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NERO, GALBA AND NYMPHIDIUS.
A Parallel from History.

Caecis judicium aut reipublicæ amor, occulta spe, pro ut quis amicus vel hanc vel illum ambitiosis rumoribus Tac.

to be lifted into power by artifice; yet was proclaimed emperor amidst the acclamations of the whole Roman people. The multitude, infatuated by their love for Nero, flocked to the temples with thanksgiving, and cried "Long live the Emperor;" they knew whether he was likely to be a blessing or a curse, to his country. Nero without talents of that anomalous kind which his possessors just above contempt procure him respect, and while he disqualify him for mischief, unfit him to be useful; talents that sometimes provoke detestation. With more sagacity than judgement, and more energy than wisdom, he knew how to gain popularity, but not how to deserve it.

He saw the enthusiasm that was kindled in his favour, and the first acts of his administration were calculated to fan it into a frenzy. He began his reign with an ostentation of regard to the memory of his predecessors—went to the tomb—and in a funeral procession pronounced by himself, proposed a law among the Gods—that very pretence, says the historian whom he had deceived in the basest manner, and whose lies he afterwards trampled under foot. His inaugural speech was a masterpiece of cunning. It met the wishes and received the applause of all parties, for in that speech, that having been unconcerned with civil commotions, he knew of no divisions between the people, and came to the throne with a single eye to the welfare of his country. Although he was sensible that age and merit had been regarded in preferring Nero to Britannicus, yet the senate might be led that he had chosen for his model the Emperor Augustus. The senate decreed him a day, ordered his speech to be engraved on a column of solid silver, and to be daily rehearsed to the consuls, but Nero did not stop with bare professions. The high price fixed by the Pagan law were complained: he actually reduced them three fourths. Factions had growled about oppressive taxes: he remitted two fifths of all the taxes on slaves, and others he entirely took off. In short—there was no abuse, no pretence, no ostentation, which he did not actually correct or redress. Such disinterested regard for the people had Nero! They were not ungrateful. He was hailed Father of his country. The tide of his popularity ran to the highest swell. Thanksgivings and statues—and alters were decreed to the senate till adulation was exhausted, leaving honors upon his name.

It is the sunny day that brings forth the adder. Patriotism in Nero was an exotic that could not take root in a country that was withered by the decay of prosperity. He knew that the stupid credulity of the people when once enlisted on the side of a favorite, sanctifies his very crimes. And weary of constraint, he seized the moment to let loose a host of foul and frivolous actions that had lain together and engendered in his breast, until now they came forth as a stinking brood and made him at once odious and contemptible. His after life was a continued scene of folly, baseness, lewdness, impiety and extravagance.

In public life he was no less despicable. No sooner was he established on the throne, he was contrived to ruin the very person, whose intrigue had lifted him into power, openly, for this was impracticable. But designing a panic—by pretending that a piracy was formed against his life, and a plot projected in the empire. A project, says the historian, so absurd, that no one was stupid enough to believe it.

He next drove from the government, all the bold and faithful officers who had devoted their lives to the public service. And for what reason? Merely because they withheld their applause from his vices & follies. Vices and follies that wasted the public treasure and drained the commonwealth.

His places he supplied with fiddlers, dancers and actors! Vagabonds without principle, without property, without character. But Nero was a patron of the frivolous arts; for himself was a master of all the frivolous accomplishments of his age. He was a dancer, a singer, a sculptor, a painter, a charioteer, a poet, a rhetorician, an actor, and an author, and a philosopher. He projected a canal from the Lake Avernus to the mouth of the Tiber, a distance of more than one hundred and sixty miles, through a ridge of rocks, which was just as impracticable as to make vessels sail in a dry sea—and ordered home the convicts from Africa to assist in the enterprise. His attention however was soon diverted from this to another which promised celebrity and greater profit. On being advised by one Bassus a vagrant adventurer, of a

huge cavern in a distant and uninhabited country, which contained immense stores of gold (supposed to be the wealth of Queen Dido!) lying in massy heaps, and towering in columns to a prodigious height, he seized the bubble with avidity—bargained for the mine—and exhausted the public wealth in searching for what was not to be found.—He even made assignments on the property, and addressed the senate on the value of the purchase. All eyes, and ears, and mouths were open. The Emperor could not be deceived. The senate and vast numbers of the people were gulled. The whole rabble shouted his praise. Poems and orations were made by his parasites at the next Quinquennial Games, in which it was said with admiration, that the earth was no longer satisfied with yielding only her usual bounties, but teemed in his reign with productions altogether new—even with treasure, already stored.

At another time when the temple of Janus was shut, and Rome was at peace with all the world, to convince the people of the public prosperity, he ordered two hundred ships of corn, just arrived from Egypt, the public granary, to be sunk, in the Tyber. A famine ensued, as might have been expected—and while the citizens were starving in the streets, another ship arrived in the Nile, laden (not with corn) but with sand to smooth an arena for Nero's experiments. Unhappily for Rome, however, philosophers, rhetoricians and fiddlers are not always the best rulers. They are too frequently men of frivolous passions, of narrow views and eccentric notions—men of unthinking prodigality—fond of idle and untried experiments, which they pursue at the expense of the welfare and happiness of the nation. Such was Nero. He found the public treasury full: He squandered seventeen millions in mad projects and left it empty. He found Rome in the height of prosperity: by the public edict he shut every shop, and thus paralyzed trade and robbed the citizens of their bread. Shall I mention his impeachments against the best men of Rome—men who were the pride and ornament of their country? Who has forgotten Paetus Thrasea, by whose death, says Tacitus, he hoped to extirpate virtue itself. I could dwell upon his impiety against the Gods. For he was an avowed despiser of all religious worship, and defied Jupiter the avenger, although nature itself seemed to frown, although in his reign comets blazed, and the sun struggled under a total eclipse. But I cannot longer descend to detail. The people at length awakened from their credulity. They had mistaken a profession for principle. They saw and they felt they had been deceived.

Nero now hoped by a timely retreat to save himself from "the" public vengeance. Yes after proscribing all merit and worth—after bursting all the ties of nature and patriotism—after trampling upon public decency and prostrating the national honor—after he had brought Rome to the very door of destruction, he hoped to escape the indignation of the people, by sneaking away into obscurity and retirement. He stole off, says the historian, to Pharon's Villa, four miles from Rome, muffled up in an old cloak, without even a shoe to his foot; without a friend to attend him, or even an enemy to relieve him by poison or the sword. There crawling into a hole, he lay down covered with guilt and remorse—bemoaning his miserable lot and breathing out this wretched, contemptible exclamation—"Qualis Artifex fereos."

Let us now look to the empire. Just before Nero's fall, when it was foreseen that he must inevitably retreat, there appeared two competitors for the throne. Nymphidius, Nero's Freedman, and old Galba who had for years been Governor of Spain.

Galba had arrived at that period of life when ambition is usually frozen along with the other passions. He was seventy two years old, but he was prevailed upon (by a young man of head strong ambition) to suffer himself to be proposed for the throne. This was not, however, until Gaul had declared against Nero, and the Proprietor himself had called the Emperor "a pitiful harpener"—Old men are always cautious: sometimes they are cunning. Even then Old Galba, did not come out openly. Although the soldiers saluted him "Emperor" he still declared he was only "Lieutenant of the Senate and people of Rome." Nay—He waited till the last moment; until the contest was actually decided by the defeat of Nymphidius, before he would assume the Toga. Nor was it all. He even tried to defraud time. For notwithstanding he was so feeble & decrepid as to sink down under the weight of his own armour, yet, when his looks were complimented as still florid and vigorous, he assumed a youthful air, and replied in a short Greek verse, "my strength as yet feels no decay."

With such craft—with so much simulation and dissimulation, had old Galba been a few years younger, he must not only have secured the empire to himself, but have left his favorite firm on the throne. But it was

his misfortune to be implicitly governed by two men, both of aspiring and profligate character, Titus Vinius and Cornelius Laco. Men equally obnoxious, to all good citizens by their arrogant and fierce ambition.

Nymphidius, on the contrary, was in the prime of life. He was a Freedman of Nero and by imitating the vices and follies of his master, had been a great favorite at Court. He was besides on the spot, and held one of the first offices at Rome. All these advantages he possessed over his rival; he improved them to the best purpose. He took advantage of old Galba's absence to court the senate. Gave expensive entertainments—flattered some with hopes of family aggrandizement—and others with prospects of great power and wealth. The Senate were inclined to favour Nymphidius. Yes, Nymphidius! who in the better days of Rome, says Tacitus, could not have attained to the rank of a common centurion, now, by combining with the profligate & desperate, dared to aspire to the whole Roman Empire. But he still feared the influence of Galba—and was constrained to couple their names together and pretend that he and Galba were in alliance, and would share the government without dispute.

To the soldiers however, he was more open. For to them he had distributed largesses, and was himself commander of all the guards.—Whenever they named old Galba, Nymphidius would laugh at his gray-head and wrinkled face—artfully acknowledging "he was indeed an old man of mild and moderate sentiments."....but suggested at the same time, that "instead of using his own judgment," he would be directed in his administration by those two miscreants, Titus Vinius and Cornelius Laco. Such was the state of the two great parties that distracted the Roman empire when a third sprung up under Virginus Rufus, (a patriot worthy of the old Republic) and held the balance of power. All men of virtue and honesty...All who sighed for the calamities of their country or wished for the return of liberty and social order...All who preferred the mild reign of laws to the spasms of faction, and the intemperate fury of civil commotions, flocked to the standard of Virginus, the whole of Germany, of Gaul and several other provinces declared for the patriot party.

Both Galba and Nymphidius were alarmed. Both, in turn, made overtures to Virginus, and each proposed a coalition. But Virginus, considering both equally profligate and abandoned—equally regardless of the welfare of their country, and striving only for personal aggrandizement, rejected their proposals with scorn, and kept proudly aloof from the conflict. He and the patriots were with him resolved, if it were possible, to snatch their bleeding country from the unhallowed grasp of faction. But they would not basely compromise her rights and bargain with public robbers for a share in the plunder. They were engaged in a sacred cause. They would not pollute it, by league with traitors against the public liberty! No. *They would rather perish.*

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Foreign News.

Boston, April 26.
VERY LATE FROM FRANCE.

The French letter of M. de L'Esperence captain Deplace, arrived here yesterday, in a short passage from Bordeaux. A French gentleman, a passenger, politely favored us with a file of French papers to the 19th of last month; and a manuscript copy of a late Imperial decree. A few translations from these papers, and the decree, will be found below.

The accounts from the European Continent in these papers, are nearly a month later than before received. War between France and Austria had not commenced, though the declaration of it was daily expected.—The French ambassador, and the ministers of the Confederation of the Rhine, had quitted Vienna; and all the troops in the North, under the control of Bonaparte, were in motion. 100,000 of the troops, which were in Spain, had returned into France; and were moving towards Bavaria. The emperor was in Paris at the last date. We find but little mention made of Russia; and that little did not indicate any thing like her taking a part in the war against Austria. The peace between Turkey and England is attributed in the Paris papers to the interference of Austria.

The tidings from Spain, are late.—Saragossa surrendered the 24th February; after a memorable siege: the particulars of which fill three of the papers:—About 10,000 of the garrison had passed Bayonne. The south of Spain had not been overrun; nor had Cadiz been invested. The French had entered Oporto (Portugal) and were advancing on Lisbon.

The Brest Fleet, at the latest date remained near Rochefort.

On the subject of American affairs, these papers are wholly silent.—An Imperial Decree, affecting a part of our vessels in France, will be found under the translations. To understand it, it will be recollected, that the French, have long detained American vessels under various pretences:—But some time since an embargo was laid on all American vessels in the ports of France.—The new decree only effects such as were detained by this general embargo.—They are permitted to return direct to the U. States, giving bonds.—The others are still detained.

The above arrival gave rise to numerous vapid reports yesterday; but they were destitute of foundation in truth.—We have seen nothing which looks like an accommodation with France; or the abrogation of her decrees.

TRANSLATIONS.

VIENNA, Feb. 22.—The Wurtemberg and Bavarian ambassadors are about to quit this capital. The different corps of our army are to be commanded by the Archdukes and by Generals Lichtenstein, Rosamburg, Kallowart, and Bellegarde.

The enumeration of the horses in this city and environs is now making. Several thousands will be wanted by government for the service of the artillery.

PETERSBURGH, Jan. 15.—The Austrian Ambassador Prince Schwarzenberg, has had his first audience of his Majesty; and had a conference of an hour and a half with him in his closet.

The Vienna Court Gazette states, that several Saxon regiments had marched into the Duchy of Warsaw, while the Westphalians are marching towards Thuringo.

AUGSBURG, March 1.—The head-quarters of General Oudinot's corps are in this city. Three Bavarian corps are to be formed in Tyrol, on the Inn, and in the Upper Palatinate.

MARCH 7. We learn that several Englishmen have arrived at Trieste, & shew themselves publicly. A British courier lately departed there, and proceeded hastily to Vienna. For some time very frequent communications have been made between Austria and England, by way of Trieste.

An Austrian train of artillery has arrived at Egra, in Bohemia.

We learn that an Austrian corps has shewn itself on the banks of the Inn, on the side of Passau. For this cause the Court of Munich has ordered its troops in Swabia & Franconia to join those in Bavaria, who are to concentrate on the Iser.—The garrison of Ulm and Augsburg are already on their march.

NUREMBERG, March 7.—All the Bavarian troops are marching to the Inn.

The famous intriguer Gutz has arrived in Vienna; probably to draft the Austrian manifesto. M. Stein is also at Vienna.

BURGOS, (Spain) March 5.—Gen. Sebastian pursues his success. Marshalls Junot and St. Cyr are approaching Valencia, which it is expected will not make any defence.

Saragossa surrendered the 19th February to the Duke of Montebello (Lasnes.) Such of the garrison as would not swear allegiance to Joseph I. were to be sent prisoners of war to France.

IMPERIAL DECREE

OF FEBRUARY 25, 1809.

Art. 1. American vessels which have been detained in the ports of the Empire, solely by the (French) Embargo, are permitted to return directly to the United States. This favour is not extended to such vessels as have been detained on account of irregular papers or from any other cause.

Art. 2. The vessels, the embargo on which is thus raised, shall be placed in the disposition of M. General Armstrong, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States, to guarantee their direct return to that country.—The bonds given on their departure shall only be cancelled by certificates of our Consuls, &c. in America, that their cargoes were landed therein, and were composed only of the productions or industry of our empire; and that no part of them was the produce of the soil, or of the colonies, or of the commerce of England.

University.

THE annual examination of the Students at the University of North-Carolina will commence on the 22d of June next. The Committee of Visitation appointed to attend the examination will be composed of the following Trustees, viz.

Messrs. William Gaston	John Moore
Arch'd D. Murphey	Israel Pickens
Walter Alves	Benjamin Smith
John D. Hawkins	Jeremias Slade and
William Hawkins	Williams Williams.

As the necessity of a due attendance on the part of the Committee must be obvious to every member, and as the duties they have to perform devolve on each class only once in five years, the Board of Trustees hope that a proper regard to the welfare of the Institution will induce every gentleman to attend with punctuality.

GAVIN ALVES, Sec'y.

Hillsborough, April 21, 1809.