



COIN OF HADRIAN.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM THE DEATH OF DOMITIAN TO THAT OF MARCUS
AURELIUS.

A.D. 96 TO A.D. 180.

THE five emperors who succeeded one another after Domitian form such a strong contrast to some of the wretched tyrants who had preceded them, that the period of their reign is regarded as the happiest in the history of the Roman empire. Immediately after the murder of Domitian, both the people and the soldiers proclaimed *Nerva*, a venerable senator. But as he was not popular with the prætorians, he was obliged to be cautious in punishing offenders and in recalling the men who had been banished by Domitian; and in order to strengthen himself, he adopted *Trajan*, a man of unblemished character, who was then commanding the legions in Germany. However, he survived this step no more than three months, for he died of a fever in the beginning of A.D. 98.

Trajan, having been adopted by Nerva, succeeded him as a matter of course, and arrived at Rome in A.D. 99. He was a native of Spain, and a man of great military talent. His administration of the affairs of the empire met with the approval of the best of his contemporaries.