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The Last of the Caesars.

WHILE the term "Caesar" was often applied merely to the Julian line of Emperors, which properly should end with Nero, yet it came to be used as a title for any Roman emperor subsequent to the first illustrious bearer of the name. Such words as,—

"Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen every Caesar's purple dome."

seem always to be associated with a sudden collapse of a mighty nation, hundreds of years ago. But the last of the Caesars is nearer to us than that; especially when one stands upon the battered walls in the valley of the Lycus at Constantinople, which he so vainly defended, and of which every stone is made sacred by his blood.

In 285 A.D., the Roman Empire was divided by Diocletian, who made Maximian the Augustus at Rome, while he himself ruled at Nicomedia, until, tired of the cares of office, in 304 A.D., "he laid aside the royal purple," and at the same time compelled his colleague at Rome to do so also, and retired into a suburban life at Salona in Dalmatia. This division gave rise to constant struggle between these two parts of the Empire and considerably weakened Rome's importance, and transferred it to the eastern province. But in 323 A.D. Constantine, vanquishing Licinius, made himself master of a united Roman world. But the state of the Empire at this time made Rome a rather unsuitable place for the capital and with the eye of a statesman and general, Constantine saw that Byzantium would not alone give him a central position in the empire, but also, because of its peculiar situation, easy and rapid access to the East and West while the wealth of the eastern provinces would add greatly to his resources. In a marvelously short time he succeeded in establishing himself in the fairest of all eastern cities and for some time it bore the name of Nea Roma, in evidence of his ambition and success. But to the people, the man was greater than his work and gradually New Rome became the "city of Constantine," i.e., Constantinople.

The semi-political conversion of Constantine to Christianity had a great influence in his reconstruction of the empire, and much of the worship and institutions of the new religion pervaded the policy of the statesman. After his death the city was kept in turmoil for many years by the Huns and Goths who overran the country from the north-west, but who were subsequently reconciled and incorporated in the already heterogeneous empire by Theodosius. The final