

this prince justified the expectations of the Empire, but later on, his mind becoming unsettled by a prolonged illness, he gave himself up to the worst follies and cruelties, which brought about his assassination (41 A. D.).

To give but one instance of his folly, he wanted to appoint his horse consul. He took such delight in cruelty that he wished all the Roman people had but one neck that he might despatch them at a single blow.

Claudius. — (41 A. D. - 54). — 53. Claudius, uncle of Caligula was then chosen by the Praetorian Guards, emperor of Rome. He was a man of eminent mind but of weak character; nevertheless, he ruled well and atoned for many acts of injustice. Humane laws were promulgated in favor of freedmen, slaves, widows and orphans.

Under this emperor, the provinces were carefully and liberally governed and the boundaries of the empire were extended by the conquest of Thracia, Lydia, and Judea. His reign, fruitful in great events might have been reckoned as one of the best if the weakness of Claudius had not tolerated the greatest abuses in his family.

Nero. — (54-68). — 54. After the death of his wife, the infamous Messalina, Claudius married Agrippina who influenced him to adopt her son, Nero, to the exclusion of Britannicus, his legitimate son and heir. Having satisfied her ambition, she then poisoned the Emperor.

Nero had for his preceptors Burrhus, a brave soldier, and the great philosopher Seneca, and seemingly benefited by his masters' lessons. The first years of his reign were marked by wise measures. Soon, however his perverse inclinations gained the ascendancy, and Nero surpassed Tiberius and Caligula in crime and cruelty. He poisoned Britannicus, killed his mother, Agrippina, and his wife, Octavia, as well as Burrhus and Seneca, his preceptors. He disgraced himself by becoming a stage clown and circus rider.