the vine, and that Mount Alma, which he adds was near Sirmium, was planted with vines, which were handed over to the provincials to cultivate. He mentions Probus's death at Sirmium in an iron tower, and corrects Vopiscus's notice as to the length of the reign. He gives this as six years, four months.

Neither Eutropius nor Aurelius Victor, then, give us any appreciable amount of fresh information, and Eutropius only differs from Aurelius Victor in mentioning the Gallic campaign, and as regards the length of the reign.¹ They mention only the landmarks of the reign, and not always these. In some passages they show a remarkable agreement with each other and with Vopiscus, and as it is unsafe to generalize from one Biography we will briefly note the resemblances in all Vopiscus's works.

In the *Aurelian* there are about fifteen notices (3. 1-2; 21. 5-8; 21. 9-11; 32. 3; 35. 1-2; 35. 5; 37. 1-4; 37. 7; 38; 39-40; 45. 1-2; 48. 5). In the *Tacitus* (and *Florian*) there are only seven passages containing these resemblances, and they are not of much importance.

¹ Linsenbarth (Peter, *Philologus*, xliii. 179) thinks Eutropius used Victor. It is unlikely that one writer contemporary with another should plagiarize so openly, though both might copy from a common source.

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| 1. The Interregnum. | Caesar 36. 1. |
| 2. Execution of Aurelian's murderers. | Caesar 36. 2. Eutropius 9. 15. |
| 3. His short reign.
"gessit nihil magnum." | Eutropius 9. 16.
"nihil clarum potuit ostendere." |
| 4. Died of disease, reigned six months (as some say). | Eutropius 9. 16. "intra sextum mensem."
Victor, 200 days. |
| 5. Florian seizes the imperial power. "post fratrem arripuit imperium non senatus auctoritate sed suo motu." | Victor 36. 2. "nullo senatus seu militum consulto, imperium invaserat." |
| 6. Death of Florian. | Victor 37. 1. Eutropius 9. 16. |
| 7. Eulogy of Probus. | Victor 37. 2. Eutropius 9. 17. |

Probus (here the *Chronicon* was again of little use):—

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|--|---|
| 1. Birth of Probus. | Victor Epitome says "genitus patre agresti."
Vopiscus is much vaguer. |
| 2. Probus attacks Gaul. | Eutropius, not very definite or full. |
| 3. The tyrants. | Eutropius and Victor give scanty notices. |
| 4. "Gallis omnibus et Hispanis ac Britannis hinc permisit ut vites haberent vinumque conficerent. ipse Almam montem in Illyrico circa Sirmium militari manu fossum lecta vita consevit." | Eutropius 9. 17. " <i>vineas Gallos et Pannonias habere permisit. opere militari Almam montem apud Sirmium et Aureum apud Moesiam superiorem vineis conseruit et provincialibus colendas dedit.</i> " |
| 5. His death and its causes.
"dixit brevi necessarios milites non futuros." | Victor "hic Gallias Pannoniasque et Moesorum colles vinetis replevit." 37. 3.
Victor 37. 4. Eutropius 9. 17. "dixisse proditur brevi milites frustra fore. dixit brevi milites necessarios non futuros." |

The tyrants. Full. Lécivain thinks that all the additional matter which is not found in the *Probus* is the invention of Vopiscus.

Eutropius and Victor give cursory notices. *See* above.

Carus, Numerianus and Carinus :—

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|---|---|
| 1. Carus "præfectus prætorio." | Victor 38. 1. |
| 2. Makes his sons Caesars. Sends Carinus to Gaul. | Victor 38. 1. Eutropius 9. 18. |
| 3. Capture of Mesopotamia and Ctesiphon. | Victor. The Persian campaign. Eutropius. Capture of Coches and Ctesiphon. |
| 4. Killed by a thunderbolt. | So Eutropius and Victor. |
| 5. Ought not to have gone beyond Ctesiphon, according to oracles. | Victor 38. 3. |
| 6. Aper's craft. The death of Numerianus long concealed, and only revealed at last by putrefaction having set in. | Victor 38. 6. Eutropius 9. 18. |
| 7. Choice of Diocletian. Murder of Aper. | Victor 39. 1. Eutropius 9. 19. |
| 8. Character of Diocletian. | Victor 39. 5. |
| 9. Carinus's profligacy. | Victor 39. 12. Eutropius 9. 19. |
| 10. The battle of Margus. | Victor 39. 12. Eutropius 9. 20. |
| 11. "hic trium principum finis fuit." | Victor 39. 13. "is finis Caro liberisque." |

These resemblances have led Enmann to predicate a common source of greater merit for our three writers. The cumulative weight of these collected passages is strong, but, as we have said before, though it seems certain that our writers used common sources, there is no need to narrow this down to a single source. The resemblances are in some cases inevitable. We should not, for example, consider it remarkable if upon consulting three text-books of English History we found the author in each case asserting that Queen Anne died in A.D. 1714, and that she had many children, who all died young. The chronological outlines of any period are or ought to be a fundamental basis upon

which all authors have to build their structures, however much their styles of architecture may differ. Interesting anecdotes, again, are sure to appear in more than one authority. While admitting, then, that the others must have followed common sources, we will not presume to assert that a "Chronicon Imperiale" existed, or that, if it did exist, it was the work of a single hand. Still less will we enthrone our presumed author in that lofty sanctuary in which Marius Maximus and Lollius Urbicus sit—with Tacitus—in lonely grandeur. Perhaps, too, the unknown scribe would feel more comfortable in the company of chroniclers and meagre annalists than when breathing the rarefied atmosphere of philosophical history.

To return to our authorities. Orosius tells us nothing which we could not have gleaned from the three previous writers. He seems to have followed Eutropius, as he agrees with the latter when he contradicts Vopiscus or Aurelius Victor.

So far the authorities have some relation with one another; but Zosimus and Zonaras seem to have followed a different authority. Zosimus alone describes the last campaign of Florian, and casts some of the blame for Florian's death upon Probus. Like Vopiscus, he mentions the vindication of Aurelian and Tacitus, but he adds an account of the method adopted which is peculiar to himself. In these two cases he shows that tendency which has been noted in him before, to reveal the seamy side of affairs. He mentions a revolt in Britain which other writers (except Zonaras) neglect. In other cases he has a superficial resemblance to

Vopiscus, which gives place on a closer scrutiny to serious discrepancy. The war with the Germans has very little in common with that described in the Augustan History.¹ He speaks of a famine, and a miraculous deliverance, and mentions a number of tribes with whom Probus or his generals fought. Vopiscus left such matters conveniently vague. Again, the campaign in Isauria presents different features in his account from that of Vopiscus. The protagonist is Lydius, not Pal-furius, and a long account of the siege of Cremna, unmentioned by other writers, is given. He represents the reconquest of Ptolemais as the work of Probus's generals, and asserts that Saturninus was slain by his own troops, not by the soldiers of Probus. The account of the death of Probus was perhaps given quite differently.² Carus appears to be absent from Probus's side, and Probus is slain through treason, not mutiny. This happened in Probus's sixth year. He corroborates Vopiscus as regards the division of the provinces between Probus and Florian, the settlement of the Bastarnae (in Thrace), and the incursions of the barbarians during the trouble with the tyrants. He does not mention Proculus and Bonosus. The differences between Vopiscus and Zosimus render it probable that Zosimus (or perhaps we should say Eunapius) followed an independent, probably a Greek, source. Eastern matters are more fully dealt with than in Vopiscus.

¹ So much so that Lécivain considers it a different campaign.

² Zosimus's account ends abruptly owing to a lacuna in the MSS. Zonaras, who elsewhere followed Zosimus, had in all probability followed him here

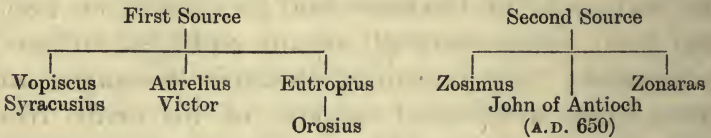
As Zonaras wrote so long after Zosimus, his account is therefore less valuable. He agrees in the main with Zosimus, but writes at less length. He mentions the division of the provinces between Probus and Florian, the slaying of Florian by soldiers whom Probus is said to have suborned, the execution of the assassins of Aurelian and Tacitus, the war with the Germans and its miraculous issue, and then passes over all events until Saturninus's usurpation. He mentions Probus's triumph, and gives quite a different account of his death from that given by other writers. We cannot, unfortunately, here check him by Zosimus.

There are a number of discrepancies between Zonaras and Zosimus. He makes Probus address the murderers of Aurelian and Tacitus, and he says that Probus disbelieved the first intelligence of Saturninus's disloyalty and had the messenger executed. It is possible to imagine a variant contemporary tradition handed down by another authority, but it is simpler to believe that here, and in some of the circumstances of Carus's elevation, Zonaras wrote inaccurately, and either added embellishments of his own, or followed some mendacious annalist who had made these additions to the account of Zosimus or his authority.

Eusebius agrees with Eutropius as to the length of Probus's reign, but his order of events is different. He places the permission for the culture of the vine in the year after the reconquest of Gaul, and in the year before the rebellion of Saturninus. Eutropius puts this concession after the overthrow of the tyrants.

The accounts which have come down to us seem,

then, to be derived from two sources—one the source of Vopiscus, Eutropius and Aurelius Victor, the other, probably Greek, the source of Zosimus and Zonaras. The first-named source need not have been an elaborate history, as some critics have imagined, but merely a bare summary of events, perhaps the work of Onesimus, or even a diary.



History was at a low ebb at this period, yet it seems probable that Vopiscus was not the only person, or the first person, who had touched on the period. He often quotes others, or many others, but this is probably only a grandiloquent method of referring to a single writer.¹ He says that no one had touched upon the reign of Aurelian, but for the life of Tacitus he mentions a Suetonius Optatianus, and for Probus we have frequent references to Onesimus, who was the author of a copious narrative on this theme, and seems also to have written of Carus and his sons.² These two

¹ *Probus*, 3. 3. “multi dicunt Probum Claudii propinquum fuisse; quod quia per unum tantum Graecorum relatum est, nos in medio relinquemus.” It is possible that Vopiscus was referring to an oral tradition.

² *Tacitus*, 11. 7. “legat Suetonium Optatianum qui eius vitam affatim scripsit.” For Onesimus cf. *Proculus*, 13. 1. How Proculus became Emperor, *Bonosus*, 14. 4. “ipse quantum libet bibisset semper securus et sobrius, et ut Onesimus dicit, scriptor vitae Probi, adhuc in vino prudentior.” *Carus*, “Onesimus enim, qui diligentissime vitam Probi scripsit, dicit illum (Carum) Romae natum.” *Carus*, 4. 2, by Carinus. These comprise all the references to Onesimus’s work.

writers are otherwise unknown, and are thought by some to be the offspring of the mendacious imagination of Vopiscus, yet, unless we accept the theory of the late composition of the History, we are not bound to admit this.

The source for the life of Tacitus was then probably, as Lécivain¹ thinks, Suetonius Optatianus, the author of a minute ("affatim") biography—probably mere anecdotage—and the source of Probus was probably Onesimus. But Lécivain would regard Onesimus as the source of the variant accounts of Zosimus and Zonaras. If this is so, Vopiscus must have employed his sources even more carelessly than one would have thought. We cannot learn much from the references to Onesimus. He seems to have dealt with the tyrannies of Proculus and Bonosus, and probably continued his narrative into the reign of Carus, who received equally full treatment. He is praised by Vopiscus (this is scarcely a recommendation), yet if he had no other merits he seems to have given copious details. The other authorities which he professes to have used are as follow:—

The *libri lintei*, which he consulted in the Ulpian library, contained letters of the Emperors, and with these may be associated the *libri elephantini*,² which included *senatus consulta* concerning the Emperor. Besides this, the Tiberian library was useful and the *regesta* of the scribes of the *porticus Porphyretica*.³

¹ *Études dans l'Histoire Auguste*, p. 373.

² The *libri lintei* are referred to, *Aurelian*, 1. 7 and 10. The *libri elephantini*, *Tacitus*, 8. 1.

³ *Probus*, 1. "usus autem sum, ne in aliquo fallam carissimam mihi familiaritatem tuam, praecipue libris ea bibliotheca

The *acta senatus* (the proceedings of the Senate) would contain minutes of all the business of the Senate, notes of the speeches and also the resolutions (*consulta*). The *acta populi*, which he declares he has also used, were a kind of gazette which contained items of interest, and were daily published and exhibited on white tablets. What might have been of greater use was the diary of Turdulus Gallicanus, a friend of Vopiscus. This, if Gallicanus was a man of sense and shrewdness, would have been very valuable.

The use of all these authorities has been questioned.¹ It is only too true that there are many inaccuracies in the document which Vopiscus professes to quote. But there can be scarcely any doubt that these documents were available and could have been consulted, and also it is evident from Vopiscus's own words that he does not always

Ulpia aetate mea thermis Diocletianis " (built A.D. 298). " item ex domo Tiberiana usus etiam ex regestis scribarum porticus Porphyreticae, actis etiam senatus ac populi, et quoniam me ad colligenda talis viri gesta ephemeris Turduli Gallicani plurimum iuvat, viri honestissimi ac sincerissimi, beneficium amici senis tacere non debui." The Tiberiana domus is mentioned *Aulus Gellius*, xiii. 18, quoted by Casaubon.

¹ *Probus*, 7. 1, is interesting. Probus is said ("fertur") to have been put forward by Tacitus as a candidate for Empire. "sed ego S.C. ipsum non inveni." If this is merely a verisimilistic touch, the forger was consummately clever. Peter thinks that "acta senatus" may be genuine. Lécirvain (p. 58) thinks the diary of Aurelian and the "libri lintei" inventions of Vopiscus. Even if they were not used they might have existed. Lécirvain sees Vopiscus in the style and language, the alliteration, Ciceronian terms, and glorification of the Senate. As Brüner says, "consulta" is used in the wider sense of "acta."

quote the exact expressions.¹ He probably quoted inaccurately, and often from memory, from the proceedings of the Senate, and fabricated some of the imperial letters.² There is no reason to disbelieve the statement that he consulted a diary.

Vopiscus, like all the *Scriptores*, manifests a strong senatorial bias. His standpoint was anachronistic, but the anachronism was frequent at the time. Though with Diocletian the last vestiges of the Senate's power disappear, that Emperor always treated it outwardly with deference and maintained its social prestige. There was no antagonism between Emperor and Senate. The time for that was past, and even those Emperors who were most deferential took care to maintain their own prerogatives. Dessau connects this spirit of Vopiscus, and the temporary exaltation of the Senate under Tacitus and Probus, with the desire manifested occasionally by Stilicho to secure the co-operation of the Senate (the two main instances are the discussion of the situation in Africa and the declaration of Gildo as a public enemy, A.D. 397, and the discussion in the Senate of the policy to be adopted against Alaric, A.D. 408). Claudian indeed (*De Cons. Stil.*, i. 328) declares that the constitution of Romulus has returned, but he must be allowed this harmless poetic licence. This casual resemblance will not greatly strengthen Dessau's theory.

Vopiscus wrote his history in several "volumes," published separately. The first contained the

¹ *Probus*, 7. 2. Tacitus sent such ("talis") a letter to Probus. *Ibid.*, 17. 5. Probus's letter to the Persian King "fertur talis fuisse."

² Internal evidence generally condemns these.

biography of Aurelian. *Tacitus*, 2. 4, refers to a "superior liber," i.e. *Aurelian*. Cf. also later, "priore libro." The next contained *Tacitus* and *Florian*. Decrees which refer to Tacitus are put, awkwardly, at the end of Florian's Life.¹ The volume on Tacitus and Florian looks forward to a biography of Probus, and lest he should lose the opportunity of glorifying his hero, he inserts here a eulogy of Probus, which is quite out of place.² In *Probus*, 1. 5, he promises to continue his work up to the accession of Diocletian, "si vita suppetet." Probus formed the next volume, and then one was devoted to the tyrants, who were not fit to rub shoulders with Probus.³ His work would seem, therefore, to have consumed some time. All these passages appear in a very natural setting and do not betray the hand of a forger. If they are due to a forger, then he must have possessed the genius of fraud, and had more wit than to write such a history as the Augustan History.⁴

¹ *Tacitus*, 12. 2. "ne quid denique deesset cognitioni, plerasque huiusmodi epistolas in fine libri posui." These are found in *Tacitus*, 18. 1. "et quoniam me promisi aliquas epistolas esse positurum . . . his additis, finem scribendi faciam."

² *Ibid.*, 16. 5. "haec sunt quae de vita Taciti atque Floriani digna memoratu comperisse memini. nunc nobis aggrediendus est Probus . . . haec ego in aliorum vita de Probo idcirco indidi, ne dies, hora, momentum aliquid sibi vindicaret, ne fatali necessitate absumptus Probo indicto deperirem. nunc claudam volumen."

³ *Probus*, 24. 7. "nunc in alio libro, et quidem brevi, de Firmo dicemus." The last volume contained Carus and his sons, *Bonusus*, 15. 10. Cf., too, *Probus*, 24. 8.

⁴ In quoting from *Florian*, Peter's arrangement has been followed. *Florian* 1 is *Tacitus* 14. So with the tyrants, who form one volume, *Proculus* 1 is quoted as *Proculus* 12, it being the twelfth chapter in the volume. Similarly with *Carinus* and *Numerianus*.

The Biographies were probably written in the natural chronological order, and this probability is confirmed by several passages.¹ They seem to have been written after the abdication of Diocletian, and in the *Carus* the conquest of Persia by Maximian is anticipated. Some have referred an allusion to civil wars to the disorders which followed Diocletian's abdication,² but it is difficult, in some cases, to see how the Biographies could have been finished so speedily after that event, and it is possible that they were composed some years later, as Rühl thinks. Vopiscus refers to Lampridius, Capitolinus and Pollio³ as though they preceded him.

¹ *Probus*, 1. 5. "non patiar ego ille, a quo dudum solus Aurelianus est expetitus, cuius vitam quantum potui persecutus, Tacito Florianoque iam scriptis, non me ad Probi facta conscendere, si vita suppetet omnes qui supersunt usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque 'dicturus.'" So *Tacitus*, 17. 5; *Probus*, 24. 7. He promises to deal with the tyrants next. Cf. *Firmus*, 1. 4. *Bonosus*, 15. 10. "supersunt mihi Carus, Carinus et Numerianus." *Carus*, 10. 1. *Numerianus* was written next, then *Carinus*.

² "eant nunc qui ad civilia bella milites parant, in Germanorum necem arment dexteras fratrum, hortentur in patrum vulnera liberos, et dignitatem Probo derogent." *Probus*, 23. 5. It is likely that Vopiscus's literary activities extended over a number of years. Rühl, *Rhein. Mus.*, refers this to the war A.D. 322-323 between Constantine and Licinius: Peter to A.D. 307 or 312 (*Philologus*, xliii. 141). Lécivain considers the passage only vague declamation. Peter, *Scr. H. Aug.*, prefers to refer it to a mutiny in November, 307, at Carnuntum. He puts Vopiscus's works between May, A.D. 305, and A.D. 311.

³ *Probus*, 2. 7. He professes to imitate Capitolinus and Lampridius. *Firmus*, 1. 3. Trebellius's account of the thirty tyrants is referred to as finished. Brünner thinks this an interpolation. Peter, with Richter, puts this reference to Capitolinus and Lampridius (*Probus*, 2. 7) in brackets, regarding it as an interpolation.

We will now give a list of references to authorities in the life of Probus, to illustrate Vopiscus's methods:—

Probus—

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 3. 2. | “ut quidem in litteras rettulerunt.” | (Of Probus's father.) |
| 3. 3. | “multi dicunt.”
(unus Graecorum). | (Of Probus's relationship to Claudius.) |
| 3. 4. | “an ephemeris.” | (Probus's sister buried him.) |
| 4. 1. | A letter of Valerian. | (Praise of Probus.) |
| 4. 3. | Another letter of Valerian. | (Praise of Probus.) |
| 5. 1. | An inference from a diary. | (Probus's early exploits.) |
| 5. 3. | Words of Valerian. | (Probus receives “corona civica.”) |
| 5. 5. | Letter of Valerian. | (Probus receives the third legion.) |
| 6. 2. | Letter of Gallienus. | (Praise of Probus.) |
| 6. 6. | Letter of Aurelian. | (Probus receives the tenth legion.) |
| 7. 1. | “Tacitus fertur dixisse.”
(The senatus consultum not found.) | (Probus ought to be Emperor.) |
| 7. 3. | Letter of Tacitus. | (Probus's support asked.) |
| 10. 7. | Letter to Capito (<i>talis</i>). | (Announcing Probus's accession.) |
| 11. 2. | Probus's letter to Senate. | (Deferring to Senate.) |
| 11. 5. | Senatus consultum. | (Probus made Emperor.) |
| 15. 1. | Letter of Probus. | (Details of his achievements in Gaul and Germany.) |
| 17. 5. | Letter to Narses.
(“fertur talis fuisse.”) | (Threatening Narses.) |
| 21. 4. | The inscription on Probus's tomb. | |

Saturninus—

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|---|
| 9. 5. | Vopiscus's grandfather. | (Present when Saturninus was made Emperor.) |
| 10. 1. | Salvidienus. | (Saturninus's speech.) |
| 11. 1. | “quosdam scio errare.” | (Another Saturninus.) |

Proculus—

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12. 2. | “fertur.” | (Proculus armed 2000 slaves.) |
| 12. 7. | A letter of Proculus. | (His outrages.) |
| 13. 1. | Onesimus. | (How Proculus rebelled.) |

Bonosus—

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 14. 1. "alii." | (Bonosus's father.) |
| 14. 4. Onesimus. | (Bonosus's convivial powers.) |
| 15. 4. Vopiscus's grandfather. | (Bonosus's wife.) |
| 15. 6. Letter of Aurelian. | (Bonosus's nuptials.) |

It will be seen that Vopiscus quotes frequently and copiously from authorities. What he cites chiefly are (professedly) imperial letters and the proceedings of the Senate (which he calls loosely "senatus consulta," not "acta"). His two references to his grandfather are deservedly suspect. It is strange that his grandfather was familiar with two tyrants, Saturninus in the East, and Bonosus in the West, and yet nowhere else helps us. Why, too, is M. Salvidienus quoted as the authority for Saturninus's speech upon his elevation when Vopiscus's own grandfather was present? Onesimus is another writer who is mentioned by name, but references to others are generally vague, "multi dicunt," "quidam ferunt," "fertur" and this reference to many authorities may generally be taken as a grandiloquent plural. In two cases the context suggests this. Vopiscus says that many declare that Claudius and Probus were related, and then adds that only one Greek mentions this. It is possible to imagine an elaborate antithesis between oral tradition and written statement, and between Roman and Greek accounts, but it is much simpler to suppose that his one Greek authority mentioned this fact. Again, he says that some have erred in confusing the Saturninus of Probus's reign with an earlier Saturninus. If we turn to the "Thirty Tyrants" of Trebellius

Pollio we find that Saturninus (No. 22), a man of considerable statesmanlike qualities, was made Emperor by his troops, and told them that they had lost a good general and made a bad Emperor, a speech strikingly similar to that of the later Saturninus. The "quidam," then, are probably Trebellius Pollio.

It is evident even from Vopiscus that the speeches and documents are not reproduced verbatim. In both cases he handles his material freely, either in imitation of the earlier historians, or through pure indolence, or through the loss of these documents. This must cast the gravest doubt upon all the documents that he cites.¹ A frequent reference to authorities is not always a favourable sign. The easiest course of all is to follow one authority unquestioningly, and an infinite number of authorities used without judgment and discrimination may give rise to work of the slightest value. Vopiscus makes a display of all the apparatus of an historian, but few craftsmen have ever used their tools so incompetently.

In view of these facts the prelude to his works (*Aurelian*, 2. 2) is interesting. In defence of Trebellius Pollio, Vopiscus declares that there is no historian who has not been guilty of some inaccuracy. His friend Tiberianus was convinced and bade him write as he pleased, secure in the knowledge that he would have many a famed

¹ Mommsen truly says that such falsification was epidemic at that time. Lécivain bluntly says that the phrase "legisse me memini" generally heralds an invention of Vopiscus's. Vopiscus says he quotes "fidei causa, immo ut alios annalium scriptores fecisse video, inserendam putavi." *Aurelian*, 17. 1.

historian to keep him in countenance. It is a fitting prologue to the works of Vopiscus Mythistoricus.¹

¹ He curiously applies this epithet to Marius Maximus. *Firmus*, 1. 2. "homo omnium verbosissimus, qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit."

CHAPTER V

RESTORATION OF THE IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

A NEW era of the republic had been inaugurated by Tacitus, but it was not destined to endure long. The short space of time which Tacitus can have spent at Rome¹ must have been a period of energetic work. The Emperor began with great munificence. He surrendered to the State his patrimony (valued at 1,500,000 sesterces) and such money as he had devoted to the payment of the soldiers, ordered public baths to be built on the site of his house, which was pulled down, and presented his silver plate to the temples, to be used in banquets.² He also attempted to effect a moral reformation by sumptuary laws. To prevent any rising he ordered the baths to be closed at sunset, and, like most Emperors, he saw that the murder of his predecessor was duly avenged.³

¹ He reigned only six months, most of which must have been devoted to his campaign. Tacitus may have announced all these measures in his first speech to the Senate, as Lécrivain thinks, p. 369. If this is so, his oration must have attained almost to the portentous length of an American Presidential Message. One would think, too, that his "ius relationis" would have been exhausted.

² *Tacitus*, 9 and 10.

³ A golden statue to Aurelian was also to be erected on the Capitol, and statues of silver elsewhere. All citizens were bound to have a portrait of Aurelian. A temple for deified emperors was ordered to be built. He emancipated the "servi urbani," or, rather, not more than one hundred of them, in accordance with the "Lex Fufia Caninia."

The hasty promulgation of these measures can have been attended with very trifling results. In the realm of morals spasmodic action is as likely to do harm as good. The Senate courteously assented to these proposals, and held high revel to celebrate the restoration of their power,¹ but the voluptuary and the sensualist still remained voluptuary and sensualist. From such dreams of moral reform and of a return to republican simplicity, the Emperor was rudely awakened by troubles in the East.

Aurelian had collected in the Tauric Chersonese a number of barbarians, in readiness for his contemplated campaign against Persia. The death of Aurelian and the confusion which resulted therefrom doubtless caused their presence to be forgotten. At length, tired of waiting, they entered the Roman territory. We are not told by Vopiscus whether they invaded Europe or Asia, or whether they approached by land or by sea.² Tacitus, whose energy one must at least admire, bustled about most vigorously and, with all a novice's enthusiasm, prepared to expel the invader. He probably was assisted by experienced and able marshals, and aided by his brother Florian was successful in his campaign. Inscriptions show that Tacitus in consequence was called Gothicus Maximus.³

¹ *Tacitus*, 12, "tantam senatus laetitiam fuisse . . . ut et supplicationes decernerentur, et hecatombe promitteretur a singulis."

² Zosimus and his satellites do, however, tell us.

³ *C. I. L.*, xii. 5676, A.D. 276. (Gallia Narbonensis.) In viii. 10072 he is called "fortissimus imperator et pacator orbis."

But this glory was to be short-lived. The soldiers had, as we said above, in a fit of penitence, remitted the choice of an Emperor to the Senate, and for a while had given themselves the unwonted pleasure of acting in a loyal and obedient manner. But the charm of novelty was now worn away, and they relapsed into their seditious courses. On the return, presumably, at Tyana, Tacitus either was slain by conspirators or, broken in spirit by the discovery of the treasonable designs of his soldiers, succumbed to disease.¹ So ended the idle dream of a new Republic. Tacitus was an amiable anachronism; he was not, in spite of his good intentions and his real energy, a worthy occupant of the throne of Aurelian.

The accounts of Zosimus, Zonaras and John of Antioch (the latter two accounts being merely transcriptions from Zosimus) differ in many points. After the invasion of Pontus and the neighbouring provinces had been checked, Florian was left by his brother to terminate these troubles. Tacitus meanwhile began his return journey, but on his way to Europe was slain by a band of highly-placed conspirators. The reason was this. Maximus, a kinsman of Tacitus, had been appointed governor of Syria.²

¹ *Tacitus*, 13. Vopiscus is aware of the two accounts and attempts to reconcile them. "interemptus est enim insidiis militaribus, ut alii dicunt, ut alii, morbo interiit. tamen constat factionibus eum oppressum mente atque animo defecisse."

² Zosimus, i. 63. "οὗτος (M.) τοῖς ἐν τέλει τραχύτατα προσφερόμενος εἰς φθόνον ἄμα καὶ φόβον κατέστησεν. τεκόντων δὲ τούτων μῖσος, τὸ λειπόμενον εἰς ἐπιβουλὴν ἐτελεύτησεν, ἧς κοινωνοὺς ποιησάμενοι τοὺς Αὔρηλιανὸν ἀνελόνας, αὐτῷ μὲν ἐπιθέμενοι Μαξιμίνῳ κατέσφαξαν, διώξαντες δὲ ἀναξευγγύνα ἐπὶ τὴν Εὐρώπην Τάκιτον ἀναιροῦσιν." Zonaras, xii. 28.

The preferment of this man, who was most unpopular, filled his rivals with envy and hatred. A plot was formed, to which some who had been parties to the assassination of Aurelian were admitted, and both Maximus and Tacitus were slain. This account is much fuller than the fragmentary notice of Vopiscus, and there is no reason why it should not be accepted. If it be true, Tacitus had aroused the enmity of a small clique, and thus perished.

Tacitus had, as became a good citizen, refrained from nominating any member of his family as heir. But autocracy has a natural tendency towards the hereditary principle, and the murder of Tacitus led to an attempt to make the succession of the Empire similar, as the senators bitterly exclaimed, to that of a country estate, and to degrade the Romans, lords of the world, to the level of "coloni" and "mancipia." Tacitus had some young children, but their claims were altogether disregarded. In deference to the request of the Senate, he had taken no steps to ensure their succession.¹ His brother Florian, however, had no such scruples. He regarded his kinship, and perhaps his recent military successes, as sufficient title to succeed, and, as the scandalized Vopiscus says, treated the Empire as though it were entailed.²

¹ *Tacitus*, 6. 8. "petens (Falconius Nicomachus) ne parvulos tuos . . . facias Romani heredes imperii." Cf. *Ibid.*, 14. 1.

² *Ibid.*, 14. 1. "post fratrem, arripuit imperium non senatus auctoritate, sed suo motu quasi hereditarium esset imperium." "quasi hereditarium imperium arripuerat." "hereditarium sibi (vindicavit) imperium." *Probus*, 10. 8. 11. 3. *Victor*. "Florianus nullo senatus seu militum consulto

Florian, as Zosimus shows, was not with his brother at the time of his death, or he would have shared his fate, but was in command of troops, on the Bosphorus according to Zosimus, acting in support of his brother's operations. On receipt of the news he took speedy action, and sent off instantly messages to the Senate and to the provinces. Otherwise it is hard to see how in any way he could have gained a large part of the Empire to his side, as we are assured he did by the evidence of inscriptions.¹ His rule was acquiesced in for the moment. He assumed all the usual titles of the Emperor, and in all probability forced the Senate to concede them. It was offended undoubtedly at Florian's assumption of power, yet Zosimus (and Zonaras) says that he was chosen by Rome, and he secured the adhesion of the whole Empire with the exception of Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.²

Meanwhile the East had its rival candidate, a

imperium invaserat." The use of the word "consultum" in reference to soldiers is awkward. Victor perhaps preserves the senatorial tradition about Florian, but one would think the Senate was forced to recognize him.

¹ *C. I. L.*, ii. 1115. (Lusitania) iii. 14019. vii. 1156. iii. 15086. (Dalmatia) ii. 1115 runs as follows: "Magnus et Invictus Imp. Caes. M. Annii Florianus. Pius Felix. Invictus Aug. Trib. Pot. Cos. P. P. Procos.

² Zosimus, i. 64. ἐντεύθεν εἰς ἐμφύλιον κατέστη τὰ πράγματα ταραχήν, τῶν μὲν κατὰ τὴν ἑψάν βασιλέα Πρόβον ἐλομένων, τῶν δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ῥώμην Φλωριανόν. καὶ Πρόβος μὲν εἶχε Συρίαν, καὶ Φοινικὴν καὶ Παλαιστίνην καὶ τὴν Ἰαγυπτον ἅπασαν, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ Κιλικίας μεχρὶς Ἰταλίας Φλωριανός, ὑπήκουον δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ τὰς Ἄλπεις ἔθνη, Γάλαται καὶ Ἰβήρες ἅμα τῇ Βρεττανικῇ νήσῳ. καὶ προσέτι γε ἅπαντα Λιβυῆ κατὰ Μαυρούσια φύλα.

Zonaras, xii. 29, is still more explicit. ἐν δὲ Ῥωμῇ παρὰ τῆς συγκλήτου Φλωριανός Κιλικίας μεχρὶς Ἰταλίας καὶ τῶν Ἑσπερίων.

man of higher distinction, and with a better claim—that of merit—to succeed. Probus was a native of Pannonia and was born at Sirmium A.D. 232, the place which was to be the scene of his death. His mother had apparently contracted a *mésalliance*, and the family was not wealthy.¹ His father, whose name is variously given as Maximus or Dalmatius,² finally attained the office of tribune and died in Egypt, leaving a son and a daughter.³ One authority is quoted as saying that Probus was related to the Emperor Claudius, but this is very doubtful. Probus's progress in the army was rapid. He was made tribune at an early age ("prope imberbis"), and after distinguishing himself in the Sarmatian war was put in command of the third legion despite his youth.⁴ In the succession of wars which took place under Valerian, Gallienus, Aurelian and Claudius, he had abundant opportunities of distinguishing himself and took full advantage of them. Under Aurelian he received the command of the tenth legion, a high honour, as

¹ *Probus*, 3. 1. "oriundus a Pannonia civitate Sirmiensi, nobiliore matre quam patre, patrimonio moderato, affinitate non magna."

² Vopiscus, *ibid.*, says Maximus "ut quidam in litteras rettulerunt." Victor (*Epitome*) calls him Dalmatius. Perhaps this merely means a Dalmatian. He adds that he was an "agrestis hortorum studiosus."

³ On the authority of a diary Vopiscus tells us that this sister Claudia survived Probus and buried him.

⁴ The Saracen cohorts mentioned in Valerian's letter to Gallienus are unknown. Another letter contains a pun on his name, and settles various allowances and gifts to be made to him. He was presented with the *corona civica* for rescuing Valerius Flaccus from the Quadi. All these letters are suspicious. Lécivain says each is more improbable than its predecessor. The "tertia legio Felix" is unknown,

Aurelian and Claudius had, before their accession, commanded this legion. All these statements are confirmed by Vopiscus with written documents, which betray their spuriousness in many places.¹ Yet there is no reason to doubt that Probus had some career similar to that described by Vopiscus. He may have even seen among the imperial correspondence letters resembling those quoted, but the documents as they stand cannot be genuine.

Probus afterwards held high office in Africa and the East.² He overcame the Marmaridae, a tribe between Egypt and Cyrene, and regained Carthage, which had revolted. In Egypt, too, he was active, and believing then, as always, that the best preventive of mutiny and insubordination was constant employment, employed his troops in draining marshes and cultivating waste land, in dredging estuaries, and in building temples, colonnades, bridges and basilicas.³ He aided Aurelian in his campaign against Zenobia, it would seem, and after many doubtful battles, in which he almost fell into the hands of the enemy, at length was victorious, and restored much of Egypt and the East

¹ The tenth legion has "quadam felicitatis praerogativa." Aurelian's remarks are virtually an incentive to disloyalty, and seem impossible. The tenth legion was then in Pannonia. (Lécrivain.)

² Vopiscus very clumsily narrates these events after mentioning the accession of Tacitus, an impossible sequence which makes his narrative very confusing.

³ *Probus*, 6. 1. We hear of his daring deeds in single combat. Probus was hardly capable of such folly. Lécrivain, however, accepts the Aradio episode, p. 375. These works, says Vopiscus, still exist.

to Aurelian's sway.¹ From Vopiscus it is difficult to learn what position he held on Aurelian's death. His claims to Empire at any rate were not put forward, unless Tacitus mentioned him when endeavouring to escape election. Tacitus is reported to have given him the "ducatu Orientis," an imaginary office, but he can only have confirmed him in his present command, for Probus's achievements in Egypt and the East were anterior to this. Probus was also promised the consulship for the ensuing year.²

Boehm attempts to construct a career for Probus from the hints given by Vopiscus, who "quamvis et nimia fere admiratione Probi affectus neque alienus sit ab erroribus, tamen historico est fons dignus quem maiore fide sequi possit." Probus inherited his zeal for the culture of the vine from his father, who was "hortorum studiosus," as the *Epitome* of Victor tells us. Boehm also infers that Probus's boyhood was spent in Egypt, the place where afterwards so many public works were undertaken under his direction. Probus probably entered the military service in A.D. 249 (reign of Decius), when the

¹ Vopiscus probably confuses Probus with a Probus or Probatus who dislodged Zenobia from Egypt, but was defeated near Memphis and put to death. See Mommsen, *Provinces*, ii. 107. Egypt was won back by the end of A.D. 270, as the evidence of coins shows. *Ibid.*, p. 108. Probus was afterwards left in command of Egypt.

² *Probus*, 7. 4. "consulatum in annum proximum nobiscum decrevimus; te enim manet pro virtutibus tuis Capitolina palmata." The phrase "te manet Capitolina palmata" is stereotyped and has no particular significance, as Vopiscus rightly observes. The phrase "tuæ familiæ rem publicam" is improbable. (Lécrivain.)

Goths were threatening. In A.D. 253, perhaps, he became tribune, after the accession of Valerian (Vopiscus, 4), contrary to the law of Hadrian. In A.D. 260 he was given command of a legion in Illyricum, under Gallienus. Aurelian charged Probus to protect the middle part of the Danube frontier and perhaps took him with him when he attacked Zenobia. He accompanied Aurelian in his second campaign against Firmus (this insurrection is not attested by coins, which, however, is not in this case a conclusive argument).

Some career of this kind Probus doubtless had, but we can only feel certain of this: Probus rose rapidly from the ranks, and after a brilliant and successful career under various Emperors had obtained by A.D. 275 the most important command in the East, and by his distinguished position and eminent services seemed marked out for the perilous honour of the purple.

The Eastern army, when it heard the news of Tacitus's death, resolved not to entrust the selection of the Emperor to the Senate or the Italian army a second time, and, fearing to be anticipated, conferred upon the situation. There can hardly have been much debate, for their general, Probus, was the only person of distinction who had any title to the honour of being made Emperor. Yet Vopiscus has a foolish story,¹ according to which

¹ *Probus*, 10. 2. "non inepta neque inelegans fabula est scire quemadmodum imperium Probus sumpserit. cum ad exercitum nuntius venisset, tum animus primum militibus fuit praevenire Italicos exercitus, ne iterum senatus principem daret. sed cum inter milites sermo esset quis fieri deberet, et manipulatim in campo tribuni eos alloquerentur, dicentes requiren-

the tribunes addressed them upon the qualities needful in an Emperor. He must be brave, merciful and upright (" probus "). The omen was accepted, and Probus was acclaimed as Emperor. Though there are other instances of sorry puns influencing the course of history, there is no reason in this case to credit the story.

Probus may well have hesitated to accept the dubious gift of Empire. He could not flatter, he was too strict a disciplinarian. But his protests were unheeded and his accession was an accomplished fact.¹ Florian for the moment appeared to have the stronger position, and Probus adopted, therefore, a Fabian policy. His rival advanced against him as far as Tarsus, almost the limit of his power, leaving his campaign unfinished. But here he remained supine and was besieged by Probus. His army was also distressed by the summer heat, which was greater than that to which they had been accustomed.² Probus for a time did not seek

dum esse principem aliquem, fortem, sanctum, verecundum, clementem, probum, idque per multos circulos, ut fieri assolet, diceretur, quasi divino nutu, undique ab omnibus adclamatum est, Probe Auguste, dii te servent."

¹ *Probus*, 10. 5. *invitus et retractans et saepe dicens, " non enim vobis expedit, milites, non bene mecum agetis, ego enim vobis blandiri non possum."* A purple cloak was taken from a temple and he was invested with this. Clinton takes Probus's reign to begin in April, A.D. 276, after the death of Tacitus.

² *Zosimus*, i. 64. *ἀπαρεσκευασμένων δὲ εἰς πόλεμον ἀμφοτέρων, εἰς τὴν Ταρσὸν ὁ Φλωριανὸς ἀφικόμενος αὐτῇ στρατοπεδεύειν, ἐγνώκει κατὰ τῶν ἐν τῷ Βοσπόρῳ Σκυθῶν νίκην ἡμιτελῆ καταλελοιπῶς, ταύτη δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἐγκεκλεισμένοις ἐνδοῦς ἀδεῶς τὰ οἰκεία καταλαβεῖν, τρίβοντος δὲ Πρόβου τὸν πόλεμον οἷα καὶ ἐξ ἐλάττονος πολλῶ δυνάμει αὐτὸν ἀναδεξαμένου, κατὰ τὴν Ταρσὸν ἐν τῷ θέρει γενομένου καύματος, ἀθῆσαντες οἱ Φλωριανῶ συνταγμένοι διὰ τὸ ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης τὸ πλεόν τοῦ στρατεύματος εἶναι, νόσφ δεινῇ περιπίπτουσιν.*

a decisive engagement, but at length attacked. Florian's troops sallied forth, but there seems to have been no real battle. Then, however, intrigue was set afoot, and Florian's position was undermined more surely by these means than by open force. Some of Probus's soldiers went over to Florian, professedly as deserters, and secured Florian's confinement. But wild rumours were abroad, and some, in their excited state, were willing to credit rumours which were palpably absurd. It was asserted that Probus desired no harsh measures, and Florian was emboldened in this way to resume the insignia of Empire.¹ He thus sealed his fate, and suffered death at the hands of his own troops. Some writers declare that the deed had Probus's sanction,² yet the latter's treatment of another fallen rival leads one to believe

¹ Zosimus, i. 64. ὅπερ μαθὼν ὁ Πρόβος εἰς καιρὸν ἐπιθέσθαι διέγνω. τῶν δὲ Φλωριανοῦ στρατιωτῶν καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν ἐπεξεληθόντων, ἐγένοντο μὲν ἀκροβολισμοὶ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως. ἔργου δὲ οὐδενὸς ἀφηγήσεως ἀξίου πραχθέντος, ἀλλ' ἀποστάντων ἀλλήλων τῶν στρατοπέδων, ἐλθόντες μετὰ ταῦτα τινὲς τῶν ἅμα Πρόβῳ στρατενομένων, παραλόουσι Φλωριανὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς. οὗ γενομένου χρόνον μὲν ἐφυλάχθη τινά. τῶν δὲ περὶ αὐτὸν οὐ κατὰ τὴν Πρόβου προαίρεσιν τοῦτο γεγενῆσθαι λεγόντων, ἀναλαβεῖν τὴν ἀλουργίδα αὐθις ἠνέσχετο. For all this Zosimus is our only authority, followed by John of Antioch. Müller, iv. 600.

² Zosimus. μεχρὶς ἐπανεληθόντες οἱ τὰ Πρόβῳ σὺν ἀληθείᾳ περὶ τοῦ δοκοῦντα μηνύοντες ἀναιρεθῆναι παρὰ τῶν οἰκείων Φλωριανὸν πεποιήκασι. Zonaras, xii. 29. Vopiscus, *Probus*, 10. 8. "milites, cognito quod imperaret Probus, Florianum interemerunt, scientes neminem dignius imperare quam Probum." Tacitus, 14. 2. "Tarsi a militibus, qui Probum audierant imperare, occisus est." The *Epitome* of Victor says Florian opened his veins. This is obviously an error. (Cf. Probus's letter, "vindictatum quinetiam in illum a prudentioribus militibus, quod fuerat usurpatum.") Zonaras, xii. 29, ἀναιρεθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν παρὰ Πρόβου λεγομένων σταλῆται.

that, so far as circumstances would permit, he was leniently disposed.

So ended the Eighty Days of Florian.¹ He was the brother of Tacitus, and that perhaps is sufficient condemnation. Ambitious but irresolute, an aspirant to Empire who seems to have been only a weak imitation of that colourless personality his brother, he was unable to maintain the loyalty of the very army which had saluted him as Emperor, much more to win the allegiance of an Empire. Naturally the legions preferred the experienced Probus to the untried Florian, who had, moreover, by his precipitate action, alienated the Senate, which now considered itself Rome's monarch. His relationship to Tacitus won him a three months' sovereignty: it could not seat him permanently on the throne. He fell, a victim of the fickleness of his legions and of his own inordinate ambition.

Probus could not with safety, if he had so desired, vindicate himself upon the murderers of Florian, but he was sufficiently powerful to punish the survivors of the assassins of Aurelian and the murderers of Tacitus. According to one tradition he scrupled not to dissemble. He assembled these men on the pretence of giving a banquet, and when his victims gladly appeared

¹ Vopiscus. Scarcely two months seems too short. Victor agrees. "uno mense vel altero vix retentata dominatione." Eutropius, ix. 16. "duobus mensibus et diebus XX in imperio fuit." Eusebius, 80 days. Orosius, vii. 24. "tertio demum mense." Syncellus ἡμέρας π'ή', and also μηνὸς β' πρὸς ἡμέρας κ'. Malalas says he was sixty-six years old.

at his quarters, bitterly reproached them for their disloyalty and had them put to death.¹

The death of Florian rendered Probus's next step very easy. The armies of Europe acknowledged his sway, and only the recognition of the Senate remained. That could hardly have been refused in any case, but a tactful letter secured not only acquiescence but enthusiasm. The date which Vopiscus gives presents many difficulties, and perhaps (with Tillemont) the word "Februarias" should be amended to "Augustas," so that the Senate met on August 3, 276. Probus acted his part well, if not over well. He first reflected upon Florian for seizing the Empire as though it were an hereditary possession, and then with great deference submitted his claims to the decision of the Senate.² This adroit glozing over an accom-

¹ *Probus*, 13. 2. "si qui de interfecto-ribus Aureliani superfuerant" (Tacitus had executed the rest) "vario genere vindicavit . . . deinde animadvertit etiam in eos qui Tacito insidias fecerant." But Vopiscus dwells on Probus's comparative humanity. Zosimus, i. ἀπεριστάσης δὲ βασιλείας εἰς Πρόβον, ἐλαύνων ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσω, προοίμιον ἐποιήσατο τῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινού πράξεων ἔργον ἐπαινετόν. παρὰ γὰρ τῶν ἀνελότων Αὐρηλιανὸν καὶ ἐπιθεμένων Τακίῳ δίκην ἔγνω λαβεῖν, ἀλλὰ προφανῶς μὲν οὐ πράττει τὸ βουλευθῆν, δέει τοῦ μὴ τινὰ ταραχὴν ἐκ τούτου συμβῆναι, λόχον δὲ στήσας ἀνδρῶν οἷς τοῦτο τεθαρρηκῶς ἔτυχεν ἐφ' ἐστίασιν τοὺς φονέας ἐκάλει. τῶν δὲ συνελθόντων, ἐλπίδι τοῦ βασιλικῆ κοινωνήσαι τραπέζῃ, πρὸς τι τῶν ὑπερώων ἀναχωρήσας ὁ Πρόβος ἐξ οὗ τὸ γενόμενον ἄποπτον ἦν σύνθημα τοῖς ἐπιτεταγμένοις τὸ δράμα ἐδίδου. τῶν δὲ τοῖς συνελθούσιν ἀφράκτοις οὖσιν ἐπιθεμένων, ἅπαντας πλὴν ἑνὸς κατέσφαζον. ὃν μετ' οὐ πολὺ συλλαβῶν ὡς αἰτιὸν σφισι κινδύνου γεγονότα παραδέδωκε ζῶντα τῷ πυρί. This seems incredible. Vopiscus, at any rate, disagrees. Zonaras says he slew them. λέγεται συναγαγεῖν καὶ πολλὰ ὀνειδίσαι καὶ ἀποκτεῖναι. How the transcription of this tale must have delighted the cynical Zosimus!

² *Probus*, 11. 2-4. "recte atque ordine P.C. proximo superiore anno factum est ut vestra clementia orbi terrarum principem daret, et quidem de vobis, qui et estis mundi princi-

plished fact delighted the Senate, and the letter was received with acclamation. Manlius Statianus, who had the privilege of delivering his opinion first, spoke of Probus's former triumphs,¹ and moved that the titles of "Caesar," "Augustus," and "Pater Patriae," the proconsular "imperium," the tribunician "potestas," the office of "Pontifex Maximus," and the right of making three proposals at one meeting of the Senate, should be granted to Probus. The last provision seems to be an assertion of the Senate's rights, for other Emperors had the power of referring as many as five matters to a meeting of the Senate. Vopiscus, who has strong senatorial sympathies, asserts that Probus restored to the Senate many of their former privileges, and always secured the ratification of his laws by "senatus consulta."² If these "magni iudices"³

pes, et semper fuistis, et in vestris posteris eritis, atque utinam id Florianus expectare voluisset . . . quaeso ut de meis meritis faciatis quicquid iusserit vestra clementia." The letter is called in one place "oratio," but Vopiscus corrects himself afterwards. But that the letter is very fulsome it might well be that of Probus. Doubt has been cast on the account owing to the anachronistic reference to the temple of Concordia. Scorpionianus is not mentioned in the *Fasti* and must have been a consul ordinarius.

¹ "enimvero quae mundi pars est quam ille non vincendo didicerit? . . . ubique vigent Probi virtutis insignia." The speech was probably written by Vopiscus or at least embellished (cf. "praerogativa," "longum est"). The statements about Probus's career tell us nothing new, and the reference to the Emperor's letters in the archives is very suspicious.

² *Probus*, 13. 1. "secundum orationem permisit patribus ut ex magnorum iudicium appellationibus ipsi cognoscerent, proconsules crearent, legatos consulibus darent, ius praetorium praesidibus darent, leges quas Probus ederet, senatus consultis propriis consecrarent." The use of "iudex" thus is an anachronism—Lécrivain, p. 34, who disbelieves that Probus was more senatorial than Alexander Severus.

³ Mentioned in preceding note.

were the "praefecti urbi et praetorio," it seems incredible that the hearing of appeal from their decisions, a right which had always belonged to the Emperor, should now be transferred to the Senate, or that the governors of provinces should again be necessarily of senatorial rank. The privilege of ratifying the Emperor's laws meant little, for the Senate would not have dared to refuse this trifling formality. It is not probable, then, that Probus waived in this careless way the rights which a long line of predecessors had enjoyed. Yet it may be that the Senate hoped, after the flattering reign of Tacitus, to assume more importance, and conceded more sparingly such honours as it was accustomed to concede at the accession of an Emperor. Alexander Severus had the right of bringing five matters before any one meeting of the Senate, Probus had only, according to Vopiscus, "ius tertiae relationis." However, with an Emperor of Probus's stamp such constitutional pedantries would matter little. If he was complaisant enough to humour the Senate, he did not intend to place himself under the guidance of a servile and discredited assembly, which even Gallienus had despised and trampled upon. No Emperor of any character could at this period have seriously increased the power of the Senate. Florian's supporters, who were to be found chiefly in the West, were treated generously. Probus recognized that they had had some justification for supporting the brother of the late Emperor, and did not abuse his good fortune.¹

¹ Florian, "sociis pepercit, quod non tyrannum aliquem videbantur secuti, sed sui principis fratrem." *Ibid.*, 13. 3.

After these preliminary matters had been settled, foreign affairs necessarily claimed his attention. And in the first place the Roman prestige needed rehabilitation in Gaul. Gallienus is the last Emperor whose name is found on coins on the right bank of the Rhine, and Gaul often threatened to follow the example of the German provinces, finding Rome unable to defend it. Postumus had made himself master of Gaul for ten years during the weak reign of Gallienus and had manfully defended it against barbarian incursions,¹ and with him was associated Victorinus. After their deaths, under the weak rule of Tetricus, the barbarians broke in, but Aurelian drove them out from Gaul and also put an end to the Empire of the Gauls. On his death the Germans again occupied Gaul,² and it was necessary for prompt action to be taken. The Gauls themselves had long been Romanized, and had no desire to be cut off from the Roman world—this was amply proved during the rule of Tetricus—but they had lost their ancient valour and needed to be defended from the barbarians. The invaders probably advanced from city to city, occupying each in turn, the Gauls having made no

¹ Gallienus, 4. 3. *seqq.*

² *Tacitus*, 3. 4. The speech of Gordianus might almost be genuine. It mentions one fact which is not mentioned elsewhere in the Biography and yet is certainly true. “*nam limitem trans Rhenum Germani rupisse dicuntur, occupasse urbes validas, divites, et potentes.*” But the reference to the “*limes*” as a barrier is at this time an anachronism. The Gauls made Postumus Emperor in self-defence. His strong and able rule seems to have obtained some kind of recognition from Rome. He was recognized also both in Spain and Britain, and the Gallic Empire was a close copy of the Roman Empire.

combined resistance. Probus's achievements were swiftly executed. The barbarians were driven out from Gaul, sixty cities were wrested from them,¹ and 400,000 of the enemy were slain. This was not sufficient. Probus crossed the Rhine and drove back the enemy to the Neckar and the Rauhe Alp. A determined effort was made to check future invasions by establishing colonies and forts in the enemy's country.² This seems at length to have impressed the enemy, and an embassy of nine kings came to the Emperor to sue for peace. Hostages and supplies were demanded and furnished, and the restitution of the Gallic plunder was required.³ These successes gave rise to foolish exultation and exaggerated expectations. There was a report that the Germans were to be disarmed, a ridiculous

¹ *Probus*, 13. 5. "tanta autem illic proelia feliciter gessit, ut a barbaris sexaginta per Gallias nobilissimas reciperet civitates, praedam deinde omnem, qua illi praeter divitias etiam efferbantur ad gloriam." This Jerome puts in the year 229, *i. e.* A.D. 277. The *Cod. Justin.*, viii. 56. 2, shows Probus was at Sirmium on May 15, A.D. 277, probably before the campaign in Gaul.

² *Ibid.* "caesis prope quadringentis milibus qui Romanum occupaverant solum, reliquias ultra Nierum" (Peter reads "Nigrum") "fluvium et Albam removit . . . contra urbes Romanas et castra in solo Barbarico posuit, atque illic milites collocavit. agros et horrea et domos, annonam Transrhenanis omnibus fecit, eis videlicet quos in excubiis collocavit." Professor Bury takes Alba to refer to the Rauhe Alp, not to the river Elbe; so Boehm.

³ *Ibid.*, 14. 2. "nec cessatum est unquam pugnari, cum cottidie ad eum barbarorum capita deferrentur, iam ad singulos aureos singula, quam diu reguli novem ex diversis gentibus venirent atque ad Probi pedes iacerent, quibus ille primum obsides imperavit, qui statim dati sunt, deinde frumentum, postremo etiam vaccae atque oves." Lécrivain, p. 377, thinks the whole account a travesty, and comments on the absence of proper names.

project which Probus could hardly have entertained,¹ and there was hope of making Germany a Roman province again, but the plan seems to have been deferred until a more favourable opportunity should arise.² The most substantial result of the campaign beyond the Rhine was 16,000 recruits, who were distributed amongst the various provinces in detachments of a limited number.³

Zosimus⁴ describes two campaigns which do not correspond in many features with that of Vopiscus. He speaks of the cities in Germany (this geographical inaccuracy is not uncharacteristic of Zosimus) being oppressed by barbarians and of Probus being forced to come to their aid. The war was protracted

¹ *Probus*. "dicitur iussisse his acrius, ut gladiis non uterentur, Romanam expectaturi defensionem si essent ab aliquibus vindicandi. sed visum est id non posse fieri, nisi si limes Romanus extenderetur, et fieret Germania tota provincia." Vopiscus, therefore, does not say that Probus extended the "limes," as some have thought.

² In Probus's letter to the Senate, 15. 7, he says: "volueramus Germanis novum praesidem facere, sed hoc ad pleniora vota distulimus."

³ *Probus*, 14. 7. "accepit praeterea sedecim milia tironum, quos omnes per diversas provincias sparsit ita ut numeris, vel limitaneis militibus, quinquagenos et sexagenos intersereret, dicens sentiendum esse non videndum quam auxiliariis barbaris Romanus iuvatur." Cf. Probus's letter. In that he inconsistently says seventy cities were taken.

⁴ i. 67. δύο πολέμους ἀγωνισάμενος, καὶ τῷ μὲν αὐτὸς παρὰ γεγωνῶς, τῷ δὲ ἑτέρῳ στρατηγὸν προστησάμενος, ἐπειδὴ ταῖς ἐν Γερμανίᾳ πόλεσιν ἐνοχλουμέναις ἐκ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ῥηνὸν βαρβάρων ἠναγκάζετο βοηθεῖν. ἐνισταμένου δὲ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ λιμοῦ πᾶσι τοῖς αὐτόθι τόποις ἐνσκήψαντος, ἄπλετος ὄμβρος καταρραγεῖς συγκατήγαγε ταῖς ψηκάσι καὶ σίτον ὥστε καὶ σῶρους αὐτομάτως ἐν τόποις τισὶ συντεθῆναι. πάντων δὲ τῷ παραδόξῳ καταπλαγέντων, τὴν μὲν ἀρχὴν ἀψασθαι καὶ τούτῳ θεραπεύσαι τὸν λιμὸν οὐκ ἐθάρρουν. ἐπεὶ δὲ παντὸς δέους ἢ ἀναγκῆ καρτερωτέρα, πέψαντες ἄρτους καὶ μεταλαβόντες ἅμα καὶ τὸν λιμὸν ὑπεσείσαντο, καὶ τοῦ πολέμου ῥᾶστα τοῦ βασιλέως περιγεγόνασι τύχη.

and there was a dearth of supplies. Only a miracle saved the Roman army from starvation, but they then easily overcame the enemy. Then Zosimus goes on to speak loosely of other wars in which Probus was successful. He fought some stubbornly contested battles with the Logiones, whose chieftain, Semnon, with his son, was captured. He was restored to his tribe after restitution of booty had been made and other terms exacted.¹ The Franks next claimed the Emperor's attention, or rather that of his generals, while he himself dealt with the Burgundians and Vandals. His army was inferior in numbers to the barbarian host, but as the barbarians were divided by a river, he was enabled to defeat them in detail.² Peace was granted to them on condition that all booty and prisoners were restored. These terms were not observed, and Probus, indignant

¹ Zosimus. μάχας δὲ καρτέρας ἠγωνίσαστο . . . οὓς καταγωνισάμενος καὶ Σέμνωνα ζωργήσας ἅμα τῷ παιδί τὸν τούτων ἠγούμενον, ἰκέτας ἐδέξατο καὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους καὶ τὴν λείαν πᾶσαν ἣν εἶχον ἀναλαβὼν ἐπὶ ῥηταῖς ὁμολογίαις ἠφίει καὶ αὐτὸν Σέμνωνα μετὰ τοῦ παιδὸς ἀπέδωκε. So Zonaras, xii. 29, speaks of the Germans harassing Roman cities and of the miracle "εἴ τισι τοῦτο πιστεύοιτο." Boehm identifies the Logiones with the Ligii, who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Silesia; Luden thinks the name invented. Zeuss believes that these battles were fought on the Danube and that Zosimus has blundered. Boehm seems to be right in saying that Zosimus used fuller and more authoritative sources than Vopiscus, who contents himself with a panegyric.

² *Ibid.*, i. 68. καὶ δευτέρα γέγονεν αὐτῷ μάχη πρὸς Φράγκους. οὓς διὰ τῶν στρατηγῶν κατὰ κράτος νενικηκῶς αὐτὸς Βουργούνδοις καὶ Βανδίλοις ἐμάχετο. πλήθει δὲ τὴν οἰκίαν δύναμιν ἐλαττωμένην ὄρων μερίδα τινὰ παρασπάσασθαι τῶν πολεμίων διανοεῖτο καὶ ταύτη διαμάχεσθαι. καὶ πως συνέδραμε τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ βασιλέως ἢ τύχῃ. τῶν γὰρ στρατοπέδων ὄντων παρ' ἑκάτερα ποταμοῦ εἰς μάχην τοὺς πέραν βαρβάρους οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι παρεκαλοῦντο. οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ παροξυνθέντες, ὅσοιπερ οἰοί τε ἦσαν ἐπεραιοῦντο. καὶ συμπεσόντων σφίσι τῶν στρατοπέδων, οἱ μὲν ἀπεσφάτοντο τῶν βαρβάρων, οἱ δὲ καὶ ζῶντες ὑπὸ τριῶν Ῥωμαίοις γεγόνασι.

at this violation of the agreement, attacked and captured Igillus, the commander. The captives were sent to Britain, where they proved of service.¹

The improbability of two German expeditions in Probus's short reign impels one to identify Zosimus's expedition with that of Vopiscus. The doubt has arisen owing to Vopiscus's liking for the vaguest of generalities. He mentions scarcely any names. Zosimus, on the contrary, gives full details, but is weak in all geographical matters. Both writers lay emphasis on the restitution of booty, and on the punishment of those who omitted to do this, but Zosimus mentions persons, Vopiscus does not, nor does he distinguish between the actions of Probus and those of his generals. The bulletin of Probus announcing his victory to the Senate is suspect. It tells us practically nothing which Vopiscus has not previously related, and in such cases we are tempted to infer that the letter is only a fabricated confirmation of his own account, with rhetorical amplifications;² yet this

¹ Zosimus. τῶν δὲ λειπομένων σπονδὰς αἰτησάντων, ἐφ' ὅτε καὶ τὴν λείαν καὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους οὓς ἔτυχον ἔχοντες ἀποδοῦναι, τυχόντες τῆς αἰτήσεως οὐ πάντα ἀπέδοσαν. πρὸς ὃ βασιλεὺς ἀγανακτήσας ἀναχωροῦσιν αὐτοῖς ἐπιθέμενος ἀξίαν ἐπέθηκε δίκην, αὐτοὺς τε ἀποσφάξας καὶ τὸν ἡγούμενον Ἰγίλλον ζωγρία ἑλὼν ὅσους δὲ ζῶντας οἷός τε γέγονεν ἐλεῖν εἰς Βρεττανίαν παρέπεμψεν, οἳ τὴν νῆσον οἰκήσαντες, ἐπαναστάντος κατὰ τὰυτα τινος, γεγόνάσι βásiλειί χρήσιμοι. Zosimus puts these expeditions after Saturninus's revolt; Vopiscus reverses the order. Brünner, p. 111, thinks von Wietersheim wrongly identifies the account of Zosimus with that of Vopiscus, because the Logiones were much farther east between the Oder and the Wechsel. But Zosimus's geography is often weak.

² The style is too bombastical and the composition "smacks of the lamp." The inconsistency about the number of cities is a mark of carelessness and has no bearing on the question of authenticity.

particular letter is not as palpably spurious as are some.

In spite of a certain amount of rodomontade, Probus admits that the Germans are not completely subdued. He had desired to appoint a governor of Germany, but this design must be postponed till the fruition of his hopes has arrived, and till his armies have been attended with still better fortune.¹ This part of the letter appears at any rate to be derived from some respectable source, though the rest of the dispatch is merely the account translated into Vopiscan rhetoric. The account of the head-hunting and the embassy of the kings seems a travesty of facts, nor is it probable that the whole of the spoils obtained were restored. The Emperor Julian vaguely speaks of the seventy² cities taken by Probus (ἑβδομήκοντα πόλεις ἀναστήσας ἐν οὐδὲ ὅλοις ἐνιαυτοῖς ἑπτὰ). He seems, most improbably, to extend the taking of these cities over Probus's reign. This may, however, be merely a stilted antithesis.

Gaul was not the only province which was disturbed. Probus now proceeded to Illyricum, where the barbarians were threatening. *En passant* he pacified Rhaetia without needing to employ force, and restored absolute security there. The Sarmatians and other tribes were crushed and their

¹ "volueramus, P.C., Germaniae novum praesidem facere, sed hoc ad pleniora vota distulimus. quod quidem credimus conferre, cum divina providentia nostros uberius fecundarit exercitus."

² Von Wietersheim attempts to explain the discrepancy between the sixty cities of Vopiscus's account and the seventy of Probus by assigning ten to the "agri decumates." Boehm rejects this.

plundering expeditions ended.¹ They, too, were forced to restore the booty they had won. In Thrace, similarly, the Goths, without striking a blow, yielded, and became subjects or allies of Rome, subdued by the potency of her prestige of yore.²

These achievements unfortunately seem to be merely paper achievements. The difficulties of the situation seem exaggerated. The various tribes were turbulent enough, but were easily overawed by the presence of a strong and able ruler. Under a Gallienus or a Tacitus the position of affairs might easily have become serious. As it was the danger evidently proved slight, and Probus's statesmanship is vindicated at the expense of his military glory.

The border tribes were taught a much-needed lesson and for a while remained peaceful. They had tested the mettle of the new Emperor and found him prompt and unhesitating. These operations were merely demonstrations in force which proved very effective. Probus probably claimed no more for them, and must not be considered responsible for the exaggerations of his indiscreet biographer. The Sarmatians, though cowed for the time, became threatening again upon the death

¹ Vopiscus alone mentions this expedition in 16. 1. "posthoc Illyricum petiit et prius quam veniret, Rhaetias sic pacatas reliquit ut illic ne suspicionem quidem ullius terroris relinqueret, in Illyrico Sarmatas ceterasque gentes ita contudit, ut prope sine bello cuncta reciperet quae illi diripuerant." Clinton puts these various events in A.D. 278.

² *Probus*, 16. 3. "tetendit deinde per Thracias, atque omnes Geticos populos fama rerum territos et antiqui nominis potentia pressos, aut in deditionem, aut in amicitiam recepit."

of Probus, and had to be subdued by Carus. They appear to have been a very bellicose nation, but their resistance was without stamina.

In this reign one difficulty was ever succeeded by another. In Isauria, a land much troubled by marauding forays, brigandage had never been absolutely suppressed. At this time a chief named Palfurius according to Vopiscus, Lydius according to Zosimus, had wrought much havoc. He was taken and slain,¹ and in order to secure the permanence of peace many colonies of veterans were settled there.² Isauria and Pamphylia and the neighbouring districts were thus pacified. As the country seemed peculiarly suited for brigandage, it was ordered that the sons of the colonists should be enrolled in the legions at the age of eighteen, lest they should learn the arts of brigandage before the arts of war.

Zosimus has the usual variant account. The hero of the bandits with him is Lydius, an Isaurian. He assembled a band of men like unto himself and ravaged all Pamphylia and Lycia.³ Finding himself unable to meet in the field the troops which had

¹ *Probus*, 16. 4. "his gestis Orientem petiit, atque in itinere potentissimo quodam latrone Palfurio capto et interfecto omnem Isauriam liberavit, populis atque urbibus Romanis legibus restituitis."

² *Ibid.* "veteranis omnia illa quae anguste adeuntur loca privata donavit, addens ut eorum filii ab anno octavo decimo mares duntaxat ad militiam mitterentur, ne ante latrocinari quam militare discerent . . . quae (loca) cum peragrasset hoc dixit 'facilius est ab istis locis latrones arceri quam tolli.'"

³ Zosimus, i. 69. ἄξιον μὴδὲ τὰ κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον Ἰσαύροις πραχθέντα παραδραμεῖν. Λύδιος τὸ γένος Ἰσαύρος ἐντεθραμμένος τῇ συνήθει ληστεία στίφος ὅμοιον ἑαυτῷ περιποισάμενος τὴν Παμφυλίαν ἄπασαν καὶ Λυκίαν ἐπήει.

been collected against him, he seized the fortress of Cremna in Lycia, which had an almost impregnable position. The Romans invested the place. Lydius, being somewhat pressed for food, drove out all the non-combatants, and as the Romans refused to let them pass, these unhappy people perished miserably in the ravines near the town. The robber chief was of an inventive turn. He had a subterranean passage constructed which had its outlet beyond the enemy's lines, and thus supplies were conveyed into the town. This was at length discovered, through the information of a woman, but the only immediate result was that the besieged were put on short rations, and those who were useless were ruthlessly put to death. Some women were, however, left to attend upon them.¹ But the chief's ferocity was displayed once too often. He had an archer of remarkable skill, who had the reputation of being able to hit any enemy he chose at long range. One day he missed his mark, and Lydius, beside himself with rage, ordered him to be stripped and flogged, and threatened the unhappy marksman with death. He, alarmed and enraged, fled to the enemy and gave the Romans valuable information. He told them of a casement through which Lydius was in the habit of reconnoitring the enemy, and begged for an opportunity of vindicating his marksmanship

¹ Zosimus, i. 69. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ οὕτως ἀπέειπεν ὁ Λύδιος, ἀλλ' οἶνον μὲν κατὰ βραχὺ τοὺς αὐτῷ συνόντας ἀπέστησε καὶ σίτον ἐμέτρει τοῦ συνήθους ἐλάττονα, τῶν δὲ σιτίων καὶ οὕτως ἐκλιπόντων εἰς ἀναγκὴν κατέστη τοῦ πάντας ἀπολέσαι ἐν τῇ πόλει πλὴν ἀνδρῶν αὐτῷ τε ἐπιτηδείων καὶ πρὸς φυλακὴν ἀρκεῖν δοκούντων. κάτεσχε δὲ καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, ἅς ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς φύσεως ἀναγκαίᾳ χρεῖα κοινὰς εἶναι πεποίθηκε πᾶσιν.

in the eyes of Lydius. He did not miss the mark this time, and Lydius, receiving a mortal wound, died in great pain, after adjuring his men never to surrender.¹

The character of Lydius is of some interest. Only in such periods as the third century after Christ or the "Dark Ages" do such persons have full scope for their abilities. Though little better than a savage, he seems to have united indomitable spirit and boundless ferocity. But for his excesses in the latter respect, he might have become a great leader. He was the soul of this rising, and with him it ended. His followers, in spite of his dying request, surrendered, and peace was again restored.

The dissimilarities between the accounts of Vopiscus and Zosimus are great, and the latter gives a disproportionately long account of this siege, which, all things considered, is a matter of minor importance. Vopiscus, as usual, avoids details; Zosimus is much fuller. We can only assume that the two writers followed different authorities, and Zosimus's source would seem to be the fuller and the better.

It is doubtful whether such a trouble as that in Isauria would have been in itself sufficient to take Probus to the East. He seems to have cherished a design of attacking the Persians,² a design which

¹ Zosimus. τοῖς λελειμμένοις ὄρκους ἐπαγαγὼν περὶ τοῦ μὴ ἐνδοῦναι τῇ πολιορκίᾳ καθάπαξ, μόλις ἐξέλιπεν. οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν οὐκ ἐνεγκόντες ἔτι τὴν πολιορκίαν ἐξέδοσαν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ στρατοπέδῳ καὶ τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ ληστικὸν τέλος ἐδέξατο.

² *Probus*, 16. 4. "his gestis" (operations in Thrace) "Orientem petiit, atque in itinere," etc., and "pacatis denique omnibus Pamphyliæ partibus, ceterarumque provinciarum, quæ sunt

he was never able to carry out. But Egypt needed attention first. That country was, as has been said, reconquered under Aurelian (A.D. 270). Yet much trouble had been caused on the south-eastern frontier by the Blemyes, an Ethiopic nomadic tribe of barbarians of lower Nubia, who were still in the lowest stage of civilization, and centuries later still offered human sacrifices to their gods.¹ They troubled the Egyptian frontier even under Decius (A.D. 250), and had been checked by Aurelian after his overthrow of Firmus, but continued to oppress Egypt, and at this time held a strong position in Coptos and Ptolemais.² These places were wrested from them by Probus's generals, it would seem, and many captives were retained to grace a future triumph at Rome.³ Yet this tribe was not in reality subdued. We find them under Diocletian still troubling Rome, and payments were made to them by the Emperor, payments which one can

Isauriae vicina, ad Orientem iter flexit." In the speech of Gordian, *Tacitus*, p. 227 B, there is reference to "Persici motus."

¹ Mommsen, *Provinces*, ii. 250. Eratosthenes names them, and Claudian also.

² *Probus*. "Copton" (Peter, "Copten") "praeterea et Ptolemaidem urbes ereptas barbarico servitio Romano addidit iuri." Zosimus, i. 71. τῆς δὲ κατὰ Θηβαΐδα Πτολεμαίδος ἀποστάσης . . . πόλεμον δὲ προκόπτοντα ἐπὶ χρόνον βραχὺν ἀράμενος, αὐτὴν τε καὶ τοὺς συμμαχήσαντας αὐτῇ Βλεμύας παρεστήσατο, διὰ τῶν τότε στρατηγησάντων. Here the Blemyes are represented as allies, not conquerors. Probably they treated their "allies" very cavalierly. Coptos was important as the starting-point of the Red Sea route from the Nile.

³ *Probus*, 17. 2. "Blemyas etiam subegit, quorum captivos Romam transmisit, qui mirabilem sui visum stupente populo Romano praebuerunt." It is absurd for Vopiscus to say that the Blemyes were "caesi ad internecionem."

only regard as blackmail levied by the Blemyes upon the Empire. However, the Blemyes received a temporary check, and the news that this dreaded tribe had been subdued perhaps made the Persian King, Vararam II—not Narses, as Vopiscus says—more anxious to improve his relations with Probus. At any rate an embassy arrived with presents for the Emperor. He is said to have rejected the presents, and dismissed the envoys, with a haughty reply suggesting that all Persia was his for the asking.¹

These communications mark an important stage in the reign of Probus. He had now overcome all the difficulties which had encompassed him when he succeeded to the throne, and could now, if it was necessary, assume an aggressive instead of a defensive position. He seems to have been picking a quarrel with the Persian King with a view to an attack upon the Empire. Fifty years before, the Arsacid dynasty had been supplanted by the Sassanids, who adopted more of a belligerent attitude towards Rome, and regarded themselves as peers, not vassals, of the Roman Emperors.

¹ *Probus*, 17. 4. “ex quo tantum profecit ut Parthi legatos ad eum mitterent, confitentes timorem pacemque poscentes: quos ille superbius acceptos magis timentes domum remisit. fertur etiam epistola illius, repudiatis donis quae rex Parthorum miserat, ad Narseum *talis* fuisse. ‘miror te de omnibus quae nostra futura sunt tam pauca misisse.’ . . . his acceptis litteris Narseus maxime territus, et eo praecipue quod Copton et Ptolemaidem comperit a Blemysis qui eas tenuerant vindicatas caesosque ad internecionem” (an exaggeration) “eos qui gentibus fuerant ante terrori. facta igitur pace cum Persis,” etc. This “igitur” is most inconsequential. Narses did not succeed until A.D. 293. Vopiscus here does not profess to give the letter of Probus.

The severest disgrace which had been inflicted upon Rome by Persia was the capture of the Emperor Valerian (A.D. 258), who died in captivity. Yet such extravagant claims as Persia had made to the whole of Western Asia had never been made good, largely owing to Odaenathus of Palmyra, who had won back Mesopotamia and effectually checked the Persian advance. But the sting still smarted, and an emperor of Probus's stamp doubtless burned to wipe out past disgraces. It has been suggested that the story is an invention of Vopiscus's, but undoubtedly the invasion of Persia was one of Probus's fixed ideas. He is found at the moment of his death preparing for an invasion, and the policy was carried on by his successor.

One would naturally expect that the next development would be a campaign on the Euphrates and an invasion of the Parthian Empire. But nothing came of this spirited prelude, save a treaty of peace. We must infer that at this moment fresh difficulties in another part of the Empire rendered the Emperor's presence there imperative. The project of a Parthian invasion remained a project, and it was Carus, not Probus, who re-established the eastern frontier of Severus.

Shortly after this Probus made some extensive settlements of barbarians in the Roman bounds. The Bastarnae, who were hard pressed by the Goths, were permitted to cross the Danube and to settle in Thrace to the number of one hundred thousand. They remained loyal, and gave no

cause for regret at this step.¹ But other settlers, belonging to the Gipedi, Gautunni and the Vandals, were less loyal, and when Probus was engrossed in the wars with the tyrants, took advantage of this to wander over the Empire as they pleased.² Zosimus tells us of the adventures of one detachment of Franks who took ship, and after doing considerable damage on the coasts of Greece, Italy, Sicily and Africa, contrived to reach their home safely.³ The task of reducing these turbulent vassals was painfully difficult, but it was at length achieved. Probus appears as one of the exponents of the policy of defending the frontiers by barbarian outposts, and perhaps carried the policy to an excess. At any rate the result only partially justified it.

¹ *Probus*, 18. 1. "centum milia Bastarnarum in solo Romano constituit, qui omnes fidem servaverunt."

² *Ibid.* 18. 3. "cum et ex aliis gentibus plerosque pariter transtulisset, id est, ex Gepidis" (Peter, "Gipedis"), "Gautunnis" ("Greuthungis" has been conjectured) "et Vandalis, illi omnes fidem fregerunt, et occupato bellis tyrannicis Probo, per totum pene orbem pedibus et *navigando* vagati sunt, nec parum molestiae Romanae gloriae intulit. quos quidem ille diversis vicibus oppressit, paucis cum gloria redeuntibus quod Probi evasisent manus." Zosimus, i. 71, mentions the settlement of the Bastarnae and Franks. Βαστάρνας δὲ, Σκυθικὸν ἔθνος, ὑποπεσόντας αὐτῷ προσιέμενος, κατόκισε Ἐρακίους χωρίους, καὶ διέτελεσαν τοῖς Ῥωμαίων βιοτεύοντες νόμοις.

³ Zosimus, *ibid.* καὶ Φράγκων τῶν βασιλεῖ προσελθόντων καὶ τυχόντων οἰκίσεως μοῖρά τις ἀποστᾶσα πλοίων ἀπορήσασα τὴν Ἑλλάδα συνετάραξεν ἅπασαν καὶ Σικελία προσεχούσα καὶ τῇ Συρακουσίων προσμίξασα πολὺν κατὰ ταύτην εἰργάσατο φόνον. ἤδη δὲ καὶ Λιβύῃ προσορμισθεῖσα καὶ ἀποκροσθεῖσα δυνάμει ἐκ Καρχήδονος ἐπεεχθείσης οἷα τε γέγονεν ἀπαθὴς ἐπανελθεῖν οἴκαδε. He also mentions the outbreak of a party of gladiators. Vopiscus's remark, "pedibus et *navigando* vagati sunt," may refer to these troubles.

CHAPTER VI

THE TYRANTS AND THE DEATH OF PROBUS

PROBUS had now made good his authority over all the Empire, but it was not to remain unchallenged. "Tyrants," or rival claimants to empire, were chastening afflictions which every Emperor of this time must experience. These conflicts were "survivals of the fittest"—if we do not define "fittest" too exactly—and Probus was able to prove his superiority to the successive pretenders. Vopiscus honours these tyrants with special chapters, constructed on his usual biographical method, or want of method, and as he abstains from all chronological details he leaves us a charming puzzle to solve. He breathes not a word of tyrants until the subjection of the Blemyes has been accomplished and the settlement of the barbarians in Thrace; Zosimus, on the contrary, puts the rebellion of Saturninus quite early in the reign, before either the German, or the Eastern, or the Egyptian campaigns. Eusebius puts Saturninus in 283 (corrected date A.D. 280), Jerome in Probus's fourth year, A.D. 279 (the rise of Saturninus), and his fall A.D. 280; Syncellus puts the rising in Probus's last year.¹ An evidence of the entanglements which ensnared the historians of this period

¹ We have no coins of Saturninus to attest even his existence.

is the fact that some authorities confused this Saturninus with a tyrant under Gallienus.¹ If we could feel sure that Vopiscus's grandfather was present when he was made Emperor, the matter would be settled.² The agreement of Vopiscus and Zosimus should, at any rate, establish Saturninus's existence. It is possible that his rebellion, which does not seem to have been long protracted, occurred early in the reign,³ and that the resulting weakness of the Roman power in that quarter emboldened the Blemyes to become active.

Saturninus was a Moor, according to Zosimus, or a Gaul, according to Vopiscus, who had in early days enjoyed a good rhetorical training. He rose to be "dux limitis Orientalis"—Vopiscus has invented this office—or Governor of Syria. (Zosimus and Eusebius call him "magister exercitus.") Distrusting his character, Aurelian ordered him never to set foot in Egypt. Later, however, in the reign of Probus, this injunction was disobeyed.⁴

¹ *Saturninus*, 11. 1. "errare quosdam scio, et putare hunc esse Saturninum qui Gallieni temporibus" (see the thirty tyrants, 22. 9. Trebellius Pollio is one of those at fault) "imperium occupavit cum hic longe alius fuerit."

² *Ibid.*, 9. 4. "avum meum saepe dicentem audivi se interfuisse cum ille adoraretur." If his grandfather was present, surely it was unnecessary to appeal to the witness of M. Salvidienus for the genuineness of this authority.

³ So Zosimus puts it. He may be correct on a point of Eastern history. Most authorities, however, put this rebellion later, Lépaule in A.D. 281, Clinton in A.D. 279–280.

⁴ One cannot see what respective positions Probus and Saturninus had before Probus's accession. *Saturninus*, 8. 1. A letter of Hadrian's regarding the Egyptians is generally considered forged; it is somewhat irrelevant. Servianus was consul in A.D. 134, but Verus, who is called Hadrian's son, was not adopted until A.D. 136. The reference to the Christians

The frivolous, reckless populace of Alexandria immediately saluted him as Augustus. Saturninus, not enamoured of this doubtful honour, hastily departed to Palestine. He then reflected, however, that the Rubicon was passed, and that the boldest plan was the safest. He therefore assumed the imperial insignia, still wavering as to the wisdom of this course, and, lamenting that the State had lost a valuable servant, the restorer of Gaul, the liberator of Africa, and the pacificator of Spain, concluded his remarks with an impressive description of the uneasiness of a head that wears the crown,¹ which, in spite of the training of Saturninus, must be assigned to the eloquence of Vopiscus. Yet the new Emperor's energy seemed paralysed, and he awaited his fate inactive and unresisting. Probus himself

is suspicious. If the letter be genuine, Dürr suggests that it has been tampered with. See Bury, *Roman Empire*, B.C. 27–A.D. 180, ch. xxvi. note D. Lécivain, p. 69, rejects the letter entirely and sees in it merely the work of Vopiscus. Certainly the letter, as we have it, is entirely in the Vopiscan style. We find some more of this rhetoric in the speech of Saturninus immediately following. He is called the restorer of Gaul, the liberator of Africa, and the pacificator of Spain. There is not a vestige of evidence to support this. “hæc ergo cogitans de Aegyptiis Aurelianus iusserat ne Saturninus Aegyptum videret et mente quidem divina. nam ut primum Aegyptii magnam potestatem ad se venisse viderunt, statim clamaverunt, ‘Saturnine, Auguste, dii te servent.’ ille quidem, quod negari non potest, vir sapiens, de Alexandrina civitate mox fugit, atque ad Palaestinam rediit. ibi tamen cum cogitare coepisset tutum sibi non esse si privatus viveret . . . adoratus est.”

¹ “necessarium virum res publica perdidit . . . nescitis quid mali sit imperare. gladii et tela nostris cervicibus impendent, imminent hastae undique,” etc. The speech is obviously of Vopiscus's composition. The conclusion is unworthy: “sed habeo solatium mortis, solus perire non potero.”

had much regard for Saturninus¹ and was loth to proceed to extremities. He desired to pardon his rival, and promised in frequent letters to do so, but the rebellious soldiers were distrustful.² Before Probus could arrive the rebellion was ended through the murder of Saturninus by his own troops, who either were disgusted at his supineness, or wished to propitiate Probus.³ Such was the fidelity an Emperor of this age might expect.

Gaul was the scene of another revolt, that of Proculus and Bonosus. This was probably later than that of Saturninus. Under Vopiscus's handling the relation between Proculus and Bonosus is very perplexing. His vicious biographical method renders two distinct lives necessary, and perhaps two different accounts of the same revolt. Other authorities always associate the two tyrants, and

¹ Zosimus, i. 66, praises him: ἐπιτήδειος ὢν ἐς τὰ μάλιστα τῷ βασιλεῖ διὰ τοῦτό τε καὶ τὴν Συρίας ἀρχὴν ἐπιτετραμμένος, τῆς βασιλείως ἀποστὰς πίστεως εἰς ἐπαναστάσεως ἔννοιαν ἦλθεν. Zonaras, xii. 29: ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ φίλτατος. Lécrivain says this statement is only made to credit Probus with another virtue. But Probus does seem to have been merciful.

² *Saturninus*, 11. 2. "Probo pene nolente (est) occisus. fertur autem Probus et clementes ad eum litteras saepe misisse et veniam esse pollicitum, sed milites qui cum eo fuerant non credidisse." Saturninus would doubtless have acceded to Probus's offers, had his supporters allowed him. But they had gone too far.

³ *Ibid.* "obsessum denique in castro quodam ab iis quos Probus miserat, invito Probo esse iugulatum." Zosimus, i. 66. ὅπερ ἀκούσαντι τῷ Πρόβῳ καὶ διανοομένῳ τὸ ἐγχείρημα μετελθεῖν, ἔφθησαν οἱ κατὰ τὴν ἔψαν στρατιῶται συγκατασβέσαντες τῇ τυραννίδι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Zosimus disagrees, therefore, as to the manner of his death. Eusebius says he began founding a new state at Antioch. Vopiscus, *Probus*, 18. 4, says there were several battles, "variis praeliorum generibus superavit." Syncellus, ἐν Ἀπαμέᾳ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ἐσφάγη (wrongly in Probus's last year).

Vopiscus himself does so once.¹ Yet it appears from him that both claimed the title of Emperor, and both established their power in one province. They seem to have been independent of one another, but were linked together by hostility to a common foe and had some understanding with each other.

As Vopiscus gives separate accounts of these two tyrants, we must now perforce follow him. Proculus, who belonged to the Albingauni, a tribe dwelling in the maritime Alps, seems to have kept to the last the characteristics of a barbarian, and his wife Sampso, whose virago qualities greatly impressed her contemporaries, abetted him in his folly.² Rarely has even a tyrant possessed fewer qualifications for ruling, for his only virtue was his bravery. This robber prince, with his two thousand armed slaves, might win a reputation for cattle-lifting, but was quite out of place as a Roman official or as a Roman monarch. However, he entered the Roman service, and by his gallantry had (presumably) risen to high office. Lugdunum was a city which had experienced the severity of Aurelian

¹ *Probus*, 18. 5. "deinde cum Proculus et Bonosus apud Agrippinam in Gallia imperium arripuissent." So Eutropius, xi. 17, at Agrippina, and Victor (only Bonosus, but the *Epitome* joins both) and Orosius. Zosimus and Zonaras mention neither.

² *Proculus*, 12. 1. "Proculo patria Albingauni fuere, positi in Alpibus maritimis. domi nobilis, sed maioribus latrocinantibus, atque adeo pecore ac servis et eis rebus quas abduxerat satis dives. fertur denique eo tempore quo sumpsit imperium duo milia servorum suorum armasse. huic uxor virago, quae illum in hanc praecipitavit dementiam." Album Ingaunum was on the coast of Liguria. It is mentioned *C. I. L.*, v. 7781. (Restoration of the walls under Constantius, A.D. 354).—Pauly.

and, dreading punishment at the hands of Probus,¹ hoped to avert this retribution by rebellion, and strove to persuade Proculus to declare himself Emperor. At last, after a series of unusual successes at the game of "Robbers,"² he was acclaimed by a wit as Augustus (we must hope that this man's jests had usually more point). In such a frivolous way were emperors made. Mock homage was performed, and it was felt that the jest had now become earnest.³ The fall of Proculus was not immediate, and he employed the respite in plying his old *métier* of cattle-plundering, but not at the expense of his subjects. These brilliant achievements, however, were terminated by the approach of Probus, who drove him to the limit of his dominions, and compelled him to take refuge with the Franks, with whom he claimed some kinship.⁴ They indulged

¹ *Proculus*, 13. 1. "multis legionibus tribunus praefuit et fortia edidit facta. cum etiam post honores militares se improbe et libidinose ageret hortantibus Lugdunensibus, qui et ab Aureliano graviter contusi videbantur, et Probum vehementissime pertimescebant, in imperium vocitatus est ludo et pene ioco."

² This game was played with pawns on a board and had a certain resemblance to chess. Different pieces were moved in different ways, some straight and some obliquely. The object was to give a kind of check. It was a difficult game, and the winner seems to have been saluted as "imperator."

³ Onesimus seems to be the authority for this. *Proculus*, 13. 2. "cum in quodam convivio ad latrunculos luderetur, atque ipse decies imperator exisset, quidam non ignobilis scurra, 'ave,' inquit, 'Auguste.' allataque lana purpurea, humeris eius iunxit, eumque adoravit."

⁴ *Proculus*, 13. 3. "non nihilum tamen Gallis profuit. nam Alamannos, qui tunc adhuc Germani dicebantur, non sine gloriae splendore contrivit nunquam aliter quam latrocinandi pugnans modo. hunc tamen Probus fugatum usque ad ultimas terras, et cupientem in Francorum auxilium venire, a quibus originem se trahere ipse dicebat," etc.

their proclivity for treachery by handing the fugitive over to Probus, who had no scruple in putting an end to the existence of this brutal and senseless disturber of the peace. His family were unharmed, and continued to dwell among the Albingauni. It was a byword with them that they had no wish to be emperors or robbers ("latrones"), an allusion to the ill-starred game of "latrunculi."¹

Bonosus was born, or resided, in Spain, the son of a British father and a Gallic mother. His father, as he averred, was a rhetorician; as envious tongues declared, a pedagogue, ever a despised class. However, Bonosus was left fatherless early, with the not uncommon result that he learned nothing.² He enlisted in the Roman legions and rose to a high position, that of "dux Rhaetici limitis," chiefly through his extraordinary convivial qualities. His capacity (he was called a barrel) was such that he could see any barbarian under the table, and thus he was useful in winning valuable secrets from them.³ Alarmed at some damage done

¹ *Proculus*. "ipsis prodentibus Francis, quibus familiare est ridendo fidem frangere, vicit et interemit . . . posteri eius etiam nunc apud Albingaunos agunt, qui ioco solent dicere sibi non placere esse vel principes vel latrones." He intended to associate his son with him, if he reigned five years, but these soaring hopes were soon cut short.

² *Bonosus*, 14. 1. "ut ipse dicebat, rhetoris filius, ut ab aliis comperi, paedagogi literarii. parvulus patrem amisit, atque a matre fortissima educatus literarum nihil didicit."

³ *Ibid.* "militavit primum inter ordinarios, deinde inter equites, duxit ordines, tribunatus egit, dux limitis Rhetici fuit, bibit quantum hominum nemo. 'non ut vivat natus est, sed ut bibat.' siquando legati barbarorum undecunque gentium venissent, ipsis propinabat, ut eos inebriaret, atque ab his per vinum cuncta cognosceret. ipse quantumlibet bibisset, securus atque sobrius et (ut Onesimus dicit) in vino prudentior."

by the Germans—who had burnt the flotilla of ships on the Rhine which prevented the barbarians from crossing—dreading the responsibility for this remissness, he took upon himself the still greater responsibility of declaring himself Emperor, and maintained his position for some time.¹ Overcome by Probus after a long and severe contest, he hanged himself. Probus spared his two sons and continued his wife's allowance until her death.² She was a barbarian of Gothic race, and her name, according to Vopiscus, was Hunila, which, as Peter says elsewhere, is always a man's name. Vopiscus professes to give a letter of Aurelian ordering the marriage of Bonosus and Hunila to be celebrated with due ceremony.³

Both these tyrants were very different from the

Lécirivain, p. 383, thinks the whole account of Bonosus an audacious invention. It is strange that Vopiscus's grandfather knew both Saturninus (in the East) and Bonosus (in Gaul). Klebs notices this, *Rhein. Mus.*, 1892, p. 24.

¹ *Bonosus*, 15. 1. "cum quodam tempore in Rheno Romanas lusorias Germani incendissent, timore ne poenas daret, sumpsit imperium, idque diutius tenuit quam merebatur." It would seem that the headquarters of Bonosus, at any rate, were at Köln. So Aurelius Victor, Orosius, Eutropius. Clinton puts this in A.D. 281.

² *Ibid.*, 15. 3. "longo gravique certamine a Probo superatus, laqueo vitam finivit. tunc quidem iocus exstitit 'amphoram pendere non hominem.' filios duos reliquit, quibus ambobus Probus pepercit, uxore quoque eius in honore habita, et usque ad mortem salario praestito."

³ *Ibid.* "fuisse enim dicitur" ("ut et avus meus dicebat." His grandfather knew both Saturninus and Bonosus.) "familiae nobilis gentis Gothicae." The marriage was dictated by state policy. The actual document is quoted from memory. "haec me legisse tenes de Bonoso." Vopiscus seems to have some inkling of the trivial character of this biography. "potui quidem horum vitam praeterire, quos nemo quaerebat."

refined and cultured Saturninus. Proculus was a sensualist, Bonosus a sot; yet these crude votaries of Bacchus and Venus made a better struggle against Probus than did Saturninus, the experienced statesman and administrator, who had sufficient sensibility to feel the momentous character of the step he had taken, and thus allowed "the native hue of his resolution to be sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought." These pretenders enjoyed a short-lived success. There was little magnetic charm about the personalities of the three whom we have mentioned, and a much more formidable opponent was needed to wrest the Empire from Probus, until he lost his soldiers' support. Plainly, Probus was the man of his time best fitted to rule, and in all the games of "latrunculi" that he played with his opponents, it was he whose combinations were successful, and he who was acclaimed "imperator."

The rebellion of Proculus and Bonosus seems to have involved Probus in some difficulties. The secession of Gaul led to the temporary detachment of Spain and Britain, which were isolated from Rome. These provinces may have accepted the rule of Proculus and Bonosus, or, as is perhaps more probable, waited on events.¹ Zosimus tells us of a rebellion in Britain, which, if the account be correct,

¹ In *C. I. L.*, ii. 3738, the name of Probus is erased. This is a Spanish inscription. Mommsen attributes this to the rising of Proculus. The existence of Bonosus is attested by coins. Cohen, v. 314. Vopiscus says, *Probus*, 18. 5, "cum Proculus et Bonosus . . . omnes sibi Britannias Hispanias et braccatae Galliae provincias vindicarent." Perhaps a partition treaty; probably nothing more was done. Vopiscus says the Germans refused to help them, 18. 7: "Probo perservire maluerunt." Lécirvain scornfully rejects this.

should be assigned to this time. The leader is unnamed, but owed his position in Britain to the recommendation of Victorinus (Consul in A.D. 282). Probus called the last-named to him, and after reproving him for his faulty judgment, ordered him to retrieve himself the consequences of his error. He immediately went to Britain, and by discreet methods,¹ which may be a euphemism for unscrupulous treachery, destroyed the tyrant.

Probus was at last enabled to celebrate his long-deferred triumph over the Germans and the Blemyes, the only cases in which he could rightly have claimed the honour. Vopiscus, who is a connoisseur in these matters, describes the triumph as fully as he described the similar triumphs of Aurelian and Carinus. With all the enthusiasm of a dweller at Rome he expatiates on the various fêtes which celebrated Probus's many successes. The triumph could not have the *éclat* or the magnificence of that spectacle some eight years previously, in which the populace had gazed upon a Zenobia, and a Tetricus, following in the train of the Emperor, not to men-

¹ Zosimus, i. 66. ἄλλην ἐπανάστασιν ἐν τῇ Βρεττανίᾳ μελετηθεῖσαν διὰ Βικτωρίνου, Μαυρουσίου τὸ γένος, ὧπερ πεισθεὶς ἔτυχε τὸν ἐπαναστάντα τῆς Βρεττανίας ἄρχοντα προστησάμενος. καλέσας γὰρ τὸν Βικτωρίνον πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ συμβουλῇ μεμψάμενος πταῖσμα ἐπανορθώσοντα πέμπει. ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν Βρεττανίαν αὐθις ἐξορμήσας περινοίᾳ οὐκ ἄφρονι τὸν τύραννον ἀναίρει. Zonaras corresponds. He, too, seems ignorant of the tyrant's name. ἕτερος δὲ τις ἐν Βρεττανίαις ἀποστασίαν διεμελέτησεν, ὃν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐποίησατο, Βικτωρίνου Μαυρουσίου ὀικειωμένου ἀντῷ τούτῳ αἰτησαμένου. Καὶ τοῦτο μαθὼν ὁ Πρόβος ἠτιᾶτο τὸν Βικτωρίνον. Καὶ ὃς πεμφθῆναι πρὸς ἐκείνον ἠτήσατο, καὶ ἀπῆει ὡς δῆθεν φεύγων τὸν αὐτοκράτορα, καὶ ἀσπασίως ὑπὸ τοῦ τυραννήσαντος ὑποδέδεκτο. ὁ δὲ διὰ τῆς νυκτὸς ἀνελὼν αὐτὸν ἐπανῆλθε πρὸς Πρόβον. He is thus more explicit than Zosimus. John of Antioch follows Zosimus verbally. *Probus*, frag. 4, Müller.

tion persons of less significance. But the many achievements of Probus and his captains warranted a spectacle which had now become unfamiliar. In the triumphal procession itself, detachments of fifty from every tribe which had been subdued were led before the Emperor, and other celebrations perhaps, as Lépaulle thinks, lasted some time. A hunting exhibition was given in the Circus, and no expense was stinted. In an imitation forest there roamed a thousand ostriches, and an equal number of stags, boars, deer, and other species of animals, and all were delivered over to the people, who received a substantial donative.¹ Another day in the Amphitheatre one hundred lions were exhibited, who, to the universal disgust, afforded very little sport. There were also contests between gladiators, in which figured the Blemys, the Germans, and also some Sarmatians and Isaurians, with whom Probus had had also to do.² The date of this triumph is

¹ *Probus*, 19. 1. "dedit Romae etiam voluptates et quidem insignes, delatis etiam congiariis. triumphavit de Germanis et Blemys, omnium gentium drungos usque quinquagenos homines ante triumphum duxit." Zonaras says, (ιστόρηται) κατὰ πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τρόπαια στήσασθαι.

"arbores validae connexis late longeque trabibus affixae sunt, terra deinde superiecta, totusque Circus ad silvae consitus speciem gratia novi viroris effronduit. inmissi deinde per omnes aditus struthiones mille . . . et cetera herbatice animalia, quanta vel alia potuerunt vel inveniri. inmissi deinde populares, rapuit quisque quod voluit."

² *Ibid.* "addidit alia die in Amphitheatro una missione centum iubatos leones . . . qui omnes e posticis (Peter). interempti sunt, non magnum praebentes spectaculum cum occidebantur, neque enim erat bestiarum impetus ille qui esse e caveis egredientibus solet . . . editi deinde centum leopardi Libyci . . . quorum omnium ferarum magnum magis constat spectaculum quam gratum. edita praeterea gladia-

assigned by Tillemont to A.D. 279, but this seems too early, although we find a coin of this year in which the Emperor is represented on a quadriga triumphalis. Lépaule¹ infers from two coins (Cohen, Nos. 67 and 68) which bear the legend "Gloria orbis consul IV," and "gloria orbis consul V," respectively, that the celebration of the triumph began in A.D. 281, and was prolonged into 282. This suggestion is at any rate plausible, and even without these coins we would naturally assume that the triumph was celebrated at or about this period in the reign. Vanity was not one of Probus's sins. His moderation, or, rather, good sense, was shown in his celebrating only one triumph,² and this fact helps us to appraise at their proper value Vopiscus's lavish eulogies of the greatest general in Roman history.

Probus did not remain long at Rome. The peace concluded with Persia could not be lasting. The motive for that peace is unknown to us. However, Probus now resolved again to assume the aggressive,³ although the Persian King seems to have given him no provocation. Extensive preparations were made for an invasion in force, and troops were concentrated in Illyricum. Probus himself had arrived

torum paria trecenta, Blemyis plerisque pugnantibus, qui per triumphum erant ducti, plerisque Germanis et Sarmatis, nonnullis etiam latronibus Isauris."

¹ *Étude historique*, etc., p. 93.

² Vopiscus, ch. 19. "triumphavit de Germanis et Blemyis."

³ Vopiscus mentions the conclusion of a peace (18) and then says nothing more about Persia until "bellum Persicum parans," (20. 1). Perhaps Probus thought that the internal troubles mentioned in *Carus* 8 would afford a very favourable opportunity for an attack.

at Sirmium, his native place, when all these ambitious projects were cut short by death. The account given us by Vopiscus is not very illuminating.¹ The soldiers were engaged on a public work, as Lépaulle thinks, to while away the time. Probus's views, which he had perhaps injudiciously revealed, must have rendered him unpopular with his troops. In the first place, he had revived the rigours of the ancient discipline, and refused to limit a soldier's activity to the parade ground. Now, as before, he occupied his troops with work, and thus excited their discontent. One plan of his was to unite Sirmium to the sea by constructing a canal, and to drain the marshy land near. Probus had also imprudently let fall words which presaged a reduction of the military forces of the Empire, a design which, however beneficent, would only excite the rage of turbulent legionaries. When this displeasure broke out suddenly, the Emperor fled to a high iron tower for refuge, but there was seized and slain.² Another tradition had it that Probus's successor,

¹ *Probus*, 20. 1. "quibus" (the triumph) "peractis, bellum Persicum parans, cum per Illyricum iter faceret, a militibus suis per insidias interemptus est. causae occidendi eius hae fuere primum, quod nunquam militem otiosum esse perpessus est. siquidem multa opera militari manu perfecit, dicens annonam gratuitam militem comedere non debere. his additum dictum eius grave, si unquam fuerit salutare Rei publicae, 'brevi milites non necessarios futuros.'"

² *Ibid.* 21. 2. "cum Sirmium venisset, ac solum patrum effecundari cuperet et dilatari, ad siccandam quandam paludem multa simul milia militum posuit, ingentem parans fossam, qua, deiectis in altum navibus, loca Sirmensibus profutura siccaret. permoti milites confugientem eum in turrem ferratam, quam ipse speculae causa editissimam exaedificaverat," etc. Aurelius Victor, his epitomist, Eutropius, Orosius, and Eusebius, give the same story.

Carus, was privy to the deed, but in view of his character Vopiscus discredits the charge.¹ The soldiers' repentance was as hasty as their mutinous fit, and as they could not bring their Emperor to life again, they solaced their grief by building a magnificent tomb.² So died Probus, after a reign of six years.

Zonaras (following Zosimus ?), John of Antioch and Anonymus post Dionem give a different account. The last-named states that when Carus took up arms against Probus, Probus held a council, and while all the others were silent, Martinianus, a Chiliarch, boldly rebuked the Emperor for the hesitation which was causing his ruin, and urged him to act immediately and confront the usurper. No other writer mentions Martinianus and this debate. John says that the armies of Noricum and Rhaetia (τῶν ἐν Πατρία καὶ Νορικῷ δυναμένων) invested Carus with the purple. The army sent against Carus went over to his side and Probus, completely deserted, was slain.

¹ *Carus*, 6. 1. "non me praeterit suspicatos esse plerosque et eos in fastos rettulisse" (we have no record of this) "Cari factione interemptum Probum, sed neque meritum Probi erga Carum neque Cari mores id credi patiuntur, simul quia Probi mortem et acerrime et constantissime vindicavit."

² This inscription has been doubted. Though Lépaulle finds it full of grandeur in its simplicity, others will see in it only bad rhetoric and a sorry pun. Vopiscus gives Probus's reign as five years, so Victor; Eutropius six years four months, so Eusebius and Orosius. Zonaras says he was slain in his sixth year. Syncellus six years, and Jerome and Cassiodorus. Malalas says he was fifty years old. His birthday was on August 19 (Natales Caesarum), and thus he died, perhaps, after August 19, A.D. 282. See Clinton. Coins were issued at Alexandria with Probus's name after that date, and he reigned till September at least. Perhaps we should reckon from the death of Florian; then Clinton would assign the death of Probus to the end of October.

Zonaras (xii. 29) confirms this. Carus, a governor of part of Europe, noticed that his troops were rebelliously disposed, and begged to be recalled. Probus, however, was unwilling to take this step. The soldiers then compelled Carus to accept the Empire, and hastened into Italy. The army which was sent by Probus against Carus cast its generals into chains and deserted. Probus was then slain by his attendants.

The circumstances, then, of Probus's death are most obscure. According to Vopiscus, Carus was in Probus's camp, and not an accessory to his master's death. Probus was slain at Sirmium by an angry mob of soldiers. Some of the circumstances of Probus's death have a suspicious resemblance to those of the death of Saturninus. It is possible, and certainly not unlikely, that Zonaras, who is here most copious, confused the two. It is difficult to decide whether Carus was faithful or not, but perhaps the evidence is slightly in his favour. One would prefer to believe that Carus was a loyal servant and Probus an appreciative master, and that Carus's accession was not due to treason. Be that as it may, the two main traditions are irreconcilable.

Only one man appeared a possible successor. This was Carus the praefectus praetorio, a man high in the favour of Probus.¹ This fact Vopiscus, as

¹ *Carus*, 5. 4. "per civiles et militares gradus, ut *tituli statuarum eius indicant*, praefectus praetorii a Probo factus tantum sibi apud milites amoris locavit ut interfecto Probo solus dignissimus videretur imperio." He does not seem to have heeded the Senate much. He bids it rejoice at his succession because he is a true-born Roman.

usual, attests with a letter to the Senate praising Carus. It is hardly likely that an Emperor like Probus would urge the Senate to raise statues for his servants, and therefore the letter should be rejected. Carus, like Probus, had enjoyed a successful military career. Though he was said to have been born at Narbo, he himself claimed to be a true Roman, and bade the Senate rejoice therefore at his accession.¹ He treated that body in a very cavalier fashion, and seemed to regard their acceptance of his succession as less than even an idle formality.

Carus showed, however, that he was a worthy successor to Probus. The immediate result of Probus's death was the rising of the Sarmatians, who, inspirited by his end, threatened to invade Illyria, Thrace, and even Italy. However, security was speedily restored, and heavy blows were dealt upon the Sarmatians.² Then Carus proceeded to carry out the plans of Probus by entering upon a war with Persia, for according to Anonymus post Dionem he considered that he had obtained the

¹ *Carum*, 4. "patria sic ambigue traditur ut praesumptae veritatem dicere nequeam." Onesimus says that Carus was born at Rome, Fabius Cerilianus in Illyricum, and later (5) "gaudendum est itaque P.C. quod unus ex vestro ordine, vestri etiam generis, imperator est factus. quare adnitemini ne meliores peregrini quam vestri esse videantur." There is no request such as Probus made, for any recognition by the Senate. Carus was consul A.D. 283 with his son Carinus.

² *Carus*, 9. 4. "Sarmatas adeo morte Probi feroces ut invasuros se non solum Illyricum sed Thracias quoque Italiamque minarentur, ita inter bella patiendo" (corrupt; see Peter; Madvig emends—"ita scienter bella partiendo"), "contudit ut paucissimis diebus Pannonias securitate donaverit, occisis Sarmatarum sedecim milibus, captis diversi sexus viginti milibus."

crown to do harm to the Persians. He obtained the hearty consent of the soldiers, and advanced into the Persian territory. The Persians were distracted by internal troubles and in no position to bar the enemy's advance. Carus was thus enabled to regain Mesopotamia and to advance to Ctesiphon,¹ thus restoring the Eastern frontier of Severus. Meanwhile his two sons had been honoured with the title of Caesar, and Carinus had been made regent of Gaul.² The latter soon proved that he was entirely unworthy of such an honour, and the report of his doings made his father declare that this was no son of his, and lament that Numerianus, not Carinus, was his younger son, and even perhaps think of deposing him in favour of Constantius, then governor of Dalmatia.³

The following inscriptions relate to Carus and his sons :—

Carus, II. 1117, 3660, 4102, 4760, 4785, 4786, 4908. III. 5205. VIII. 968, 1626, 4220, 5332, 10144, 10157, 10956, perhaps 4201, 10250 (name erased). X. 8013.

Carinus, II. 3385, 4103, 4761, 4795, 4822, 4832, 4882. III. 3469. VIII. 5332, 10144,

¹ *Carus*, 8. "contra Persas profectus, nullo sibi occurrente Mesopotamiam cepit et Ctesiphontem usque pervenit. occupatisque Persis domestica scditione, imperatoris Persiae nomen meruit."

² *Ibid.*, 7. 1. "ubi primum accepit imperium, consensu omnium militum bellum Persicum quod Probus parabat, aggressus est, liberis Caesaribus nuncupatis, et ita quidem ut Carinum ad Gallias tuendas cum viris lectissimis destinaret."

³ *Ibid.*, 17. audiebat pater eius quae ille faceret et clamabat "non est meus." statuerat denique Constantium in locum eius subrogare; illum vero, ut Onesimus dicit, occidere.

10950, 10157, 10219 (in Carus's lifetime), 2717, 2384, 4222, 7002, 10156, 10315.

Carinus and Numerianus, VIII. 2529-2530. XIV. 126.

Numerianus, II. 4641, 4793, 4929, 4942, 4452. VII. 1165. VIII. 5332, 10144, 10157, 10283 (in Carus's lifetime), 4223, 10145, 10156, 10234 (after his death). IX. 2445. X. 110, 1523, 5672. These inscriptions confirm the statement that Carus's sons were given the title of Caesar, and show also that they assumed the titles "Germanicus, Maximus, Britannicus, Persicus," as Nemesianus suggests. The title "princeps iuventutis," first employed by Augustus, was revived in their honour.¹ We have also many coins of Carus and his sons separately and together. Cohen gives 118 of Carus alone. In two he is called "Parthicus" and in eleven he is called "divus," a sign of his deification. Carinus is called on some coins "nobilissimus Caesar," in his father's lifetime, on one "Augustus." There are 122 coins of Numerian. Some call him "princeps iuventutis," some betoken his deification, and others his victories. There are 195 of Carinus; on 158 is inscribed "victoria Germanica." Some coins (and two inscriptions) give us the name of his wife Urbica, and another coin mentions the deification of Nigrinianus, a son who died young. There are in Poole seven Alexandrian coins of Carus which show that he reigned two (Egyptian) years, four of Carinus as Caesar, ten as Augustus, which show that his reign extended over three

¹ See also *Ephemeris epigraphica*, vii. 603, 648, 671; vi. 3582-3612; and Mionnet, Suppl., vol. ix. 627-635.

years, two of Numerianus as Caesar and ten as Augustus.

Hard as it is to separate the truth from its supernatural embellishments, the end of Carus was as sudden and undeserved as that of Probus. Vopiscus does not accept the story that Carus was struck by lightning, but rationalizes it into the statement that his death, a natural death, happened in a storm.¹ Nor will he admit that the death was a divine judgment on his rashness in advancing into the heart of Persia.²

Numerianus, who had accompanied his father, found the soldiers unwilling, apparently, to advance farther, and therefore turned westwards. His death, according to the curious story handed down to us, occurred on the way home,³ but was long concealed by Aper, who carried Numerianus as before in a litter. At length his death was discovered, and Diocletian, who was proclaimed "Augustus," did not allow Aper to profit by his faithlessness.

We have one literary monument of the time. That eclogue of Calphurnius, which modern critics more rightly assign to Nemesianus, celebrates the

¹ Eutropius ix. 18. "vi divini fulminis periit." Aurelius Victor, 3. 8.

Carus, 8. A letter of Junius Calphurnius to the praefectus urbis is quoted to that effect. All documents in Vopiscus are to be suspected.

² *Carus*, 9. "sed sibi habeat artes suas timiditas calcanda virtutibus." Vopiscus then speaks of a coming invasion by Maximian of Persia. Aurelius Victor is an example of this "timiditas."

³ This must have occurred some time after September, 284, or a little earlier, as we have Alexandrian coins which speak of his third year of rule.

games which the brothers held in honour of their victories. Numerianus is still alive and his presence is eagerly expected. The poet sings of the tribes upon the Rhine and Tigris which have been subdued, and keenly anticipates the splendour of the triumph.¹ Vopiscus gladly seizes the opportunity to describe the games, which were celebrated in complete disregard of expense. Coins and inscriptions also show that the brothers assumed titles in honour of the victories of their father and their own.

Diocletian advanced to the West to meet Carinus, who was still indulging himself to his heart's content in the most monstrous of vices, and after the deaths of his father and brother seemed to consider all restraint unnecessary.² We know little about his rule, except that there was a famine and a fire.³ The debauchee, however, defended himself with considerable vigour, and it was only after the stoutly contested battle of Margus⁴ that he fell, and with him the short-lived dynasty of Carus. With the accession of Diocletian is inaugurated that new era of order towards the establishment of which Probus had contributed so much.

¹ Nemesianus, 62-85.

² *Carus*, 18. "cum pater fulmine absumptum . . . comperit, maiora vitia et scelera edidit, quasi liber a frenis domesticæ pietatis suorum moribus absolutus." Eutropius, ix. 19.

³ Chronographus of A.D. 354.

⁴ At the confluence of the Margus with the Danube, not far from Viminacium. *Carus*, 18. "multis proeliis confligit." Eutropius says that Carinus was betrayed by his army. Victor has a different account. Hearing of Carus's death, Julian, corrector of the Veneti, aspired to empire. Carinus attacked him, but in the hour of victory was slain by his followers, who were indignant at his seduction of the wife of one of his officers.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

HE who attempts to investigate the reign of Probus must often feel that he is attempting to make bricks without straw. The controversy on the Augustan History knows no bounds or limits, yet the events of the reign of Probus can easily be narrated in two not excessively long chapters. The mist which hangs over the predecessors of Diocletian is one which even the strongest historical searchlight cannot penetrate, or—to change the metaphor—the historian must always be delving in the dark with but a gloomy prospect of lighting upon any precious ore. It is too high a compliment to call our authorities even the crude material of History, for our investigation has shown that the inquirer who trusts to Vopiscus is leaning upon a broken reed. Whether we attribute his comparative excellence to his own merits or to that of his source Eunapius, Zosimus is our best authority. Zosimus is not an authority of whom one can in general speak in terms of praise. But at least he tells his story plainly and directly, and indulges neither in rhapsodies nor in digressions, as does our verbose rhetorician Vopiscus. And, fortunately, in this period Zosimus has no opportunities of giving rein to his pagan prejudices. If we measure

the contributions of the two authors not by amount but by quality of information, we shall find that Zosimus is the more helpful, his only defect being that geographical inexactitude which is found everywhere in his works.¹ The loss of the conclusion of Book I is, then, a genuine loss, for which the survival of the slipshod Zonaras cannot compensate. The comparison of Zosimus with Vopiscus, then, leads us to the singular result that Zosimus, contrasted with some writers, takes quite a respectable rank.

The dearth of all reliable information must, then, be taken as a fundamental principle at the outset of all investigations of the period. We have been totally unable to accept those conclusions of German scholar-romanticists which have resulted in the addition of so many luminaries to the historical firmament, for these supposed planets turn out on a closer investigation to be mere will-o'-the-wisps which simply leave their deluded votaries stranded in the mire. And those who would assign the composition of the Augustan History to a later date take from it its only merit, that of being a more or less contemporary account.

Of Vopiscus in particular it is unnecessary to say much more. This sudden and portentous invasion of the realm of History by banality and bathos is an interesting study in psychology, and those who deny Vopiscus's existence would rob us of one of Literature's most curious characters, a personage whose vanity was as colossal as his incapacity,

¹ See my *Claudian as an Historical Authority*, pp. 18, 73, 201.

whose erudition was not sufficient to merit the proud title of pedant, a writer whom to reckon as a mediocrity is to praise extravagantly, one who was able to paint no man's character but his own, in short, a miracle of complacent ineptitude. His faults are obvious and manifold. A magnificent disdain of detail or chronology, a deep-seated mendaciousness, which prompts him to fabricate confirmations of his statements, a penchant for rhetorical platitude, an elaborate parade of historical principles, without historical insight or an historical conscience, a series of irritating mannerisms, a volubility which "never deviates into sense," would make him an ideal hero for an historical Dunciad. The scraps of information which he vouchsafes are told us incidentally, for never for one moment can he keep to the point. He fabricates and forgets, he quotes his grandfather and his friends, and the senseless *causerie* does not cease till the subject and the reader are exhausted. Yet, though it is both a crime and a blunder to write a bad book, admitting to the full the heinousness of Vopiscus's offence, and not seeking to extenuate that verbosity which is at once his pride and his undoing, one may feel that the worst historian on record has undergone a sufficiently severe punishment, and might now be consigned to a merciful oblivion.

With such authorities results cannot be striking. We must not visit upon Probus the indiscretions of his biographer, but the events which have been narrated scarcely justify the lavish eulogies of Vopiscus. Probus was assuredly a gallant soldier, an able officer, and a competent general, but many

persons equally distinguished have failed to win an empire. He is preferred to Scipio, Marius and Sulla as a general, to Trajan, Hadrian and Antonine as an Emperor,¹ but what military genius, what gifts of statesmanship even attest such extravagant claims? Gaul was certainly restored to the Empire, and the Germans received a decided check, but the other achievements of Probus are described in too bombastic a style. When a general conquers a province without striking a blow, we may reasonably doubt whether that province had ever been really lost. The successes in Rhaetia and Illyricum—we would not belittle them in saying this—were merely instances of competent and resolute administration. Probus crushed incipient disaffection, he did not vanquish degenerate barbarians whose courage suddenly melted away. It is significant that Probus triumphed only over the Germans and the Blemyes. Not being a man of overweening vanity, or anxious for undeserved honours, he was content

¹ *Tacitus*, 16. 6. “vir Aureliano, Traiano, Hadriano, Antonino, Alexandro, Claudioque praeferendus, nisi quia in illis varia, in hoc omnia praecipua tunc fuere.” (The exception is remarkable.) *Probus*, 1. 4. “occidit pro pudor! tanti viri et talis historia, qualem non habent bella Punica, non terror Gallicus, non motus Pontici, non Hispaniensis astutia.” His final judgment, “conferens ego cum aliis imperatoribus, omnibus prope ducibus, qui fortes, qui clementes, qui prudentes, qui mirabiles exstiterunt, intellego hunc virum parem fuisse, aut si non repugnat invidia furiosa meliorem. quinquennio imperii sui per totum orbem terrarum tot bella gessit, et quidem per se, ut mirabile sit quemadmodum omnibus occurrerit proeliis.” Yet both Julian and Victor praise him. (Zosimus has the same phrase.) Silenus, however, at the banquet says that he was too austere. Victor’s estimate is high: “ingenti belli scientia exercitandisque varie militibus ac duranda iuventute prope Hannibal alter?”

to celebrate a composite triumph over the Germans, who had been expelled from Gaul, and the Blemyes, whose power to harm Egypt was temporarily ended.

But yet amid the "drums and trappings" of barbarian hosts and Roman legionaries the Roman Empire endured and developed, and we would fain turn from the miserable page of Vopiscus to the contemplation of the inner working of that wondrous machine the Roman Empire. Of that we know little, but we must infer that the change to the organization of Diocletian was not entirely abrupt, and that in such matters the period was a period of transition. Lépaulle would therefore rank Probus's organizing talents as highly as his military genius, and would in his scheme of chronology allot as much time to the task of reorganization as to the campaigns. In spite of the lack of information upon the subject there can be little doubt that he is right, and that Probus's achievements in the sphere of government were of greater value than his scanty laurels. Gaul, which had been overrun by barbarians, was again restored to the rank of a Roman province, Rhaetia and Illyricum again were obedient to the Roman rule, Isauria was freed from the banditti which infested it, Egypt was delivered from the odious tyranny of the Blemyes. Here were tasks sufficient to tax the genius of a Carnot or a von Moltke, and stray hints let fall by Vopiscus confirm the presumption that Probus's "victories of peace," too tame to obtain the mention of his voluble panegyrist, were of no mean importance. These matters, then, deserve a moment's attention.

In those troublous times the army was the pivot

of imperial policy. It was a ferocious and unwieldy monster, which must be soothed and occupied. Probus's expedient was twofold. He desired to restore Roman prestige and Rome's ancient glory. The most brilliant means of accomplishing this end was a successful war prosecuted against a foreign nation. The project of a Persian invasion was often in his thoughts. It was delayed owing to circumstances of which we are ignorant, and was not to be achieved until Carus had succeeded to the throne. The success of the latter shows that the scheme was not a chimera, but perfectly feasible, though Rome's expansion had now approached its limit. Probus's policy on the frontier of the Rhine met with complete success even in his own reign. The project of establishing Germany as a Roman province was abandoned, if the policy (as Vopiscus says) was debated.¹ The Germans were awed by the resolute action of Probus and were content to let well alone.² Gaul was plagued by tyrants, but not by foreign incursions.

The Roman Emperor, confronted with his

¹ *Probus*, 15. 7. A project of appointing a governor of Germany is mentioned in a letter to the Senate ("tales ad senatum litteras dedit"). "hoc ad pleniora vota distulimus, quod quidem credimus conferre, cum divina providentia nostros fecundarit exercitus." A very reasonable conclusion. Probus, then, contented himself with establishing *têtes du pont* on the other side of the Rhine. Mommsen, *Provinces*, i. 167.

² Vopiscus even says they refused aid to the tyrants. *Probus* 18. 7. "unum sane sciendum est, quod Germani omnes, cum ad auxilium essent rogati a Proculo, Probo potius perservire maluerunt quam cum Bonoso et Proculo esse."

Vopiscus does not succeed in concealing this. *Probus*, 18. 3. "nec parum molestiae intulerunt, quos quidem ille diversis vicibus, variisque victoriis oppressit, paucis cum gloria domum redeuntibus, quod Probi evasissent manus."

turbulent legions, must often have been tempted to desire disarmament. Such was the dream of Probus, of a time when soldiers should be no more. Yet to imagine a time when the barbarian lion would lie down with the imperial lamb, to conceive the possibility of a complete disarmament, was the idlest of day-dreams. An empire of such vast extent as was the Roman Empire must necessarily have a considerable frontier force, and if we consider the difference between the tame and sluggish-spirited Rome of the time, and the rash, untutored barbarians, it is obvious that this idle fancy of a reign of peace was worthy only of the admiration of Vopiscus.¹ But Probus was discreet enough to hasten slowly towards the accomplishment of an ideal which conflicted with his dreams of conquest. Still the fact that Probus held such views is significant of that weariness of turmoil and anarchy which all thoughtful men must have felt.²

His other views regarding the army were more laudable. The urgent need of the time was to end that fearful frivolity with which the legions set up and pulled down their puppet Emperors. Lawlessness and turbulence were now inbred qualities, and the reformer's first aim must needs be the restoration

¹ *Probus*, 20. 5. "quid est aliud dicere? Romanus iam miles erit nullus, ubique regnabit, omnia possidebimus, segura Res publica orbis terrarum non arma fabricabit, non annonam praebebit, boves habebuntur aratro, equus nascetur ad pacem. nulla erunt bella, nulla captivitas, ubique pax, ubique Romanae leges, ubique iudices nostri." The passage does not deserve the praise which De Quincey gives it.

² The saying of Probus, "brevi milites non necessarios habebimus," seems to have impressed the imagination of later writers. Victor and Eutropius, besides Vopiscus, give it.

of the ancient "modestia." In this fearfully difficult task Probus, like other Emperors, perished as soon as his soldiers realized his aims. Besides restoring discipline, he wished to remove the opportunities of and incentives to sedition by occupying their idle hours.¹ Many useful works were accomplished in pursuance of this policy, a policy which Probus seems to have initiated early in his career.² The troops murmured that they were given no rest, that the number of marshes to be drained, of harbours to be improved, and of similar works, was unending. Probus refused to let his troops eat the bread of idleness, and in this arduous policy he failed, but failed nobly.

The Roman prestige stood higher on the Rhine than on the Danube. Here a different policy was adopted, that of settling barbarians on Roman soil as a kind of outpost. One hundred thousand of the Bastarnae were settled on the Roman side of the Danube, and numbers also of other tribes. The settlement of the Bastarnae was completely successful,³ but that of the other tribes was a failure. There was much to be said for the experiment, though the policy was not that policy of extirpation which Probus carried out in Gaul so thoroughly. But the policy, though in time of

¹ *Probus*, 21. 2. "quod nunquam militem otiosum esse perpeusus est. siquidem multa opera militari manu perfecit, dicens annonam gratuitam militem comedere non debere."

² *Ibid.*, 9. 3. In Egypt (under Aurelian). "extant apud Aegyptum eius opera quae per milites struxit in plurimis civitatibus."

³ Lépaulle, p. 86, wrongly says that the Bastarnae disappear from History. See Claudian. De IV. Cons. Hon. 450. De Cons. Stil. I. 96.

Rome's decadence it became the normal panacea, was perilous. When the Emperor's attention was engrossed in other troubles, those tribes who had less aptitude for the ways of civilization relapsed into their barbarous vagrant habits and ranged about the provinces killing and plundering, and though they were at length repressed, it was at a heavy cost.¹

That Probus's reorganization was not entirely perfect is shown by this and other circumstances. We are told of a detachment of Franks who sailed about the Mediterranean, under the black flag. But though Probus's endeavours were not always crowned with success, in most cases his labours were beneficial. The case of Isauria has been mentioned. In that province the foraging tendencies of the inhabitants were checked by stern repressive measures, and by enlisting upon the side of order the military instincts of the inhabitants of a land which seemed the cattle-lifters' paradise. The corn supply of Rome was improved by the subjugation of the Blemyes, who had long levied blackmail upon Egypt, and possibly the public works attributed to Probus were carried out in the reign of Probus, and not previously as Vopiscus states.² It is certain, at any rate, that Probus did devote much attention to works of public benefit upon a large scale, and did not scruple to humiliate his warriors by forcing them to turn their idle hands to profitable labours.

¹ Both Zosimus and Vopiscus mention occurrences of this kind.

² So Lépaulle, p. 83, assumes. Vopiscus (*Probus*, ch. 9) says that his works still existed, but gives no evidence to prove that they were constructed before.

One matter in particular seems to have become almost a crotchet of Probus. Many authorities tell us that he first permitted various provinces to cultivate the vine. It is not true, however, that Probus first instituted the culture of the vine in Gaul.¹ In spite of the then greater severity of the Gallic winter, the vine had been previously cultivated, though the typical product of the province was its beer. Under the Emperors the vine was cultivated, especially in the neighbourhood of Arles and Lyons. Domitian ordered the vines in Gaul to be destroyed, but this order cannot have been completely carried out.² What Probus did, then, was to propagate in different parts of Gaul that culture of the vine which had previously been confined to Narbo and Southern Aquitania. Here and in Pannonia the soldiers were employed in planting vines, and the plantations thus made were handed over to the care of the provinces.³ Sirmium,

¹ The coin (Cohen, 277) referring to this is not authenticated. Lépaulle, p. 89.

² For the matter above see Mommsen, *Provinces*, i. 108. Brünner also says that Vopiscus's statement about the culture of the vine is incorrect.

³ Vopiscus, 18. 8. "Gallis omnibus et Hispanis ac Britannis hinc permisit ut vites haberent vinumque conficerent. ipse Almam montem in Illyrico circa Sirmium militari manu fossum lecta vite consevit." So Victor (Gaul, Pannonia and Moesia), but earlier in the reign. Eusebius, Gaul and Pannonia (before Saturninus's revolt). Eutropius puts it more probably after this. "vineas Gallos et Pannonios habere permisit opere militari. Almam montem apud Sirmium et Aureum apud Moesiam superiorem vineis conseruit et provincialibus colendas dedit." Enmann is justly sceptical about Britain. "Dass in Britannien je Weinbau getrieben worden sei, hat noch kein Sterblicher gesehen, man müsste denn wie der Londoner Cockney glauben, dass Port und Claret auf dem Boden Albions wuchsen."

which as Probus's birthplace was always specially favoured, had Mount Alma, which was in the vicinity, planted with vines, and this was done doubtless in many places. Whether the results of Probus's devotion to the vine were lasting or not, we do not know, but this policy, in suitable districts, must have increased the prosperity of his subjects, and shows, at any rate, an enlightened desire to promote the welfare of the Empire.

Though we must not attach too much importance to the vapourings of Vopiscus, the attitude of Probus towards the Senate appears to have been something of an anachronism. During those confused years, in which Emperor followed Emperor in such swift succession, the Senate seems at times to have asserted some of its ancient rights. The weakling Tacitus had conceded to it privileges which filled its members with exultation and caused premature celebrations of the second birth of liberty. Probus, anxious, naturally, in his first days to secure every possible support for his claims, professed great deference for the Senate, who, enraptured at such unwonted courtesy, immediately declared him Emperor. But this recognition was a barren ceremony, and under no one except a Tacitus could the Senate have regained an appreciable part of its former predominance. The reign proved troublous. The toga deferred to arms, and no more is heard of the Senate. Yet the Emperor's long absences from Rome, and his conciliatory methods, enabled the Senators to dupe themselves with the illusion that they were partners of Empire. They heard with regret of

Probus's end, and shuddered when they learnt that instead of the deferential Probus there reigned Carus, who did not trouble to submit his claims to the Senate's consideration.¹

Yet they gained nothing substantial from Probus. The rise of the Illyrian Emperors, as they have been called, marks indeed a stage in the decline of Rome. The centre of gravity had begun to shift eastwards, Illyricum, under Probus, was favoured much with the imperial presence, and Sirmium became almost a capital.² Sirmium was viewed by Probus with the devoted feelings which a patriotic citizen has for his birthplace, and Rome was beginning to be a city and not the City.

Of Probus's treatment of the provinces we are told little. We should expect that his usual humanity was shown towards his subjects, and that he required his governors to follow his example. His desire to reduce the army shows that he wished to deliver the provinces from those burdens which the maintenance of a standing army involves. The Empire was not governed from Rome for Rome's benefit. Probus spent little time at Rome, and his frequent campaigns brought one advantage. He must have been able to inspect the administration of the various provinces, probably with beneficial results. His zeal for the culture of the vine is an instance of his regard for his subjects'

¹ *Probus*, 24. 4. "cum esset nuntiatum Carum imperare, virum bonum quidem sed longe a moribus Probi . . . tam senatus quam populus inhorruit. Metuebant enim unusquisque tristiozem principem, sed magis improbum metuebant heredem."

² Lépaulle, p. 24.

welfare. Gaul, Illyricum, Rhaetia and the East, all were visited by him, and all doubtless were benefited by the presence, though temporary, of the Emperor.

Probus probably continued the efforts of Aurelian and Tacitus to reform the coinage, though only under Diocletian did matters much improve. From A.D. 274–300 we find little change in the coinage,¹ and it seems that no silver coins were issued under Probus, though older silver coins continued to be used.² During the reign we find six imperial mints working in the West (Serdica and Cyzicum only occasionally).

His talents were considerable and his virtues unusual in that age. He was generous to a fallen foe, or at least not blindly vindictive.³ The fact that he maintained his position for six years is, for that age, sufficient proof of his capacity to rule. Florian, Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus were all weighed in the balance and all found wanting. Florian was merely the brother of Tacitus, in itself a circumstance ominous enough for the duration of his power; Saturninus, a man of considerable distinction, was lacking in resolution; Proculus and Bonosus were Gallic Calibans. Probus was not a monster of cruelty, yet at the fitting moment his rival always fell; he was discreet and tactful, he could dissemble and conceal his aims until he thought that the moment suitable for their accom-

¹ Lépaulle, p. 11. This paragraph is based on Lépaulle.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ Compare his treatment of Florian's followers, of Saturninus, of Bonosus's children and wife. *Probus*, 13. 3. *Proculus*, 13. 5. *Bonosus*, 15. 3.

plishment had arrived. He had not that element of austerity, if not of savagery, which had made Aurelian so unpopular in senatorial quarters. He possessed the gift of apt and pithy expression.¹ He seems to have been successful in the selection of his subordinates, and later generals and emperors of distinction served their military apprenticeship under him. Such were Carus, Diocletian, Constantius, Annibalianus, Maximian, and others.²

Under happier circumstances Probus might have been able to display more brilliantly his military talents, but he was dogged by a series of misfortunes. After the long and difficult task of restoring the Empire to something of its former position had been accomplished, successive rebellions, which at various times detached from him the greater part of the Empire, arrested him in his task of the consolidation of the resources of Rome, and the barbarians, who were not slow to take advantage of this, roamed over the outlying provinces of the West as they pleased. When these troubles ceased at length, on the eve of an invasion of Persia, in which he might have emulated Trajan, he suffered a premature death at the assassin's hand.

Owing to external circumstances, then, as much as to any defect of Probus's, the reign was not more than a qualified success. We cannot place Probus on the lofty pedestal which Vopiscus sets up for

¹ A number of instances are given: "fugitivo militi potius quam forti hic equus convenit." "facilius est ab istis locis latrones arceri quam tolli." "annonam gratuitam militem comedere non debere." "brevi milites non necessarios habebimus." *Probus*, 8. 3; 10. 5; 20. 2; 20. 5.

² *Probus*, 22. 3.

him when he claims that his hero was the equal of any Emperor and restored all parts of the world to security. One of the essential elements of security is permanence, and it is difficult to make good such imposing claims for a reign of six years, in which one province after another had to be recalled to its loyalty, and one tyrant succeeded another. Even Vopiscus may be censured for his folly when he extols those achievements above the deeds of a Scipio or a Caesar. It is true that brave men have lived since Agamemnon,¹ but it is doubtful whether Probus, much as he shines when compared with some of his predecessors, was cast in the heroic mould. It is certain, at any rate, that the Homerids were in the fourth century A.D. an extinct race, and that Probus owes but little to his biographer. He renders Probus's merits ridiculous by his foolish claim that had a longer term of life been granted to Probus the whole race of barbarians would have been extirpated.²

But our final word must not be one of depreciation. Probus faithfully, and as he was able, served Rome in his generation. "It is not given to mortals to command success," but Probus did

¹ The preamble to *Probus*. "certum est . . . omnes omnium virtutes tantas esse quantas videri eas voluerint eorum ingenia qui uniuscuiusque facta descripserint."

² *Probus*, 23: 2. "quae deinde felicitas emicuisset, si sub illo principe milites non fuissent? annonam provincialis daret nullus, stipendia de largitionibus nulla erogarentur, aeternos thesauros haberet Romana Res publica. nihil expenderetur a principe, nihil a possessore redderetur, aureum profecto saeculum promittebat. adde quod nullus occideretur in bello." Cf. "nonne omnes barbaras nationes subiecerat pedibus? quia totum mundum fecerat iam Romanum." *Probus*, 20. 4.

more. He deserved it. He was not deified,¹ and was soon forgotten by a fickle people and a self-satisfied successor, yet few Roman worthies have more richly deserved a seat among the gods. A high-souled hero, one of those devoted sons who ever responded to Rome's call in such numbers, he deserved the gratitude of Rome and the remembrance of posterity.

* * * * * *

Vopiscus has, or at least lays claim to, one virtue, that of humility. The passage in which he concludes his biography of Carinus curiously foreshadows a modern conception of the function of History,² and may fittingly serve as epilogue to an essay in historical research. "habe, mi amice, meum munus, quod ego, ut saepe dixi, non eloquentiae causa sed curiositatis, in lumen edidi, id praecipue agens ut siquis eloquens vellet facta principum reserare, materiam non requireret, habiturus meos libellos ministros eloquii. te quaeso sis contentus, nosque sic voluisse scribere melius quam potuisse, contendas."

¹ Lépaule, p. 97. His appreciation of Probus is enthusiastic. "Une des personnalités les plus glorieuses, les plus honnêtes, et disons-le aussi, les plus justement sympathiques de l'histoire romaine." See pp. 98-102.

² Cf. Prof. Bury, *Inaugural Lecture*.

APPENDIX

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE REIGN

IN chronological matters we are always groping in the dark. Our starting-point must be the fact, which seems well attested, that Tacitus succeeded to the throne in September,¹ which, being the month of his birth (a fact which is confirmed by the "Natales Caesarum,"), was called temporarily "Tacitus."² Tacitus's election, then, was on September 25 (A.D. 275). If Tacitus reigned six months, and Florian reigned two months, Probus's reign should date officially from the end of May or thereabouts. But the meeting of the Senate which elected Probus took place, according to Vopiscus, on February 3, before the death of Tacitus! This is a gross instance of Vopiscus's dulness and carelessness, and it is hardly worth while to amend "Februarias" to "Augustas" (a trenchant enough measure), as Tillemont does, to save Vopiscus's reputation. Brünner is quite wrong in saying that Probus's letter to the Senate was considered before Florian's death. It is clear from his letter, in spite of his deliberate vagueness, that Florian is dead.³ Moreover, the

¹ *Tacitus*, 3. 2.

² *Ibid.*, 13. 6.

³ *Probus*, 11. 4. "nunc quoniam ille imperium arripuit, nobis a militibus delatum est nomen Augustum, vindicatum quinetiam in illum a prudentioribus militibus, quod fuerat usurpatum. quaeso ut de meis meritis faciatis quidquid iusserit vestra clementia." Lépaulle, p. 49, explains rather unsatisfac-

Senate would otherwise not have ventured upon the bold step of treating with one who was merely so far a tyrant. In any case the date is too early. Probus's reign, then, starts from soon after the death of Tacitus (beginning of April ?), though the recognition by the Senate did not take place till after Florian's death, which happened at Tarsus, a considerable distance from Rome.

Another instance of Vopiscus's inaccuracy, to use no stronger word, may be given. Tacitus sent his first letter to Probus *to the following purport*.¹ A great burden lies on Probus's shoulders as well as on Tacitus, and a consulship, to be held by them jointly, is promised for next year (which should be A.D. 276). But Probus was never consul with Tacitus, Aemilianus is the other consul of A.D. 276 according to the chronicler of 354. Throughout the reign Vopiscus says no more of dates or consulships, nor does he in the rest of his narrative (till the death of Carinus).

As has been mentioned before, the beginning of this reign has been shifted to a later date by some chroniclers. Thus Cassiodorus makes Tacitus's death occur in the year A.D. 279, a year after Probus's second consulship; the *Chronica Constantinopolitana* puts it in A.D. 277, the year of Probus's first consul-

torily that the Senate antedated the decree : " il a voulu faire disparaître des temoins matériels et gênants de sa connivence à la nomination de Florian, en même temps qu'il donnait à Probus une marque nouvelle de son adulation, et conservait, à son profit, l'apparence du droit de disposition de l'Empire."

¹ *Probus*, p. 235, D. " Tacitus primam talem ad Probum epistolam dedit . . . nos tibi consulatum in annum proximum *nobiscum* decrevimus."

ship. The error is due originally to Eusebius, who has three redundant years from A.D. 192. It is natural to assume that Probus held the consulship in the first year after his accession, as Carus later.

There are some discrepancies in the *Fasti*—

	<i>Chronographus</i> 354.	<i>Chron. Const.</i>	<i>Consul. Ital.</i>	<i>Prosper.</i>
276 A.D.	Tacitus II and Aemilianus.			
277 A.D.	Probus and Paulinus.	Probus and Paulinus.	Probus and Paulinus.	Probus and Paulinus.
278 A.D.	Probus and Paulinus.	Probus II and Lupus.	Probus II and Lupus.	Probus II and Paternus II.
279 A.D.	Probus III and Paternus.	Probus III and Paternus.		Probus III and Paternus.
280 A.D.	Messalla and Gratus.	Messalla and Gratus.	Messalla and Gratus.	Messalla and Gratus.
281 A.D.	Probus IV and Tiberianus.	Probus IV and Tiberianus.	Probus III and Tiberianus.	Probus IV and Tiberianus.
282 A.D.	Probus V and Victorinus.	Probus V and Victorinus.	Probus IV and Victorinus.	Probus V and Victorinus.
283 A.D.		Carus and Carinus.	Carus and Carinus.	

Thus it is agreed that Probus was consul every year of his reign except one, A.D. 280. We have no hint as to the reason, whether Probus did not wish to monopolize the consulship, or otherwise. The assignment of one consulship of A.D. 278 to Paulinus in the *Chronicler of 354* is suspicious, as all agree that Paulinus was consul in A.D. 277. Similarly Prosper gives the consulship of this year to Paternus, although he held it in A.D. 279. Lupus, therefore, was probably the colleague of Probus. In the other years there is agreement. It is interesting to note that Victorinus was consul in A.D. 282. Vopiscus does not mention him, but Zosimus (and Zonaras) mentions him. He would appear to have been a trusted servant of Probus, and was sent to Britain

to overcome a tyrant. The fact that he was made consul may confirm this story of Zosimus, which is unrecorded elsewhere. The consulship might have been a reward for valuable service.

As for the events of the reign, it is hard to construct from Vopiscus a scheme which can be of any value, nor is this surprising when we reflect that, among other errors, Vopiscus assigns only five years to the reign, not six years and four months, which seems more probable. Briefly the sequence of events as given by the different writers is—

<i>Vopiscus.</i>	<i>Victor.</i>	<i>Eutropius.</i>	<i>Zosimus.</i>	<i>Zonaras.</i>
Gallie campaign.		Gallie campaign.	Saturninus's revolt.	Saturninus's revolt in Britain.
Illyrian campaign.	Culture of vine.	Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus.	German campaign (two campaigns).	German campaign.
Isaurian campaign. Coptos and Ptolemais. ¹	Saturninus and Bonosus.	Culture of vine.	Isaurian campaign.	Deposed consequent upon Carus's elevation.
Persian embassy. The Bastarnae, etc.	Death.	Death.	Ptolemais. The Bastarnae.	
The three tyrants, in order — Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus. Permission to plant the vine. ² Triumph. Prepares for Persian War. Death.				

¹ It is doubtful which of these events happened first; perhaps they were practically simultaneous.

² Vic., *Epit.*, puts the culture of the vine after the three tyrants, but he may not be thinking of the chronological sequence.

Our authorities, then, are of little use. But there is another means of aiming at something like a chronological sequence. Lépaulle in his numismatic study of the reign attempts this task. Firmly convinced of the light that coins can cast upon history, he has chosen the reign of Probus for his study owing to the very scantiness of the other information which we possess.¹ He regards Vopiscus's word, however, with a veneration which no other modern critic feels, and follows him implicitly, neglecting Zosimus entirely. This is undoubtedly a defect in a work which has been executed with considerable ability.

During the reign of Probus six mints were at work—those at Rome, Siscia, Lyons, Tarragona, Serdica and Cyzicum. The coins can be identified by means of the special marks on each of these six classes.²

The coin (Cohen, 65) with the inscription "Imperator Caesar," and on the reverse "exercitus Persicus," celebrates Probus's elevation. Probus then proceeded to the Bosphorus, and at this time the mint at Cyzicum sent out coins inscribed "Soli invicto," "virtus Probi" and "concordia militum." His progress towards Pannonia is marked by coins of Serdica, a place which the inscription "adventus Probi" shows that Probus visited, and Siscia, where also he stayed a while ("adventus

¹ Lépaulle, p. 5. "La richesse numismatique de cette époque, puis ensuite, la grandeur des faits accomplis sous le gouvernement de cet homme honnête, et enfin, le mutisme calculé de l'histoire à son égard."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 19–29. Coins were only issued from Serdica in A.D. 276, when Probus was again in Thrace, and in A.D. 280.

Augusti," "Siscia Probi Augusti").¹ Other coins in different parts of the Empire celebrate Probus's accession, and in some cases where there was need of haste Probus's name appears under the bust of Tacitus. Probus made a short visit to Rome ("adventus Probus Augusti"), and then concentrated his troops near Lyons.² This campaign commenced in A.D. 276, and consumed all A.D. 277. In A.D. 278 Probus entered Germany, and after his campaign in that country his victory was celebrated by a coin of that year (his second consulship) which celebrates the "victoria Germanica." In the same year Probus advanced to Illyricum. We have a coin "restitutor Illyrici," and other coins of the time celebrate the "Pax Augusti."³ In A.D. 297 Thrace was pacified, and Probus spent the year there. About the Isaurian expedition and events in Egypt coins give us no information.⁴ From this time, however, we find on coins inscriptions of the warmest eulogy only, even at Rome. The Asiatic campaign and the Egyptian campaign consumed A.D. 280 and part of A.D. 281, and Lépaulle assigns Probus's great works in Egypt to this period, very improbably. He also puts the subjugation of the Blemyes and the peace with Persia in A.D. 280 (end), and the rebellion

¹ An enactment in the Justinian Code shows that Probus was at Sirmium on May 5, A.D. 277.

² Lépaulle, pp. 55-56. There is no coin with the actual inscription "adventus."

³ The coins "salus Augusti" have been taken to imply that some epidemic was raging. Lépaulle, p. 74.

⁴ Lépaulle, following Vopiscus, assigns the conquest of Blemyes to Probus himself.

of the tyrants in A.D. 281, but in all these matters coins do not help us. Coins, however, of the end of A.D. 281 show that Probus returned to Rome to celebrate his triumph, and these celebrations were prolonged into A.D. 282 ("gloria orbis consul IV" and "gloria orbis consul V"), and then again we are without assistance.

This scheme of events suits the information which we have, though there are gaps which can be filled in according to individual pleasure, and in such cases a scheme must be tentative and make no pretensions to finality. The writer in Pauly accepts this scheme of Lépaulle's, but Clinton suggested A.D. 277 for the Gallic campaign, A.D. 278 for the events in Illyricum, A.D. 279 for the Isaurian campaign and the subjugation of the Blemyes, A.D. 279-280 for the revolt of Saturninus, A.D. 281 for the war with Bonosus and the planting of vines.

One obstacle to a satisfactory scheme is the reported treaty of peace with the Persian King. After the threatening attitude of Probus, according to Vopiscus's account, we should expect to hear more than the bare fact that a peace was made. It contained no concessions, or we should have heard of them, and can simply have taken the "status quo" as a basis. Yet it is difficult to reject the episode altogether, for Probus showed later that he really had hostile intentions against Persia, and at his death was preparing an invasion. It is surprising that he should relinquish the undertaking merely to settle the Bastarnae in Roman territory, and we know from another source that the settlement of the Bastarnae did follow the campaign with

the Blemyes, as Vopiscus says. It is possible that the troubled condition of Gaul required his presence, but this is not stated. Perhaps the condition of Gaul, and also the troubled state of the Thracian frontier, made him realize the expediency of deferring an Eastern campaign until another season.

We may reasonably assume, if Probus was not recognized universally before perhaps the end of July, A.D. 276, that the campaign in Gaul could not begin before A.D. 277. The campaign in Gaul and beyond the Rhine can have been no easy task, and if Probus was at Sirmium in May, and thus had not yet assumed the command in person, the operations must have continued well into A.D. 278. In this same year he might have been able to pacify Illyricum and Thrace, where his difficulties do not seem to have been very great. However, as the reorganization of the Danubian provinces must have been a difficult task it is better to allow another year for this. We have now nothing to check our speculations. The Isaurian campaign appears to have been prolonged, and therefore would consume most of A.D. 280. Simultaneously Probus's generals drove back the Blemyes and reconquered Coptos and Ptolemais, while Probus remained on the Eastern frontier threatening Persia.¹ In A.D. 281 the

¹ This may explain Vopiscus's confusion. *Probus*, 17. 4. "Copton et Ptolemaidem urbes Romano addidit iuri, ex quo tantum profecit ut Parthi legatos ad eum mitterent." And, later, "his acceptis litteris Narses maxime territus et eo praecepit quod Copton et Ptolemaidem comperit vindicatas." It is probable that the King was impelled to send his first letter merely by Probus's presence in the East. He was intimidated later both by Probus's reply and the news about the Blemyes. But the whole difficulty is as likely as not due to Vopiscus's own muddleheadedness.

settlements of the barbarians might have taken place, and the revolt of the Gallic tyrants, which lasted longer than they deserved, may have begun at the end of A.D. 280. In A.D. 281 they were crushed, and the rest of the year was spent in works of peace, the planting of vines, etc. The triumphal celebrations commenced in this year and were continued in A.D. 282, and in A.D. 282, up till his death (late in the year), Probus was engaged in preparing to attack the Persian Empire.

The revolt of Saturninus is hard to place. It is unlikely that it took place after the operations in Egypt. If Saturninus had taken part in them, this would probably have been mentioned among his achievements. There seems no reason to believe that Saturninus enjoyed power long. He had not the temperament of a tyrant, and was probably slain by his own troops. We have no coins of his. Similarly the rebellion in Britain involves many difficulties. It does not seem to have been contemporaneous with the rebellion in Gaul, for Probus sent Victorinus to quell it, and this would have been difficult when Gaul was held by enemies. Perhaps it was at the outset of the reign, when Probus was in Gaul (A.D. 277). Saturninus's rebellion may have been also, as Zosimus puts it, early in the reign. He may have thought that his claims should have been preferred to those of Probus. At any rate Zosimus's authority for this reign is as good as, if not better than, Vopiscus's, and in the absence of any numismatic or inscriptional evidence we may put his usurpation early. We have remarked in several

places the comparative excellence of Zosimus's account.

One may suggest, then,—

- 276 A.D. Accession of Probus (Sadée, July 7th).
- 277 A.D. Campaign in Gaul. (Rebellion of Saturninus. Rebellion in Britain?)
- 278 A.D. Gallic and German campaigns continued.
- 278–279 A.D. Probus in Rhætia, Illyricum and Thrace. Reorganization, etc.
- 280 A.D. Isaurian campaign, and simultaneously campaign against the Blemyes. Negotiations with Persia.
- 281 A.D. Settlement of Bastarnæ. The tyrants rebel and are crushed. Triumphal celebrations commence. Peaceful undertakings.
- 282 A.D. Preparations for Persian campaign. Death of Probus (after August 29: October, Sadée).

The Alexandrian coins for this reign give us little help. They attest the consulships of Probus, and show that he lived till the end of August, when the Alexandrian year commenced, but give us no further information.

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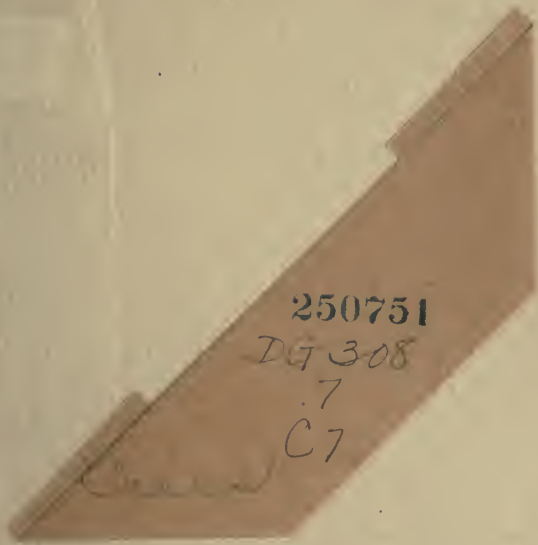
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