

fertile and well cultivated land, covered by a population of 120,000,000, a number more than half the present population of the whole of Europe.*

This ancient people must ever remain the most attractive and profitable subject of study, and its literature form the basis of every enlightened system of education. The languages of Modern Europe are more than half formed from the language of Ancient Rome, but their obligations to it, are not greater than the obligations of their literature to her literature.

Her laws also have been in great part incorporated into the laws of modern nations both in Europe and America, and it is not too much to say that full grown manhood does not owe more to the studies of youth than does modern civilization to the civilization of ancient times.

The Roman or Civil Law forms the basis of every existing system of Commercial Law. It is believed to have constituted the body of the ancient Common Law of England, in which country as a Province of the Roman Empire the Roman Jurisprudence, polity and government, existed for upwards of three centuries and a half, and have left many traces behind. In Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland and Holland, it has formed the Common Law. In Scotland for a time, it formed the only system of jurisprudence, and its Advocates were for a time examined on the Roman Law alone. It is taught and obeyed in France and Spain. It is law in the Islands of the Indian Ocean. It was introduced into the Island of Ceylon by the Dutch. It governs the New States in Spanish America. It flourishes on the banks of the Mississippi—in the State of Louisiana. It is taught and studied on the banks of the St. Lawrence by our own firesides;—proving the truth of the striking observation of the French Chancellor, D'Aguesseau, that “the grand destinies of Rome are not yet accomplished; she reigns throughout the world by her reason, after having ceased to reign by her authority.”†

How can we then explain the mighty influences of Roman civilization? Among the causes, I would mention these three;—the immense duration of the Roman Empire,—the national characteristics of the Romans; their national polity.

When we consider the duration of this Empire, we find it presents a very great contrast in this respect to other nations.—The Athenian

* Gibbon's Decline, vol. 1, p. 32.—“Nothing conveys a juster notion of the greatness of Roman history than those chapters in Gibbon's work, in which he brings before us the state of the east, and of the north, of Persia and Germany, and is led unavoidably to write a universal history because all nations were mixed up with the greatness and the decline of Rome. This, indeed, is the peculiar magnificence of our subject, that the history of Rome, must be in some sort, the history of the world; no nation, no language, no country of the ancient world can altogether escape our researches if we follow on steadily the progress of the Roman dominion, till it reached its greatest extent.”

Arnold's History of Rome, p. 68, cap. XL.

† “Comme si les grandes destinées de Rome n'étaient pas encore accomplies; elle regne dans toute la terre par sa raison, après avoir cessé d'y regner par son autorité.”—D'Aguesseau Œuvres, 1, 157.