

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
R O M A N E M P I R E.

VOLUME THE FIFTH.

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
R O M A N E M P I R E.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE FIFTH.

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THE  
H I S T O R Y  
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DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE.

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C H A P. XLVIII.

*Plan of the Fifth and Sixth Volumes.—Succession and Characters of the Greek Emperors of Constantinople, from the Time of Heraclius to the Latin Conquest.*

I HAVE now deduced from Trajan to Constantine, from Constantine to Heraclius, the regular series of the Roman emperors; and faithfully exposed the prosperous and adverse fortunes of their reigns. Five centuries of the decline and fall of the empire have already elapsed; but a period of more than eight hundred years still separates me from the term of my labours, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. Should I persevere in the same course, should I observe the same measure, a prolix and slender thread would be spun through many a volume, nor would the patient