

to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons and military engines."

Aurelian, in fact, became doubtful of the event of the siege, and he offered the queen the most honourable terms of capitulation if she would surrender to his arms; but Zenobia, who was aware that famine raged in the Roman camp, and daily looked for the expected relief, rejected his proposals in a famous Greek epistle, written with equal arrogance and eloquence; she defied the utmost of his power; and alluding to the fate of Cleopatra, expressed her resolution to die like her, rather than yield to the Roman arms. Aurelian was incensed by this haughty letter, even more than by the dangers and delays attending the siege: he redoubled his efforts, he cut off the succours she expected, he found means to subvert his troops even in the midst of the desert; every day added to the number and strength of his army, every day increased the difficulties of Zenobia, and the despair of the Palmyrenes. The city could not hold out much longer, and the queen resolved to fly, not to ensure her own safety, but to bring relief to her capital:—such at least is the excuse made for a part of her conduct which certainly requires apology. Mounted on a fleet dromedary, she contrived to elude the vigilance of the besiegers, and took the road to the Euphrates; but she was pursued by a party of the Roman light cavalry, overtaken, and brought as a captive into the presence of Aurelian. He sternly demanded how she had dared to oppose the power of Rome? to which she replied, with a mixture of firmness and gentleness, "because I disdained to acknowledge as my masters such men as Aureolus and Gallienus. To Aurelian I submit as my conqueror and my sovereign." Aurelian was not displeased at the artful compliment implied to his answer, but he had not forgotten the insulting arrogance of her former reply. While this conference was going forward in the tent of the Roman emperor, the troops, who were enraged by her long and obstinate resistance, and all they had suffered during the siege, assembled in tumultuous bands, calling out for vengeance, and with loud and fierce cries demanding her instant death. The unhappy queen, surrounded by the ferocious and insolent soldiery, forgot all her former vaunts and intrepidity: her feminine terrors had perhaps been excusable if they had not rendered her base; but in her first panic she threw herself on the mercy of the emperor, accused her ministers as the cause of her determined resistance, and confessed that Longinus had written in her name that eloquent letter of defiance which had so incensed the emperor.

Longinus, with the rest of her immediate friends and counsellors, were instantly sacrificed to the fury of the soldiers, and the philosopher met death with all the fortitude which became a wise and great man, employing his last moments in endeavouring to console Zenobia and reconcile her to her fate.

Palmyra surrendered to the conqueror, who seized upon the treasures of the city, but spared the buildings and the lives of the inhabitants. Leaving in the place a garrison of Romans, he returned to Europe, carrying with him Zenobia and her family, who were destined to grace his triumph.

But scarcely had Aurelian reached the Hellespont, when tidings were brought to him that the inhabitants of Palmyra had again revolted, and had put the Roman governor and garrison to the sword. Without a moment's deliberation the emperor turned back, reached Palmyra by rapid marches, and took a terrible vengeance on that miserable and devoted city; he commanded the indiscriminate massacre of all the inhabitants, men, women and children—fired its magnificent edifices, and levelled its walls to the ground. He afterwards repented of his fury, and devoted a part of the captured treasures to reinstate some of the glories he had destroyed; but it was too late; he could not reanimate the dead, nor raise from its ruins the stupendous temple of the sun. Palmyra became desolate; its very existence was forgotten, until about a century ago, when some English travellers discovered it by accident. Thus the blind fury of one man extinguished life, happiness, industry, art, and intelligence, through a vast extent of country, and severed a link which had long connected the eastern and western continents of the old world.

When Aurelian returned to Rome after the termination of this war, he celebrated his triumph with extraordinary pomp. A vast number of elephants and tigers, and strange beasts from the conquered countries; sixteen hundred gladiators, an innumerable train of captives, and a gorgeous display of treasure—gold, silver, gems, plate, glittering raiment, and oriental luxuries and rarities, the rich plunder of Palmyra, were exhibited to the populace. But every eye was fixed on the beautiful and majestic figure of the Syrian queen, who walked in the procession before her own sumptuous chariot, attired in her diadem and royal robes, blazing with jewels, her eyes fixed on the ground, and her delicate form drooping under the weight of her golden fetters, which were so heavy that two slaves were obliged to assist in supporting them on either side; while the Roman populace, at that time the most brutal and degraded in the whole world, gaped and stared upon her misery, and shouted in exultation over her fall. Perhaps Zenobia may in that moment have thought upon Cleopatra, whose example she had once proposed to follow; and, according to the pagan ideas of greatness and fortitude, envied her destiny, and felt her own ignominy with all the bitterness of a vain repentance.

The captivity of Zenobia took place in the year 273, and in the fifth year of her reign. There are two accounts of her subsequent fate, differing widely from each other. One author asserts that she starved herself to death, refusing to survive her own disgrace and the ruin of her country; but others inform us