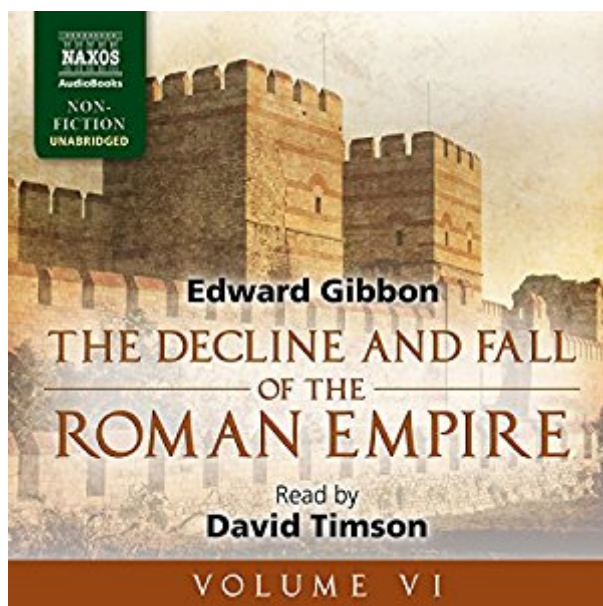


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The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire, Volume VI



Synopsis

In Volume VI (Chapters LVII - LXXI), Gibbon ends his masterful history by charting the rise of the Turkish nation and the birth of the Ottoman Empire, which becomes an unstoppable force as it eventually captures the remains of the Eastern Empire. Weakened under the continuing schism of the Greek and Latin Christians, the strategically important site of Constantinople becomes an easy target for Sultan Mohammed II much to the consternation and apathy of the West.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are books; there are great books; and then there are books that change everything - that test you and change you and impact you permanently and profoundly. Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens...those sorts of authors shake you and challenge you to grow. Gibbon, deservedly considered one the fathers of modern history and the historical method, ranks among those authors. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire displays a fine example of literary genius, representing some of the very best humanity has to offer. If, faced with the extinction of the human race and the loss of all things we've learned throughout our history, the lone survivors were bequeathed a top ten list of written works aimed at condensing human thought and evolution into the most valuable lessons and wisdom of the ages in the interest of providing the surest and most beneficial foundation for starting anew, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire should be in it. Yes, it's that important and that good. Aptly titled, Gibbon explains not only the historical nuts and bolts of what happened when but more importantly why. As incredibly ambitious as it is valuable, Gibbon traces the history of Rome's demise from its height (around the 1st century) to/through the dark/middle ages (to around 1500 A.D.), giving a sweeping and astonishing view of a period of our

history that still has no equal. Gibbon not only shows us Rome; for those willing to look he holds a mirror before humanity...shows us who we are, largely where we came from, emboldens our virtues and warns us of our vices, and shows that while the context and names may change, the essential core of issues human beings face remains the same.

I will append a single proviso to my five-star rating: to enjoy this book, you will need a somewhat decent command of the English language and the capacity to unpack dense meaning. Gibbon's prose, to my mind, is almost without par; however, it is very much written in the Enlightenment style, which was more complex than what we accustomed to from today's workman-like scribblers. Therefore, if you dislike long, complicated sentences, it's probable that you won't enjoy this work. Also if you're a teenager, I might suggest you perhaps start with someone like Will Durant, who has a nice style of his own, but is much easier for the youngsters to comprehend. Unless you're a whizz kid, then by all means jump on this immediately. Perhaps a representative passage will get my point across: "Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy presents the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate without an indignant smile, that, on the father's death, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself, and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

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