

consuls and tribunes formerly made to the people? and though the soldiers had no particular place to assemble in, nor were under the regulation of any certain forms; though the temper of their minds was not usually serene, their proceedings consisting of action rather than deliberation, did they not however dispose of the public fortune with a sovereign authority? what was an emperor but the minister of a violent and tumultuous government, and did not the soldiers elect him for their own particular convenience?

When the army associated into the empire (a) Philip, the praetorian prefect of the third Gordian, this prince claimed the exercise of an undivided command, but did not succeed in his pretensions; he then requested the army to divide the power equally between them, but to as little effect; he next intreated them to leave him the title of Caesar, and was still refused; he afterwards solicited them to create him praetor of the praetorian bands, and met with the usual repulse; till at last he was reduced to plead for his life. The army, in the instance before us, exercised the supreme magistracy in their several decisions.

The Barbarians were at first unknown to the Romans, and for some time afterwards only incommodious; but at last they became formidable to them, by an event altogether unparalleled at that time, and which perhaps may never be equalled hereafter. Rome had so effectually extinguished all nations, that when she at last was vanquished in her turn, the earth seemed to produce a new race of mankind, to accomplish her destruction. ✓

(a) See Julius Capitolinus.