ANCIENT ROME

THE LIVES OF GREAT MEN

TOLD BY

MARY AGNES HAMILTON

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       The Lives of Great Men

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see caption

RUINS OF A ROMAN TOWN

see caption

POMPEII

ANCIENT ROME

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Brutus and Tarquin · Lucretia · Mucius · Cloelia · Regulus
Marcus Curtius · Coriolanus · Volumnia · Pyrrhus
Fabricius · Hamilcar · Hannibal · Flaminius · Fabius
Marcellus · The Scipios · The Gracchi · Cato · Marius
Drusus · Sulla · Mithridates · Lucullus · Pompeius
Crassus · Cicero · Caesar

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see caption

ROME AND THE TIBER

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(added by transcriber)

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THE HILLS ROUND HORACE’S FARM
from a drawing by E. Lear

I

INTRODUCTORY

The People and City of Rome

MORE than two thousand years ago, at a time when the people in the British Isles and in most parts of Western Europe were living the lives of savages, occupied in fighting, hunting, and fishing, dwelling in rude huts, clad in skins, ignorant of everything that we call civilization, Rome was the centre of a world in many ways as civilized as ours is now, over which the Roman people ruled. The men who dwelt in this one city, built on seven hills on the banks of the river Tiber, gradually conquered all Italy. Then they became masters of the lands round the Mediterranean Sea: of Northern Africa and of Spain, of Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor and the Near East, and of Western Europe. The greatness of Rome and of the Roman people does not lie, however, in their conquests. In the end their conquests ruined them. It lies in the character, mind, and will of the Romans themselves.

In the history of the ancient world the Romans played the part that men of our race have played in the history of the modern world. They knew, as we claim to know, how to govern: how to govern themselves, and how to govern other people. To this day much in our laws and in our system of government bears a Roman stamp. They were great soldiers and could conquer: they could also hold and keep their conquests and impress the Roman stamp on all the peoples over whom they ruled. Their stamp is still upon us. Much that belongs to our common life to-day comes to us from them: in their day they lived a life not much unlike ours now. And in many respects the Roman character was like the British. We can see the faults of the Romans, if we cannot see our own; we can also see the virtues. We can see, too—looking back at them over the distance of time, judging them by their work and by what is left to us of their writings—how the mixture of faults in their virtues explains the fall as well as the rise of the great power of Rome.

see caption

LAR, or
Household God

The Romans were men of action, not dreamers. They were more interested in doing things than in understanding them. They were men of strong will and cool mind, who looked out upon the world as they saw it and, for the most part, did not wonder much about how and why it came to be there. It was there for them to rule. That was what interested them. Ideas they mostly got from other people, especially from the Greeks. When they had got them they could use them and turn them to something of their own. But they were not distracted by puzzling over ideas. Their religion was that of a practical people. In the later days of Rome few educated men believed in the gods. But all the ceremonies and festivals were dedicated to them; and magnificent temples in their honour were erected in which their spirits were supposed to dwell. In the old days every Roman household had its particular images—the Lares and Penates which the head of the family tended and guarded. Connected with this office was the sacred authority of the head of the family—the paterfamilias. His word was law for the members of the household. And the City of Rome stood to its citizens in the place of the paterfamilias. The first laws of a Roman's life were his duty to his father and to the State. They had an absolute claim on him for all that he could give. The Roman's code of honour, like the Englishman's, rested on this sense of duty. A man must be worthy of his ancestors and of Rome. His own life was short, and without honour nothing; the life of Rome went on.

Courage, devotion to duty, strength of will, a great power of silence, a sense of justice rather than any sympathy in his dealings with other men: these were the characteristic Roman virtues. The Roman was proud: he had a high idea of what was due from himself. This was the groundwork out of which his other qualities grew, good and bad. Proud men are not apt to understand the weakness of other people or to appreciate virtues different from their own. The defects of the Romans were therefore hardness, sometimes amounting to cruelty both in action and in judgement; lack of imagination; a blindness to the things in life that cannot be seen or measured. They were just rather than generous. They trampled on the defeated and scorned what they could not understand. They worshipped success and cared little for human suffering. About this, however, they were honest. Sentimentalism was not a Roman vice, nor hypocrisy. When great wealth

poured into the city, after the Eastern conquests of Lucullus and Pompeius, the simplicity of the old Roman life was destroyed and men began to care for nothing but luxury, show, and all the visible signs of power. They were quite open about it: they did not pretend that they really cared for other things, or talk about the ‘burden of Empire’.

The heroes of Roman history are men of action. As they pass before us, so far as we can see their faces, hear their voices, know their natures from the stories recorded by those who wrote them down at the time or later, these men stand out in many respects astonishingly like the men of our own day, good and bad. Centuries of dust lie over them. Their bones are crumbled to the dust. Yet in a sense they live still and move among us. Between them and us there lie not only centuries but the great tide of ruin that swept the ancient world away: destroyed it so that the men who came after had to build the house of civilization, stone by stone anew, from the foundation. The Roman world was blotted out by the barbarians. For hundreds of years the kind of life men had lived in Rome disappeared altogether and the very records of it seemed to be lost. Gradually, bit by bit, the story has been pieced together, and the men of two thousand years ago stand before us: we see them across the gulf. The faces of those belonging to the earliest story of Rome are rather dim. But they, too, help us to understand what the Romans were like. We learn to know a people from the men it chooses as its heroes; about whom fathers tell stories to their children. They show what are the deeds and qualities they admire: what kind of men they are trying to be.

II

The Early Heroes

THE oldest Roman stories give a description of the coming of the people who afterwards inhabited the city, from across the seas. They tell of the founding of the first township round the Seven Hills, and of the kings, especially of the last seven, who ruled over the people until, for their misdeeds, they were driven out and the very name of King became hateful in Roman ears. Then there are many tales of the wars between the people of Rome and the neighbours dwelling round them on the plains of Latium and among the hills of Etruria and Samnium; and the fierce battles fought against the Gauls who, from time to time, swept down

on Italy from the mountains of the north.

These stories do not tell us much that can be considered as actual history. But they do help us to understand what the Romans wished to be like, by showing us the sort of pictures they held up before themselves.

In later times the Romans learned to admire intensely all that came from Greece. The Greeks had been a great ruling people when the Roman State hardly existed: and from them much in Roman life and thought was borrowed. They liked to think that the first settlers on the Tiber bank came from an older finer world than that of the other tribes dwelling in Italy. So they told how, after the great siege of Troy by the Greek heroes, Aeneas, one of the Trojan leaders, fled from his ruined city across the seas, bearing his father and his household gods upon his shoulders, and after many adventures, and some time passed in the great city of Carthage, on the African coast, came with a few trusty companions to the shores of Latium and there founded a new home.

The descendants of Aeneas ruled over their people as kings. In later days, however, the Romans, who held that all citizens were free and equal, hated the name of King. Rome was a republic: its government was carried on by men elected by the citizens from among themselves, and by assemblies in which all citizens could take part. The first duty of every citizen was to the republic: its claim on him stood before all other claims.

The story of the fall of the last king and of Lucius Junius Brutus, one of the first Consuls, as the chief magistrates of the new republic were called, shows clearly how far the idea of duty to the republic could go in the minds of Romans.

Brutus and Tarquin

The last King of Rome was Tarquin the Proud. His misrule, and the insolent heartlessness of his family, especially of his son Sextus, brought about their expulsion from Rome and the end of the kingship. Sextus had, by guile, got into the town of Gabii but was at a loss how to make himself master there. He managed to send out a messenger to his father. It was summer. In the garden where the King was walking, poppies—white and purple—were growing in long ranks. Tarquin said nothing to the messenger: only as he walked he struck off with his staff the heads of the tallest poppies, one after another, without saying a word. Sextus, when the messenger came back and described to him his father’s action, understood. Pitilessly he put the leading men of Gabii to the sword.

It was the misdeeds of this Sextus that brought the proud house of Tarquin to the ground. He tried to force his brutal love on the fair Lucretia, the wife of his cousin Collatinus, and so shamed her that, after telling her husband how she had been wronged, Lucretia killed herself before his eyes and those of his friend Brutus. Stirred to deepest wrath, Collatinus and Brutus then swore a great oath to drive the house of Tarquin from Rome and henceforth allow no king to rule over the free people of the city. When they had told their fellow citizens how Sextus had wronged Lucretia, a daughter of one of the proudest families in the city, and reminded them of the oppression and injustice they had all suffered at the hands of his family, the leading men of Rome rose up and drove the Tarquins out. The city was proclaimed for ever a republic to be ruled not by any one man but by the will and for the good of all free men who dwelt in it. Some there were, however, who took the side of Tarquin and tried to bring him back. Among them were the two sons of Brutus. They were captured and brought up for judgement, and like the others condemned to death. Brutus was the judge. Though they were his sons and he loved them he condemned them unflinchingly. Without any sign of feeling he saw them go to their death. An action for which he would have sentenced another man seemed to him no less wrong when committed by his own children.

The Death of Lucretia

They tried to soothe her grief, laying the blame, not on the unwilling victim, but on the perpetrator of the offence. ‘It is the mind,’ they said, ‘not the body that sins. Where there is no intention, there is no fault,’ ‘It is for you,’ she replied, ‘to consider the punishment that is his due; I acquit myself of guilt, but I do not free myself from the penalty; no woman who lives after her honour is lost shall appeal to the example of Lucretia,’ Then she took a knife which she had hidden under her dress, plunged it into her heart, and dropping down soon expired. Her husband and father made the solemn invocation of the dead.

While the others were occupied in mourning, Brutus drew the knife from the wound, held it still reeking before him, and exclaimed, ‘I swear by this blood, pure and undefiled before the prince’s outrage, and I call you, gods, to witness, that I will punish Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, his impious wife, and all his children with fire and sword to the utmost of my power, and that I will not allow them or any other to rule in Rome.’ After this, he handed the knife to Collatinus, next to Lucretius and Valerius, all amazed at Brutus and perplexed to account for his new spirit of authority. They took the oath as he directed and, changing wholly from grief to anger, they obeyed his summons to follow him and make an immediate end of the royal power.

The body of Lucretia was brought from her house and carried to the Forum, the people thronging round, as was natural, in wonder at this strange and cruel sight, and loud in condemning the crime of Tarquinius. They were deeply moved by the father’s sorrow, and still more by the words of Brutus, who rebuked their tears and idle laments, urging them to act like men and Romans by taking up arms against the common enemy.

Livy, i. 58. 9-59. 4.

Mucius and Cloelia

see caption

ETRUSCAN SOLDIER
from a Brit. Mus. bronze

The same spirit was shown by Caius Mucius and the maiden Cloelia and many others in the long and bitter wars that followed. Tarquin found refuge with Lars Porsena, King of the Etruscans, who pretended to be eager to restore him while he really wanted to submit the Roman people to his own rule. Porsena laid siege to the city and the people were reduced to the hardest straits. A young man named Caius Mucius determined to kill Lars Porsena. He succeeded in passing through the enemy's lines and made his way into their camp. There he saw a man clad in purple whom he took to be Lars Porsena. In his heart he plunged the dagger he had hidden under the folds of his toga. The man fell dead. But he was not the King. Mucius was carried before Lars and to him he said, 'I am a Roman, my name Caius Mucius. There are in Rome hundreds of young men resolved, as I was, to take your life or perish in the attempt. You may slay me but you cannot escape them all.' Porsena demanded the names of the others: Mucius refused to speak. When Porsena said he would compel him to speak by torture Mucius merely smiled. On the altar a flame was burning. To prove to the ally of Tarquin of what stuff the young men of Rome were made, he thrust his right arm into the flame and held it so without flinching until the flesh was charred away. Such, his action showed the King, was the spirit of Rome.

Mucius: The Spirit of Rome

see caption

ROMAN LEGIONARY
from a Brit. Mus. bronze

Mucius was escaping through the scared throng, that fell away before his bloody dagger, when, summoned by the shouts, the King's guards seized him and dragged him back. Standing helpless before the throne, but even in such desperate position more formidable than afraid, he cried out, 'I am a Roman citizen; my name is Caius Mucius. My purpose was to kill an enemy of my country; I have as much courage to die as I had to slay; a Roman should be ready for great deeds and great

suffering. Nor have I alone been emboldened to strike this blow; behind me is a long line of comrades who seek the same honour. Therefore, if you choose, prepare for a struggle in which you will fight for your life every hour of the day and have the sword of an enemy at your palace door. Such is the war that we, the youth of Rome, proclaim against you. You need not fear armies and battles; by yourself you will meet us one by one.' When the King, enraged and terrified, was threatening to have him thrown into the flames unless he explained the hints of assassination thus vaguely uttered, he replied, 'See how worthless the body is to those whose gaze is fixed on glory.' With these words he laid his right hand on a brazier already lighted for the sacrifice and let it burn, too resolute, as it seemed, to feel pain. Then Porsena, astounded at the sight, ordered Mucius to be removed from the altar and exclaimed, 'Begone, your own desperate enemy more than mine. I would wish well to your valour, if that valour was on the side of my country. As it is, I send you hence unharmed and free from the penalties of war.'

Livy, ii. 12. 8-14.

Later in the same war the Romans were compelled to give hostages, twenty-four men and maidens. Cloelia, a highborn maiden sent among them, escaped at night and on horseback swam across the foaming Tiber to Rome. But since she had been given as a hostage and faith once given was sacred, the Roman leaders sent her back.

Cloelia's Heroism

This reward granted to the heroism of Mucius inspired women also with ambition to win honour from the people. The maiden Cloelia, one of the hostages, escaped the sentries of the Etruscan camp, which had been pitched near the Tiber, and amid a shower of missiles swam across the river, leading a band of maidens whom she brought back safe to their families in Rome. When Porsena heard of it, he was at first enraged, and sent envoys to the city with a demand for the return of his hostage Cloelia; he made no great account of the others. Afterwards, his anger being changed to admiration, he said that her exploit surpassed anything done by Horatius or Mucius, and declared that he would consider the treaty broken if the hostage was not surrendered, but that if she was, he would send her back unharmed to her people. Faith was kept on both sides; the Romans returned the guarantee of peace in accordance with the terms of the treaty, and the King not only protected but honoured the heroine, making her a present of half the hostages and bidding her choose as she pleased. The story is that when they were brought before her, she picked out the youngest, a choice at once creditable to her modesty and approved by the unanimous wish of the rest that those whose age made them most helpless should be liberated first. After the restoration of peace the Romans recognized this unexampled heroism in a woman with the honour, also unexampled, of an equestrian statue. It was placed at the top of the Sacred Way, a maiden sitting on a horse.

Livy, ii. 13. 6-11.

This same high temper and unflinching sense of honour was shown two hundred years later in an even more splendid way by Atilius Regulus.

Regulus

In the first war against Carthage (255 B.C.) Regulus, a Roman general, was

heavily defeated and taken prisoner with a large part of his army. Shortly afterwards the Roman fleet was destroyed by a terrible storm. Nevertheless, the events of the next year's campaign went against the Carthaginians. They determined to offer peace and for this purpose sent an embassy to Rome. With this embassy Regulus was sent, on the understanding that if he failed to induce his countrymen to make peace and to agree to an exchange of prisoners he would return to Carthage, where, as he well knew, a terrible fate certainly awaited him. Nevertheless, despite the appeals of his wife and children, Regulus urged his countrymen not to make peace. His body might belong to the Carthaginians who had captured it, but his spirit was Roman and no Roman could urge his countrymen to accept defeat and give up fighting until they had won. True to his vow, he went back to Carthage and there he was put to dreadful tortures. His eyelids were cut off and he was then exposed to the full glare of the sun. But the story of his devotion remained strong in the minds of his countrymen, and Horace, one of their great poets, later put it into lines of imperishable verse.

The Honour of Regulus

> Such a downfall had the prescient soul of Regulus feared, when he refused assent to dishonourable terms and maintained that the precedent would be fatal in time to come if the prisoners did not die unpitied. 'I have seen', he said, 'our eagles hanging on Carthaginian shrines, and weapons of our soldiers surrendered without bloodshed; I have seen arms bound behind the back of the free, and gates thrown open in security, and lands tilled that our armies had wasted. Think you that the soldier, ransomed with gold, will return the braver? You do but add loss to disgrace. Wool, tinctured by dye, never regains its old purity; nor does true courage, if once it is lost, deign to be restored to the degraded. If the stag fights after being freed from the meshes of the net, he will be brave who has surrendered to a treacherous foe, and he will crush the Carthaginians in a second fight who without resentment has felt the thongs binding his arms, and has feared death. Such a man, all ignorant of the way to win a soldier's life, has confused peace and war. Oh lost honour! Oh mighty Carthage, exalted by the shameful downfall of Italy!' It is said that he put from him the lips of his virtuous wife and his little children, a free citizen no longer, and with grim resolution turned his eyes to the ground, till with the weight of advice never given by any before him he strengthened the wavering purpose of the Fathers, and amid the mourning of his friends hurried into a noble exile. Yet, though he knew what the barbarian tormentor had in store for him, he set aside opposing kinsmen and people that would delay his return as quietly as if he were leaving the business of some client's suit at last decided, and were journeying to his estate in Venefrum or to Tarentum that the Spartan built.
>
> Horace, *Od.* iii. 5. 13-56.

Marcus Curtius

What were Rome's most precious possessions? To this question a splendid answer was given by Marcus Curtius. In the midst of the Forum—the market-

place in the heart of the city where public business was transacted and men met daily to discuss politics and listen to speeches—the citizens found one morning that a yawning gulf had opened. This, so the priests declared, would not close until the most precious thing that Rome possessed had been thrown into it. Then the republic would be safe and everlasting. For a time men puzzled and pondered over the meaning of this dark saying. Marcus Curtius, a youth who had covered himself with honour in many battles, solved the riddle. Brave men, he said, had made Rome great: the city had nothing so precious. Clad in full armour and mounted on his war-horse he leaped into the gulf. It closed over him at once, nor ever opened again.

The Devotion of Marcus Curtius

> During the same year, as the story goes, a cavern of measureless depth was opened in the middle of the Forum, either from the shock of an earthquake or from some other hidden force; and though all did their best by throwing soil into it, the gulf could not be filled up till, warned by the gods, the people began to inquire what was Rome's greatest treasure. For that treasure, so the prophets declared, must be offered in it, if the Roman commonwealth was to be safe and lasting. Whereupon Marcus Curtius, a warrior renowned in war, rebuked them for doubting whether the Romans had any greater blessing than arms and valour. Amid a general silence he devoted himself, looking to the Capitol and the temples of the immortal gods that overhang the Forum, and stretching out his hands, at one time to the sky, at another to the yawning chasm that reached to the world below. Then, fully armed and seated on a horse splendidly caparisoned, he plunged into its depths, while a crowd of men and women showered corn and other offerings after him. Thus we may suppose that the Curtian Lake got its name from him, and not from Curtius Mettus, in old time the famous soldier of Titus Tatius.
>
> Livy, vii. 6.

see caption

LACUS CURTIUS
Restored

In Mucius Scaevola, in Regulus, in Marcus Curtius, and many others the fine qualities of the old Roman temper, pride, courage, will, devotion, a love of their country that went beyond all other feelings, even unto death, stand out. One can see the main lines of the character that made the Romans what they afterwards became—the conquerors and law-givers first of a single city, Rome, then of the whole plain of Latium in which that city stood: then, after driving back barbarian invaders from the north and Greek invaders from the south, of all Italy: later of the known world.

Coriolanus

To understand this character better one may look at it from another angle, studying a man in whom these qualities were spoiled by the faults that belong to them. Courage may become cruelty: pride fall into arrogance: high contempt for others will grow to selfishness and hardness; even a high devotion to one's country may be spoiled if it comes to mean a devotion to one's own idea of what that country should be like and how it should treat oneself. It may then be mere selfishness. Many men love their country not as it is but as they think it ought to be. This may be a good and helpful feeling if what they think it ought to be depends not on their own private wishes and welfare only, but on that of the people as a whole. A love of country of this kind makes men strive incessantly to make it better. But some Romans forgot the welfare of the people as a whole. The men belonging to the old families, men who claimed to be descended from the early settlers, who called themselves 'patricians', that is, the fathers of the State, were apt to consider that what they thought must be so: that they alone knew what was right and good. The welfare of the State depended on them. They were the leaders in the army and in the government. They had no patience with those who said that they should not settle everything in Rome, that their idea of what was right and patriotic was not the end of the matter; men who said that Rome was not this class or that but the whole people. The city was growing fast; new settlers had come in, men not counted as citizens, but men whose happiness and comfort depended on the way the State treated them. These people, the 'plebs' as they were called, were despised by many patricians. They looked upon them not as Romans, but as creatures who could be made into soldiers when the city needed soldiers, but at other times should keep quiet.

The faults and virtues of the patricians—and nearly all the heroes of Roman story belong to patrician families—are well shown in the life of Caius Marcius, called Coriolanus in honour of his victory outside the town of Corioli.

The Capture of Corioli

One of the leading men in the camp was C. Marcius, who afterwards received the name of Coriolanus, a youth of equal vigour in counsel and in action. The Roman army was besieging Corioli and, occupied with its people shut up behind their walls, had no fear of attack from without, when the Volscian troops from Antium swept down upon it, and at the same time the enemy sallied out of the town. Marcius happened to be on duty, and with some picked troops not only repelled the sally, but fearlessly rushed in through the open gate and, after slaughtering the enemy in the neighbourhood, chanced to come across some lighted brands and flung them on to the buildings that

adjoined the wall. Then the cries of the townsmen, mingled with the shrieks of women and children that quickly arose, as usual, when the alarm was given, encouraged the Romans and dismayed the Volscians, inasmuch as they found that the city which they had come to help was in the hands of the enemy. Thus the Volscians from Antium were routed and Corioli was taken.

Livy, ii. 33. 5-9.

Caius Marcius belonged to one of the oldest and proudest families in the Republic. A member of this family had been one of the Seven Kings. His father died when Caius was but a boy and he was left in the charge of his mother Volumnia. Volumnia was a woman of noble character and fine mind. Her house was admirably ordered: everything in it was beautiful and yet simple. She brought up her son well: he excelled in all manly exercises, was of a courage that nothing could shake, scorned idleness, luxury, and wealth: believed that the one life for a Roman was a life of service to the death. But Volumnia did not succeed, as a father might have done, in curbing the faults of the lad's character. Caius grew up headstrong, obstinate, and excessively proud. Personally highly gifted in mind and body, he was disposed to look down upon others less firm and resolute. He set, for himself, a high standard of uprightness and courage, and cared nothing for what other people thought of him. Among the youths with whom he grew up he was the natural leader: his will brooked no contradiction. Few dared to criticize or oppose him. Those less firm in mind, less brave in action, less indifferent to the opinion of others, he despised. Any one who failed in courage, endurance, or devotion he condemned without sympathy.

When but a lad he won, for bravery in battle, the crown of oak leaves given to soldiers who saved the life of a comrade in action. In all the fighting of the hard years in which Rome was defending itself against the other Italian peoples, Marcius was ever to the fore. He shrank from no fatigue, no danger: he was always in the hottest of the fight: first as a simple soldier, then as a general. In the field his soldiers adored him because he shared all their hardships and always led them to victory. Always, too, he refused to take any reward in money or riches. But when these same soldiers got back to Rome Coriolanus had no sympathy with them. Fighting was life to him: he did not see why it should not satisfy every one or understand the hardships of the common man whose wife and children were left behind in wretched poverty. There were indeed many things Coriolanus did not see. His harsh mind condemned without understanding the complaints of the poor. To him it seemed that they thought of themselves, instead of thinking about Rome. He did not realize that their hard lot compelled them to do so. His wealth and birth made him free, but they were not free.

All the land belonged to the patricians. Wars made them richer because the things their land produced fetched high prices, but the poor family starved while the father was away at the wars, unable to earn, and they had no money with which to purchase things. They had to pay taxes—and wars always mean heavy taxes. They fell into debt and, under the harsh Roman law, a debtor could be first imprisoned and then, unless some one helped him by paying off what he owed, sold as a slave. Even a man serving in the army might have his house and all the poor household goods he had left at home seized because he or his wife had got into debt. This harsh law finally produced a mutiny. The whole army marched out of Rome and, taking up a position on the Sacred Mount outside, stayed there until the Senate (this was the ruling body of the State, at the time composed only of patricians) agreed first to change the harsh laws about debt, and second to give to the poorer people a body of men to look after their interests. These were the Tribunes. The appointment of these tribunes angered many patricians, and especially Coriolanus. Not understanding the sufferings of the people—he had always been far removed himself from any such difficulties, belonging as he did to a family of wealth and dignity—he thought that their discontents were created by talk and idleness. And since there were men in Rome who got a cheap popularity by perpetually reminding the people of their wrongs, he sometimes seemed to be right. The tribunes he regarded as noxious busybodies, whose loose talk was dividing Rome into two parties. In fact there were two parties. Coriolanus could not see that the real cause of the division was not what the tribunes said but what the people suffered. He could see no right but his own, and all his powerful will was set to driving that right through. To yield seemed to him pusillanimous. There was bound to be a fierce struggle and it soon came. Coriolanus made bitter scornful speeches, which enraged the people. They smarted under his biting words and forgot all his great deeds. He became more and more unpopular. This unpopularity only made him despise the people, who judged men by words and not by deeds. At last the tribunes accused him of trying to prevent their receiving the corn that had been sent to them by the city of Syracuse and of aiming at making himself ruler in the city. Finally they demanded that he should be banished. Coriolanus scorned to defend himself. Instead of that he attacked the tribunes and abused the people in terms of cruel scorn and contempt. When the vote banishing him was carried he turned on them, declaring that they made him despise not only them but Rome. He banished them: there was a world elsewhere.

But though Coriolanus had always declared that he cared more for Rome than

for anything and desired not his own greatness but that of the city and now pretended to scorn the people and the sentence they had passed upon him, his actions showed how far his bitterness had eaten into his own soul. He turned his back on Rome and betook himself to the camp of Tullus Aufidius, the leader of the people of Antium, then engaged in war against the Republic, and prepared to assist him in order to punish the ungrateful Romans.

From this dreadful action he was saved by his mother Volumnia. Her patriotism was truer and more unselfish than his. With his wife and his young children she came to the camp, clad in the garb of deepest mourning, dust scattered upon her grey hairs, and went on her knees to her son to implore him not to dishonour himself by fighting against his country. At last the true nobleness in the soul of Coriolanus made its way through the anger and bitterness that had darkened it: he acceded to Volumnia's prayers, though he well knew what the price for himself would be. Rome was saved from a great danger, since the city had no general to equal Coriolanus. He himself, however, was assassinated by the orders of Aufidius, who soon afterwards was badly defeated in the field. Coriolanus said to his mother, when she at last persuaded him to yield, that she had won a noble victory for Rome, but one that was fatal to her son. He was right. His very words showed that in some part of his mind he realized how wrong and really unpatriotic his action had been; in joining with the enemies of Rome he had shown clearly that what he loved was not his country but his own pride. In the end, thanks to Volumnia, he bent his head. The lesson to the Romans was a clear one: and in the years that followed it was not forgotten. Coriolanus was remembered as a hero, but also as a warning. When real danger threatened Rome the people stood unshaken from without and from within. In the Roman camp there were never any traitors.

The Mother's Appeal

Distracted by the sight of his mother, Coriolanus leapt wildly from his seat and was advancing to embrace her when, turning from supplication to anger, she exclaimed, 'Before I allow your embrace, let me know whether I have come to an enemy or a son, whether I am a prisoner or a mother in your camp. Has a long life and helpless old age brought me to such a pass that I see you, first as an exile, and afterwards as an enemy? Could you bear to devastate this land that bore and nurtured you? However hostile and threatening the spirit in which you came, did not your anger fail when you crossed its border? When Rome was in sight, did you not reflect, "Inside those walls are my home and its gods, my mother, wife, and children?" If I had not been a mother, as it seems, Rome would not have been besieged; if I had not a son, I should have died free in a free country. But as for me, I can no longer suffer anything that will add to my wretchedness or to your disgrace and, wretched though I am, it will not be for long. These younger ones have the claim upon you, for, if you persist,

you will bring them to a premature death or to a life of slavery.' Then his wife and children embraced him, and the wailing that arose from all the throng of women, and lamentations for themselves and their country, at length broke his resolution. He embraced them and sent them away, and at once withdrew his forces from the city.

Livy, ii. 40. 5-10.

A Happy Victory

Coriolanus. O, mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold! the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother! mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;
But, for your son, believe it, O! believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, would you have heard
A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius?
Auf. I was mov'd withal.
Cor. I dare be sworn you were:
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me: for my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you,
Stand to me in this cause.

Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, v. iii.

CHAPTER III

The Great Enemies of Rome

THE early history of Rome is a history of war. Its heroes are soldiers. When the city was founded and throughout its early life Italy was divided among different peoples, ruling over different parts of the country. With these peoples—the Latins, the Etruscans, the Volscians, the Samnites—the Romans fought. War with one or other of them was always going on. Its fortune varied, but in the end the Roman spirit and the Roman organization told. One by one the other Italian tribes submitted and accepted Roman overlordship. This was a long and slow business, extending over hundreds of years. While it was still going on the Romans had to meet another danger: the danger of invasion from without. Again

and again the Gauls swept down upon Italy from the north. Once (390) they actually occupied parts of the city of Rome itself. After that they were finally driven out and defeated by Camillus. Later, though they came again across the northern hills, they were always beaten and driven back. When on the march, their armies were dangerous; but the Gauls had no plan of permanent conquest: after a defeat, they retired to their northern plains and hills.

Within the space of a hundred years, in the third century before the birth of Christ, the Romans had to meet two invaders of a very different and far more dangerous kind: invaders with a settled plan of conquest, who came against them in order to subdue and rule Rome and Italy. These were Pyrrhus and Hannibal. Had either of them succeeded, the whole history of Rome and of the world might have been different. In a very real sense Pyrrhus and Hannibal are heroes in the story of Rome. They were the greatest enemies the Roman people ever had to meet. They were defeated because of qualities in the Roman people as a whole, rather than by the genius of any single general. No single Roman leader at the time was a first-rate commander like Pyrrhus, still less a genius like Hannibal, a much greater man than he. It is during their struggle with Pyrrhus, in the war with Carthage that followed Pyrrhus's defeat, and in the long war with Hannibal that ended in his defeat and the destruction of Carthage as a great power that we can see the Roman character at its best. We can appreciate it and understand it only by understanding the enemies whom it met and broke.

Pyrrhus

At the time of his attack upon Italy Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, was the most brilliant soldier of his day: and his ambition was to rule, like Alexander, over a world greater than that of his own Greek kingdom. From babyhood he breathed and grew up amid storm and adventure, all his life he was most at home in camps and on the battlefield. His father was killed in battle when Pyrrhus was but five years old: he himself was only saved from death by a faithful slave who carried him to the house of the King of the Illyrians and laid him at his feet. The baby Pyrrhus clasped the knees of the monarch who, looking into his face, could not resist the appeal of the child's eyes, but kept him safe till he was twelve years old and then helped to put him on his father's throne. Though only a boy, Pyrrhus held it for five years. He was driven out, but later he recovered his kingdom again. As he grew up he studied the art of war constantly and wrote a handbook on tactics. As Plutarch, who wrote his life, puts it, 'he was persuaded

that neither to annoy others nor be annoyed by them was a life insufferably languishing and tedious'. Pyrrhus's appearance expressed the strong, generous simplicity and directness of his character and his singleness of aim. The most remarkable feature in his face was his mouth, for his front teeth were formed of a continuous piece of bone, marked only with small lines resembling the divisions of a row of teeth. Fear was absolutely unknown to him. His weakness was that he did not understand men: though a brilliant soldier he knew nothing about government. He was a soldier only. He could win battles but not rule men.

see caption

PYRRHUS

Pyrrhus came to Italy on the invitation of the people of Tarentum. Tarentum was a wealthy and flourishing city in the south. Originally a Greek settlement, its people were famous for the luxury and elegance of their houses and lives, and scorned the rude, hardy, and simple Romans as untutored barbarians. When some Roman ships appeared in their harbour they were sunk by the Tarentines, who thought that as the Romans were at that time busy—the Gauls had swept down from the north and they were engaged with a war against the Samnites—Tarentum was safe from them. But the Romans at once declared war (281). The Tarentines took fright: they had no mind for fighting themselves and looked about for some one who would do it for them. Thus they called to Pyrrhus to save the Greeks in Italy. Pyrrhus saw in their appeal his chance of realizing what for the great Alexander had remained a dream—an empire in the West. He took sail at once. He was indeed so eager that he started in mid-winter despite the storms, and lost part of his fleet on the way. Nevertheless he brought a great army with him: Macedonian foot soldiers, then considered the best in the world, horsemen, archers, and slingers; and elephants, never before seen in Italy. In Tarentum he found nothing ready. His first task was to make the idle, luxurious city into a camp. The inhabitants, who cared for nothing but feasting, drinking, and games, did not like this, but it was too late to be sorry. Pyrrhus had come, and since no other towns in Italy gave any sign of joining him, he had to make the most of Tarentum. The Tarentines, who had been used to having all their fighting done for them by slaves, now had to go into training themselves.

In the spring the Roman army took the field and marched south against the invader. When Pyrrhus surveyed from a hill the Roman camp and line of battle he exclaimed in surprise: 'These are no barbarians!' In the end he won a victory

at Heraclea (280), partly by reason of the panic caused among the Roman soldiers by the elephants—they had never seen such beasts before—but the victory was a very expensive one. Pyrrhus's own losses were so heavy that he said, 'One more victory like this and I shall be ruined.' As he walked over the field at night and saw the Roman dead, all their wounds in front, lying where they had fallen in their own lines, he cried: 'Had I been king of these people I should have conquered the world.'

A deep impression was made on him by the envoy Fabricius. Plutarch tells the story:

Pyrrhus and Fabricius

> Presently envoys came to negotiate about the fate of the prisoners, and among them Gaius Fabricius, who was famed among the Romans, as Cineas told the King, for uprightness and military talent, and for extreme poverty as well. Therefore Pyrrhus received him kindly, apart from the rest, and urged him to accept a present, of course not corruptly, but as a so-called token of friendship and intimacy. When Fabricius refused, the King did no more for the moment, but next day, wishing to try his nerves as he had never seen an elephant, he had the largest of these beasts put behind a curtain close to them as they conversed. This was done, and at a signal the curtain was drawn aside, and the beast suddenly raised its trunk and held it over the head of Fabricius, uttering a harsh and terrifying cry. Undisturbed, he turned round and, smiling, said to Pyrrhus, 'Yesterday your gold did not move me, nor does your elephant to-day.'
>
> At dinner all sorts of subjects were discussed, and as a great deal was said about Greece and its philosophers, Cineas happened to mention Epicurus and explained the doctrines of his disciples about the gods and service to the state and the chief end of life. This last, as he said, they identified with pleasure, while they avoided service to the state as interrupting and marring their happiness, and banished the gods far away from love and anger and care for mankind to an untroubled life of ceaseless enjoyment. Before he had finished, Fabricius interrupted him and said, 'By Hercules, I hope that Pyrrhus and the Samnites will hold these doctrines as long as they are at war with us.'
>
> This filled Pyrrhus with such admiration of his high spirit and character that he was more anxious than before to be on terms of friendship instead of hostility with the Romans, and he privately urged Fabricius to arrange a peace and to take service with him and live as the first of all his comrades and generals. It is said that he quietly replied, 'O king, you would gain nothing; for these very men who now honour and admire you will prefer my rule to yours if they once get to know me.' Such were his words; and Pyrrhus did not receive them with anger or in a spirit of offended majesty, but he actually told his friends of the nobility of Fabricius and gave him sole charge of the prisoners on the understanding that, if the Senate refused the peace, they should be sent back after greeting their friends and keeping the festival of Saturn. As it happened, they were sent back after the festival, the Senate ordaining the penalty of death for anyone who stayed behind.
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> Plutarch, xxx. 20.

He was yet more deeply impressed by the strength of the Roman character a little later. When he found that none of the Latins were going to join him Pyrrhus sent an ambassador to the Senate, offering terms of peace. This ambassador was

loaded with costly presents for the leading Romans and their wives. All these gifts were refused. Then Pyrrhus's envoy came before the Senate, to see whether eloquence could not do what bribes had failed to effect. He had been a pupil of the great Demosthenes, the most wonderful orator of Greece, and his golden words moved many of the senators; they thought it would be wise to make terms. But old Appius Claudius, one of the most distinguished men in Rome, the builder of the great military road known as the Appian way, had been carried into the Senate House by his sons and servants, for he was very old and nearly blind. He now rose to his feet and his speech made these senators ashamed of themselves. 'Hitherto', he cried, 'I have regarded my blindness as a misfortune; but now, Romans, I wish I had been deaf as well as blind, for then I should not have heard these shameful counsels. Who is there who will not despise you and think you an easy conquest, if Pyrrhus not only escapes unconquered but gains Tarentum as a reward for insulting the Romans?' His words stirred the senators deeply. They voted as one man to continue the war. Pyrrhus's ambassador was told to tell his master that the Romans could not treat so long as there was an enemy on Italian soil. He told Pyrrhus that the Senate seemed to him an assembly of kings.

The firm mind of the Romans did not change when Pyrrhus marched north. Though he got within forty miles of the city there was no panic: only a rush of men to join the armies standing outside the walls to guard it. He had to retire south again. Even after another victory in the next campaign—at Asculum (279)—Rome was not shaken: the Italians stood firm. Pyrrhus knew that to win battles was not enough; he could not conquer Rome unless he could shake the solid resistance of a whole people. This he could not do. Nor did he know how to appeal to the Italians and unite them against Rome. To the Italians Pyrrhus was a foreigner, called in by the Tarentine Greeks whom they rightly despised. Against him they rallied round Rome. And the Romans never wavered for an instant. At the darkest hour there had been no break in the will of the whole people. Pyrrhus saw this: he saw that the Romans would last him out. After Asculum he crossed to Sicily and defeated the Carthaginians, the allies of Rome who were gradually capturing the island from Agathocles the king. But though he soon overran a large part of this island, the Greeks in Sicily liked his iron rule no better than the Greeks of Tarentum had done. He returned to Italy, leaving the great fortress of Lilybaeum still in Carthaginian hands, crying as he sailed away, 'What a battleground for Romans and Carthaginians I am leaving.' In Italy he fought one more big battle, at Beneventum (275); but it was a defeat. His hopes were ended.

He had won glory for himself, but he had, and this he knew, helped to unite Italy under Rome; and, as he saw, to prepare the way for a great struggle between Rome and Carthage. Pyrrhus saw, sooner than any Roman, the great struggle coming in which the fate of Rome was to be decided. He had shown the Romans the way: had made their strength visible to them and turned their eyes beyond Italy, across the seas.

Carthage

The power of Carthage, to the men of the age of Pyrrhus, seemed infinitely greater than that of Rome. Rome at that time was but a single city whose rule did not extend even over the whole of Italy. Carthage was the head of an empire, built up on a trade which spread its name over the whole of the known world. The Punic or Phoenician people, as the ruling race in Carthage was called because of their dark skins, came from the East. Their earliest homes were in Arabia and Syria. It was from Tyre and Sidon, great and rich towns when Rome was hardly a village, that the traders came and settled in North Africa. Their ships, laden with woven stuffs in silk and cotton, dyed in rich colours, with perfumes and spices, ivory and gold, ornaments and implements in metal, sailed all the navigable seas, and brought home from distant places the goods and raw materials of different lands. At a time when the Romans had hardly begun to sail the seas at all, their vessels passed out of the Mediterranean, through the Straits and up to the little-known lands of the Atlantic. They brought home tin from distant Cornwall, silver from Spain, iron from Elba, copper from Cyprus. Carthage itself was a magnificent city and the richest in the world. Its citizens lived in wealth and idleness on the labour of others. Trade supplied them with riches: the hardy tribes of Africa, Numidians and Libyans, were their slaves, manned their fleets and armies. Their navy ruled the seas. They had settlements in Spain; Corsica and Sardinia were owned by Carthage; all the west of Sicily was in their hands.

see caption

THE DESOLATION OF CARTHAGE TO-DAY

In Sicily the Carthaginians and the Romans first met. The eastern part of the island was ruled by King Hiero of Syracuse; but raids on it were constantly made by the people of Messina. After one of these Hiero attacked Messina. His force

was driven off by the Carthaginians who then occupied the citadel. The people of the town looked round for assistance and finally appealed to Rome (265).

Messina was not a Roman city; but the Romans saw that if the Carthaginians were left in possession they would hold a bridge from which they could easily cross into Italy. That was the question that had to be faced when the Senate met to consider whether they should help the people of Messina. To do so meant war with Carthage at once. Not to do so might mean war with Carthage later on. The Senate called upon the people to decide. The people voted for war now.

see caption

CARTHAGINIAN
PRIESTESS

No man could then have foreseen how long and severe the war was going to be. It lasted three and twenty years (264-241); and at the beginning all the advantage seemed to be on the Carthaginian side. In the first place Carthage had the strongest navy in the world. The Carthaginian army was much the larger, though it was composed of paid soldiers of foreign race. There was no outstanding leader on the Roman side equal to Hamilcar, who commanded the Carthaginians in its later stages.

When the war began the Romans had no fleet. They had never had more than a few transport vessels: no fighting ships. They did not know how they were constructed. This did not daunt them, however. A Carthaginian man-of-war was driven ashore. Roman carpenters and shipwrights at once set to work, studying how it was put together, and thinking out devices by which it could be improved. While the shipwrights were busy the men practised rowing on dry land. The most famous improvement invented by the Romans was the ‘crow’. This was an attachment to the prow, worked by a pulley, consisting of a long pole with a sharp and strong curved iron spike at the end. As soon as an enemy ship came within range this pole was swung round so that the spike caught the vessel and held it in an iron grip. A bridge was fastened to the pole: the soldiers ran along and boarded, forcing a hand-to-hand fight. To this the Carthaginian sailors were not used. They were better navigators than the Romans, but not such good fighters. In hand-to-hand encounters the Romans got the best of it. But they did not know so much of wind and weather, and again and again the storms made havoc with them. Four great fleets were destroyed or captured in the first sixteen years of the war, which lasted for twenty-three. In the year 249 Claudius the Consul lost 93 vessels at a stroke in the disastrous battle of Drepana and killed himself rather than live on under the disgrace. Later in the same year another great fleet was dashed to pieces in a storm.

see caption

PICTURES FROM POMPEII—

The year ended with the Carthaginians masters of the seas and on land. Four

Roman armies had been lost almost to a man. In five years one man in every six of the population of Rome had perished in battle or on the sea. After sixteen years' hard fighting and extraordinary efforts the end of the war seemed further off than ever, unless the Romans were to admit defeat. But it was no part of their character to admit defeat. As Polybius, the great Greek historian who knew them well, said some years later, 'The Romans are never so dangerous as when they seem to be reduced to desperation.' So it proved. No one had any thought of giving in. Regulus, captured by the Carthaginians and sent by them to Rome to urge his countrymen to surrender, urged them to go on fighting, though he knew he must pay the penalty for such words with his life. Had the Carthaginians been made of the same metal they might have used the hour to strike the fatal blow; but they were not. On land they did not trust the one really great general whom they had—Hamilcar Barca. For six years nothing serious was done in Sicily. On sea they let the fleet fall into disrepair because they were confident that the Romans, after their tremendous losses, could do nothing much. They did not know the Roman temper. In the coffers of the State there was no money to build ships. But there were rich men in Rome who put their country's needs before their own comfort. A number of them sold all they had and gave the money for shipbuilding. Shipwrights and carpenters worked night and day, and in a wonderfully short time a fleet of 250 vessels was constructed and given to the State. And this fleet ended the war. Every man in it was alive with enthusiasm, ready to die for Rome. The Consul Lutatius Catulus, who was put in command of it, utterly defeated the Carthaginian navy in a great battle off the Aegatian Islands (241). In Sicily Hamilcar could do nothing; no supplies could reach him. With bitterness in his heart he had to make a peace which gave Sicily to Rome. The real heroes are the Roman people who, whether in the armies or the navies or at home, never yielded or lost courage in spite of defeat and disaster but held on to the end. They won the victory. They defeated Hamilcar. In this, the first Punic War, the Carthaginian Government was glad to make peace; Hamilcar was not. He was determined that Carthage should defeat Rome yet: he made his young son Hannibal swear never to be friends with Rome.

see caption

—OF A MIMIC NAVAL BATTLE

Hannibal

This son of Hamilcar was the most dangerous enemy the Romans ever had to face. He was not only, like Pyrrhus, a brilliant soldier and general: he was much more than this. He was a genius in all the arts of war, and in the leadership of men; great as Napoleon and Julius Caesar were great. He had the power to fill the hearts of his followers with a devotion that asked no questions; they were ready to die for him, to endure any and every hardship. No Roman general of the time was a match for him: few in any time. Yet he was defeated. The reason was simple. He was defeated not by this or that Roman general but by the Roman people. His genius broke against their steady endurance, grim patience, and devotion to Rome. Hannibal could and did win battles, but no victory brought him nearer to his great object, that of dividing Italy and breaking the dominance of Rome. Except for the southern tribes and Capua the Italians stood solid; in Rome there was never any talk of giving in. When Varro, after a rout, partly due to his own recklessness, which left the road to Rome open to Hannibal, brought his remnant back to the city, the senators came out to meet him, and instead of uttering reproaches or lamentations, thanked him because he had not despaired of the Republic. This spirit Hannibal could not break. Behind him there was nothing of this kind. He had his genius and the soldiers he had made; but the people of Carthage only gave him grudging support.

Hannibal's invasion of Italy failed: but it is one of the most wonderful stories in the whole history of war, and he is one of the great men of history.

His father, Hamilcar Barca ('Barca' means 'lightning'), was a brilliant general; that the Carthaginians lost their first war with Rome was their fault, not his. Of his three sons, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago, Hannibal the eldest was the dearest to him and most like himself in strength of will, in the power to form a purpose and hold to it unshaken by all that happened to him or that other people said. Soon after the war with Rome was ended Hamilcar left Carthage, taking his sons with him. Before he left he made young Hannibal, then nine years old, swear on the altars never to be friends with Rome. They sailed for Spain. Spain, Hamilcar saw, could be worth more than Sicily, if the people were trained as soldiers and taught the arts of agriculture and mining. The country was rich in metals. His sons helped him, and he meantime taught them not only everything connected with war and the training and handling of men, but languages and all that was then known of history and of art, so that although their boyhood was spent in camps they were as well taught as the noblest Roman.

At the age of six-and-twenty Hannibal was chosen by the army to command the

Carthaginian forces in Spain. Although young in years Hannibal's purpose in life had long been clear to him: since his father's death he had lived and thought for nothing else. He had trained the army in Spain for this purpose; his captains knew and shared it; and they and the men were filled with a passionate love for and belief in their young commander. Hannibal could make himself feared. The discipline in his army was strict, though he never asked men to do or suffer what he would not do or suffer himself. It was not through fear, however, that he made men devoted to him. They followed him because they believed in him, believed that he had a clear plan and the will to carry it through, and because they loved him. He was the elder brother and companion of his soldiers, and never forgot that they were men.

Three years after he had been made general in Spain Hannibal's plans were complete. Everything was ready. He knew what he was going to do. Suddenly he laid siege to Saguntum (219), a town in Spain allied to Rome, and took it. This was a declaration of war on Rome. A few months later news came to Rome; news which at first could hardly be believed. Hannibal had left New Carthage, his great base in Spain, with a large army. He had defeated the northern Spaniards and was preparing to cross the Alps and descend on Italy. The Roman army sent to stop him on the Rhone arrived too late to do so. But to cross the Alps with troops and baggage when the winter snows were beginning to fall upon the mountain passes and the streams were freezing into ice was believed to be impossible: no army had ever done it. The paths were precipitous, at places there were no tracks at all. Wild fighting tribes of Gauls held the passes. There was no food: not even dry grass for the animals. Fierce storms of hail and snow swept the mountain tops.

Nevertheless, before winter had fully set in Hannibal had brought his army over. The losses of men and animals had been severe; but a thing thought impossible had been done. The season was still early for fighting: Hannibal could let his suffering troops rest in the fertile North Italian plains. Livy describes the last stage of the journey:

Hannibal's March: the Sight of the Promised Land

> On the ninth day they reached the crest of the Alps, pushing on over trackless steeps, and sometimes compelled to retrace their steps owing to the treachery of the guides or, where they were not trusted, to the random choice of some route through a valley. For two days they encamped on the top, and the soldiers, exhausted by marching and fighting, were allowed to rest. A number of baggage animals, too, that had slipped on the rocks, reached the camp by following the tracks of the army.

> Tired as the men were, and wearied by so many hardships, a further dismay was caused by a fall of snow, which the setting of the Pleiades brought with it. They started again at dawn, and the army was slowly advancing through ways blocked with snow, listlessness and despair visible on the faces of all, when Hannibal hurried in front of his men and ordered them to stop on a ridge commanding a wide and distant view, from which he pointed out Italy and the plains of the Po lying at the foot of the Alps. ‘Here’, he exclaimed, ‘you are scaling the walls, not merely of Italy, but of Rome; the rest of the way will be smooth and sloping; one or at most two battles will make you masters of the fortress and capital of Italy.’
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> Livy, xxi. 35. 4-9.

Just across the river Ticinus a Roman army came to meet him under Cornelius Scipio (218). It was defeated; a month later the other consul, Sempronius, was out-generalled and defeated on the river Trebia. These two victories meant that Italy north of the Po was in Hannibal’s hands. Moreover the Gauls had risen and joined him. Hannibal at once set to work training them, and filling the thinned ranks of his own army with fresh men. His hope was that not only the Gauls—poor allies, for they could never be trusted—but the Italians generally would rise and join him. He counted on their being eager to shake off the yoke of Rome.

see caption

GREAT ST. BERNARD PASS

In Rome men were anxious and excited, but not dismayed. There were two main parties among the people and among the soldiers, led by men of very differing type. On one side stood those who believed that the way to treat Hannibal was by a waiting game. If Rome stood fast they could wear him out as they had worn Pyrrhus out. He was far away from his base of supplies. His new troops could not be so good as his old. The Italians would not rise to help him in any great numbers. The centre of Italy was safe, anyhow. So long as he stayed in the north the south would not rise; if he moved south the Gauls would soon tire of fighting. The leader of this party was Quintus Fabius, a member of one of the proudest Roman families, and a man of what was already beginning to be called the old school. That the common people might suffer if the war dragged out for years did not disturb him much.

On the other side stood men like Caius Flaminius and Terentius Varro, younger both in years and in mind, eager, impatient for action.

Caius Flaminius had opposed Fabius before. He had been elected a tribune of the people—one of those magistrates appointed at the time of Coriolanus to speak for them. He was a man of great ability and warm enthusiasm, a man with more

imagination than Fabius. He was as truly devoted to his country, but to his mind the greatness of Rome depended not only on conquest and fine laws and honesty and honour in its leading citizens. These were all good things. But there was another question to ask. Were the ordinary common people happy? Fifteen years before Hannibal's invasion, Flaminius had brought in a Bill intended to help the poorer Romans by making land settlements for small cultivators in the north. Fabius and most of the old patricians were hot against this. Fabius said to give land to the poor people of Rome encouraged men who could find work in the city but did not take the trouble. They would not cultivate the land if they got it: they would sell it and come back for more. Flaminius denied this. There were men in numbers, he said, men who had served in the armies, who wanted to work but could not do it because they could not get land. To put more men on the land would enrich the whole country. His law was finally carried. Another work done by Flaminius stands to this day as a memorial of him. It, too, shows the imagination of the man. This is the Via Flaminia, a magnificent road that ran right across the Apennine Mountains from sea to sea. It took twenty years to build, but when built it stood for centuries, useful in time of war, even more useful in time of peace.

Flaminius, already popular on account of these achievements, dreamed of doing yet more striking things as a soldier. This was his danger. In the year after the battle of the Trebia he was put in command of one of the two new Roman armies. He was all for a bold policy and believed that he could defeat Hannibal and thus add military glory to himself. He did not know Hannibal. Hannibal, however, had made it his business to know his enemies; he did know what Flaminius was like and used that knowledge for his undoing. Flaminius's views and character are given by Livy.

Flaminius before Trasimene

> Flaminius would not have refrained from action even if his enemy had been inactive; but when the lands of the allies were harried almost before his eyes, he thought it a personal disgrace that Hannibal should range through the heart of Italy and advance unopposed to attack the walls of Rome. In the council all the rest urged a safe rather than an ambitious policy. 'Wait for your colleague,' they exclaimed, 'and then, joining the two armies, carry on the war with a common spirit and purpose; meantime use the cavalry and light-armed infantry to check the reckless plundering of the enemy.' In a rage he flung himself out of the council and, bidding the trumpet give at once the signal for march and battle, he cried, 'Rather let us sit still before the walls of Arretium, for here is our country and our home. Hannibal is to slip away from our hands and devastate Italy and, plundering and burning, to reach the walls of Rome, while we are not to move a step till C. Flaminius is summoned by the Fathers from Arretium, as Camillus of old was summoned from

Veii.' Amid these angry words he ordered the standards to be pulled up with all speed and leapt into the saddle, but the horse suddenly fell and threw the consul over his head. While the bystanders were alarmed by this gloomy omen for the beginning of a campaign, a further message arrived that, in spite of all the standard-bearer's exertions, the standard could not be pulled up. Turning to the messenger, he said, 'Do you also bring a dispatch from the Senate forbidding me to fight? Go, tell them to dig out the standard if their hands are so numbed with fear that they cannot pull it up.' Then the advance began; the chief officers, apart from their previous disagreement, were further alarmed by the double portent; the soldiers were delighted with their high-spirited leader, as they thought more about his confidence than any grounds on which it might rest.

Livy, xxii. 3. 7-14.

see caption

TRASIMENE

When Flaminius took the field he found that Hannibal, despite the melting snow that flooded the fields and made them into marshes and the rivers into torrents, had crossed the Apennines. It had been a terrible crossing: men, horses, and animals fell ill and died. Hannibal himself lost an eye. But he had crossed the mountains and marched right past Flaminius, who was not strong enough to attack him, on the road to Rome. This was done on purpose to lure Flaminius on; for Hannibal knew that he longed to fight before the other consul, Servilius, could join him with his army and share the glory. Hannibal had learned a great deal about the country and he succeeded in misleading Flaminius as to his movements, drawing him on into a deadly trap. Along the high hills standing round the shores of Lake Trasimene he posted his men one night on either side of the pass that closed the entrance. In the morning the heavy mists concealed them absolutely. Flaminius marched his army right in, unsuspecting. Hannibal's soldiers swept down the slopes and closed the Romans in on every side. They were doomed. There was no escape: they were entrapped between the marshes and the lake; only the vanguard cut their way through, and they were surrounded later. Fifteen thousand men perished, among them Flaminius himself, who died fighting. As many were taken prisoners. Hannibal's losses were far less. Livy comments:

After Trasimene

Such was the famous battle of Trasimene, one of the most memorable disasters of the Roman people. Fifteen thousand men were slain on the field; ten thousand, scattered in flight all over Etruria, made for Rome by different ways. Two thousand five hundred of the enemy fell in the battle; many afterwards died of wounds. Hannibal released without ransom the prisoners who belonged to the Latin allies, and threw the Romans into chains. He separated the bodies of his own

men from the heaps of the enemy's dead and gave orders for their burial. A long search was made for the body of Flaminius, which he wished to honour with a funeral; but it could not be found.

Livy, xxii. 7. 1-5.

After this disaster old Fabius was called to the helm and he carried out his own totally different policy; a policy of endless waiting. During the whole of the rest of the year Hannibal could not force Fabius to give battle. Hannibal moved gradually south, along the western coast. But the Italians did not rise in any great numbers. Hannibal believed that a crushing defeat of Rome would make them do so, and prepared to that end. This is Livy's account of Fabius's plan of campaign, and of some of the difficulties he met with in carrying it out: difficulties not only from Hannibal but from his own captains. Thus Varro, his master of the horse, was constantly stirring up discontent.

The Strategy of Fabius

The dictator took over the consul's army from his deputy, Fulvius Fleccus, and marching through the Sabine land came to Tibur on the day which he had fixed for the gathering of the new recruits. From Tibur he moved to Praeneste, and by cross roads to the Latin way. Thence, after very careful scouting, he led his army against the enemy, determined not to risk an engagement anywhere if he could avoid it. On the day that Fabius first encamped within view of the enemy, not far from Arpi, Hannibal at once formed his army into line and offered battle; but when he saw no movement of troops and no stir in the camp, he retired exclaiming that the ancestral spirit of the Romans was broken, that they were finally conquered, and that they admitted their inferiority in valour and renown. But an unspoken anxiety invaded his mind that he would now have to deal with a general very unlike Flaminius and Sempronius, and that the Romans, taught by their disasters, had at last sought out a leader equal to himself.

Thus Hannibal at once saw reason to fear the wariness of the new dictator, but as he had not yet put his determination to the proof, he began to worry and harass him by constantly moving his camp and pillaging the lands of the allies actually before his eyes. Sometimes he would hurriedly march out of sight, sometimes he would wait concealed beyond a bend of the road, in the hope that he might catch him on the level. Fabius, however, led his troops along the high ground, neither losing touch with his enemy nor giving him battle. The soldiers were kept in the camp unless some necessary service called them out. If fodder and wood were wanted, they went in strong parties that did not scatter. A force of cavalry and light-armed infantry, formed and posted to meet sudden attacks, protected their own comrades and threatened the scattered plunderers of the enemy. The safety of the army was never staked on one pitched battle, while small successes in trivial engagements, begun without risk and with a retreat at hand, taught the soldiers, demoralized by previous disasters, to think better of their own valour and the chances of victory. But he did not find Hannibal such a formidable enemy of this sound strategy as the master of the horse, who was only prevented by his subordinate position from ruining the country, being headstrong and rash in action and unrestrained in speech. First with a few listeners, afterwards openly among the soldiers, he described the deliberation of his commander as indolence and his caution as cowardice, attributing to him faults that were akin to his virtues, and tried to exalt himself by depreciation of his superior, a detestable practice that has become common because it has been too successful.

In the following year, Varro, this same master of the horse, was made consul, sharing the command with Aemilius Paulus. Aemilius was an experienced soldier; but he was on the worst of terms with Varro, and Fabius did not mend matters by warning him that Varro's rashness was likely to be more dangerous to Rome than Hannibal himself.

The Roman army was the largest yet put in the field and especially strong in infantry. The Plain of Cannae, where Hannibal was encamped, was not favourable for infantry, Aemilius therefore wanted to put off battle. Varro was eager for it. They could not agree. In the end they decided to take command alternately. As soon as Varro's day came the soldiers saw, to their delight, the red flag of battle flying from the general's tent.

see caption

HELMET found on the
field of CANNAE

The battle of Cannae (216) was Hannibal's greatest victory and the most terrible defeat for Rome in all its history. The Roman charge drove right through the Carthaginian centre: too far, so that the Carthaginians turned and attacked on all sides. The slaughter was terrible. Of 76,000 Romans who fought in the battle the bodies of 70,000 lay upon the field, among them Aemilius himself and the flower of the noblest families in Rome. It was said that a seventh of all the men of military age in Italy perished. Of the higher officers Varro was the only one who escaped; with him was a tiny handful of men, all that was left of the mighty army.

The news of Cannae came to Rome and the city was plunged in mourning. Yet despite the hideous losses and the extreme danger no one gave way to weakness or despair. The strife of parties died down. Men and women turned from weeping for their dead to working for their country. Rome still stood and to every Roman the city's life was more important than his own. Not a reproach was uttered against Varro, even by those who before had distrusted and blamed him. After the battle he had done well. With great courage and energy he collected together and inspired with new faith the scattered units that remained, and at their head he marched back to Rome. The Senate and people went in procession to the city gate to meet him and the scattered remnant of travel-worn,

bloodstained men who had escaped with him from Cannae. Before them all Varro was thanked because he had not despaired of the Republic. Well might Hannibal feel that even after Cannae Rome was not conquered. It was not conquered because the spirit of its people was unbroken. Rome stood firm. The rich came forward giving or lending all they had to the State; men of all classes flocked to the new armies; heavy taxes were put on and no one complained. If the ordinary man was ready to give his life, the least the well-to-do could do was to give his money. The people of Central Italy stood by Rome. In the south rich cities like Capua opened their gates to Hannibal; some of the southern peoples joined him. But there was no big general rising. Nor did the help Hannibal needed come from home, Carthage, or from his other allies in Sicily and Macedonia. The people of Carthage were not like those of Rome. They were sluggish and a big party there was jealous of Hannibal and would do nothing to support him.

Marcellus, the general who took the field after Cannae, was a fine soldier who believed with Fabius that the way to defeat Hannibal was to wear him down. In Marcellus Hannibal found an enemy he must respect. When Marcellus was killed at last and brought into the Carthaginian camp Hannibal stood for a long time silent, looking at his dead enemy's face. Then he ordered the body to be clothed in splendid funeral garments and burned with all the honours of war. He had the ashes placed in a silver urn and sent to Marcellus's son. He had in the same way buried Aemilius with all honourable ceremony.

Time was on the Roman side. Yet for eleven years Hannibal, with a small army, kept the whole might of Rome at bay. He was driven further south, that was all. His great hope was that though the Carthaginians would not stir, his brothers Hasdrubal and Mago would send him help from Spain. In Spain after his own departure the Romans had reconquered most of the country, but four years after Cannae Publius Scipio (defeated on the Ticinus) and his brother Cneus were both defeated and killed, and during the next few years Hasdrubal won nearly the whole of Spain. In 208 he was able to move north. He crossed the Pyrenees; spent the winter in Gaul; and in the spring, as soon as the snows melted, crossed the Alps by an easier pass than that taken by his great brother. Before any one expected him he was in Italy. The danger, if he could join Hannibal, was extreme. So serious was it indeed that Fabius, now a very old man, went to the two consuls, Livius and Claudius Nero, and begged them to act together. They hated one another. Fabius had learned how dangerous such quarrels might be to

the State, and what harm his own advice had done between Varro and Aemilius Paulus; he now used all his great influence to get the consuls to put an end to personal strife. They agreed and joined their armies. Together they were much stronger than Hasdrubal. On the river Metaurus he was defeated (207). There Hasdrubal himself, fighting like a lion, was killed with ten thousand of his men.

Unhappily the victorious Nero showed in his treatment of his dead enemy a spirit very different from that of Hannibal. He threw the bloody head of Hasdrubal in front of Hannibal's lines. It was the first news he had of the fate of his brother. He had lost not only a man dearer to him than any on earth but, with him, his last hope of success. He knew that all was over; the fortune of Carthage was at an end. For a moment he hid his face in his mantle. What deep bitterness and pain held his heart in that moment none may guess.

Two later Roman writers, Livy and Horace, have described the battle of the Metaurus, which was, indeed, the turning-point of the war: for Hannibal a fatal turning.

Metaurus, and After

Hasdrubal had often shown himself a great leader, but never so great as in this, his last battle. It was he who supported his men in the fight by words of encouragement and by meeting danger at their side; it was he who, with mingled entreaty and rebuke, fired the spirit of his troops, weary and despairing of a hopeless struggle; it was he who called back the fugitives and in many places restored the broken ranks. At last, when fortune declared itself in favour of the enemy, he would not survive the great host that had followed him, but spurred his horse into the thickest of the Roman legionaries. There he fell fighting, as became the son of Hamilcar and the brother of Hannibal.

The consul, C. Claudius, on his return to the camp ordered the head of Hasdrubal, which he had carefully brought with him, to be thrown down in front of the enemy's sentries, and he exhibited African prisoners in chains. Two of them he freed and sent to Hannibal to inform him of everything that had happened. Hannibal, stricken with grief at such public and personal loss, exclaimed, as we are told, 'I recognize the doom of Carthage.' Then he withdrew to Bruttium in the southern corner of Italy, with the intention of concentrating there all the allies, whom he could not protect if they were scattered.

Livy, xxvii. 49, 51.

Despair

What thou owest, Rome, to the house of Nero, let the Metaurus be our witness, and Hasdrubal's overthrow, and that bright day that scattered the gloom of Latium, the first to smile with cheering victory since the dread African careered through the cities of Italy, like fire through a pine forest or Eurus over Sicilian waves. After this the manhood of Rome gained strength from continued and successful effort, and temples desecrated by the unhallowed violence of the Carthaginian saw their gods restored. And the treacherous Hannibal at length exclaimed 'Like stags, the prey of ravening

wolves, we essay to pursue those whom it is a rare triumph to elude and escape.... No more shall I send triumphant messages to Carthage; fallen, yea fallen, is all the hope and greatness of our name with the loss of Hasdrubal. Naught is there that the hands of the Claudii will fail to perform, for Jupiter protects them with beneficent power, and prudent forethought brings them safe through the perils of war.'

Horace, Od. iv. 4. 36-76.

For four more years Hannibal stood at bay in South Italy. No Roman general drove him out, no Roman army could defeat him or the soldiers who stood by him with a matchless devotion only given to men who have, as Hannibal had, what we call the divine spark burning within them. When at last, after fourteen years in Italy, he sailed home, it was to try to save Carthage, the city which had betrayed him, and now called him to save them from the war the Romans had carried into their own country. He knew that he could not do it. The Carthaginians had signed their own doom when they failed to send him help. When they in their turn called to Hannibal the enemy was at their gates. In the great battle of Zama, outside Carthage, Scipio defeated Hannibal. This defeat was the end of Carthage as a great power. The Roman terms had to be accepted. The power and might of Carthage was over. The city still stood: but its empire was gone. All its overseas possessions were added to the Roman dominions.

see caption

A COIN OF VICTORY

Six years after Zama Hannibal was banished from Carthage at the bidding of Rome, although Scipio protested in the Senate, declaring it to be unworthy of Rome to fear one man in a ruined state. Hannibal took refuge in the East. There, some years later, he and Scipio met. Of the conversation between them many stories were told. Scipio asked Hannibal whom he thought the greatest general in the world. Hannibal replied that he put Alexander first, then Pyrrhus, then himself.

'And where would you have placed yourself had I not defeated you?'

'Oh, Scipio, then I should have placed myself not third but first.'

In saying this Hannibal put his thought in words that might give pleasure to his listener but were not quite true. Scipio had defeated him at Zama; but no one knew better than the victor that the real triumph was not his. The forces that had defeated Hannibal were greater than those in the hand of any one man.

Had Hannibal defeated the Romans, the whole course of the world's history might have been changed. Looking back now it seems impossible that he could ever have thought he could do so. But part of the secret of a truly great man is that he believes nothing to be impossible on which he has set his will. The power to set the will firmly, clearly, with knowledge, on some action to be done, of whatever kind it be; to sacrifice, for that end, one's own wishes; to crush down the desire every human being feels for rest, enjoyment, comfort at the moment, and go on when the chance of success seems far away; this power is the instrument by which extraordinary things are brought about. Because of this power behind him Hannibal was a real danger to Rome, and Rome knew it. If he could have made the people of Carthage feel as he did, he would have conquered. But he could not. His will was set on defeating Rome: the will of the Carthaginians was set, not on this, but on a life of ease and comfort for themselves. And because the Carthaginians were built thus, and not like Hannibal, and he could not, by his single force, make them like himself, it would have been a disaster for the world if Hannibal had won. The Romans defeated him because they, and not the Carthaginians, had in them something of the force that moved Hannibal: they, as Polybius said of them, 'believed nothing impossible upon which their minds were set'.

IV

The Scipios

SCIPIO, to whom after his defeat of Hannibal the name of Africanus was given by his countrymen, was a Roman of a new type. For him the interest and business of the world were not bounded by war. He read much and travelled widely in the course of his life and thought deeply on many things that had hardly begun to trouble the ordinary Roman of his time, though they were to trouble deeply the Romans who came after him. He loved Rome: but his love was not the simple unquestioning devotion of the old Romans, for whom it was enough that the city was there, and that their religion as well as their patriotism was bound up with it. He loved Rome because he believed it stood for something fine.

Of Scipio's domestic life we do not know much: but he was a man of many warm and devoted friendships and certainly showed deep attachment to his

father, to his brother, and to Scipio Aemilianus, his grandson by adoption. When young he was distinguished by his slim height and extreme fairness of complexion; a skin that flushed easily and showed the feelings he afterwards learned to conceal.

Something of his character may be seen in his bust, which shows, above the firm mouth and powerful chin of the man of action and resolute will, the questioning eyes and fine brow of the thinker. It is a stern, but not altogether a cold face; above all it is the face of a man to whom nothing was indifferent. Like most portraits of great men, it represents its subject well on in middle life, when the enthusiasms of youth have cooled and settled, but it is the face of a man capable of enthusiasm, if an enthusiasm controlled by judgement.

see caption

SCIPIO AFRICANUS

Scipio was capable of enthusiasm: but not of a kind that carried him away or made him do reckless things. The Romans of his time believed that he had been born under a lucky star, was in some sense a special favourite of the gods. Certainly the chances that destroy or make men seemed throughout his life always to turn out for good. He made mistakes, and they proved more successful than the wisest judgements could have been. But the real secret of his success was not luck but his sureness of himself. He never lost his head. He believed he could do anything he put his hand to. This belief not only inspired others with confidence; it carried him through the stages of difficulty and apparent failure in which all but the strongest are apt to give up an enterprise for lost. More than that, thanks to his belief in himself, Scipio was never disturbed by jealousy or by envy of other men’s success. Men’s praise did not excite him; his own opinion was what mattered and he knew what it was. At the same time Scipio had in his nature no tinge of what the Greeks called the ‘daemon’ in man and we the divine spark. The impossible did not beckon to him. His imagination and his desires moved among the things that could be done. He was incapable of a passion like Hannibal’s. He could never have set out to conquer the world, and held on year after year, beaten but not defeated, knowing that he could not win but refusing to give up. He was the natural leader of a successful people. Always he had Rome behind him. Hannibal had nothing behind him, in that sense. He had to create his instruments by the sheer force of his own fiery energy. Scipio could never have done this. It would have seemed to him foolish to try.

Although Scipio cared for many things outside the business of war, it was as a soldier that he was admired and honoured by most of his countrymen. War was the only road to high place and distinction recognized in Rome. Scipio, like other young men of his class—he belonged to a very ancient and honourable family, that of the Cornelii—was trained as a soldier from his boyhood.

At the battle of the Ticinus the life of the consul Publius Cornelius Scipio was saved by the gallantry of a lad of eighteen, serving his first campaign. This lad was his son, named like himself Publius Cornelius Scipio. He fought again at Cannae, and was, with the son of old Fabius Cunctator, among the very few young officers who escaped alive. As he made his way from the stricken field he came upon a group of men, one or two being officers, who in despair after the frightful day felt that Rome was lost. All that was left for them was to cross the seas and try, in a new country, to carve a career for themselves. Scipio and young Fabius, their swords drawn, compelled them to give up this idea and swear that they would not desert their country. These young men did yeoman service in helping Varro to collect the remnants of his scattered army; and Scipio was clearly marked out for high command in years to come.

That it would come as soon as it actually did no one, however, could have foreseen. After the battles of Ticinus and Trebia, Scipio's father and his uncle were sent to Spain to reconquer the lost provinces there and prevent any help coming to Hannibal. They also stirred up trouble in Africa. But their success was brief. When Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal returned to Spain the Spaniards who had enlisted in the Roman armies deserted. Finally, four years after Cannae, Publius Scipio was defeated and killed and Cnaeus, shut in by three armies, suffered the same fate. To allow the Carthaginians to hold Spain was a serious danger; to defeat them a big task. Long did the Roman Senate deliberate over who was to be sent. There did not seem to be any one capable who could be spared. Fabius was very old; Aemilius dead; Marcellus needed against Hannibal. The younger generals thought the Spanish command carried more risk than glory.

At last Scipio came forward and offered himself. A vivid account of the impression he made on the men of his day is given by Livy.

Africanus, the Young Proconsul

At Rome, after the recovery of Capua, the Senate and people were as anxious about the situation in Spain as in Italy, and it was determined to strengthen the army there and to send a new commander.

There was, however, no agreement about the best man for the post, though all felt that, as two great generals had fallen in the course of thirty days, their successor ought to be chosen with unusual care. After various names had been proposed, it was finally arranged that the people should elect a proconsul for the Spanish command, and the consuls gave notice of the day of election. It had been assumed that any who thought themselves equal to the responsibility would come forward as candidates, and when this expectation was disappointed, there was renewed mourning for the recent disasters and regret for the lost generals. Thus it happened that on the day of the election the citizens went down to the Plain despondent and without definite purpose. Turning to the assembled magistrates, they scanned the features of the leaders, who were looking helplessly from one to another, and murmured that the blow had been so great and that the position was now so hopeless that no one dared to accept the Spanish command. All at once P. Scipio, the son of Publius who had fallen in Spain, proposed himself as a candidate, though he was only twenty-four years of age, and took his stand in a conspicuous place. Every eye was fixed on him, and the shouts of applause that at once burst forth predicted good luck and success to his mission. Then the election proceeded, and P. Scipio received the votes, not only of every century, but of every individual. However, when the business was finished and impetuosity and enthusiasm had cooled, men began to ask themselves amid the general silence what they had really done, and whether favour had not carried the day against judgement. There was a strong feeling that the proconsul was too young, and some even found a bad omen in the misfortunes of his family and in the very name of Scipio, as he was leaving two households in mourning to go to provinces where he would have to fight over the tombs of his father and of his uncle.

When Scipio saw the trouble and anxiety caused by this hasty action, he invited the people to meet him, and spoke with such pride and confidence of his youth and the duty entrusted to him and the war which he was to conduct that he awakened and renewed all the former enthusiasm, and filled his hearers with a more sanguine hope than is usually suggested by trust in promises or by inference from established facts. Scipio, indeed, did not merely deserve admiration for his genuine qualities, but from his youth upwards he had been endowed with a peculiar faculty for making the most of them. When he gave counsel to the people, he founded it on a vision of the night or an inspiration seemingly divine, either because he was in some sort influenced by superstition, or because he expected that his wishes and commands would be carried out readily if they came with a kind of oracular sanction. In very early life he began to create this impression, and as soon as he was of age, he would do no business, public or private, till he had gone to the Capitol and entered the temple, generally sitting there for a time alone and apart. By this habit, which he maintained all through his life, he gave support, either of set purpose or by accident, to a belief held by some that he was of divine parentage, and he thus revived a similar and equally baseless story, once current about Alexander the Great, that he was the son of a huge serpent, which had often been seen in the house before his birth, but glided away at the approach of any one and disappeared from sight. Scipio did nothing to discredit these wonders; in fact, he indirectly confirmed them, for, if he asserted nothing, he did not deny anything.

Livy, xxvi. 18-19.

He was still very young, nevertheless he had already made people feel confidence in him. In Spain, although he began with a bad failure since he allowed Hasdrubal to cross the Pyrenees with his army and march to Italy to assist Hannibal, his Spanish campaign was ably carried out and his capture of New Carthage was a bold and brilliant exploit. When the time came to choose a general, after the Metaurus, to attack Hannibal at home, every one in Rome felt

that Scipio was the man. He would finish the war. There was, indeed, no serious rival; the long struggle had worn the older generals out. Some of the old-fashioned senators distrusted Scipio. He was too cultivated; too much interested in Greek literature and too young. But he was the idol of the people, who adore success, and was nominated by acclamation.

Soon the Carthaginians were so hard pressed that they sent frantic messages to Hannibal to come to their aid. They knew that the death struggle was upon them. Hannibal came. Even his genius could not, at this stage, change the fortunes of war. He had no time to train the raw Carthaginian levies. His veterans were invincible, but they were vastly outnumbered when on the plains of Zama, five days' march from Carthage, he met Scipio in the final battle (202). It was a victory for Rome. Hannibal, who always saw things as they were, knew that the long struggle was over. Carthage must make what terms it could. These terms were severe. The city lost all its foreign possessions, had to pay a big indemnity, and hand over all but twenty men-of-war and all elephants; no military operations even within Africa could be undertaken save by permission of Rome. The city, however, was left free. Scipio set his face firmly against those who clamoured for the utter destruction of Carthage. In the same way he protested against the demand made six years later for the banishment of Hannibal.

Scipio returned to Rome amid scenes of extraordinary enthusiasm and rejoicing. All the way from Rhegium, where he landed, to Rome itself the people came out and lined the roads, hailing him as the man who had saved his country. He entered the city in triumph, marching to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill to lay before the altar his wreaths of olive and laurel. Magnificent games were held, lasting for several days, in honour of his victory, and he himself was given the name Africanus.

For the next few years Africanus lived in Rome the life of a private citizen, concerned with politics, giving his spare time to the study of Greek literature, to which he was devoted. This study he shared with many friends, among them Laelius, who had been his devoted lieutenant in the Spanish and African wars, Tiberius Gracchus the Elder, the husband of Scipio's daughter Cornelia, herself a woman of high character and educated ability; and Aemilius Paulus, whose sister he married and whose nephew was afterwards adopted into the family of the Scipios by the son of Africanus and known as Scipio Aemilianus. As they read the plays, poetry, and philosophy of the Greeks, educated Romans learned that they were not alone in the world. Before them had lived a people who were

skilled in all the arts of life at a time when they themselves were rude barbarians, like the Gauls whom they despised.

The Greece of their day, however, was no longer the Greece of the glorious past. Alexander's great empire, which had extended over half Asia, had fallen to pieces. In Greece itself the different peoples were quarrelling among themselves. Even after the Roman armies had freed the Greeks from Philip of Macedonia, Antiochus of Asia threatened them; at the Court of Antiochus was Hannibal. It was as an envoy from Rome to his Court that Scipio met and talked with Hannibal. Later he went out as assistant to his brother Lucius, when the latter was made commander in the war against Antiochus, and finally defeated him at the battle of Magnesia in Asia Minor.

By no means all educated Romans shared Scipio's feelings about Greece. On the contrary there were many who thought that the simplicity of the grand old Roman character was being destroyed, while the young men were falling into luxurious and effeminate ways. Marcus Porcius Cato, for example, a man of the utmost uprightness and courage, took this view. He was a hard man himself, and he wanted others to be hard. He could see no difference between a love of beauty and luxury. He saw nothing that was bad in the old order, nothing that was good in the new.

The Scipios, Africanus and his brother, who now bore the name of Asiaticus, were Cato's particular enemies. He had struggled in the Senate with Africanus over Carthage, for the old man wanted to see the city of Hannibal razed to the ground. He hated Scipio's Greek ideas. He thought him too proud and self-willed to be a good servant of the State. After the Greek campaign Cato called upon Asiaticus to give an account of the money spent in the wars against Antiochus, suggesting that he had been extravagant. That such a charge should be brought against his brother roused Scipio Africanus to passionate anger. He refused to defend him; the character of a Scipio was its own defence. In the presence of the Senate he tore up the account books which Cato had called for. When Lucius was, nevertheless, condemned Scipio rescued him by force. Thereupon he himself was charged with treason by two tribunes. Even then his haughty spirit did not bend. Instead of pleading his cause he reminded the people that it was the anniversary of the day on which he had defeated Hannibal at Zama. Let them follow him to the Temple of Jupiter and pray for more citizens like himself. The crowd obeyed. No more was heard of the trial.

Scipio's pride, however, was deeply injured. He had been the idol of Rome in his youth. That he and his brother should be accused before the Roman people was to him an unbearable sign of ingratitude and baseness of mind. He left Rome, shaking its dust from his feet, and retired to the country. There a few years later he died at the age of fifty-three. In his will he ordered that his ashes should not be taken to Rome.

In the same year (183) Hannibal also died. To the last the Romans feared him; Hannibal took poison when he heard that Nicomedes of Bithynia, at whose Court he was, had been ordered to hand him over to Rome.

Scipio Aemilianus

The young man left to carry on the great name of Scipio was the son of Aemilius Paulus and nephew by marriage of Africanus, whose son adopted him into the Cornelian family.

Scipio Aemilianus, to give him the name by which he was always known after this adoption, saw, even more clearly than Africanus had done, both that Rome was changing and what was good and what was bad in the change. He shared in both good and bad. No one saw more clearly than he the baseness of the destruction of Carthage and the cruelty of the sack of Numantia; yet it was he who, as general, had to carry them out. He saw the dangers of the growing contrast between the increasing wealth of the few rich, as treasures poured from all parts of the world into their coffers, and the wretchedness of the poor in Rome; he saw the cruelty, indifference to human life, and love of pleasure that filled men's minds after a series of successful wars; he saw the old simplicity of life and high devotion to country disappearing and a new selfishness and personal ambition growing up.

Scipio was a man of action; an excellent soldier and general. Even old Cato, who hated the Scipios, had to admire Aemilianus. Speaking of him he quoted a famous line of Homer: 'He is a real man: the rest are shadows.' In a very profound sense this was true. The mind of Scipio Aemilianus saw below the surface of things to the reality. He could act, but like all really first-rate men of action—Napoleon, Hannibal, Caesar—he was a thinker. Round his table there gathered the most interesting men in Rome. They talked of all the questions that have puzzled and perplexed men's minds since men began to think at all. Closest of his friends was Polybius, the great Greek historian who wrote the history of

the wars with Carthage. He lived in his house and accompanied him in his wars in Spain and Africa. Polybius stood by Scipio's side as he watched Carthage burning to the ground (146). Orders had come from Rome that the city was to be utterly destroyed; a ploughshare was to be drawn across the site and a solemn curse laid on any one who should ever rebuild there. 'It is a wonderful sight,' said Aemilianus as they watched walls toppling and buildings collapsing in the flames which rose up, a huge cloud of ruddy smoke darkening and thickening the noonday sky of Africa, 'but I shudder to think that some one may some day give the same order—for Rome.'

The following sketch of his character by Polybius shows some of his distinguishing traits:

Scipio Aemilianus as a Sportsman

> After the war was decided, Paulus, in the belief that hunting was the best training and recreation that a young man could have, put the king's huntsmen at the orders of Scipio, and gave him full authority over everything connected with the chase. Scipio readily accepted the charge and, regarding it almost as a royal office, continued to occupy himself with it as long as the army remained in Macedonia after the battle. His youth and natural disposition qualified him for this pursuit, like a high-bred hound, and his devotion to hunting became permanent, being continued when he came to Rome and found Polybius as enthusiastic as himself. Consequently, all the time that other young men spent in the law-courts and with morning calls, waiting about in the Forum and trying thus to make a favourable impression on the people, was passed by Scipio in hunting; and as he was constantly performing brilliant and notable exploits, he distinguished himself more than all the rest. For they could not win credit except by injuring others; such are the conditions of legal action; but Scipio, without doing any harm to any one, gained a popular reputation for courage, matching words with deeds. Therefore he soon excelled his contemporaries more than any Roman of whom we have record, though he followed a path to fame which, in view of Roman character and prejudice, was the very opposite of that chosen by his rivals.
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> Polybius, xxxvi. 15. 5-12.

From Carthage came another friend of Scipio's—the poet Terence. Born in that city about the time of Hannibal's death, the lad had come to Rome as a slave. His rare parts attracted the notice of his owner, who finally set him free. Terence was introduced to Scipio by another friend of his. This was Caecilius, the playwriter. His plays are unfortunately all lost, so that we have no means of judging what they were like. One day when Caecilius was at supper he was told that the managers of the games had sent a young man to read him a play which he had submitted to them, and of which they thought well. Caecilius called him in and bade him sit down on a stool on the other side of the table from that at which he and his friends were reclining on sofas, and begin to read to him. The young man

had only read a few lines when the elder poet stopped him. The work was so good, he said, that he ought to sit at the author's feet, not he at his; he called Terence up to the table. Afterwards Caecilius took the young man to see Scipio Aemilianus; and he soon became one of the intimate circle which Scipio had gathered round him. Scipio and Caecilius helped him with advice, and they all worked together at Scipio's favourite task of improving and purifying the Latin language. A line in one of Terence's plays expresses the point of view which Scipio Aemilianus and his friends tried to take. 'I am human: nothing human is alien to me.' These plays are among the earliest works of pure literature in Latin, and they show in every line the influence of Greece. The Greek spirit was one of questioning; and its influence on Roman thought was profound.

see caption

TRAGIC AND COMIC MASKS

Scipio Aemilianus questioned but looked on. He saw much in the present state of Rome to disturb and displease him; he dreaded what might come in the future, as the few grew richer and the many poorer; but he did not take any action. His was the mind of the philosopher; like his friends Polybius and Terence he wanted to understand. He did not believe that things could be changed. What was to happen would happen; to perturb and perplex oneself was useless and might be dangerous. The people who got excited and believed that great improvements could be brought about easily seemed to him stupid and dangerous. It was easy to breed disorder; to spoil the things that had made Rome great; very hard to make alterations. The men who really served the Republic were not the politicians clamouring in the market-place, orating in the Assembly, or the idle dirty mobs who listened to them and were ready to shout for this to-day and the other thing to-morrow. Them Scipio scorned. The real workers and builders he thought were the silent soldiers fighting and working in all the dreariness and discomfort of camps in foreign countries. In Scipio there was a good deal of the temper of that Lucius Junius Brutus who in the earliest days of the Republic had condemned his own sons to death for treason to the State. He judged his own friends and relations more, not less, severely than other people. Thus when Tiberius Gracchus, the kinsman and brother-in-law of Scipio (his own wife was Sempronia, the sister of Gracchus) brought in his Land Bill and came, over it, into conflict with the Senate, Scipio was against him. When disorders and rioting in the streets of Rome grew out of the struggle over the Land Bill and Tiberius

was murdered, Scipio made a speech in the Senate in which he said that Tiberius had deserved his death. He quoted a line of Homer: ‘So perish all who do the like again.’ When the people shouted him down in their anger he turned on them with cold contempt—fear of any kind was not in Scipio—and said, ‘Be silent, ye to whom Italy is only a step-mother.’ Speeches like that did not make him popular. Scipio was so much respected that men always listened when he spoke. There was something lofty and splendid about him and no soldier of his day could compare with him. But he stood aloof. Outside his own circle of close friends he was little known and less understood.

His death was sudden and mysterious. One day after speaking in the Senate he returned home apparently well and in his ordinary calm frame of mind. Nothing had occurred to disturb him. He did not seem to be disturbed about anything. Next morning he was found dead in his bed. What had happened was never known. It was whispered about that he had been murdered.

V

The Gracchi

No account of the heroes of Roman History would be complete or truthful which left out the women. Although the Roman woman was not supposed to take any share in public affairs, although she was, until she married, subject to the authority of her father, and afterwards to that of her husband, there are innumerable stories which show how great was the real part played by women in Roman life, even in quite early times. They were often as well educated as the men, sometimes better.

This was clearly the case with Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, and wife of Tiberius Gracchus the elder. Left a widow when the eldest of her three children, named Tiberius after his father, was but a lad, she conducted their training herself. From her her sons and daughter learned to be simple and hardy in their habits, truthful and upright in their minds, and to care for things of the spirit rather than of the body, as she did herself. When her friends boasted to her of the rich furnishing of their houses, of their robes of silk, their ornaments and jewels, Cornelia would turn to her children and say, ‘These are my treasures.’ She taught Tiberius and Caius and their sister that what mattered was not what a

man had but what he was. They were rich. They bore an honoured name. But these things would not give honour unless they had the soul of honour in themselves. They must strive not for their own pleasure or comfort or even for their own personal glory, but to live a life of true service to their fellow citizens. And that meant that they must see things as they were, and not be contented with the names people gave them. They wanted to see Rome great and to help it to grow greater. She taught them that a city, like a man, was great only when it strove for right and justice. Mere wealth and power did not make it so.

These thoughts sank into the minds of the young Gracchi. As they grew up they cared for Greek learning, art, and literature, poetry, and all the things that make life beautiful, as Scipio Aemilianus and Laelius did; but it troubled them, as it had not troubled Scipio, that these good things reached only the few, while the great body of the people had no share in them at all. To them, as once to Caius Flaminius, it seemed wrong as well as dangerous that Rome should be made up, as they saw that it was, of two sorts of people, ever more and more separated from each other; the few who had everything and the many who had nothing. They could not feel, as Coriolanus had done, as Fabius had done, as Cato did, and as Scipio Aemilianus, it seemed to them, was doing more and more, that all good was to be found among the well-to-do and cultured few, and that what happened to the many did not matter. It seemed to them that it did matter if the many were poor, ignorant, stupid. It was not necessary that they should be so. They were ignorant and stupid because they were poor. If their lot were less hard they might be clever and good, or at any rate better than at present.

So it seemed to Tiberius Gracchus and later to his younger brother Caius, as they looked at what they saw in the light of what Cornelia had taught them. They could not find life beautiful while so many people were wretched, or feel that Rome was the city of their dreams, however rich and powerful it might be, however many lands across the seas owned its sway, so long as the ordinary men who served as soldiers in Rome’s armies, the ordinary women who kept their homes and brought up their children, were miserable.

The great wars which brought glory to generals and wealth and pride to Rome actually made the poor more miserable, for many reasons, and for two in particular. One was the growing number of slaves in the city. After every campaign thousands of prisoners were taken and these prisoners were not given back at the end of the war; they became the slaves of the conqueror. There were so many slaves in Rome after the wars with Sicily, Carthage, Spain, Greece, Asia

Minor, that it was by no means easy for the ordinary Roman to get work. The other reason was the difficulty of getting land. Once, before the long wars, Italy had been a country of small farmers and peasants who lived on a little piece of land, sometimes rented and sometimes their own, and cultivated it. There were very few of these happy farmers now. The men had been called away to the wars; many never came back. What happened was this. While the man was away at the wars, his wife, with children to look after, and less strong than he, could seldom cultivate the land fully. Even if she managed to keep the children fed, she had no money or produce over with which to pay the rent. Then the landlord would turn her out and take the plot and add it to his own estate. This was happening all over Italy. If the owner were not turned out, the land went to rack and ruin from neglect. Thus many a soldier, when he did come back, found his home gone. Others, weary, worn, and perhaps disabled after long years of the hardships of war, had neither the strength nor energy to set to the heavy work of digging and preparing land that had been neglected for years. At the same time the common lands, which were supposed to belong to the whole people, who might graze their cattle or cut wood on them, were taken in bit by bit by the big landlords in the war years. Thus men who wanted land could not get it. Big estates grew bigger, and they were run largely by slave-labour. The independent husbandman, who had been the backbone of the Roman army, was vanishing. A few people began, in Scipio's day, to be worried about this question of the land, because they saw that if the peasants and farmers disappeared, the best soldiers would disappear also.

All this was well known; it had been going on for long. People talked, but nothing was done. Sometimes, however, there comes a man who has the power to see and be moved to action by a thing which most people, out of habit or laziness, take as a matter of course. Tiberius Gracchus was such a man. In his young manhood he was quiet, rather shy, and very silent; he thought a great deal and said little about it. Some people regarded him as slow. His was the slowness of a mind that takes a long time to be sure of a thing but, once sure, never lets go. When he did speak, men observed that his remarks were just and well considered and went to the heart of the matter. His devotion to duty was obvious; as a soldier he won the respect and love of his men by his unvarying fairness of temper and the fact that he never asked them to take a risk or bear a hardship that he did not share himself. And he acquired, too, a reputation for integrity which was, as Plutarch tells us, of infinite value.

Tiberius Gracchus. The Value of a Reputation for Integrity

> After the Libyan expedition Gracchus was elected quaestor, and it was his lot to serve against the Numantines under the Consul Gaius Mancinus, who had some good qualities, but was the most unfortunate of Roman generals. Thus unexpected situations and reverses in the field brought more clearly into light, not only the ability and courage of Tiberius, but—what was more remarkable—his respect and regard for his superior, who was so crushed by disaster that he hardly knew whether he was in command or not. After some decisive defeats Mancinus left his camp and attempted to retire by night, but the Numantines, being aware of his movements, at once occupied the camp, fell upon his troops as they fled, made havoc of the rear, and drove the whole army on to difficult ground, from which it was impossible to escape. Whereupon, in despair of forcing a way into safety, he sent envoys with proposals for a truce and conditions of peace. The enemy replied that they trusted no one except Tiberius and insisted that he should be sent to them. This attitude was partly due to their high opinion of Tiberius, whose reputation was familiar to all, partly to the memory of his father, who after fighting against the Spanish tribes and subduing many of them settled terms of peace with the Numantines and persuaded the Roman people strictly to confirm and keep them. Thus it came about that Tiberius was sent; and after some give and take in negotiations he made a treaty, and beyond question saved twenty thousand Roman citizens, besides attendants and camp followers.
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> Plutarch, liii. 5.

As Tiberius travelled through Italy on his way to the wars in Spain he looked at the condition of the people of his own country, thought of the fortunes of his own soldiers, and was moved to indignation and distress by what he saw. On the banners carried into battle, above the public buildings, at the head of the laws and decrees issued by the Government, there stood the letters ‘S.P.Q.R.’—the Senate and People of Rome. The senators, he knew, were rich and growing richer. The name of Rome was carried far and wide. But what of the people? As Tiberius himself said, ‘The wild beasts of Italy have their lairs and hiding places, but those who fight and die for Italy wander homeless with their wives and children and have nothing that they can call their own except the air and sunlight.’

Tiberius saw and felt. But seeing and feeling were not enough. He determined to act. The land question, the homelessness and poverty of the people, and the army question were, as he saw it, really part of the same. He resolved to deal with them together.

When he came back from his second term of service in Spain (134) he got himself elected as one of the tribunes of the people. Almost at once he introduced his Land Bill. The idea of this Bill was simple. All over Italy the State of Rome owned great estates. But for years back the estates had either been let to or occupied by the big landowners or wealthy men of Rome. They were in possession. But the lands did not belong to them. There was no reason in law or

justice why the Republic should not take back and use what was its own. These lands, cut up into small holdings, would provide a means of livelihood to hundreds of thousands of peasant proprietors. The miserable poverty of Rome could be swept away. A new race would grow up.

see caption

COSTUME. THE ROMAN TOGA,
from a terra-cotta in the British Museum

The Bill was a reasonable one. It was received with enthusiasm by the poorer classes. Moderate men saw that it was a sincere effort to tackle a state of things they knew and deplored. It was necessary to do something for the poor, they knew; they were glad of any plan which promised to reduce the luxury and display of the rich. But the big landowners, whose estates were going to be divided, who were being called upon to give back what, after all, had never been their own, were furious. They were ready to go to any lengths to defeat the Bill. To them Tiberius was a dangerous man, a traitor to his own class. Since they were in a minority they knew that if the matter came to a vote they would be defeated. Feeling grew more excited as the voting day drew near. Tiberius had become the darling of the people; but he had to go about armed for fear of an attack from the landlords' party. At last the latter hit on an ingenious device. The tribunes, the magistrates who represented the poor classes, or plebeians as they were called, were ten in number, one to represent each of the original ten tribes. If one of them chose he could stop anything the others wanted to do by saying 'Veto'—I forbid. This power was intended to be used sparingly and only in times of grave danger. Originally, indeed, the tribune could only say Veto on religious grounds; because having inspected the omens he saw something which showed that the gods were unfavourable. The landlords, however, now persuaded Octavius, one of the colleagues of Tiberius, to say Veto to his Land Bill. Tiberius understood what had happened. He tried to persuade Octavius to give way. In vain. Then, as happens with men who appear very quiet and hard to move, his anger, which had been slowly mounting, burst out. He went down to the assembly of the people and made a powerful attack upon Octavius. How could a man be said to represent the people, he asked, to be a tribune of the people, who was doing his best to prevent a measure which the people desired and which was altogether for their good? There was a scene of great excitement. Tiberius called upon Octavius to resign. Octavius refused. Then Tiberius called for the election

of another tribune in Octavius's place. This was against all rule and order. Nevertheless it was done. Octavius was removed. A new tribune was elected in his stead. Amid great rejoicing the Land Bill was passed.

The landlords were full of a deep bitterness against Tiberius and accused him of all kinds of things. They said that he wanted to upset the State and tear up the laws because he had passed a Bill taking from them a portion of their lands which had never really belonged to them. He, however, went quietly on with his work. A committee was set up, on which were both Tiberius and his brilliant young brother Caius, to divide the common land and give it out in lots to the citizens who needed and could work it. This was a long task. At the end of the year Gracchus ceased to be tribune. His work was not finished. The Senate had refused to give the Land Commission any money for their expenses and was putting every kind of difficulty in the way of their getting on with their task. Moreover, in view of the hatred of the landlords Gracchus himself, as a private person, was hardly safe. Therefore, when the election time came he asked to be chosen as tribune again.

A great many of the citizens who had come in from the country districts to vote for the Land Bill had gone back again; others had left Rome to prepare for or take up the new allotments. The charges made against Gracchus made timid people afraid; they were worried when it was said that a man could not legally be elected tribune for two years running. They were still further alarmed by Gracchus's own speeches. Feeling ran very high on both sides, and it was plain that the election day would not go off without some disturbance.

Rioting, indeed, broke out in the Capitol almost before the sun rose and fighting with sticks and stones between those who wanted Tiberius elected and those who did not. As always happens, many joined in who neither knew nor cared what the trouble was all about. When Tiberius himself appeared he raised his hand to summon his friends to gather round him. This was reported to the Senate by a man who cried, 'Tiberius Gracchus has raised his hand to his head: he is asking the citizens to crown him.' On this Nasica, a senator who hated Gracchus, demanded that he should be put to death as a traitor. When the consul refused Nasica rushed out with a body of senators and, charging the people who stood round Tiberius, broke through and killed him almost at once (133). In the panic many others were slain and trampled underfoot. The body of Gracchus was cast into the Tiber. Many of his supporters were imprisoned. Others had all their property taken away.

The senators doubtless hoped that, Tiberius dead, his work would soon be forgotten. But the evils he had tried to remedy remained. And abroad serving in the army was his brother Caius, who did not forget. 'Whither can I go?' said Caius. 'What place is there for me in Rome? The Capitol reeks with my brother's blood. In my home my mother sits weeping and lamenting for her murdered son.' His was a nature very different from his brother's. Tiberius was quiet, gentle, kindly, naturally rather dreamy; a man who in happier times would have been content with the uneventful life of a gentleman. Caius was fiery and passionate, filled with an energy that must have found some outlet for itself in whatever circumstances he had lived. He loved his brother and his death filled his heart with glowing anger and a fixed determination that his work and life should not be wasted. He would carry out Tiberius's ideals; and carry them farther than Tiberius had ever dreamed.

Caius Gracchus was nine years younger than Tiberius and a man of more remarkable character and more brilliant gifts than his brother. The sense of a

great wrong made Tiberius burn with indignation, and in his indignation he took to politics; Caius had a natural genius for politics. His mind ranged forward into the future; whereas Tiberius worked blindly, in the dark, Caius knew where he wanted to go. And he understood men as his brother had never done. Without any of the shy aloofness that at times gave Tiberius the appearance of more strength than he really possessed, Caius made people like him without moving away by so much as an inch from the purpose he had in mind. That purpose was a change far more revolutionary than Tiberius had dreamed of.

Only twenty years of age at the time of his brother's murder, Caius spent the next ten years in public service. Like Aemilianus he held it every man's duty to work for the Republic. But while Aemilianus thought that for such work obedience, faithfulness, courage, temperance were all that were required of a man, Caius, who had these virtues in a high degree, had also an active questioning mind. It did not seem to him that the men who ruled the State were wise or just or generous enough to lay down, once for all, the lines on which it was to move for ever. The citizen had a duty to the Republic beyond that of loyal and obedient devotion. He must use not only his arm in its service but his mind also. He must help it to grow; make Rome worthy of the greatness about which people talked so lightly and easily. The greatness had been won at a fearful price. Hundreds of thousands of Roman soldiers had laid down their lives to make it; hundreds of thousands more had given their best years to its service, asking no reward but that the Republic should stand safe. It could, Caius thought, only be safe, only be great in so far as it became more and more the city of free men in fact as well as name.

With such thoughts as these moving in his mind he turned in loathing from the life of the young Roman noble of his own age and class. He had no use for personal luxury; wine and fine clothes and a gorgeous house in which to live a life of ease and idleness—these things were nothing to him. While serving abroad in Spain, Sardinia, and elsewhere, he shared the hardships of his soldiers, and spent his own money in the effort to make their hard lot less severe. Such leisure as he had was occupied in reading. In this way he disciplined and fortified his mind. Moreover, Caius had before him a fixed purpose, a clearly determined work in life. For that he was preparing. One of his weapons was to be the art of speech. He studied, therefore, particularly the works of the great Greek orators. He wanted to learn, and he did learn, how to use words to persuade men and impel them to action. He made himself one of the greatest

orators Rome knew. His speeches are lost, but accounts of them remain, and they tell how Caius could set his hearers on fire, stir them to tears or anger.

see caption

ELABORATE LAMP
to show the luxury
of later times

When, nine years after Tiberius's death, Caius Gracchus came back to Rome (124), he found that men were waiting eagerly for him. Tiberius had not been forgotten. The poor hoped, the rich feared that Caius had come as his avenger. When he stood for the tribuneship the party in the Senate that had thwarted and finally murdered Tiberius strained every nerve to prevent Caius's election. They did not wait to hear what his plans were. They knew that he belonged to the men of the new generation who wanted far-reaching changes, and they believed that any change must be at their expense. They at once began attacking Caius. They accused him of coming home before his time of service abroad was up. They even declared that he, the most scrupulously honest and disinterested of men, had made more money than he ought to have done from the various posts he had held. Caius turned on them. He had already served twelve years in the army. As for making money: 'I am the only man who went out with a full purse and returned with an empty one. Others took out casks of wine for themselves, and when they had emptied them brought the casks back filled with gold and silver.' He lived not in the rich quarter of Rome among the high-born and wealthy, but among the poor near the Forum. He was elected tribune by an overwhelming majority and at once set to work.

His main idea was a really great and original one; nothing less than the extension of Roman citizenship, in so far as voting rights went, to the people of Italy. The Italians were called to serve in Rome's armies. The best soldiers, indeed, had always come from outside the capital. The Italians paid heavier taxes; they ought to share in the benefits of Rome and have a voice in its government. Caius Gracchus indeed dreamed of making the Government of Rome a real democracy. It was a magnificent dream; but the people were not ready for it. In fact it was only after a bitter war that the Italians won from the Romans the right to vote. Gracchus knew that his plan could not be carried through at once; but he had worked out a series of Bills which would, he believed, pave the way for it. Until they were through he said nothing of his great scheme.

Caius Gracchus. The varied Activities of a popular Leader

> When the people had not only passed this law, but actually commissioned Gracchus to appoint the judges from the Order of the Knights, he became invested with a kind of royal authority, and even the senators were ready to listen to his counsel. When he gave it, he always proposed something to their credit, as, for example, a most just and honourable decree about the corn which the proconsul Fabius had sent from Spain. He persuaded the Senate to sell the corn and return the money to the cities from which it came, and furthermore to censure Fabius for making his rule burdensome and unendurable to the inhabitants; and this brought him great reputation and popularity in the provinces. He proposed, too, to send out colonies and to make roads and to build granaries, personally managing and controlling all these undertakings, never failing in attention to a mass of details, but with extraordinary quickness and application working out each task as if it alone engaged his efforts, with the result that even those who hated and feared him were astounded at his universal thoroughness and efficiency. Most people on meeting him were surprised to see him surrounded by contractors, craftsmen, ambassadors, commanders, soldiers, and scholars. Treating them all with an easy good nature, being at once kind and dignified, and suiting himself to the character of the individual, he proved that it was gross slander to call him dictatorial, or presumptuous, or violent. Thus his gift for popular leadership was shown rather in personal association and conduct than in public speeches.
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> Plutarch, liv. 6.

He was a tremendous worker and all his plans were thought out to the smallest detail. They were not vague ideas on paper. He began on his land policy. If it were to have any chance of being carried he must, he saw, break the solid majority of the landowning classes and their friends. The most important of these friends were the class known as the Knights, or Equestrian Order. The Senate was composed of men selected from among those who had held one of the high offices of State. Senators might not take part in business, but they alone served as jurors to try the cases which concerned people who carried it on, and particularly those who carried on one important kind of business, that of tax-collecting in the provinces. This was largely in the hands of the knights. Their name went back to the days of the old constitution when men of a certain wealth served in the cavalry, and were given votes as so serving. The so-called Equestrian Order had greatly grown in number. They were the money-makers, financiers, capitalists of Rome. As against changes in the land system they might stand with the Senate, but when Caius Gracchus proposed that the juries which tried people for political offences should be drawn not from the Senate, but from the knights, he won their support against it. He then turned to win that of the people by a new Corn Law which arranged that the Government should buy corn wholesale and supply it to the Roman people at a fixed low price. From this he turned to other constructive measures. He revived his brother’s Land Laws; started a great road-building scheme; and worked out a plan for the

reorganization of the army. Over the detailed working out of all these big plans he watched himself with the eye of a practical man whom nothing escaped. For Caius, though his ideas were large and far-reaching, and his mind grasped problems that the ordinary Roman politician did not begin to see, was no dreamer. He was an organizer of consummate ability and possessed a remarkable knowledge of facts and of men. His house became a sort of great Government office, buzzing with hard work from morning until night.

In the following year he was re-elected and at once moved on to the next stage in his policy, a big scheme of land settlement and colonization, very much on the lines now worked by Canada and our other Colonies who assist intending settlers by giving them cheap passages out and plots of land in new territories. This done, he launched his plan of granting Roman citizenship to the Italians.

Here, however, he came into collision with rich and poor at once. The ordinary Roman citizen was jealous of his rights and did not want to share them. Caius's popularity began to fall off at once. The idea of Italy a nation was one for which the Romans were not ready. They had been angry when Tiberius wanted to give farms to the Italians; Caius's plan of giving them votes and thereby a share in the games, cheap corn, and other joys of Roman life, made them far more angry. They despised the Italians and cared nothing for their grievances. Caius could not stir them to any sympathy.

The leaders of the Senatorial party realized at once what had happened, and determined to strike. An outbreak of disorder at a meeting at which Caius was speaking gave them their chance. The consul declared that the State was in danger and proclaimed a state of siege in the city. Then he went out with armed bands and in the streets Caius himself and a number of his supporters were cut down and slain (121).

Thus both Caius and Tiberius Gracchus perished. Cornelia their mother left Rome and went to live at Misenum. Of her sons she spoke as of two heroes who had given their lives for their country. Her pride in them remained untarnished, for they had died true to the things in which they believed. Indeed, many years had not passed before statues to the brothers were set up in the public places in Rome and offerings brought there by the people who realized, too late, how greatly both Tiberius and Caius had served them. Had their work been carried through, Rome might have been spared the terrible disasters that came upon the city in the next half-century. As it was, the senators breathed with relief that

Caius had followed his brother to a bloody grave; they did not see that those who opposed reform were preparing the way for revolution and civil war.

VI

Cato the Censor

At any time there are always some people who look back and say, ‘Ah, things are not what they were. There are no such men nowadays as there used to be. The good old days are over. When I was young....’ and so on. Such men see in change nothing but evil. There is, to some minds, a danger in every change: but there may be greater danger in standing still.

The evils that men like the Gracchi saw in their own time made them desire to see the life of Rome move forward to other and better ways. A new world had opened round them: new ideas, new forces were making themselves felt. Rome was no longer a small city, whose existence was closed in by its own walls; it was the centre of a great dominion, and touched the life of other peoples and nations at innumerable points. The ways of the old could not be those of the new Rome. They saw the difficulties and risks, but they saw too the promise of better things to be won.

see caption

THE TOMB OF A ROMAN FAMILY: to show simplicity of dress

Very different was the outlook of a man like Marcus Porcius Cato. To him the ancient ways alone seemed right. He modelled his own life and actions so far as he could upon the heroes of the past, especially on those like Cincinnatus, who were noted for their simplicity and frugality. Cincinnatus, though he had held the highest offices in Rome, was found driving his own plough by those who came from Rome in an hour of peril to ask him to take over the highest power in the State. So Cato kept his dress, the furnishings of his house and table, and everything about him as plain as those he might have had in the days when every one was poor. In his own record of his life he reports that he never wore a garment that cost him more than a hundred drachmae; that even when praetor or consul he drank the same wine as his slaves; that a dinner never cost him from

the market above thirty pence; and that he was thus frugal for the sake of his country, that he might be able to endure the harder service in war. He adds that having got, among some goods he was heir to, a piece of Babylonian tapestry, he sold it immediately; that the walls of his country houses were neither plastered nor white-washed; that he never gave more for a slave than fifteen hundred drachmae, as not requiring in his servants delicate shapes and fine faces but strength and ability to labour, that they might be fit to be employed in his stables, about his cattle or on such-like business; and that he thought proper to sell them again when they grew old, that he might have no useless persons to maintain. In a word he thought nothing cheap that was superfluous, that what a man has no need of is dear even at a penny; and that it is much better to have fields where the plough goes and cattle feed, than gardens and walks that require much watering and sweeping. This stern simplicity he carried throughout his life and in words of eloquence (he was one of the most powerful speakers in Rome) he tried to get others to imitate him.

see caption

PLOUGHING: a terra-cotta group

Cato’s own character was of remarkable firmness. He did not ask other people to do what he would not do himself. He served in war again and again, and distinguished himself as a soldier, though his harshness made him detested by the peoples he conquered, for instance in Spain. But he wanted every one to think and live in his way, and judged with cruel severity those who thought or acted otherwise. The key to his character, both its strength and its weakness, is given by Plutarch when he remarks that ‘Goodness moves in a larger sphere than justice.’ Cato was just: but his justice was often harsh, cruel, and ungenerous. Thus he left his war-horse behind him when he left Spain, to save the public purse the charge of his freight, just as he sold his slaves when they became too old to work. In this we see carefulness and indifference to comfort and luxury turning to parsimony and meanness. As Cato grew older he became more and more fond of having money though not of spending it. He himself had prospered in life and, as he grew older, became extremely rich both from his farms and from lending money, at high interest, to shipping and other companies. For those who did not succeed he had a very severe judgement and small pity, as for those who gave way to any of the faults from which he was free. He judged instead of understanding them. His judgement was just but not sympathetic. His own

account of the duties of a bailiff and his wife gives an excellent idea of the man.

The Duties of a Bailiff and his Wife

These will be your duties as bailiff. Maintain strict discipline; observe rest-days; do not lay hands on the property of another, but keep a careful watch over your own. It is your business to settle disputes in the household and to punish offences without excessive severity. The household ought to be well cared for, never suffering from cold or hunger, and should be sufficiently employed; in which case it will be easier to stop unruliness and dishonesty. If your conduct is good, your example will be followed; if you are wronged, your master will inflict the punishment. Reward merit, and thus encourage others to exert themselves. Do not waste time in taking walks; always be sober, and never go out to dinner. See that your master's orders are carried out, and do not suppose that you are wiser than he is. His friends should be your friends, and you should obey those whom you are bidden to obey. Do not sacrifice at the cross-ways and on the hearth of the homestead except at the great festival of the *Lares*. Do not make an advance without your master's knowledge, but exact all that is due to him. Never lend seed-corn, provisions, meal, grain, wine, or oil to any one. There should be two or three households to which you apply in times of need, and which you similarly help; but no more. Be punctual in settling accounts with your master. Special labour on the land, paid by the day, should not be employed beyond the term agreed. Buy nothing without your master's knowledge, nor, indeed, keep any transaction from him. Let no one sponge upon you; consult no soothsayer, augur, prophet, or Chaldaean. Do not stint the sowing; for the result will be a poor crop. Acquaint yourself thoroughly with all the work on the farm, and often do some yourself, as long as it does not overtire you. Thus you will understand the feelings of the workers and they, knowing this, will be more contented, while you will enjoy better health, have less taste for idle walks, and be more ready for sleep. Be first to get up in the morning, and last to go to bed at night, taking care that the house is locked up, that everyone is at rest in his proper place, and that the animals have got their fodder.

You should take care, too, that your wife does not neglect her duties. Make her fear you. Do not let her indulge in luxury. She should see as little as possible of her neighbours and other female friends; she should not entertain at home or go out to dinner, or waste time in walks. Do not let her sacrifice, or depute any one else to sacrifice, without the orders of her master or mistress; for it must be understood that the master sacrifices for all the household. She should be neat, and keep the house neat and swept, and every day, before she goes to bed, she should see that the hearth is clean and the ashes gathered on to the embers. On days of festival, Kalends, Nones, or Ides, she should lay a garland on the hearth and during the same days offer up prayer to the Lar of the house for plenty. It is her business to see that food is cooked for you and everybody else, and to keep a good supply of poultry and eggs.

Cato, *De Re Rustica*, v. 1-5; cxliii. 1-2.

see caption

THE SHRINE OF THE LAR
from a house in Pompeii

This same just but hard and ungenerous spirit is seen in Cato's public life. As Censor he had the right to strike off the roll of senators men who were in any respect unworthy. In doing this Cato was fearless. He attacked the most popular

men in Rome and did not yield an inch when there was a howl against him. Public money was to him as sacred as private, and ought, he held, to be husbanded in the same careful way. Thus he attacked the brother of Scipio Africanus, because, as he said, he had spent more than he ought on his campaigns. He admired Scipio greatly. Cato was far too intelligent not to appreciate his high qualities of mind and character: but he thought him a new and therefore dangerous kind of man.

Fifty years after the battle of Zama the Carthaginians, who were not allowed by the treaty to make war without the permission of Rome, sent an appeal for protection against Masannasa, the King of Numidia, who had gradually been encroaching on their territory. A Commission was sent out from Rome to inquire, with Cato at its head. Cato came back possessed by one idea, which never afterwards left him. ‘Carthage must be destroyed. Rome would not be safe until it was blotted out.’ When it was pointed out to him that the city was in no sense dangerous to Rome, that it had practically no arms, absolutely no fleet, and had shown in fifty years no sort of desire to attack Rome, was indeed too weak even to defend itself against attack, Cato paid no heed. It did not stir him when Scipio urged that to attack a defeated and helpless city was mean and unworthy of Rome, that its greatness would not be increased by destroying a beaten foe. Cato paid no heed. Carthage was rich and flourishing: it might one day be a danger again. It was taking trade that Rome might get, it possessed riches Rome might have. He was a powerful and effective speaker and his name stood high in Rome. What he said had a great influence because his character was deeply respected. Though old, his red hair quite white, he had lost none of his vigour. His dry humour could still make the Senate laugh, and his passionate earnestness rouse them to anger. His grey eyes sparkled, his long white teeth flashed when, day in, day out, whatever the main subject of his speech, the inflexible old man always ended with the words, ‘Carthage must be destroyed’.

Cato had his way in the end. The Romans carried out the destruction of Carthage (146). It was a mean and disgraceful act. The Carthaginians had already submitted, without terms, to the mercy of the Roman people. When the consuls arrived they first demanded that all arms should be collected and given up: then that all the inhabitants should depart and the city itself be removed. This was too much. The desperate people resolved to resist, and resist they did with terrible and extraordinary heroism.

Cato himself did not live through the siege: but he died knowing that his fierce

will had its way. Carthage was to be destroyed. As a city it was to exist no longer.

VII

Caius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla

To understand the strange and in many ways sinister characters of Caius Marius and of Lucius Cornelius Sulla, we must have in our minds a picture of the dark times in which they lived. At a crisis in the life of the State Sulla showed courage, decision and will, and a stern devotion to his country which enabled him, in his own way, to save it. In these things he showed that he was a Roman of the old breed. Until this crisis came Sulla appeared no better than the other aristocrats of his time: like them he was careless of everything save his own selfish pleasure; always he remained hard, cruel, indifferent to the lives, feelings, and happiness of others. Whereas both Tiberius and Caius Gracchus lived and died for an idea greater than themselves, Sulla's was a mind incapable of idealism. He and Caius Marius, his great rival, are alike in nothing except the harsh cruelty that belongs to times of revolutionary upheaval. In all other respects they are as unlike as any two men that ever lived. Marius was a son of the soil, a soldier with a soldier's merits—courage, rude good humour, careless generosity—and his faults—cruelty, coarseness, indifference to everything but the rudest of pleasures. His one big work was the reconstruction of the army. Sulla was an aristocrat to the finger-tips: proud, cold-blooded, indifferent, highly educated, with a deep disbelief in everything and everybody. He had a remarkable intellect, and a physical beauty which attracted women without number. But it is doubtful whether he ever cared for a human creature. His extraordinary courage and his equally extraordinary indifference rested on a chilling belief in Fate. He was lucky: he called himself Sulla Felix; but nothing in the end was going to make any difference.

see caption

THE ARISTOCRAT
distributing largesse

To see Marius and Sulla against the background of their time the events must be

traced that followed on the death of Caius Gracchus.

Tiberius Gracchus, and far more clearly his brother Caius, had seen the growing dangers that threatened Rome, if no wise steps were taken in time to meet them. Both brothers gave their lives in the effort to save their country. Their sacrifice was vain. The men who had power in their hands were blind to the great change that was taking place. They tried to compel the stream to go on flowing in its old channels, although the weight of waters had grown too great for them to carry. The result was that suddenly the waters broke loose and flooded everything. Rome, all Italy, was torn by a bloody and terrible civil war.

At the time many people put these things down to the Gracchi. They had stirred up the lower orders and the Italians to discontent and bitterness. They had set strife between classes in Rome: roused the middle class against the senators and the mob against both. This was not a just statement. Caius Gracchus had thought out a great plan of reform that, if carried through, might have saved Rome and Italy from revolution and civil war. He had to win people to his side. In order to do so he passed measures that were not good in themselves but only as means to his great end. Thus he made the knights, the new class of wealthy men, judges instead of the senators; and gave doles of bread to the Roman populace in the hope that he would then be able to persuade them to give votes to the Italians and so make Italy really one.

The evil that men do lives after them:
The good is oft interréd with their bones.

It was so with Caius Gracchus.

see caption

THE FISHERMAN

But the real cause of the civil war lay much deeper than the work of any single man or group of men. It was, in the main, the fact that while Rome had grown, and grown into a new world, the old system of government remained, and did not fit this new world. Rome was beginning to be a great trading empire. Yet wealth and power was jealously held by a small class in Rome in their own hands. The men of this class grew rich. They went out to the provinces, to Sicily, Greece, and Spain, as governors and made great fortunes. They came home with their riches and bought up the land that had once belonged to peasants and farmers, and worked this land with slaves. The condition of these slaves in the

country was miserable, especially that of those who lived herded in camps. The greed of the agents of the tax-collecting companies made the Roman name hated in the provinces. In Italy, too, there was deep discontent. To keep the Roman poor quiet the ruling classes gave them games and bread-doles; they altered the laws so that no Roman citizen could be condemned to death for any offence. This kept the Romans quiet, but it made the Italians, who had no share in it, increasingly restive.

see caption

THE RICH MATRON

It had been clear to the far-seeing mind of Caius Gracchus that unless Rome could draw fresh blood and life and energy from Italy it must perish. The material wealth that was pouring into the city from all parts of the world, from Carthage and Corinth and the conquered kingdoms of the East, was doing more harm than good. Too many men, rich as well as poor, were beginning to care only for pleasure and for money as a means to pleasure. The luxury and extravagance of the rich made the poverty of the poor bitter, and these poor, uneducated, idle, accustomed to be kept in a good temper by splendid shows and presents of corn and wine, were ready at any moment to rise in disorder and destroy those who tried to help them. Most of them were not liable to military service—that was still confined to the old classes of men who held land; but they had votes, while the Italians had none. The town mob was swollen by freedmen —slaves who had saved enough money to buy themselves off—they too had votes.

The Roman voters cared nothing for the wrongs of the Italians, or of the people of the provinces. Like the rich, who lived on the revenues of the tax-collecting companies, they thought the rest of the world was there merely to supply them with comfort and luxuries. But while in Rome itself people were more and more sharply divided between the ‘have nots’ and the ‘haves’, all round them there was a growing dissatisfaction and discontent. The strife at home meant that enterprises abroad were badly managed. Many army commanders and provincial governors were incompetent and corrupt. There was no longer the old high Roman sense of duty and honesty. In its stead were pride, greed, and cruelty. The spirit that had shown itself in the savage destruction of Carthage and Corinth was shown again in the treatment of Jugurtha.

see caption

THE SHEPHERDESS

Jugurtha, the King of Numidia, threw off the Roman yoke and defied every Roman general sent against him until Caius Marius was sent out (107). Marius, the son of humble parents, had been marked by Scipio Aemilianus, under whom he served in Africa, as a coming man: but though he had already shown great gifts as a leader the Senate did not want to give him the command against Jugurtha because of his low birth, rude manners, and the love in which he was held by the Roman mob. He was at last elected by a huge majority, and, thanks in part to the brilliant exploits of a cavalry officer, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, ended the campaign in triumph. Jugurtha was captured, marched in chains through the Roman streets and cast naked into an ice-cold dungeon to die of hunger and exposure.

In Marius's triumph there was a drop of bitterness. His glory was shared with Sulla. For it was Sulla who had actually captured Jugurtha. With a small body of men he had daringly entered the camp of Bocchus, King of Mauretania, with whom Jugurtha had taken refuge, and persuaded Bocchus to make friends with Rome by giving him up. He had a ring made with a picture of the scene, which annoyed Marius every time he saw it.

But no one at the moment thought that Sulla could be a real rival to Marius. There was no question of naming any one else as general when the strife of parties in Rome was suddenly interrupted by terrible news—the Northern barbarians were on the march. This danger, from the Cimbri and the Teutones, had actually been threatening for a long time. In 113 a consular army had been routed by the Cimbri. For the next eight years, joined by other tribes, they remained on the North Italian frontier, a perpetual menace, defeating, one after another, the armies sent against them. In 105, when Marius was still in Africa, two Roman armies were annihilated at Arausio on the Rhone (105). More than 80,000 men perished in a single battle. Only a handful escaped to bring the terrible news home. Such a disaster had not happened since Cannae. The way to Rome stood open: there was no army to stop the victors had they marched on to Italy. They did not. They turned to Spain. Marius, who was called home, given chief command, and made consul in three successive years, had time to create a new army.

see caption

TROPHY OF VICTORY
Capitoline Museum

In doing this he tackled one of the most pressing problems of the time. Gracchus had seen how great a danger the falling-off of the supply of men from the land might be: but no one had really grasped and dealt with the question from the army point of view until Marius took it in hand. This was indeed his greatest and most lasting work. First he changed the whole basis of service. Every one was liable to be called on, not only the shrinking class of holders of land. He took soldiers from the towns as well as from the country, from among freedmen and paupers as well as from among citizens. Second, he paid to every soldier a small daily wage. This was an immense change. It at once created a new class: the professional soldier. Formerly men had done their time in the army and then returned to ordinary civil life. Now the soldier was a soldier for life. Next Marius reorganized the army from within, sweeping away the differences between the Roman legions and those made up of Italians and allies. He improved the equipment of all ranks. This done he set himself to training his new men, encamped in Transalpine Gaul, in readiness to meet the foe.

A soothsayer, in whose prophecy he placed great faith, had told Marius he should be consul seven times. As consul for the fourth time he finally attacked the Teutones with his new armies. At Aquae Sextiae (to the north of Marseilles) 100,000 barbarians were slain (102). It was a terrible slaughter. For centuries after the fields were covered with blackening bones, and the people of Massilia used them to make fences for their vineyards. Next year Marius, consul for the fifth time, met the Cimbri, who had crossed the Alps and descended into the plains of Lombardy, at Vercellae (101). Before the battle messengers came from the Cimbri, demanding land for themselves and the Teutones. They had not heard of the rout of Aquae Sextiae. Marius smiled grimly. ‘Do not trouble yourselves about your brothers,’ he replied. ‘They have land enough which we have given them to keep for ever.’ When battle was joined next day it was the height of summer; the blazing heat exhausted the Northerners. Boiorix, the Cimbrian king, the tallest and strongest man in the army, perished; round him there lay, at the day’s end, 100,000 of his countrymen.

Marius returned home to be hailed as the saviour of his country, the peer of Camillus and Fabius. He was made consul for the sixth time.

Marius had won great victories; but the rejoicings in Rome over the terrible dangers that had been averted by his generalship were brief. Men's minds were profoundly disturbed: many felt dimly that great and terrible events were coming without seeing what they were or how to deal with or prevent them. Marius certainly was not the man who had either the insight or the power to do this; he was a man of camps with no knowledge or understanding of politics. His victories and the great shows that followed them made him the idol of the mob: but the idol of the mob was the last man to deal wisely with the difficulties of Rome. The men of wealth and birth detested him as a dangerous, rude, unlettered boor, who knew nothing of government or public business. Marius could not even keep order. There were constant riots. People were set upon and murdered in the open streets. Alarming reports came from the provinces, especially from the East. But any one who had the courage to demand justice for the provincials was certain to be detested in Rome. Thus the honest Rutilius Rufus, who tried to defend the people of Asia against the greed of the Roman tax-collectors, was driven into exile. Nor did the Roman mob care a fig for the grievances of the Italians—or the senators either.

Drusus

There were, however, men in Rome who felt that dishonour was coming upon the Republic from these things as well as danger. These men—aristocrats of the old stamp—were, however, mostly rather inclined to turn aside from politics, which filled them with disgust. Their feelings were not keen enough to make them take action. But they saw that things were going from bad to worse; and when at last one of their order came forward who cared enough to take risks, they rallied round him. This was M. Livius Drusus, a young man of lofty family, who thought the men of his own order were partly to blame for what was happening. They held aloof and let vulgar and ignorant men like Marius and his associates, Glaucia and Saturninus (men of very low character who led the crowd by promises and bribes), drag the good name of Rome down. Two things stirred Drusus to action: one the shocking unfairness of the law courts, the other the fact that the people of Italy were shut out of all share in their own government. Everything was settled in Rome: the Italians had no voice. The consuls and other magistrates who made and administered the laws were chosen by Roman votes only. Yet the Italians had to send men to the army and pay taxes.

Drusus got his Bill for the reform of the law courts through (91) in spite of the

moneyed men, since he proposed that the judges should be partly chosen from the Senate, and a strong body of senators backed this up. But when his Bill giving votes to the Italians came up things were different. There he could count on very little support. It did not help him in Rome that, when he fell ill, prayers for his recovery were put up in every town in Italy. This was indeed used against him by his enemies in Rome, who said there was a conspiracy going on. The rich Italians, too, made common cause with the rich men in Rome. Some of the aristocrats stood by Drusus, but the majority in Rome was against him.

Throughout Italy the struggle round his Bill raised an intense and deep excitement. Then one night Drusus was murdered in the street as he was going home. The murderer vanished. No inquiry was made. Drusus's Bill was dropped; his party was crushed. His enemies at once rushed through a measure setting up a court before which every one suspected of sympathizing with votes for Italians was to be charged.

But the hopes of the Italians could not be crushed thus. The news of Drusus's murder ran like an earthquake shock through Italy. Feeling was at fever pitch. Rome refused to recognize Italian rights: the Italians would compel it to do so by the sword. All over the peninsula feverish preparations went on. A few months after Drusus's death fighting broke out at Asculum in the south and spread like lightning all over the north and centre.

This Social War, as it was called, was waged with dreadful bitterness on both sides, and the misery and ruin it brought on the country was terrible. In the first year (90) things went against Rome, though all their best generals, including Marius and his hated rival Sulla, took the field. In the second year (89) Marius did little or nothing, but in the south Sulla carried everything before him. But while the Romans were winning they were also beginning to see that the war need never have taken place: it was time to let the Italians take their share and make them Romans. A Bill giving them voting rights was drafted and passed into law. This did more than anything in the actual campaign to bring the fighting to an end.

The war was still raging when news came that the East was ablaze. Mithridates, King of Pontus, the richest king in Asia Minor, and far the ablest, had taken the field and was preparing to overrun the Roman provinces. Hard on the heels of this came worse. Mithridates had defeated a Roman general, destroyed his army, captured his fleet and was invading Asia. He came, he said, to free the people

from the Roman tax-collectors who sucked their blood away. Slaves and prisoners were set free, those who killed Italians pardoned. On a certain day of the year 88 there was a massacre of no less than 80,000 Italians in Asia. The rebellion against Rome, thus begun, spread to Greece. Athens threw off the Roman yoke; Mithridates, who dreamed of ruling over the whole East, sent his general to help overthrow the Roman garrisons in Greece.

see caption

SULLA
from a coin

Thus while Romans were fighting one another the lands beyond the seas of which they were so proud, and which were the source of most of their wealth, were in rebellion. Men of their own race had been massacred by Asiatics. Each day the news grew worse. In Rome there were riots in the streets. Sulla had been named commander against Mithridates. Marius could not bear this. He got his friends to bring in a Bill transferring the command to him. It was carried, but amid such disorder that senators and consuls fled from the city. Sulla had left the riots and disorders of Rome to go to his army at Nola. There he received the order to hand over the command to Marius. If Marius expected him to obey he had misread the character of the man he hated. Sulla's answer was to march upon Rome at the head of his legions. There he was welcomed by the remnant of the Senate as the restorer of law and order. Marius fled.

Of the sudden rise of Sulla, Plutarch gives the following account:

Sulla Felix

> In the long Social War, with all its vicissitudes and disasters, and dangers that threatened the safety of Rome, Marius could achieve nothing great, and merely proved that military excellence demands physical strength and vigour, while Sulla by many notable victories gained the reputation of a great general with the people, of the greatest of generals with his friends, and of the most fortunate with his enemies. Yet he was not sensitive about this last judgement as Timotheus the son of Conon was; for when his enemies attributed all his successes to fortune, and painted pictures in which he was represented asleep with Fortune casting a net over the cities, Timotheus was rude to them and angry, feeling that they deprived him of the credit due to his deeds. Sulla, on the other hand, not only accepted without annoyance the 'felicity' thus assigned to him, but even magnifying it and recognizing it as divine, he made fortune responsible for his exploits, either in a spirit of ostentation or from a genuine belief in providential guidance. For example, he has written in his memoirs that of all his decisions which were justified by results the happiest were not reached by deliberation, but adopted in the hurry of the moment. Moreover, when he says that he was born for fortune rather than for war, he seems to have more respect for fortune than for merit and to accept the control of an

> unseen power; insomuch that he makes a divine good luck the cause of his harmony with Metellus, his kinsman and colleague in the consulship; for he expected to have much trouble with him, but found him a most agreeable partner in office. Again, in the memoirs, which he has dedicated to Lucullus, he bids him place most reliance on any warning given him by a vision in the night. He tells us, too, that when he was leaving the city with an army to fight in the Social War, the earth opened near Laverna and a great fire gushed out, shooting up a bright flame to the sky. The prophets interpreted this to mean that a man of genius, who was of unusual and remarkable appearance, would take the command and free the country from its present disorders. Sulla declares that he was the man; for his golden hair was the peculiarity in his appearance, and he felt no diffidence in ascribing genius to himself after his great achievements.
>
> Plutarch, xxxiii. 6. 2-7.

In many respects Lucius Cornelius Sulla is the most extraordinary figure in Roman history. Belonging to a very old family, the same as that of the Scipios, he grew up in genteel poverty, living in one of the large blocks of flats that had been built near the centre of the town. He was extremely handsome, with every grace of form and feature, tall, well built, with a face of classic outline, marred in later life by a hot and somewhat mottled complexion, but distinguished by eyes of a brilliant blue: eyes that could upon occasion flash fire. They did not often do so, for Sulla was a person of ice-cold reserve, seldom carried away by his feelings. Highly educated and gifted with unusual powers of mind, he looked out upon the world and despised most people in it. His was a mind incapable of feeling any sort of religious appeal. Most of the things people strove after seemed to him stupid, because there was no pleasure in them. He was what is called a cynic.

Until he was nearly fifty Sulla took no important part in public affairs. He served with great distinction in Africa. His unshakable courage and complete self-control, combined as they were with rare powers of making men do what he wanted and an absolute belief in himself, made him a successful commander. But for military glory in itself he did not care, or for any other kind of glory. To him these things were illusions. Nor was he stirred by patriotism in the ordinary sense. He saw the Rome of his time very much as it was and did not consider it worth the sacrifice of a pleasure. The aristocrats seemed to him selfish and stupid: the popular party vulgar and stupid. He saw what was going to happen but had none of the belief that inspires idealists that he could change the course of events. ‘Things are what they are; the consequences will be what they will be. Why then should we seek to be deceived?’ This, said two thousand years later, was a true description of Sulla’s point of view. He looked on, coldly scornful; and amused himself, like other well-to-do men of his class, with the arts in their lower as well as their higher forms. But, when occasion called, he could act.

When the Social War broke out, and all hands in Rome were, as it were, called to the pumps, Sulla was ready. He proved more successful, if also more ruthless, than any other commander in the field; he understood, better than any one else, the supreme danger in which Rome stood. It was this, and not personal ambition in the ordinary sense, that made him take the command against Mithridates, and march on Rome when the Marius faction showed that they were incapable of keeping order there.

Sulla could spend no time in Rome. The danger in the East was too pressing. He sailed for Greece. Marius might return: if he did Sulla knew that his own life might be in danger, but he could not trouble about that. Roman rule in the East was threatened: it was his business to save it. He saw, as Marius did not or could not see, that at this terrible moment the fate of Rome trembled in the balance. Italy lay torn and exhausted by civil war. Agriculture had been ruined, thousands slain, and business of all kinds was at a standstill. The war in the East shook the very life of the Republic to its foundations. Rome lived, as London lives, on trade and supplies from overseas. They were stopped. There was a money panic. The danger was the greater that the revolt against Rome, both in Italy and in Asia, Greece, and elsewhere, had right on its side. The Roman Government, in the years that had passed since the defeat of Hannibal, had been bad: cruel, extortionate, and unjust. In Rome itself there was bitter disunion.

When Sulla set sail he knew all this, knew how tremendous a task was before him, and, believing as he did in his star, knew that he would accomplish it. But only he of Romans then living could have done it. Marius, hot-headed always and now old and weakened in will and mind by drink, could not have succeeded. It needed all Sulla’s extraordinary coolness, all his iron will.

Though he saw that trouble would break out again in Rome as soon as his back was turned, he also saw that the danger from the revolt of Greece and from Mithridates was even more immediate and pressing. The whole basis on which the Roman world rested would drop from under it if Mithridates succeeded. The danger was, in its way, as great as that which had threatened Rome when Hannibal crossed the Alps.

see caption

MITHRIDATES
from a coin

For Mithridates was an exceedingly able prince. His strength did not lie in the huge hordes of soldiers he had behind him. Eastern soldiers were a poor match for Roman legionaries, even when they far outnumbered them. Nor did it lie in the vast wealth of the kingdoms over which he ruled: though in both men and resources he outclassed the small army Rome could send against him. His real strength was first his own ability, second, the general and widespread revolt against Rome. The Roman State, as he knew, was torn with revolution at home. There was a general sense of panic and uncertainty. The Government had neither men, money, nor supplies for the war against Mithridates.

Now, instead of closing ranks, as after Cannae, rich Romans fled, some even joining Mithridates. Marius and his party saw in the dangers Sulla went out to face nothing but their chance to come back to power in Rome. Marius himself was old now and had taken to drink. Almost as soon as Sulla sailed revolution broke out again in Rome. The streets ran with blood; the town was heaped with the bodies of the slain. Cinna, one of the consuls, proposed to recall Marius (who had fled to the ruins of Carthage) and brought up first slaves and then armed Italians against the Senate. He was defeated and declared a public enemy. With Sertorius, a most able officer but a personal enemy of Sulla, Cinna then organized the Samnites. Marius returned from Africa, and he, Cinna, Sertorius, and Carbo marched on Rome (87). When they at last entered the city at the head of their troops a terrible massacre took place. Marius, who was almost mad with fury, struck down any one who had ever thwarted or criticized him, among them some of the noblest men in Rome. Antonius, first of living orators, Publius Crassus, a fine soldier, Catulus who had shared with Marius the toils and honours of the wars against Teutones and Cimbri, Merula the consul, shared the fate of hundreds of less note. No one was safe. Marius walked about like a raging lion, thirsting for blood. The heads of the dead stood in rows round the Forum and above Marius’s own house. For five days the massacre went on until at last Sertorius, who had looked on with horror, stopped it by cutting Marius’s bodyguard of murderers to pieces. The old man was elected consul for the seventh time (86): a few days later he died. Sulla meantime was declared a public enemy, banished, and removed from his command. His house was

demolished, all his goods were sold, his wife and family were driven into exile.

Such was the news that came to Sulla as he was besieging Athens and in the greatest danger. The city appeared impregnable. His small army was reduced by wounds, disease, and the shortage of supplies: the danger that Mithridates would land and cut them off was immediate. They would then be between the devil and the deep sea. But Sulla's iron will did not quail. The man whom Rome regarded as a creature of pleasure shared every hardship of the soldiers and encouraged them day and night by his personal courage and calm. He showed marvellous ingenuity and resource in collecting supplies and a complete disregard of everything but the purpose in hand. He was a Greek scholar with a real admiration of Greek literature and art: yet he ransacked the temples and melted down the ornaments and treasures of centuries to make money; cut down the trees of the Sacred Grove of the Academy where Plato had walked with Socrates to make trench props. His ablest officer, Lucius Lucullus, was sent off to collect a fleet, somehow or other.

All through the winter and the whole of the next year Athens held out. The next winter came before Mithridates' fleet sailed: it could do nothing till the spring. But with this news came that of a new danger. The Roman Government of Cinna was sending out an army against Sulla. He was between two fires. But his nerve did not fail. Athens fell to a supreme assault on the 1st March (86) before the new Roman army left Italy. Moving south Sulla then met Mithridates' army on the Boeotian plain and at Chaeronea gained a victory that rang through the world. The spell of Mithridates' name was broken: Rome was still invincible. The revolted cities of the East began to come back. In the same year Sulla gained another great victory. At first the Roman line broke, panic-struck. Sulla, leaping from his horse, snatched a standard and rushing into the hottest of the fight shouted to his men, 'Soldiers! If you are asked where you abandoned your general, say it was at Orchomenus.' Stung by this reproach and the supreme courage of their general, the men recovered. The day was won. Flaccus, the Roman general, made an agreement with Sulla: to him, whatever the orders of the Home Government, it seemed impossible that Roman armies should fight against one another when there was a common enemy to face. But a captain in the ranks, Fimbria by name, stirred up a mutiny, Flaccus was murdered, and Fimbria prepared to march on Sulla.

Sulla was now in a dilemma. His life was in danger unless he made peace with Mithridates. To do so was not magnificent: it was not even highly honourable.

But Sulla was not a man to be stayed by such ideas. His own life was at the moment more important than anything else. If he were killed there would not be much left of the honour of Rome. He therefore made a treaty with Mithridates. He made the treaty on his own terms, however. Earlier, at a time when he was in extreme danger, Mithridates had offered him an alliance. This he had utterly rejected. Now he insisted that Mithridates should altogether abandon his plans and claims against Rome. By the treaty of Dardanus (84) the king had to give up all his conquests in Greece and Asia and hand over ships of war and a great sum of money to Sulla. In return the man who had arranged the cold-blooded murder of 80,000 Italians was made ‘friend and ally’ of Rome. Sulla knew that Mithridates would sooner or later give trouble again: but for the time being the danger was over. Rome’s power and name in the East had been saved, at a price. The treaty could not stand, but for the moment it was necessary. Sulla could turn to saving Rome at home. Fimbria’s army began to desert to him. Fimbria in despair killed himself. Sulla spent the next year in preparations for his own return in Rome. Carbo, who had succeeded Cinna, was as bitter against him as Cinna had been.

After a year in Asia collecting the taxes, not paid for the last four years, Sulla landed at Brundisium (83) with a well-filled treasury and a devoted army. On every soldier he imposed an oath: they were to treat the Italians as friends and fellow citizens, not as enemies. But to the Marian party in Rome he determined to show no mercy. The State must be cleared of these people: there must be no more riot and revolution. As Sulla marched north he defeated the forces sent against him: many of the soldiers deserted to him: many cities opened their gates. The Government of Marius, Cinna, and Carbo was thoroughly unpopular: and Sulla kept his word, doing no harm to the country through which he passed. Only the Samnites resisted strongly: them Sulla, who had been joined by young Crassus and by Cnaeus Pompeius, defeated in a great battle lasting from noon to the following mid-day outside the Colline Gate (82).

Rome and all Italy were now in Sulla’s power. He entered the city and assembled the Senate in the Temple of Bellona. As he explained his plans for restoring order—he was to have the powers of a dictator till that was done—a frightful sound was heard. Sulla gave his grim smile. ‘Some criminals being punished’, he said. Six thousand Samnite prisoners were being cut to pieces. In this spirit he proceeded to stamp out what had been the party of Marius. Marius had been mad with rage: Sulla was quite calm, but not a whit more merciful. The tomb of

Marius was broken open, his ashes scattered in the road. Samnium, which had resisted the conqueror, was laid desert. The land was broken into allotments for Sulla's soldiers.

The proscriptions followed. Lists of public enemies were posted and a reward paid to any one who killed the men whose names appeared. Their property was confiscated. Men put the names of private enemies on the list before or sometimes after they had killed them. Catiline, for instance, did this to his own brother. Sulla did not care. The State must be cleared of dangerous men and it must get revenues from somewhere. On the 1st June 81 the lists were closed: the executions and confiscations ended. Nearly five thousand persons had perished. Their property and that of those who had fled or been banished fell to the State, which got four million pounds in this way.

By murder and robbery the State treasury was filled. Sulla's hard mind did not shrink from these ugly words. He did the things and made no pretences. In the same way he never pretended to believe in the rights of the people. He despised them, thought them stupid, ignorant, and lazy. What they needed was police. The Government he built up was of this kind. He made the Senate much larger and stronger, for men of birth and wealth, though no better than the others, could at least, he thought, be trusted to keep things orderly and as they were. No one was to be consul till he had passed through the lower offices, and then consul only once. As consul he was to stay in Italy without an army; at the end of his year he might be sent abroad, with an army, as a pro-consul. In Italy there were to be no troops: no soldiers were to cross the Rubicon. The law courts were reformed, the juries again drawn from the Senate.

see caption

A BOAR HUNT
from a sculpture in the Capitoline Museum

When he had finished his work of reorganization and built up the power of the Senate—i.e. of the older men of birth and property—as strongly as he could, Sulla laid down all his extraordinary powers and retired to private life. He had built himself a lovely villa, full of the art treasures he had brought from Greece and from the East, in the midst of exquisite gardens. There he lived, writing his memoirs, and enjoying the pleasures of hunting and fishing, banqueting and revelling, surrounded by the most amusing people he could find. Many of these

were writers, artists, and actors. Actors were looked down upon in Rome, but Roscius the tragedian was a great friend of Sulla's, for he scorned all such notions as unreal. Always Sulla had provoked the Romans by his power of casting off serious cares when he sat down at table and by what they thought his ill-timed jests. They did not understand his view of life. To him it was all a play, not a very good play: out of which, if one were lucky, one might get some entertainment. He had been lucky: chance was his goddess and he believed in nothing higher. Before he died, at the age of sixty, he wrote his own epitaph, which was inscribed on the great monument set up to him in the Campus Martius: 'No friend ever did me so much good or enemy so much harm but I repaid him with interest.'

see caption

SCENE FROM A TRAGEDY
Terra-cotta relief

VIII

The New Rome

WITH the death of Sulla a new period of Roman history begins, a brief and in many ways brilliant half-century, about which we know far more than we do of any earlier time, since we possess the works, in writing, architecture, sculpture, of the men, or of some of them, who helped to make it. Roman life in these fifty years is, in many respects, startlingly like that of our own day. True, the great discoveries of science had not been achieved; there were no motors, telephones or lifts, no railways, no electric light or power, no illustrated papers—indeed the first newspaper of any kind was a small sheet issued by Caesar. But in the things they did and said and thought about, and in the way they acted and spoke and thought about them, the Romans who lived in the sixty odd years before the birth of Christ were very much like the Englishmen of our own day. The comfort of the lives of the well-to-do, with their elegant town houses and charming country villas, furnished with beautiful things brought from all parts of the world, depended on the labour of innumerable slaves. In many ways, however, these slaves were not worse off than the poor factory workers of our great towns; in some they were more fortunate. The lot of those who were being trained to fight

in the games was certainly dreadful; but those owned by private persons were for the most part kindly treated and could and often did buy their freedom. The class of freedmen was a large and growing one in Rome.

see caption

CUTLER’S FORGE

The revolutionary wars had brought ruin to many. Large tracts of Italy had been laid waste. But though the wounds that had been dealt at the life of the country bled for long, prosperity returned surprisingly quickly. If some families had lost everything, others had profited by their losses. And from abroad wealth poured into Italy in ever-increasing streams. A new class of rich men grew up, whose wealth came from business of all sorts—tax-farming in the provinces, house building, ship construction, agriculture on a large scale. Side by side with them were the lawyers, an increasingly important body. As to-day, a great many young men, when they had completed their education by spending some time abroad, in Greece by preference, became barristers. Success in the courts, the power of public speaking, opened the way to success in politics, though it was long before any one could go far along that road who had not won distinction as a soldier.

see caption

CUTLER’S SHOP

Very slowly and gradually, the sharp line between the new men and the old patrician families began to soften. There were few so proud that they would not go and eat a sumptuous dinner at the house of a man because his parent had not worn the purple stripe on his toga that marked the senator. Education spread. Sulla brought back with him from Greece innumerable treasures, among them the works of Aristotle, which became the educated young Roman’s bible.

All over Italy wealth spread, as the fields blossomed with vine and olive. Great roads made travel easier and swifter; aqueducts brought water where it was needed; the marshes were drained; everywhere lovely villas were built, their exquisite gardens adorned with beautiful statues. Thither the tired Roman went for a few days’ refreshment, accompanied by his friends and escorted by trains of slaves. Slaves wrote his letters for him, and carried them swiftly to his friends in other parts of Italy or across the seas. They copied the verses and prose sketches which the young Roman of fashion liked to have written, so that the

vellum roll circulated almost as quickly and freely, among the well-to-do, as does the volume to-day. Life became more elegant and refined. Music, dancing, games of all sorts provided distraction; gambling became a passion with many; eating and drinking were as luxurious as now. When we think of the Romans of the period after the civil wars we must think of men intelligent, cultivated, educated, polished by contact with a wide and various world of affairs, their minds opened by foreign travel and the study of Greek language and literature.

see caption

WRITING MATERIALS
Pens, Ink, Tablet, and Potsherd
Brit. Mus.

War, however, remained the high road to popularity and fame. Since all the provinces were held by military governors (pro-consuls or quaestors) any one who aspired to high place in the State must have gone through some sort of military training. The successful general was still the favourite candidate. But military prowess alone was no longer enough. The day was gone by when a boor like Marius could ride rough-shod over the Republic. The hero of the new Rome was to be something more than a soldier, though he must be a soldier too.

Within Italy the struggle between Romans and Italians was over. Italy was one, as it had never been before. Having acquired the vote, though not on terms of full equality with the Roman citizen, the Italian middle class settled down to money-making and did not, as a rule, trouble much about the stormy course of politics in the capital. More and more, it was from Italy that the army came; the Roman populace liked the shows given at the close of campaigns, but did not care much for the dangers and hardship of service.

But although this struggle was over, another remained, sharper and more bitter than before. The return of Sulla had meant the triumph of the Senatorial Party, of the Conservatives, the men of old family and fixed ideas. Sulla’s proscriptions, the murder and banishment of innumerable families and the seizure of their goods and estates, to be divided among their enemies, left behind them a deep hatred between those who had triumphed and those who had been defeated. After Sulla’s death the sons and grandsons of the proscribed began to come back, and what had once been the Popular Party, led by Marius and Cinna, built itself up again. At first it had no leaders. The men who were to be its leaders were still too young. Gradually, however, in spite of the unpopularity that had become

attached to its very name, it gathered strength. The new rich and the struggling lawyers joined its ranks, since there was more chance there than in those of the Conservatives for fresh talent and new ideas. A new kind of political organization was built up through the clubs and workmen's associations.

The main source of the growing strength of this new Popular Party was the weakness and inefficiency of the Government. Sulla had erected a remarkable machine, intended to prevent all change and keep the power of the State in the hands of a small ruling class, the patricians. But the machine would not work when his strong directing hand was removed. It was too stiff and rigid to cope with the growing tasks of administering the great empire over which Rome had to rule. Bit by bit Sulla's system broke down; his rules were swept aside. In the years between his death and that of Caesar the rule of Rome extended enormously; each extension made the need of a strong and efficient Government more pressing. The actual government of Rome through the Senate was neither strong nor efficient. Nothing was well managed. This growing mismanagement compelled men of active minds to look around and ask themselves what was wrong. They found different answers. But the need of change was clear.

IX

Lucius Licinius Lucullus

If great men are those whose action brings about great changes, Lucius Licinius Lucullus was one of the greatest men of his time. His campaign in Asia Minor started an altogether new policy. Hitherto Rome had acquired provinces in an accidental way; there had been no purpose of conquest. In Spain and Africa the influence of Carthage had to be wiped out; in Greece Rome was nominally a protector only, called in to help against outside dangers. In Asia Minor it was more or less the same. As regards Asia Minor no one in Rome was satisfied with the treaty Sulla had made with Mithridates. It was felt to be a disgrace to Rome that the man who had caused the murder of hundreds of thousands of Italians in cold blood was recognized as the 'friend and ally' of Rome and left in undisturbed possession. Mithridates had got to be punished. When Lucullus went to the East it was for this purpose. But he did far more. He discovered that these great Asiatic monarchies, with their myriad armies, looked strong but were

really weak; they could not maintain themselves, if attacked. He did not merely make Rome safe against their attack; he marched through kingdom after kingdom, conquering and subduing them to Rome. Thus, in fact, if not yet in name, he made Rome an empire.

The work he thus began Lucullus did not complete. The idea was his; it was his hard fighting, the courage with which he overrode instructions and disregarded the Senate's order to return, which paved the way for conquest. Pompeius, whose slow mind and cautious temper could never have started such a policy, saw from Rome what Lucullus's fighting was leading up to. He saw the golden prize at the end of his efforts and determined to snatch it from him. In this he succeeded. But the credit or blame of making Rome an imperial power, a power that rules by force over alien races, belongs not to him but to Lucullus. This was not understood at the time. Lucullus, disappointed and embittered, came back to Rome and was known to his contemporaries not as the man who laid the foundations of the empire, but as the giver of the most luxurious and extraordinary banquets ever eaten. The proverb associated with his name —'Dining with Lucullus'—shows this. His feasts were famous; the rarest foods from every part of the known world were on his table. His gardens too were wonderful, and his house glowed with all the treasures of the distant East. Among the treasures he brought back was one little noticed in his day—the cherry-tree. This soon grew all over Italy, but that Lucullus had brought it was forgotten. Like everything else that he did, it failed to bring him fame.

The family of L. Licinius Lucullus was one of the oldest in Rome and one of those not too numerous ones which maintained not only the pride of ancient race but the idea that good birth carried duties with it. He was poor but excessively proud, and belonged to that small Conservative group from which Rutilius Rufus and Livius Drusus came. His mind was clear and highly educated, cultivated in the full sense. As a soldier he was extremely able. The way in which the ordinary politician made money and bought votes disgusted him. In the main he stood sternly aloof from the scramble for office and wealth.

After Sulla's death—he had been one of Sulla's most capable officers—he retired to private life and watched with cold scorn the way in which the affairs of the State were mismanaged both at home and abroad; the long struggle with Sertorius, the rise of Pompeius, by good luck rather than, he thought, by merit. He had strong feelings and a good deal of the ambition that moves in almost every mind that is aware of its own powers, but he detested intrigue and had no

aptitude for it. He was unpopular, because of his habit of saying what he thought, both in public and in private, about the corrupt politicians and vulgar scrambling money-makers whom other politicians abused in private but dared not offend in public. He had no party. Until he was fifty he had held no command or office of the first rank.

But when the question of the campaign against Mithridates came up Lucullus felt that he had a claim to it and was prepared, despite his ordinary aloofness, to push that claim through. Nicomedes, the old King of Bithynia, had just died (74) and left his rich territory—a buffer state between the Roman provinces in Asia Minor and Mithridates' kingdom of Pontus—to the Roman people. This the able and wily King of Pontus was not going to allow. He declared war, made an alliance with Sertorius, and marched into Bithynia. This was a serious menace. When Mithridates invaded Cilicia (73) people remembered the massacre of fifteen years ago and trembled. Pompeius wanted the command, but he was still busy in Spain; in the end Lucullus was appointed.

The difficulties of the campaign were at first overwhelming. Lucullus was not in sole control and his colleagues were refractory. But the defeat of Cotta, the other consul, at last left him a free hand. Many of his captains were dismayed by the reduction of the Roman army. Lucullus remained calm. Mithridates had attacked the port of Cyzicus, far from his own base, with an army so large that to provision it was extremely difficult. Lucullus took up a position from which he could cut off his supplies and so close him in a trap between the town and his own army. With his smaller army Lucullus refused battle, and when Mithridates endeavoured to make his way out by dividing his forces Lucullus attacked the two parts in turn, though it was the dead of winter, and defeated them disastrously. A vast army perished in the snow. Lucullus was able to overrun Bithynia and force Mithridates to retreat into Pontus.

It was now that Lucullus took the step which makes his career profoundly important in the history of Rome. Instead of waiting for instructions from the Home Government—instructions which he knew would probably have ordered his recall and certainly a halt in his operations—he resolved to act boldly on a plan of his own. That plan was no less than the invasion of Mithridates' kingdom. Nearly all his generals opposed him, but Lucullus's mind was clear. He burned to wipe out the treaty of Dardanus and had come to the conclusion that Eastern monarchies were not so strong as they looked: that their loose organization could not stand against the disciplined force of Rome. Mithridates

himself had something of genius; but Mithridates was old.

The progress of the campaign showed that Lucullus was right. Entering Pontus in the late autumn, he overran the rich country without meeting with any serious opposition; Mithridates' armies had been scattered at Cyzicus; he had not yet collected fresh ones. Immense plunder—slaves and cattle, gold and silver, ivory and precious stones, rare stuffs and wondrous embroideries—were sent home to Rome. In the following spring when Mithridates did advance with his new army Lucullus defeated it decisively. Cabira was taken and Lucullus spent the winter with the royal palace as his head-quarters, training his army for the work before it. Here the defects of his character came into play. Proud and passionate, Lucullus had an inordinate sense of his own dignity and of the greatness of his own purpose; he forgot that the greatest general is only the leader of other men, on whom his triumphs depend. To Lucullus his soldiers were mere instruments, not human beings; the army a machine. Great generals like Hannibal, Caesar, Napoleon, Alexander and, in his degree, Sertorius, owe their lasting success to the power they have to make each man in the army feel that he is a man, whose devotion matters, on whom in the last resort everything depends. When soldiers feel this, when they feel that they and their general are part of one living thing, they can perform miracles. Lucullus had no such power. He was harsh, tyrannical, and inhuman in his attitude and, overwhelmed by a mass of work, never found time to relax. The sternness of discipline never unbent. He seemed to grudge the soldiers any share in the vast booty sent to Rome. He had no kindly word or look for individuals. It was this growing feeling of bitterness that the discontented officers in his army, and especially his brother-in-law Clodius, who was secretly working for Pompeius against him, used to sow the seeds of mutiny.

Lucullus, absorbed in the mighty design he had conceived, did not realize what was happening, even when after the capture of Amisus his men paid no heed to his orders that the city should be spared, but sacked and looted it. By the autumn all Pontus was in Roman hands. Lucullus, again refusing to await orders from Rome, pushed on into Armenia and attacked Tigranes, with whom Mithridates had taken refuge. This campaign was brilliantly carried out. With his small army, hardly 20,000 in all, Lucullus inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the Armenian forces. Armenia was under his feet. He had shown all the qualities of a great commander: clearness and steadiness of purpose, complete confidence, the boldness and unresting energy of genius. As he rested in winter quarters in

South Armenia planning the conquest of Persia and Parthia, he might well compare himself with Alexander.

Next year Tigranes had gathered a fresh army and Lucullus determined to smash him by taking Artaxata, the capital of Armenia. But here he failed. The campaign was dreadful: the ground was covered with snow; the rivers icy. At last mutiny broke out, his men refused to go on. News came from Rome that Lucullus had been superseded. The plotters at Rome had got their way.

The fruits of victory had been snatched from Lucullus and left for Pompeius to garner. His soul might well be filled with bitterness as he came back to Rome. No one there realized what he had done; he had no party. The political struggle disgusted him more than ever. His solitariness had been increased by years of absolute power in the East. He withdrew into silent isolation, and the banquets which were the talk of Rome. Men gaped, but did not understand either the man or his work.

After Strenuous Years

> In the life of Lucullus, as in Old Comedy, we find at the beginning the acts of a soldier and a statesman, but towards the end eating and drinking, and little else but revels and illuminations, and mere frivolity. For I count as frivolous his costly houses, with their porticoes and baths, and still more the pictures and statues and his pains in collecting such works of art at great expense, lavishing the magnificent fortune amassed during his campaigns on the site where even now, though luxury has increased so much, the gardens of Lucullus are counted among the noblest belonging to the Emperor. At Naples, too, and on the neighbouring coast he pierced hills with great tunnels, surrounded his house with ponds and channels of salt water for breeding fish, and even built out into the sea, so that Tubero, the Stoic philosopher, at the sight of this magnificence called him ‘Xerxes in a toga’. Besides all this, he had country seats near Tusculum, with gazebos and rooms and porticoes open to the air, where Pompeius came on a visit, and blamed him for lodging himself excellently in summer, but making a house that was uninhabitable in winter. Lucullus merely smiled and said, ‘Do you think that I have less sense than the cranes and storks, and do not change my home according to the season?’ At another time, when a Praetor was anxious to make his spectacle magnificent, and begged for a loan of some purple cloaks to dress the performers, Lucullus replied that he would give him some if he found that he had any. Next day he asked how many were wanted, and hearing that a hundred would be enough, he offered two hundred. Horace is thinking of this when he remarks that he considers a house poor when the valuables hidden and overlooked are not more than those known to the master.
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> Plutarch, xxxvi. 39.

X

Cnaeus Pompeius

At the time of Sulla's death the unanimous opinion of Rome would have fixed upon Cnaeus Pompeius as the one young man then alive who was likely to follow in his footsteps and rule the Roman world by his own will. And if there had been in Pompeius's character the qualities which his rapid success seemed to promise, they would have been right. But the life of Pompeius shows how much circumstances—chance, opportunity, the good opinion of others, birth and wealth—can do for a man; and what they cannot do, unless he has within himself the qualities of mind and will which mark off the first-rate from the best second-rate. Greatness was, as it were, thrust upon him; but since he was not great in himself he could not achieve it. It is this that makes him so interesting a failure. His failure was due to the fact that at a supreme crisis he was called upon to do just the things he could not do. It was no accident that enabled Julius Caesar to succeed where he failed. For Caesar possessed in supreme degree the power to act with decision, which, when combined with clear judgement, makes the great man of action. At the crucial moment the judgement of Pompeius wavered: his will was uncertain. In ordinary peaceful times his weaknesses might never have been seen; but his life fell within an era of storm and stress when the stuff of which men are made is tested and shown.

Tall, strongly built, with curly hair and large eyes that though prominently set and wide open had a rather sleepy expression, Pompeius when young was often likened to Alexander the Great. He had his regular features and brilliant colouring, but in his eyes there was none of the fire or mystery that made Alexander seem to his contemporaries as beautiful as a god. His manners were grave and dignified. He gave all who saw him an impression of his importance. Pompeius had a very strong sense of his own importance. The thing he was most afraid of was of being laughed at. When he suspected that any one was doing this, he lost his temper.

see caption

POMPEIUS

Pompeius belonged to a family old and honourable enough, though plebeian, to make the senators at last accept him as one of themselves, the more readily that he had acquired immense wealth in the proscriptions. At the time of the civil war he was on the side of Marius, and closely associated with him, while Marius and

Cinna were in power in Rome. His first wife Antistia was the daughter of a friend of Cinna's. When Sulla landed, however, Pompeius soon saw which way things were going. He collected an army and marched to join Sulla. Although he was only twenty-three at the time, Sulla hailed him as one of the most important of his supporters. He suggested to him that he should put away his young wife Antistia and marry his own daughter-in-law. To this Pompeius agreed, although Antistia loved him and was in the deepest distress, since her father had been killed in the proscriptions; moreover, her mother, when she heard how Pompeius intended to treat her daughter, laid violent hands upon herself. In the proscriptions Pompeius acquired so much wealth that within a few years he was one of the richest men in Rome. His popularity was great and he could afford to keep it up by giving splendid shows and presents to the people.

His wealth, his quick success, his great popularity filled the senators with awe. They had a constant fear that he was to be the next Sulla. They listened with respect to all that Pompeius said, though he was a dull speaker; and regarded him as the first general of the day, though he had really done nothing to deserve that title. But he was always lucky in his campaigns, and again and again had the good fortune to be made commander just at the stage when the fruits of a long struggle, carried on by others, were ready to be gathered. In the means by which he achieved success Pompeius was not over scrupulous. His want of feeling in the matter of Antistia was only one sign of this. The same kind of callousness was shown in the way he secured the final defeat of Sertorius, not by action in the field but by a plot. After three years of unsuccessful fighting Sertorius, much the ablest of Marius's followers, who had raised the standard of revolt in Spain, was still as far from being conquered as ever. Pompeius was tired of the war; so were his troops. At last by the treachery of Perpenna and some other Romans in his army, on whose minds secret emissaries from Rome had worked, Sertorius was murdered. Pompeius then suppressed the revolt in Spain with horrible cruelty and returned to Rome crowned with success.

He was made consul (70) although he had never held any of the junior offices of State; but his consulship was marked by nothing more important than his constant disagreements with his colleague Crassus, who, though of patrician birth, inclined to the so-called Popular, anti-Senatorial party. For the next two years he was little to the fore until called upon, as the first general of the day, to deal with a difficulty which represented a most serious danger to Rome. Rome depended to a large extent on foreign corn. Yet this overseas corn supply was

almost suspended by the pirates of the Mediterranean. Commander after commander failed to suppress them. Food prices in Rome rose to famine heights. At last the tribune Gabinius proposed that a special commander should be appointed, with unexampled power, both as regards men and money; and that Pompeius should be the man. Caesar and Cicero supported the plan. It was hotly opposed by those who thought such powers dangerous; but in the end Pompeius was appointed. He showed conspicuous energy and within forty days the seas were cleared.

see caption

A VASE in the shape of a galley

A vivid account of Pompeius's operations against the pirates was given by Cicero in the great speech he made in support of the proposal of Manilius to give him the command in the East, in the place of Lucullus.

Pompeius in his Prime

> You know well enough how quickly these operations against the Pirates were conducted, but I must not on that account omit all mention of them. What man ever existed that, either in the course of business or in the pursuit of gain, was able to visit so many places and to travel such long distances in so short a time as this great blast of war, directed by Cn. Pompeius, swept over the seas? Even when it was yet too early for a distant voyage, he visited Sicily, explored the coast of Africa, thence crossed to Sardinia, and protected these three great granaries of the Republic with strong garrisons and fleets. Next, after returning to Italy, he provided in the same way for the safety of the two Spains and Transalpine Gaul, and sending ships to the Illyrian coast, to Achaia, and all Greece besides, he established large forces, military and naval, in the two seas of Italy. On the forty-ninth day after he left Brundisium he brought the whole of Cilicia under the dominion of the Roman people, and all the Pirates, wherever they might be, either were captured and put to death, or surrendered to his sole authority and command. Finally, when the Cretans had followed him even into Pamphylia with envoys begging for clemency, he did not disdain their offer of submission and was content to demand hostages. The result was that this great war, that lasted so long and reached so far, a war that harassed every country and every people, was taken in hand by Pompeius at the end of the winter, was begun in the early days of the spring, and was finished by the middle of the summer.
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> Cicero, *De Lege Manilia*, §§ 34-5.

Pompeius used the renown won by this success to secure for himself the fruits of the Asiatic victories won by Lucullus. On the one hand, he worked in Rome against Lucullus so that he got the command transferred to himself; on the other, by bribery and the arts of Clodius, Lucullus's brother-in-law and aide-de-camp, he worked up a mutiny among his troops. Then he went out to Asia and in a series of spectacular campaigns laid the East at his feet. His progress through

Asia was a parade; it was no wonder that the Romans were dazzled by the news of the way in which he overran kingdoms and conquered vast territories of enormous wealth. Pompeius seemed to them a general of the rank of Hannibal or Alexander.

The Senate grew alarmed. They had not forgotten how Sulla had returned from the East in 83 and set himself up as Dictator, master of Rome. If Pompeius in 62 wanted to do the same there was nothing to prevent him. He had a great army, devoted to him and ready to follow him in any adventure. He was extremely popular with the people of Rome. He had never shown any particular respect for the laws and customs of the State when he wanted anything for himself. He had broken the rules Sulla had laid down, by which no one could hold high command until he had passed through all the lower offices. Now, while still in Asia, he demanded to be allowed to stand as consul, in his absence, although he had never been tribune or praetor. The Senate put difficulties in his way. Indeed they did everything they could to irritate Pompeius and give him the excuse for taking the strong line they dreaded. Only Julius Caesar, the young and rapidly rising leader of the Popular party, backed him. The Senate refused to allow Pompeius to stand for the consulship. Nepos, his emissary, would actually have been killed in the streets if Caesar had not saved him. Caesar pleased him by proposing that he should finish rebuilding the Capitol.

The Senate's fears were groundless, as Caesar knew. Pompeius was not like Sulla. Sulla always knew what he wanted. Pompeius had no clear aim. Opportunities lay open before him which he did not desire or know how to use. He wanted to be important, a big man of whom people spoke well, to whom they looked up; but his timid mind shrank from responsibility. He had never been fired by any great idea; he had no purpose that he wanted to impress upon the world. He had not even got that harsh and cold contempt for the mass of mankind that caused Sulla to feel a sort of bitter pleasure in imposing his will upon them. Of Caesar's fire he had nothing. Politically he had never taken a firm line. If no one in Rome quite knew where he stood, Pompeius was in the same doubt himself. His was a respectable nature with a natural inclination towards safety. But in the Rome of his day things were in a state of uneasy movement; there was no safety or quiet for any one who wanted at the same time to be a big figure. Pompeius was later forced to take action. This action was weak and irresolute because his mind had never been clear. Most people are like Pompeius: they do not know what they want; or they want something vague, like

happiness or the good opinion of others; or they want a number of things which cannot be had together. The mark of those men who stand out in history is that they conceived clearly something they wanted to have or do; and by force of will drove through to it. Even when they failed, as Hannibal, for instance, failed, their failure has in it something more magnificent than ordinary success. But this power to will implies a readiness to make sacrifices. If you want one thing you must be prepared to do without others. If you want to please yourself you must be ready to displease other people. You cannot have your own way and at the same time have the good opinion of everybody. This Pompeius never saw.

see caption

A TRIUMPH
from a relief of the Empire

When he returned from his great campaigns in the East in the year 62 Pompeius landed at Brundisium and dismissed his soldiers to their homes. The senators heaved a vast sigh of relief. He was not going to be dangerous. When Pompeius arrived in Rome without his army he found that nobody much wanted him. People were more interested in the struggles that had been going on at home—Catiline's conspiracy, Cicero's strong line in putting the conspirators to death, the question whether Caesar had been implicated, the friendship between Caesar and Crassus—than in what Pompeius had been doing in the East. Without his army nobody was afraid of Pompeius. He found Lucullus, in the Senate and political circles generally, doing everything he could to thwart him, supported by Cato the Younger, who thought that imperialism, Eastern conquests, and new wealth were bad things, likely to ruin Rome. Pompeius celebrated a stupendous triumph which made him the idol of the mob; but the Senate would not hear of his being made consul or make grants of lands to his soldiers. The Conservative party had thwarted Pompeius at every turn; he was deeply hurt, and in his most sensitive part, his vanity. This hurt finally drove him into an alliance with Caesar and Crassus, the leaders of the Popular party, and his own most dangerous rivals. He disliked Crassus and feared Caesar. At the moment his support was invaluable to the Popular party; therefore Caesar set himself to overcome Pompeius's distrust of himself and Crassus's deep detestation of Pompeius. He had good arguments for each of them; and behind them a charm of manner that few people could resist.

Three years after Pompeius returned from the East the three strongest men in

Rome were bound together. This first Triumvirate (60), as it was afterwards called, was a private arrangement. People only learned of its existence when they saw it at work. Pompeius married Caesar's daughter, Julia, who, so long as she lived, kept him friendly with her father. Caesar was made consul and at once confirmed all that Pompeius had done in the East and made grants of lands to his soldiers. A big programme of land reform was passed through. The corn distribution was reorganized. People who criticized the Triumvirate too openly, like Cato, were banished. Cicero also was exiled, since Clodius had sworn vengeance on him. Caesar would have saved him by taking him with him to Gaul, as well as his brother Quintus, who was one of his adjutants; but Cicero refused. Caesar went off to Gaul the year after his consulship (58); Pompeius and Crassus were left masters in Rome.

There were at the time incessant disorders in the city. The strife of parties waxed bitter and furious. Fights between different political clubs were of nightly occurrence. The ingenious Clodius had reorganized the old associations of the workers into guilds of a more or less political kind, and thus built up a machinery in every quarter of the city which he handled with great adroitness at election times. Moreover, he organized something like a voters' army of slaves and freedmen, which turned out on his instructions, and lived on the free corn given out by the State. Pompeius did nothing to cope with this state of things. He fell, in fact, into a strange condition of indolence, and took hardly any part in public affairs. The news of Caesar's victories in Gaul did not rouse him, though Caesar's popularity increased daily and his own declined.

Pompeius's sloth at this period is sometimes put down to his extreme domestic happiness. Julia, his new wife, was but half his age, three and twenty. She possessed a full measure of the irresistible charm of her father; so long as she lived the bond between the Triumvirs was unshakeable. But her husband's apparent indifference to public affairs was due, in the main, to another reason; the one which explains so much in Pompeius's action and inaction both at this time and later. He stood aloof because he did not know what to do. The political tangle had become a knot that must be cut. Pompeius was not the man to cut knots. He let things slide.

see caption

A ROMAN VILLA ON THE COAST
Notice the roof garden

Disorder grew and nothing was done to stop it. The Senate, alarmed by Caesar's growing popularity—a fifteen days' festival was held in honour of his victories in Gaul—began to attack his new land and other laws. Pompeius did not trouble to defend them. Cicero had come back from banishment and made alarmist speeches declaring that Caesar was aiming at bringing the Republic to an end. Pompeius and Crassus quarrelled again. Yet when Caesar called his friends to meet him at Lucca, where he had gone into winter quarters (56), hardly any one in Rome refused to go. Pompeius, despite his growing jealousy and uneasiness, was reconciled to Crassus and the Triumvirate renewed. But as soon as he got back to Rome again, away from Caesar's charm, he fell back into his old moody indolence. In the course of the next few years he became openly hostile to Caesar. Little heed was paid in Rome to what he was doing in Gaul. The death and defeat of Crassus at Carrhae (53), produced no deep stir. The disturbances in the city, which had been occasional, grew constant. More interest was felt by the ordinary citizen and even the ordinary senator in the brawls between Clodius and Milo than in anything happening outside Rome.

The Government was quite helpless. Things were plainly going from bad to worse. There was one strong man in the Roman world who might save the State; but the price of his doing it was one that made the Conservatives determined to have civil war rather. The clearer Caesar's outstanding position became the more resentful were Pompeius's feelings against him. Since his early youth he had been regarded by other people, and had come to regard himself, as the great man. Now, however, when there was a real opportunity for showing greatness he did not know how to do it; and saw, too, another likely to carry off the prize.

Julia's death, two years after the meeting at Lucca, removed the one human being who might have prevented an open breach between Pompeius and Caesar, and left Pompeius's jealousy to rule unchecked in his mind. Caesar, far from Rome, saw with clear eyes the meaning of what was happening there; Pompeius, though on the spot, did not or would not understand. He would never take action. For this very reason the senators looked upon him as a safe man and gave him powers far greater than any Caesar had or had ever asked for. He was made sole

consul (52) and head of a special court which was to try all cases of disorder. Disorder had indeed been getting more and more serious; Clodius and Milo were rival candidates for the consulship. There were open fights, day and night, between their followers. At last Clodius was actually murdered by Milo's ruffians on the Appian Way.

Pompeius did nothing, though in Rome he was all-powerful. Crassus was dead; Caesar far away in Gaul and hard pressed there. When Pompeius fell ill about this time prayers for his recovery were put up all over Italy; and when the news came that he was better great public services of thanksgiving took place. But as Plutarch says, this demonstration proved to be one of the causes of the civil war which followed. 'For the joy Pompeius conceived on this occasion, added to the high opinion he had of his achievements, intoxicated him so far that, bidding adieu to the caution and prudence which had put his good fortune and the glory of his actions upon a sure footing, he gave in to the most extravagant presumption and even contempt of Caesar; insomuch that he declared, "He had not need of arms nor any extraordinary preparations against him, since he could pull him down with much more ease than he had set him up".' When people like Cicero expressed their fear that Caesar might march upon Rome with his army he said, 'In Italy, if I do but stamp upon the ground an army will appear.' Filled with such notions, he proceeded recklessly to drive Caesar to desperation. He refused to disband his own troops (two legions which he had lent to Caesar, and Caesar, on his demand, had returned to him loaded with presents); instead of backing Caesar's candidature for the consulship for the year in which he was due to return from Gaul he opposed him in every way. Finally, he made it quite clear that if Caesar came to Rome without his army he would be in serious danger; and at the same time insisted that he should do so.

What this must lead to was plain enough to people in Rome. When they heard that Caesar had crossed the Rubicon (49) at the head of his troops (regardless of Sulla's law) they fell into a panic. The Senate was terrified of Caesar and not much less afraid of Pompeius. But disunited as the Conservatives were among themselves, he was the only man who could hold them together at all, and their only general. If Pompeius had acted firmly at the crisis, whether with Caesar or against him, he might have prevented the civil war. But at a time when every day was vital he did nothing at all for several days, remained in his own house without giving any lead or staying in any way the gathering tumult and excitement. Refugees began to pour into Rome. For some reason or other every

one took it for granted that Caesar was going to march on the city, though as a matter of fact he had made no move. At last Pompeius declared that the country was in danger and that every one should leave Rome. He himself left the city to muster the great bodies of soldiers in Italy into an army. Very soon afterwards the consuls fled, in such a hurry that they left the State treasures behind them, and with most of the senators joined Pompeius at Brundisium, whence they intended to sail for Greece.

Perhaps only a poet could interpret what was happening, in this time, in the mind of Pompeius. Lucan thus describes it:

The Last Phase: the 'Shadow of a Mighty Name'

> You fear, Magnus, lest new exploits throw past triumphs into the shade, and victory over the Pirates be eclipsed by the conquest of Gaul; your rival is spurred on by the habit of continuous enterprise and a success too proud to take the second place; for Caesar will no longer endure a greater nor Pompeius an equal. Which of them appealed more righteously to civil war, we are not permitted to know. Each has the support of a mighty judge; the gods approved the cause of the conqueror, Cato of the conquered. They were not, indeed, equally matched. Pompeius was of an age already failing in decay, and during the long repose of peace and civil life had forgotten the practice of command; eager to be on the lips of all, lavish in his gifts to the mob, swayed by the breath of the people's will, and flattered by applause in the theatre that he built. Careless, too, of gaining fresh stores of strength, and relying over much on earlier success, he stands the shadow of a mighty name; like an oak that, towering in some fertile field, bears spoils offered by the people of old and votive gifts of their leaders; no longer cleaving to the earth by stout roots, it is kept upright by its own mere weight, and thrusting leafless branches through the air, gives no shade save from the naked trunk. Yet, though it rocks and soon will fall before the first blast from the east, though around it so many forest trees raise their stems unshaken, it is worshipped alone.
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> Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i. 121-43.

First in leaving Rome and then in leaving Italy Pompeius made fatal mistakes. Caesar was soon master of Italy, almost without bloodshed. Within the year he had reduced Spain and Sicily, the Roman granaries, after severe fighting; built a fleet and sailed for Greece. There he tried to induce Pompeius to meet him and so come to a settlement. Pompeius refused.

He believed that his army was stronger than Caesar's. He and all his friends were full of bitterness, and quite sure of victory. They had, indeed, every advantage on their side, in numbers and supplies, and could afford to wear Caesar down by a waiting policy. This was Pompeius's own plan, and it was sound. But he allowed himself to be overruled largely because of the gibes of his followers. He moved from Dyrrachium, where he had held a very strong position, to the plains of the Enipeus river. At Pharsalia a great battle took place (48). Pompeius was

defeated. His defeat was largely his own fault. He had 43,000 men to Caesar's 21,000 and was especially strong in cavalry. By a skilful stratagem Caesar defeated the cavalry; when Pompeius saw this he believed the day was lost; left the field and hid himself in despair in his tent. Deserted by their general his lines broke; the defeat became a rout. His army was wiped out. Pompeius himself fled to Egypt with a handful of attendants. There he was murdered by the Egyptians, under the eyes of his wife and son.

Caesar, it is said, wept when Pompeius's seal-ring was handed to him, and he knew that his great rival had perished. He set the statue of Pompeius up again in Rome; and might, thereby, have seemed to rebuke, almost in the words Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Marullus, the fickle people of Rome who so soon forgot him who was once their idol.

A Broken Idol

Marullus. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made a universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way,
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I. i.

XI

Marcus Licinius Crassus

Of all the wealthy men in Rome, whether like Lucullus or Sulla they had brought their riches back from foreign conquests, or extracted it from the people of the overseas provinces as governors, or made it in business, the wealthiest was Marcus Licinius Crassus. His riches became a standard by which other men's were measured. Crassus belonged to an old but comparatively poor family which suffered much in the wars of Marius and Sulla. He himself as a very young man was, like Pompeius, one of Sulla's lieutenants. Like Pompeius again he had founded his fortune at the time of Sulla's proscriptions. But the extraordinary and constant increase in his wealth was due to his own unresting energy and extreme ingenuity, helped by the fact that he was not in the least scrupulous.

The houses in which the ordinary Roman lived were chiefly built of wood: only very rich men had stone or marble houses at this time. The streets were extremely narrow, and many of them very steep and crooked, and the dwellings, whether single houses or great tenements, were crowded closely together. As the buildings grew old they were apt to fall down, especially the high flats, which became top-heavy. Serious fires were also very common. Crassus observed this. He therefore collected a great body of slaves, skilled as carpenters and masons. He also equipped others as a fire brigade. When a fire broke out anywhere he would make an offer to the owner to buy the house very cheaply. Were his offer accepted he would put out the conflagration and rebuild. Were it refused he would let it burn. At the same time he bought up at cheap rates houses in bad repair and likely to collapse, which he therefore got at low prices. In this way he became owner of a great part of Rome, and, as more and more people were constantly crowding into the city to live, and the supply of houses was less than the demand for them, he could and did charge high rents. People who refused to live in his houses could find nowhere else to go.

This was one of the means by which Crassus acquired his riches. But he was incessantly alert and active to spy out opportunities in this direction or in that for making money. His energy never relaxed: he was always busy. He never fell into idle ways or the kind of stupid amusement in which so many Romans, young and old, frittered away most of their time. At a time when he owned half the

houses in Rome, and so many members of the Senate were in debt to him that they dared not vote against his wishes, he built for himself only one house, and that of moderate size. He enjoyed money-making as men enjoy any pursuit of which they are master. After a time, however, he grew so rich that a new ambition seized him. He began to thirst after direct political power—not merely the indirect power which his money gave him. Crassus was no fool. In financial affairs of all kinds he had courage, resource, ingenuity, determination, and persistence, with that touch of imagination which belongs to any kind of genius. It was not only by accident that everything he touched turned to gold. But his imagination was of a narrowly limited kind. He understood all the lower motives that move men but none of the higher ones, for he understood only what he found within himself, and within himself there was no room for the power of any kind of idea.

With most Romans of his time religion had become a dead thing. They kept the sacred images in their houses and performed all the official and recognized ceremonies. But this was matter of custom and manners, like the rules of dress. There was no reality or feeling in it. The reality of Roman religion had been men's devotion to their country and the belief in the city as a great thing whose life went on after their own ended. In its service they had been prepared to spend themselves, for it to die. This kind of devotion had been profoundly shaken. The average Roman of Crassus's time believed in nothing but his own pleasure, and in power and glory for himself.

In this Crassus was exactly like them. He was the richest man in Rome, but riches after a time ceased to satisfy him. They did not give him popularity. This it is true was partly his own fault, for Crassus, like many very wealthy men, combined reckless occasional expenditure with steady meanness. He gave the most gorgeous shows; but he hardly ever let off a debtor. His hardness in collecting small sums was a byword. He would spend thousands one day and haggle about a shilling the next. Of course it was this careful looking after the pence that had made and kept Crassus so rich; but it did not make him beloved. Nor, though he was a very capable soldier, could he compete in this respect with Pompeius, who always seemed to manage to get the showy things to do while other people only got the hard work. When Crassus boasted of his exploits in the campaign against Spartacus, people shrugged their shoulders. Yet the Slave War had been a most serious danger, the more so that it broke out at a moment when difficulties were dark on every side.

More than once in the last few years Rome had suffered severely from a shortage in the supply of wheat that meant actual famine for the poorer people. In Italy the fields which used to grow corn had been increasingly planted with vine and olive—more profitable crops. The corn grown in the countryside was not much more than sufficient for the needs of the people living there. Rome depended in the main on supplies from across the seas. Although the Sicilian towns were legally bound to send a certain proportion of their crop to Rome they did not always do so, and the Government was extremely slack in keeping them up to the mark. A serious famine occurred in the year of Mithridates' invasion of Bithynia, which looked dangerous enough. At the same time came the news that the commander who had been sent out against the pirates who were devastating the Cilician coast had been seriously defeated by them and, worst of all, that a great rising of the slaves had broken out throughout Italy (73).

This Slave War proved more serious even than at first appeared. The slaves had not merely risen in great bodies: they had found a leader who proved a real military genius in Spartacus. Spartacus was a Thracian, and like most of his fellow slaves had been a prisoner of war.

These slaves were not the ordinary household slaves, many of whom were treated kindly enough, or those employed in crafts and industries. They were for the most part men kept in compounds under training for the games. All over Italy there were training schools, belonging to rich men, where picked slaves, chosen among prisoners of war because they were tall, strong, and handsome, were kept and taught to fight as gladiators. The conditions of these schools were very bad and the unfortunate men in them had nothing better before them than the chance of death in the arena. The taste of the Roman people was growing brutal; the part of the shows given them by successful generals or politicians who wanted popularity that they liked the best were the gladiatorial fights: fights between men armed in different ways that went on till one or other of the combatants was killed. A favourite combat was that between a man armed with a trident and another provided with a net. Sometimes these fights took place between bodies of men. Like the Spanish bull fights, these shows excited the people of Rome beyond anything. Good swordsmen fetched high prices and won fame for their owners.

These unhappy men were for the most part prisoners of war; many of them had been chiefs and leaders in their own country, and were men not only of strength and courage but of intelligence. In the big training school at Capua there was

such a man among the slaves: Spartacus, a Thracian chief. His mind rebelled against the hopelessness of his lot and he stirred up his fellows. Eighty of them broke out from captivity and made their escape to the slopes of Vesuvius. There they built a strong camp, and, as the news spread of what they had done, slaves from all over Italy joined them: some breaking out of the schools and prisons as they had done, others running away from their masters and places of employment. A small force was sent against them. They drove it back in disorder and captured its weapons. This success encouraged further risings. Spartacus was soon at the head of a considerable force. In the next year (72) he defeated a consular army. His own numbers rose to over 40,000. The war was fought with horrible cruelty and bitterness on both sides. Neither gave nor expected any mercy. All captured slaves were put to death. Spartacus compelled three hundred Roman prisoners to fight as gladiators at the funeral games held for a fallen slave captain. Farms and country houses were plundered and burned.

see caption

A THRACIAN GLADIATOR

The growing success of the slaves filled people with terror: they dreaded a general massacre of the rich. Yet it seemed impossible to crush them. Spartacus showed rare qualities as a general and organizer; and after he had defeated both consuls, in the following year, and began to move northwards, there was something like a panic in Rome. No one was willing to undertake command against him. At last Crassus came forward. Here, he thought, was his chance to win glory equal to that which Pompeius was gaining in Spain. His quick eye saw that the Roman armies were falling to pieces through bad discipline: his first task was to restore the strictness of military law.

In the beginning Spartacus seemed too strong and skilful for him, but Crassus knew that in the end jealousies were sure to break out in his ranks, since the slaves were men of different nationalities, only held together by the will and skill of their commander. At last, after long months in which success seemed hopeless, so hopeless that the Senate recalled Pompeius from Spain to Crassus's infinite rage, he compelled Spartacus to fight a battle. He was killed and with him 12,000 of his followers. They fought heroically, their wounds were all in front. Pompeius as he crossed the Alps met only the bands of desperate fugitives fleeing from the conqueror. He put them to the sword and afterwards, to the disgust of Crassus, claimed a share in the victory. 'Though Crassus's men

defeated the gladiators in battle, I plucked the war up by the roots', he told the Senate.

Next year (70) Crassus and Pompeius were elected consuls together. This did not make them friends. Crassus disliked Pompeius and was exceedingly jealous of his great position and influence. He did not see why he should not be recognized as as big a man as Pompeius. Pompeius was cold, lazy, self-satisfied; good fortune rained its golden shower upon him and he stood and gathered it up in his hands. Crassus, tingling with energy, alert in every nerve, was exasperated when he thought of Pompeius.

But he was intelligent enough soon to realize that he would not rise to the position and power in the State he wanted by his own unaided efforts. Nor had he to look far to find the person who could give him what he had not himself got. Pompeius's success filled him with anger and bitter envy because he disliked Pompeius. His self-satisfied and slow temper annoyed him. For the powers of Julius Caesar, on the other hand, Crassus felt nothing but lively admiration, wonder, and even devotion. He realized his extraordinary qualities at a time when Caesar was unpopular and unsuccessful. Moreover, he was conquered immediately by Caesar's personal charm, and never ceased to feel it. Caesar was loaded with debt: his want of money was his main personal difficulty. His main political difficulty was the fact that the Democratic or Popular party had become stamped, at the time of Marius and Cinna, as the party of revolution and disorder. To Caesar, therefore, Crassus was invaluable: a firm bond was sealed between them.

Some years later Caesar actually succeeded in reconciling Crassus to Pompeius by persuading them that as long as they levelled their artillery against one another they raised people like Cicero and Cato the Younger to importance. These men would be nothing and could do nothing if Crassus, Pompeius, and himself were friends and acted together. He soon proved to be right. The Triumvirate were irresistible. First Caesar was consul (59): then, four years later (55), Crassus and Pompeius.

Crassus's thirst for glory made him eager to have, in the year after his consulship, a great and important provincial command. To his delight, while Pompeius took Spain and Caesar remained in Gaul, he was given Syria. Although he was by now sixty the most fantastic visions of triumph and conquest immediately floated before his eyes: he saw himself performing feats

in the East which should altogether outshine those of Lucullus and Pompeius. There was no war going on in that part of the world, but Crassus at once made up his mind that there should be war since it was the straight path to honour and renown. He would attack Parthia and conquer a new and rich country for Rome. This he planned regardless of the fact that the Parthians were actually allies of Rome. The ideas sown by Lucullus were bearing fruit.

Crassus was elderly. It was long since he had directed a campaign, and campaigning in the East was new to him. Neither he nor his son Publius, who after serving with Caesar in Gaul came with him as his aide-de-camp, or any other member of his staff, knew anything of the geography of Parthia. After gaining quick successes in Mesopotamia he returned to Syria for the winter instead of going forward and making, as he could have done, allies in the cities of Babylon and Seleucia, cities always at enmity with the Parthians. As it was, while he was busy inquiring into the revenues of the cities of Syria and weighing the treasures in the temples, the Parthians, warned of his intentions, were making preparations against him. Accounts of the scale of these preparations were brought in which alarmed the Roman soldiers. They had imagined that the Parthians, a most warlike people, were tame folk such as Lucullus had found the Armenians and Cappadocians. A series of terrific thunderstorms seemed to them to herald disaster.

see caption

ORODES THE PARTHIAN

Crassus, however, paid no heed to the murmurs of his officers and men. He had no lack of courage or energy, and did not at all realize his danger. Moreover, he was deceived by spies into a false security. Thus he marched too far into a country about which he knew nothing. Suddenly his scouts brought in news that a great army was advancing. Very soon the Romans were upon this army. They found that its advance guard was composed of a kind of warrior never met by the Romans—bowmen on horseback, and bowmen of most deadly skill, whose arrows could pierce a steel cuirass, whose aim was sure and whose rapid movements made it almost impossible to stay them. Indeed, within a very short space of time the Roman army was hemmed in and surrounded. Crassus showed great intrepidity, but his men could not withstand the superior numbers and dreadful skill of the Parthians. With great difficulty he succeeded in extricating a portion of his men; but the day closed in defeat and the survivors were in the

darkest spirits.

Next morning the enemy advanced again with loud shouts and songs of victory and a fearsome noise of drums. And in the front of their line was a man carrying on a high spear the head of young Publius Crassus, the son of the Roman commander. This sight sent a thrill of horror through the army. Crassus alone showed greatness of mind. Plutarch gives the following account of his behaviour:

Carrhae

> Crassus was in this condition. He had ordered his son to charge the Parthians, and as a messenger had come with the news that there was a great rout, and that the enemy were being hotly pursued, and as, besides this, he saw that the force opposed to him was not pressing so hard (for in truth the larger part had moved off to meet Publius), he regained courage somewhat, and, concentrating his force, posted it in a strong position on some slopes, in the expectation that his son would soon come back from the pursuit. It proved, however, that the first messengers sent to him by Publius when he realized his danger had been intercepted by the barbarians and slain, while others, getting through with difficulty, reported that Publius was lost if he was not supported strongly and at once. Then Crassus became the prey of contrary impulses and no longer able to take a reasoned view of anything, being distracted between the desire to help his son and the fear of risking the safety of his force as a whole. At length he determined to advance.
>
> Meantime the enemy were hurrying to the attack, more terrible than ever, with yells and shouts of triumph, and the kettledrums thundered again round the Roman ranks, as they stood expecting another battle to begin. Some of the Parthians, who were carrying the head of Publius stuck on the end of a spear, rode close up and displayed it, insolently asking about his parents and family, for it was monstrous, they said, that a noble youth of such brilliant courage should be the son of a coward like Crassus. This sight, more than all else, crushed and broke the spirit of the Romans, for they were not strengthened, as they should have been, by a resolution to defend themselves, but were seized, one and all, with fright and panic.
>
> Yet it is said that Crassus never showed himself so great as in this disaster. Passing along the ranks, he shouted, ‘This grief touches me, and none besides, but by your success alone can the honour and glory of Rome be preserved inviolate and unconquered. If you pity me for the loss of a gallant son, prove it by your fury against the enemy. Take from them their triumph, punish their ferocity, do not be cast down by our loss. Great aims are never realized without some suffering. Lucullus did not overthrow Tigranes without bloodshed, nor Scipio Antiochus; our ancestors lost a thousand ships off the coast of Sicily, and in Italy many dictators and generals; but never did these defeats prevent them from crushing the conquerors. It is not by good luck, but by endurance and courage in the face of peril, that Rome has risen to its height of power.’
>
> Plutarch, xxxix. 26.

Faulty generalship had brought the Roman army into a position whence no courage could save it. In the second day’s battle a terrible defeat was sustained: no less than thirty thousand Romans perished in the disaster of Carrhae (53). Crassus himself was killed in a parley afterwards.

It is said that a few days after the battle, before the news of it had reached him, the Parthian king was witnessing a performance of the Bacchae of Euripides in which there is a scene where one of the dancers comes in bearing a bleeding head. The actor who took this part carried the head of Crassus, which he cast, amid shouts of joy, at the king's feet.

Such was the tragic end of the millionaire Crassus. The news of his death and defeat came to Rome but caused no excitement there. The city was more interested in the street brawls of Clodius and Milo. The politicians were watching the growing conflict between Caesar and Pompeius. Crassus had dropped out of the Triumvirate. The stage was cleared for the great duel.

XII

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Of none of the men of his own time do we know so much as of Marcus Tullius Cicero. His contemporaries we know from the accounts given and judgements passed by others: Cicero we know from his own. He was the first speaker of his age, and his speeches deal largely with the politics and people of his time, as he defended or attacked the men and their acts. Cicero was anything but impartial; yet it is from what he says that much of our picture of Caesar and Crassus, Pompeius, Antonius, Catiline, Clodius, Cato, Brutus and a host of others are drawn. In all the long gallery of portraits he has painted none is so sharp and vivid as his own. It comes to us not only through his speeches but through all his writings—and he wrote admirably on many philosophical and semi-philosophical subjects—and above all through his letters. These letters are addressed for the most part to his intimate friend the banker Pomponius Atticus, but also to others including most of the prominent men of his time, and to his daughter Tullia, to whom he was devotedly attached. They give a day-to-day picture of the life of Rome and also of the man who wrote them. Cicero was immersed, like most men of his time, in politics. He rose, to his own ineffable delight (a delight which he expresses again and again with childlike complacency), to be consul. But the explanation of a character that at times amused and at times exasperated his contemporaries, and has caused the same mixture of feelings to much later admirers, is that he was, in his essence, an

artist. He wanted, as do many artists, to be and do other things. He was more vain of his dubious success in politics than of the splendour of his oratory or the beauty of his writing. In action he was timid, uncertain, and quite unable to cope with the great currents of his time, snobbish and constantly mistaken in his judgements of people, and alternately elated and despairing in his view of public events. When he takes up his pen he is a master.

see caption

CICERO

Cicero was in some ways typical of the new men in Rome. He was born at Arpinum, where his family belonged to the Italian middle class. His parents were sufficiently well-to-do for the young man to receive an excellent education, completed, like that of other well-bred young men of the time, by attending lectures in Athens on literature and philosophy. His father’s death brought him a fortune that though not large was sufficient, together with a small estate at Arpinum and a house in Rome.

But Cicero had no mind for a life of fashionable idleness. For a middle-class provincial there was little chance in politics, so long as Sulla’s laws stood. He therefore turned to the law courts. There he soon made himself a great name, the more distinguished since he kept up the old custom of refusing fees. A wealthy marriage increased his consequence. His honesty and ability made him respected by all sorts of people. Cicero used his gifts in the most honourable way by defending the people of the provinces, who before his time had hardly ever got a hearing, against the rapacity of some of the Roman tax collectors. A case which made his name known throughout the Roman world was the prosecution of Caius Verres which he undertook on behalf of the people of Sicily. Verres, once an officer in Marius’s army, was a man of notoriously bad character. Like other praetors he looked on his governorship simply as an opportunity to make money for himself and his friends; it was freely said, even in Rome, that his misrule was ruining Sicily. And Sicily was one of the chief granaries of Rome. The greatest excitement was aroused over the case because the Democratic party took it up as a means of discrediting the Government; and at the same time brought in a Bill for the reform of the law courts by making the jurors not senators only, but, as before Sulla’s time, men belonging to the Equestrian Order. This frightened the Conservatives: they saw that much hung on the case of Verres. Quintus Hortensius, the most famous advocate of his time, agreed to defend him.

see caption

ARPINUM. Cicero’s birthplace

Cicero went to Sicily to collect evidence. He was quick to feel, in all his sensitive nerves, the tense atmosphere of excitement gathering round the case. It was to make or mar him. His genius rose delighted to the great occasion. He understood, as the Conservatives did not, the feelings that were dumbly stirring the mind of the ordinary decent Roman, and could give them voice. As the evidence he had collected was unrolled the story of the greed of Verres and the suffering of the people of Sicily was laid bare step by step. Excitement and anger against the class in power who did and defended such things grew and grew. Each day an enormous crowd thronged the Forum and at times its feelings made it positively dangerous. One witness told how a Roman citizen had been crucified: his appeal, ‘Civis Romanus sum—I am a Roman citizen’, had fallen on deaf ears. At this the hearers were stirred to such rage that Verres was only saved from being torn to pieces by the adjournment of the hearing. After fourteen days the defendants realized that their case was lost; no judge dared acquit Verres. He fled the city and was never heard of again. Cicero was the hero of the hour.

The man who appears and feels himself a hero when addressing a great crowd, who can work their feelings and his own into tempestuous enthusiasm, is often a weak reed, swayed by every impulse and incapable of the long slow effort required to carry a purpose into action. This was the case with Cicero. When speaking he was carried away by his own passion. Then he appeared to know exactly what he thought. Alone, however, he was moody, a prey to fearful doubt and depression, one day full of enthusiasm, the next despairing. He was at once vain and timid; uncertain of himself and turned this way and that by the praise or blame of others. His great desire was to be admired by every one. His comparatively humble origin made him feel any attention from the nobles far more flattering than it was.

In a good sense as well as in a bad he was a Conservative. His study of history made him feel full of respect for any institution that had lasted a long time, and for men belonging to ancient families. He felt this even at a time when his writings and speeches were making him known throughout Italy and admired by men whose praise was worth having. The rich men and many of the aristocrats

were far inferior to Cicero in brains and character; yet he longed and strove to get into ‘society’. Society at the time was extravagant, frivolous, vicious, and hard-hearted. Cicero was modest and frugal in his personal habits, serious in the bent of his mind, a man of high moral principle and tender domestic affections. Yet nothing pleased him more than an invitation to one of the houses of the smart set; nothing vexed him more than to be thought old-fashioned or middle-class in his ideas.

All these feelings made him regard his own election to the consulship, and the support he received as candidate from the noble Conservatives, as the most wonderful affair. Yet the real reason why the Conservatives supported him was not that they loved Cicero but that they loathed Catiline, the third strong candidate, and were prepared to go to great lengths to keep him out. Antonius, who was elected as Cicero’s colleague, though a friend of Crassus, was considered to be harmless.

This consulship was the turning point in Cicero’s life. He had always wanted to stand well with all parties. Now he was compelled to take his place definitely on the Conservative side. More than that, it finally caused him to lose his sense of balance altogether and to think of himself as a statesman: a part for which he was ill fitted. He was so much impressed with his own importance that he bought a vast house on the Palatine. To do so he had to borrow money and thus got into debt. Before he had been free, after his consulship he became entangled and embarrassed.

This was the case with many of the leading politicians and men of all parties, and hampered their actions in countless ways. In order to win popular favour they spent huge sums on shows and gave feasts and presents to the populace. They lived altogether in a way expensive and showy beyond their means. To do this they had to borrow money at exorbitant terms, and were thus helplessly in the power of the rich men who lent to them. Caesar at this time was fearfully in debt and constantly in difficulties on this account. So were innumerable fashionable young aristocrats. The Roman laws of debt were still extremely harsh and all acted against the unfortunate debtor. Prices were steadily rising: the vast wealth of the few made the lot of the many increasingly hard. While Lucullus was in the East there had been a serious financial crisis in Rome, and the effects of this lasted for a long time.

As a consequence of this state of things a vast number of people of all classes

were stirred to wild excitement and enthusiasm when Catiline, who was determined to be consul and by no means inclined to sit down under one rebuff, set out a programme of which the chief item was a wiping off of a large part of all outstanding debts. The poorer people were on his side in this almost to a man. So were a great many needy aristocrats, especially among the younger men. The rich, on the other hand, especially the class of Knights, to which most of the big financiers and trading houses belonged, were furious. They were ready to throw all their influence and the great power of the purse on to the side of the Conservatives, who cried that Catiline's programme meant revolution. On both sides the wildest excitement and the most extreme bitterness of feeling was stirred up.

Catiline was a man of low character, and of very bad record, quite reckless. But he was by no means without ability. There was something to be said for his programme if nothing for the man who proposed it. Certainly the law of debt needed to be reformed. The rich did not argue against it: they fell into a panic. They saw that popular feeling and popular votes would be on Catiline's side. But they had money and could bribe. They did bribe so effectively that when it came to the election he was beaten again.

The alarm of the propertied classes did not, however, die down, or the excitement of the disappointed. People had talked of revolution and civil war so loud and long during the elections that they began to believe in it. Cicero had been going about for days with a cuirass under his toga. He really believed that grave plots were on foot. He spent his time listening to spies and informers. One day he came down to the Senate with a very long face declaring that he 'knew all'. He produced no proofs, but most people were too much excited to ask for proofs. The word plot was enough. A state of siege was proclaimed in the city.

Soon afterwards news came that a follower of Catiline had actually got some soldiers together in Etruria. Catiline, however, was still in Rome. He attended a meeting of the Senate. On his bench he sat alone, shunned by all the other senators, who applauded loudly while Cicero thundered against him. At last Catiline, unable to bear it any longer, got up, marched out of the Senate House, and left Rome. Cicero did not dare to have him arrested. There were as yet no solid proofs against him. A few days later proofs came. Catiline's supporters in Rome lost their heads without him. They were foolish enough to ask some ambassadors of the Allobroges—a tribe of Gauls, then in the city with a petition to the Senate—whether their people would send soldiers to assist a rising.

Cicero now seemed to have the Catilinarians in his hand. They were ready, some of them, to bring the Gauls into Italy! That was enough. There was a wild outburst of feeling. All sorts of prominent people, including Caesar, were said to be implicated. Catiline had escaped, but all his close associates were arrested and brought up for trial by the Senate. Cicero hurried on the proceedings. He was terrified by the wild passion that swept all classes, the senators no less than the howling mobs outside. After two days' debate the question of what should be done to the conspirators was put to the vote. The first senator voted for death. All the others who followed voted for death until it came to Caesar. Caesar knew of the rumours going about and the risk of his own position as leader of the party to which Catiline had belonged. Nevertheless with great courage he voted against the death penalty. Every Roman citizen, he urged, had the right to appeal to his fellows. To put men to death without trial was illegal. Cato, however, made a powerful plea on the other side. Death was decreed. As Caesar left the Senate House a group of knights threatened him with swords.

Next day Cicero, accompanied by a solemn procession of senators, saw the executions carried out. Caesar was not in the procession. A huge crowd escorted Cicero back to his home. They declared, and he proudly believed, that he had saved the country. Plutarch thus describes

Cicero's Day of Triumph

> Cicero passed through the Forum and, reaching the prison, handed over Lentulus to the officer with orders to put him to death; then he brought down Cethegus and the rest separately for execution. And when he saw many of the conspirators still standing together in the Forum, ignorant of what had happened and waiting for darkness in the belief that the men were alive and could be rescued, he cried to them with a loud voice, 'They lived,' Thus Romans signify death if they wish to avoid words of ill omen.
>
> Evening had already come when he returned through the Forum to his house on the Palatine, no longer attended by the citizens with silence or even with restraint, but received everywhere with shouts and clapping of hands, and saluted as saviour and founder of his country. The streets were bright with the gleam of all the torches and links that were placed at the doors, and the women displayed lights from the roofs that they might see the hero and do him honour, as he made his stately progress escorted by the noblest in Rome; most of whom had conducted great wars and entered the city in triumphal processions and added whole tracts of sea and land to the empire, and who now agreed as they marched along that the Roman people was indebted to many leaders and generals of their day for wealth and spoil and power, but to Cicero alone for safety and life, because he had freed it from so vast and terrible a danger. For it was not thought so wonderful that he had crushed the conspiracy and punished the conspirators, but that he had quenched the most serious insurrection ever known with very little suffering, and without domestic strife and disturbance.
>
> Plutarch, lvii. 22. §§ 2-5.

The circumstances of Cicero's exile and return are described by Plutarch in passages that give a lively picture of the life of the time:

> Cicero, convinced that he must go into exile or leave the question to be decided by armed conflict with Clodius, determined to ask Pompeius for help; but he had purposely gone away and was now staying at his villa in the Alban hills. Accordingly, Cicero first sent Piso, his son-in-law, to make an appeal, and afterwards went himself. When Pompeius knew that he had come, he did not wait to see him (for he was terribly ashamed to face the man who had engaged in hard struggles on his behalf and often shaped his policy to please him), but at the request of Caesar, whose daughter he had married, he was false to those obsolete services, and, slipping out by a back door, managed to evade the interview.
>
> Thus betrayed by Pompeius and left without support, Cicero put himself in the hands of the consuls. Gabinius was harsh and unrelenting, but Piso spoke more gently to him, bidding him withdraw and let Clodius have his day, endure the changed times, and become once more the saviour of his country, which his enemy had filled with strife and suffering. After this answer Cicero consulted his friends, and Lucullus urged him to remain in the assurance that he would prevail, but others advised him to go into exile; for the people would feel his loss when it had enough of the mad recklessness of Clodius. He accepted this council, and taking to the Capitol the image of Minerva, a prized possession which had long stood in his house, he dedicated it with the inscription, 'To Minerva, guardian of Rome,' Then, having got an escort from his friends, he left the city secretly at night, and journeyed by land through Lucania, wishing to reach Sicily.
>
> 31. §§ 2-5.

As a matter of fact the immediate danger from Catiline had been exaggerated. People came to see this in a very few months. Catiline raised a few hundred men and was killed fighting. The real danger lay not in him but in the economic and political condition of Rome and Italy. Its causes were the mismanagement, corruption, and feebleness of the Government; the flaunting vulgarity and profiteering of the rich; the misery of the poor. Cicero had done nothing to meet these evils: he had no plan for doing so; he hardly realized that they were there. Men had called him 'Father of his country'. That great day was ever in his mind. As he thought of it his vanity swelled and swelled until the year of his consulship seemed to him the greatest in the annals of Rome. He bored every one by talking incessantly of it on all occasions. He dreamed of this and saw nothing of the dark tides rising round. He watched helplessly the growing power of Pompeius, Crassus, and Caesar, and did not understand what Rome was coming to. Caesar was always friendly and gracious to him, for he had a mind which could appreciate Cicero's genius as a writer: but Cicero distrusted Caesar.

He had meantime made a deadly enemy of Clodius who, by playing on disorder, was making himself more and more dangerous in Rome. Clodius was charged with sacrilege. He defended himself by saying that on the day on which he was said to have been present, in female clothes, at the Women's Festival being

celebrated in the house of Caesar's wife, he was in fact not in the city. Cicero swore that he had seen him. Thanks to bribery Clodius was acquitted. He never forgave Cicero. Soon after this, in the first year of the Triumvirate (59), he secured his banishment from the city for a year.

Cicero, after a visit to Greece, retired to his villa at Tusculum. He would have been wiser had he settled down there and devoted himself to the writing of which he was a consummate master. But after sixteen months in the country he returned to Rome.

The Return

> It is said that the people never passed a measure with such unanimity, and the Senate rivalled it by proposing a vote of thanks to those cities that had given help to Cicero in exile, and by restoring at the public expense his house, with the villa and buildings, which Clodius had destroyed. Thus Cicero returned in the sixteenth month after his banishment, and so great was the rejoicing in cities and the general enthusiasm in greeting him that he fell short of the truth when he declared afterwards that he was brought to Rome on the shoulders of Italy. Crassus, too, who had been his enemy before his exile, was glad to meet him and make proposals for reconciliation, saying that he did it to please his son Publius, who was an admirer of Cicero.
>
> 33. §§ 4-5.

When Clodius was murdered in the streets by Milo, Cicero undertook the latter's defence in a very famous speech, which we still possess. Milo, however, was condemned. In the province of Cilicia to which he was soon afterwards appointed governor, Cicero showed himself an honest and upright administrator. When he returned to Rome, however, his conduct showed a helpless weakness. Between Pompeius and Caesar he for long did not know how to choose. Both seemed to him in a measure wrong. In his own letters he said to one of his friends at this time, 'Whither shall I turn? Pompeius has the more honourable cause, but Caesar manages his affairs with the greatest address and is most able to save himself and his friends. In short, I know whom to avoid but not whom to seek.' In the end, since he thought that Caesar failed, when he entered Rome, to treat him with proper distinction and courtesy, he joined Pompeius at Dyrrachium.

There, however, he made himself very unpopular by criticism of everything done or left undone. He took no part in the battle of Pharsalia, being in poor health: after it, instead of joining Cato, who was carrying on the war in Africa, he sailed to Brundisium. When Caesar returned from Egypt he set out to join him. Caesar hailed him with the greatest kindness and respect. Cicero, however, soon

withdrew to Tusculum, where he busied himself with writing. His private affairs vexed him, however. He divorced his wife Terentia and married a rich young woman whose fortune paid off some of his debts. But his days were clouded by a heavy grief: his beloved daughter Tullia died.

After Caesar's murder Octavius treated him graciously. Marcus Antonius, however, who divided the power of the State with Octavius, was detested by Cicero, who did all in his power to increase the growing dissensions between the two. Against Antonius he wrote a series of most envenomed speeches which he called Philippics in imitation of those of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon. In this, however, he paved the way to his own doom. Antonius and Octavius patched up their quarrels, formed the Second Triumvirate with Lepidus, and carried through a terrible proscription. Cicero's was one of the names on Antonius's list, placed there mainly by the wish of his wife Fulvia, who hated the man who had spoken evil of her husband. Cicero was killed in his own villa at the age of sixty-four, and his head set up in Rome above the rostrum from which he had so often delivered passionate speeches.

XIII

Caius Julius Caesar

So long as the world lasts men will discuss, without settling, the question, What constitutes greatness? Some people will give one answer, some another. There are those who hold that no man ought properly to be called great who is not also good. Thus a French historian said that Napoleon was as great as a man could be without virtue. Even here, however, there is room for difference and discussion. What is meant by virtue? Is the good man he who does good, who makes people better and happier, or the man who is good in himself, who tries always to put the welfare of others before his own, whether he succeeds or not? If the first be true, poets, painters, and sculptors must rank highest in the order of goodness as of greatness. If the second, most of the really good are forgotten, since they tried and failed. Is success the test? It is the only test that history accepts. The men who appear to us as great in the story of the past are those who made some mark, whether for good or evil, on their time. The others are forgotten. What we know of most of the men, great or small, of the past, is not what they were, but what

they did. We know what they did. We can only guess why they did it. Often, too, it happens that good men—men kindly, affectionate, and unselfish—do harm to others without knowing it: bad men do good.

see caption

JULIUS CAESAR
The Brit. Mus. gem

All these puzzling questions, and many more, are set to us by the character of Caius Julius Caesar. He puzzled the men who lived in his own time, and has gone on puzzling historians ever since. Brutus, who loved him, finally killed him because he thought he was doing more harm than good. Marcus Antonius, who also loved him, thought him, to the end, the noblest man that ever lived. One great historian regards him as one of the few really wise and far-seeing statesmen in the world's story; a man who with extraordinary genius saw what the world needed and with extraordinary will carried it out. Another sees him as no more than a clever, selfish, and ambitious time-server: a man without fixed ideas or principles, whose sole object was power. Both admit his genius: but where one sees it directed steadily to great ends, the other sees nothing fixed in his character but the determination to succeed.

Caesar's speeches (and he was a great speaker) are lost. We have two volumes of his writings: his account of the conquest and settlement of Gaul, and his account of the Civil War. These two volumes of *Commentaries* are so admirably written, in so pure and firm and lucid a style, with such mastery of narrative and of order, that their author would stand high among Roman writers had he been distinguished in no other way. Only a remarkable man could have written an account of his own doings in just this style. For there is no word of comment: the whole thing is, as Caesar himself says, bare, simple, and plain, with every kind of ornament cast aside. The language is simple, exact, concise. Every word tells. There is never a word too much. The dryness with which amazing feats of generalship, of endurance, of courage, are set down only makes them, in the end, more impressive. No mere talker, no one shifted this way and that by chance and by the opinion of others, could have written these books. They are the record of one who could both see and act.

In so far as we can judge a man from his face, the busts tell the same story. They show us Caesar in middle age, when firmly set to serious purposes, the idle impulses of youth left behind. The power to think, the power to act—these are the characteristics of the familiar bust. Yet Caesar, if we can believe the stories of him, retained to beyond middle life a rare personal charm, and always had

much of the quick, passionate responsiveness of the artist. There was room in his mind for all sorts of things beside the business of making men do what he wanted. Whether the almost tragic nobility of the sculptured face, which is in this respect like that of Napoleon, means that Caesar was led on by something higher than personal ambition, the desire to engrave his own will upon the stuff of life, it is impossible to say. He made history; he was, in that sense, a man of destiny, but did he know what he was doing? did he care for a good beyond his own?

see caption

JULIUS CAESAR
The Brit. Mus. bust

The first incident we know of Caesar is highly characteristic. Pompeius at the time of the proscriptions had put away his wife at Sulla's behest. Caesar, a little younger, like him a rising young soldier, was descended from one of the most illustrious of patrician families. But his uncle had married Marius's sister. Not only was he the nephew of Marius; he was allied to the beaten party in the Revolution by his marriage to Cornelia the daughter of Cinna. Sulla commanded him to divorce her. Caesar refused. He loved his wife dearly. Neither then (he was hardly out of his teens) nor at any other time was he ready to take orders from other men. Therefore his property and the dowry of his young wife were confiscated. His own life was in danger and he had to leave Rome. But his will did not bend. Sulla realized something of the stuff of which, youthful and unknown as he was, Caesar was made. 'In that young man', he said, 'there are many Mariuses.'

At the time, and for long after, however, no sign of this was perceived by most people. At an age when Pompeius, the darling of fortune, had celebrated a triumph and was, despite his youth, a leading man in Rome, looked up to by every one, rather feared by the Senate, wealthy, prosperous, and important, Caesar was poor and quite unknown, attached by his relationship to Marius and Cinna to a defeated faction and a broken and discredited party. Yet Sulla was right. Caesar had a genius, a patience, and a power of will such as Marius never possessed. Of his military talents no one, not even Caesar himself, had any suspicion till long after. His rise was slow and difficult. Until his alliance with Crassus he was perpetually hampered by poverty and debts, both in fact and in the opinion of Rome.

When he escaped from Rome (81) Caesar went abroad first to the Greek islands, where he served his first campaign, and afterward to Bithynia; he also raised an expeditionary force against the Rhodian pirates. After Sulla's death he returned to Rome. His eloquence soon won him a position in the Popular party. No one, however, regarded him as a serious rival to Pompeius, who was at this time regarded as inclining more or less to the Popular side. The enormous debts which were to be such a burden to Caesar were mainly contracted while Pompeius was in the East. He carried through magnificent building schemes, and gave superb games to the people—such being the road to popularity. Wider plans were forming in his mind, however: plans on the lines of Gracchus.

The great difficulty in Caesar's way, over and above his own debts, was the character of the Popular party. It stood, to the majority of Conservatives and men of wealth and standing, for nothing but disorder and insecurity, with revolution in the background. These Conservatives did not see that they were helping to bring about all the things they dreaded by their opposition to change and their effort to keep all power in the hands of their own order, and their fear, distrust, and jealousy of any man of real ability. They drove young able men into the Popular party; and the Popular party to them was always the party of Marius and Cinna. There were in fact too many men in it of low character and reckless ways of life; men like Catiline and his friend Cethegus, like Clodius and Milo. The more clearly Caesar was marked out as the leader of this party the more did the Conservatives dread and hate him. Not without reason did he often think his very life was in danger. It was always possible that riots might break out. If they did the Popular party would be held responsible, and he would suffer for them all. His debts increased this danger. They made him at once reckless and powerless.

Yet Caesar's popularity in Rome was real. At the time when his difficulties were thickest upon him he stood for election, against some of the most honoured and important senators, as Pontifex Maximus, the chief of the State religion. He was under forty; it was a post generally held by an old man; his religious views were known to be extremely 'advanced'. Moreover, many people whispered that he had been privy to Catiline's conspiracy, since Catiline was a member of his party. One of the other candidates offered to pay his debts if he would retire. To retire was not Caesar's way; he regarded the proposal as an insult. As he left home on the day of election he told his mother, to whom he was devoted, that he would return Pontifex or an exile. He was elected.

The same immovable courage was shown by Caesar at the time of the

Catilinarian conspiracy. The whole machinery of the trial of the conspirators was contrary to the law; the Senate was not a proper Court which could condemn men to death. Caesar knew that he was suspected by many of being involved in the conspiracy and that many would be only too delighted if they could see him in the dock for any reason. Yet he was the one man who dared to point out the illegality and injustice of what was being done and to vote against the death sentence. Caesar's life was threatened at the time; but afterwards when the excitement died down and people could consider the affair more calmly they saw that he had been right; that he had kept his sense of justice when panic had made the other senators lose theirs altogether.

Caesar was soon after this made governor of Spain (61-60). But his creditors were so pressing that he would have actually been unable to start had he not come to an understanding with Crassus. Crassus settled the most urgent of his debts and he set out. Two stories are told of him at this time which show a good deal of his mind. In crossing the Alps he came upon a town so small that one of his friends remarked to him that in a place so tiny there could be none of the struggle for place and power such as there were in Rome, nothing worth having or being. Caesar, however, said, 'I assure you I had rather be the first man here than the second man in Rome.' When in Spain he spent his leisure in reading. Among other books he studied the Life of Alexander the Great. The followers of Pompeius who had just come back from the East were freely comparing him to Alexander. Caesar was so much moved by what he read that he sat thoughtful for a long time and at last, to the surprise of his companions, burst into tears. They could not understand the reason till he said, 'Do you not think I have sufficient cause for concern, when Alexander at my age ruled over so many conquered countries and I have not one glorious achievement to boast?'

In his government of Spain Caesar showed firmness, energy, and wisdom. He carried out successful expeditions to distant parts of the peninsula and brought the whole country into such good order that he enriched it as well as the Roman State, himself, and his own soldiers. And all the time that he was in Spain his mind was at work. From a distance he saw the meaning of events in Rome with clearness and formed his own plans.

As soon as he returned he set to work to bring about that understanding between himself, Crassus, and Pompeius that was known afterwards (at the time it was a private bond) as the First Triumvirate (60). To bring this about was by no means easy. Pompeius was jealous and apt to ride the high horse. Crassus, though

attached to Caesar, hated Pompeius. But Caesar persuaded them both. The world might see how things stood when he walked between them to the place of election for the consulship.

During his consulship (59) Caesar, despite the feeble opposition of his colleague, carried through a big programme of reforms. In addition he got a decree passed making him governor and military commander of Gaul for five years. In Transalpine Gaul very dangerous movements were said to be going on among the tribes. The Senate was not sorry to think of getting Caesar out of the way and into a dangerous place: he himself desired to win a glory equal to that of Pompeius and the command of an army devoted to himself. In Gaul he meant to find both. And he did.

Plutarch, who wrote the lives of many distinguished Romans, was no lover of Caesar. Pompeius is his hero. Yet Plutarch says that Caesar's campaigns in Gaul (58-51) show him 'not in the least inferior to the greatest and most admired commanders the world ever produced'. 'In Gaul', he says, 'we begin a new life, as it were, and have to follow him in quite another track.' In the nine years he spent there Caesar showed astonishing genius as a soldier and won the utter devotion of his men. But what he did in the field is surpassed by the statesmanship shown in his settlement of the country and plan for its government.

In Gaul Caesar's great ideas found scope; but they were not born in Gaul. If Caesar at work in Gaul appears to be a different man from Caesar playing at politics in Rome, the reason is not that he suddenly changed but that the picture of him in Rome is based on the accounts given by his enemies, by men who feared and disliked without understanding him. They have drawn a picture of a wild, extravagant, and dissipated young man. Caesar was that, but behind it there was a mind more powerful, a personality more strong, than in any of his contemporaries: that mind and personality which old Sulla had perceived. When in Rome Caesar worked incessantly even while he pretended to idle. He was one of the busiest men in the city, though some of his busy-ness was of a foolish kind. In Gaul his immense energies were turned to constructive work. His health, which had been fragile—he suffered from epilepsy or what was called 'the falling sickness' and from violent headaches—and never became extraordinarily robust, was strengthened by the hardships of a military life, by long marches, exposure, and spartan food. And his energy, always extraordinary, seemed to grow by what it fed on. He never rested. When on horseback on the march he

kept secretaries by him to write, at his dictation, letters, orders, memoranda, draft laws, and his own history. He reduced his hours of sleep to the fewest and at all times shared, like Hannibal, every hardship of his men. They adored him, not only because of this and because he never forgot that they were men like himself, but because of something magnetic in his personality, that charm which is the hardest thing in the world to describe or define. Caesar made his men believe in him: trust him when he asked them to do things that appeared impossible: face the most terrific odds and the severest trials in perfect belief in him. They believed, as he did, in his star. But their devotion was not only due to his genius. It was given to him, as a man, because of his charm.

For nine years Caesar was in Gaul. For nine years Rome saw nothing of him, though he spent winters at Ravenna and Lucca, and all the time never lost touch with what was going on in the capital, or hold over men there. He had left one or two faithful friends, among them Marcus Antonius and Curio, to look after his interests. But his whole mind and energy were devoted to his work in Gaul. It was a great work. Caesar not only fought battles and conquered territories, as Pompeius and Lucullus had done in the East. He did what they had never even tried to do: he romanized the country. Understanding, with rare quickness and sympathy, the nature of the people with whom he had to deal, he did not try to alter their deep-rooted habits. But he started the work, completed under the Empire, of spreading Roman law and order, coins and ways of trading, in a word Roman civilization, over Central Europe. Caesar's mark remained upon it all. There were disturbances in various parts of the country after he left it. What the Romans called Gaul was a vast region inhabited by numerous tribes who hated and warred against one another, and had not learnt how to live in peace side by side. When Caesar took up his command, the wild hordes of the north were ready to swoop down upon Rome as they had done in the time of Brennus and again later when Marius defeated them at Vercellae and the Raudine Fields. As the result of Caesar's work they were held back for more than four hundred years. And since Caesar was a statesman as well as a soldier his work was never wholly undone: the stamp of his genius and of Rome was set once and for all on North-western Europe.

As a soldier Caesar ranks among the greatest in the world. When he first went to Gaul his army was small—but four legions in all. The rest of his army he created, enlisting and training it on the spot. With his small forces he had to meet not Orientals, driven into battle by fear, but sturdy and fiercely warlike men with

whom fighting was a natural passion. Among the Gaulish chieftains too there were leaders of great military gifts—Ariovistus, the chief of the Teutons, and Vercingetorix of the Arverni.

Some idea of the means by which Caesar stirred and inspired his men, and checked the danger of insubordination in his own ranks, which rose at times when they were called upon to fight forces far greater in numbers, is given by a passage in his own story. It begins with a speech he made to his men.

How Caesar dealt with threats of insubordination provoked by fear of meeting the Germans

see caption

SUBMISSION OF TRIBES
from a relief of the Empire

‘If any of you are alarmed by the defeat and flight of the Gauls, you will find on inquiry that they were tired out by the length of the war, and that Ariovistus, who for many months had been encamped behind the shelter of the swamps and made it impossible to engage him, suddenly fell on them when they were scattered without any thought of fighting, and conquered them rather by stratagem than by valour. Such a policy might well succeed against untrained barbarians, but even Ariovistus does not expect that Roman armies can be ensnared by it. Again, if any disguise their fears by a pretended anxiety about supplies or by imaginary difficulties in the route, they are acting presumptuously; for, as it seems, either they are hopeless about the commander’s performance of his duty or they are dictating to him what that duty is. These matters are for my decision; corn is being supplied by the Sequani, Leuci and Lingones, and the crops are already ripe. As for the difficulties of the route, you will soon have an opportunity of judging them. When I am told that the soldiers will disobey me and refuse to march, I am not at all troubled, for I know that, if an army has been disobedient, either its commander has been defeated through incompetence or some overt act has convicted him of extortion; but the whole course of my life bears witness to my integrity, and my success is proved by my campaign against the Helvetii. Accordingly I shall do at once what I had intended to do later and shall march to-night at the fourth watch, so that I may know without delay whether your fears are stronger than the claims of honour and duty. If no one else follows me, I shall start with the tenth legion, whose devotion is beyond question, and I intend to make it my bodyguard.’ Caesar had shown special favour to this legion and had an absolute trust in its valour.

This speech made an extraordinary impression upon all and inspired very great enthusiasm and eagerness to advance. The tenth legion set the example, thanking Caesar through its tribunes for his generous confidence, and declaring that it was ready in every way to fight. Then the rest of the legions commissioned their tribunes and chief centurions to apologize to Caesar; they had never hesitated or feared, and had never thought that they should meddle with their commander in the control of operations. Caesar accepted their apology and started at the fourth watch, as he had warned them.

Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, i. 40. 8-41. 4.

see caption

A ROMAN LEGIONARY HELMET
found in Britain

There was a moment when it looked as though all Caesar's work was to be swept away. He spent part of the year 54 in Britain. While he was away plans for a great rising were conceived. Soon after he returned all Gaul rose in a blaze. The first rising was put down. In 52 another and more serious movement took place with Vercingetorix at its head. The danger was greater than ever. It was the more serious that Caesar knew that in Rome his enemies were working against him. So great was it indeed that Caesar's officers were in despair and begged him to retreat to some safe spot until reinforcements could be sent. But to wait for reinforcements would make things worse instead of better. The rebellion would gather force. It was by no means certain that Pompeius, now hand in glove with the Conservatives, would send him more troops. Pompeius would be glad to see his rival fail. Caesar was not going to give him that pleasure. And retreat in face of danger was never Caesar's way. Always he went to meet it. So now. He delivered a blow at the very heart of the enemy's position. Caesar's capture of Alesia, the stronghold of Vercingetorix, and his defeat of the second great Gallic army that closed him in while he was blockading the town are among the great feats in the history of war. The odds were heavy against him. His army was in a position from which no luck, only the most brilliant generalship, could save it. Caesar not only saved it: he absolutely crushed the foe. Vercingetorix surrendered. The rebellion collapsed. By the end of the next year Gaul was under Caesar's feet again. It was possible for him to turn his eyes and mind to Rome (50).

see caption

THE HEIGHTS OF ALESIA
The stronghold of Vercingetorix

He did not want to quarrel with Pompeius. He had indeed from the first done everything in his power to prevent such a quarrel. But he saw that the old order of things in Rome was crumbling into ruin. If Pompeius and he could not rule together, one of them must rule alone. In the years of his absence Pompeius had moved more and more to the Conservative point of view. His jealousy of Caesar had grown. The long struggle came to a head when Caesar's time in Gaul drew

to an end.

see caption

MARCUS ANTONIUS
from a coin

Caesar from his winter quarters at Ravenna declared that he was ready to disband his army and return to Rome as a private citizen as soon as Pompeius demobilized his troops. Pompeius actually had a larger force of men under arms than Caesar, including two legions which Caesar had borrowed and sent back to him. In the Senate Curio proposed that both generals should lay down their commands. This was agreed to. Pompeius refused. A few months later the question came up again. Curio, who had been to Ravenna, where Caesar was, read a letter from him. In this he said he would disarm, if Pompeius did the same. The Senate declared the letter was dangerous, and the man who wrote it dangerous. A friend of Pompeius then proposed that by a certain day Caesar, if not disarmed, should be regarded as a traitor. When Marcus Antonius and Cassius, another tribune, vetoed this, they were expelled from the Senate and threatened with swords by Pompeius's adherents. Caesar could no longer have any doubt as to what awaited him in Rome. He explained how things stood to his soldiers: they cried to him to march on (49).

By Sulla's law the Rubicon was the military boundary of Italy. No one might cross it under arms. Caesar paused for a moment on the bank; then suddenly crying, 'The die is cast', he crossed the river at the head of his men and marching with great speed entered Ariminum.

The poet Lucan, writing long afterwards, tried to penetrate the secrets of his mind, and guess what passed in it at this moment.

The Approach to the Rubicon: a Poet's Phantasy

> Caesar had already hurried across the frozen Alps, pondering in his heart vast schemes of war to come; but when he reached the narrow waters of the Rubicon, the vision of his distracted country rose awful to his gaze, with saddened features clear seen through the gloom and white locks flowing from beneath her crown of towers. All dishevelled and bare-armed she stood before him, uttering words broken by sighs: 'Whither do ye press on? Whither do ye bear these my standards? If ye come as loyal citizens, thus far and no further.' Then Caesar shuddered in every limb, his hair stiffened, and faintness of heart, checking his steps, stayed him at the very brink. Soon he cried: 'Oh Lord of thunder, that from the Tarpeian rock dost survey all our city, and gods that followed the race of Iulus from Troy, and mysteries of Quirinus lost to our sight, and Jupiter enthroned over Latium on

> Alba's mount, and hearth of Vesta's fire, and thou, Rome, worshipped as divine, be gracious to my cause. I bear against thee no frenzied arms. Lo! here am I, Caesar, conqueror by sea and land, still everywhere thy soldier if none forbid. On him, on him shall rest the guilt who makes me thy enemy!' Then without delay be gave the signal for advance and quickly led his men through the swollen stream.
>
> Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i. 183-203.

There was no resistance. It was not Caesar's intention to use any violence. In Rome, however, when the news came that he was moving south, people fell into a panic. Pompeius lost his head. Although the forces at his command were greater than Caesar's, he left the city, leaving everything, including the State Treasury, behind him. Most of the senators and people of consequence did the same.

Within sixty days from his crossing the Rubicon Caesar entered Rome and made himself master of it and of all Northern Italy without bloodshed. People who had trembled and believed that a reign of terror and proscriptions of the kind carried out by Marius and Sulla would follow, breathed again. Caesar showed no bitterness. There were no executions. The property of those who had fled with Pompeius was untouched. Even to Labienus, the one officer of his own who deserted him and joined the other side, Caesar was generous. He sent his goods after him.

Caesar summoned those members of the Senate who had remained in Rome and addressed them in a mild and gracious speech. He had no desire for war: he urged them to send deputies to Pompeius. But no one would do this. Pompeius meantime was embarking for Greece. Caesar did not follow him. He was master in Rome: but Rome was utterly dependent for all its supplies, the means by which it lived, on the world outside. Of that world Pompeius seemed master. Caesar's first task was, therefore, not to defeat Pompeius but to secure the food supply of the capital. For this purpose he himself set out for Spain, where there was a strong Pompeian army, leaving Marcus Antonius in charge in Italy and sending Curio to Sicily. The Spanish campaign was severe, but after the Battle of Ilerda the Pompeian armies were shattered. A considerable force surrendered. Caesar pardoned the men and many of them joined his legions. When he returned home, capturing Massilia on the way, he heard that Curio had done excellently in Sicily: Cato had been defeated and fled to Pompeius.

The West was safe. From Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia corn flowed into Rome. Caesar could sail for Dyrrachium to meet Pompeius. Pompeius rejected all his proposals for peace. He was in a strong position: his army far outnumbered

Caesar’s, and his companions were blindly certain of victory. They indeed spent their time quarrelling among themselves as to who should hold the great offices in Rome when they got back there: who should be Pontifex Maximus for instance, when Caesar had been killed. They were so sure of victory that when Caesar was compelled to shift his camp, since his men were dying of starvation, they insisted on following him and giving battle, though Pompeius saw that this was playing Caesar’s game: whereas to delay would have worn him down. At the battle of Pharsalia (48) Caesar’s much smaller army won a complete victory, thanks to his superior generalship. The princes of the East sent in their submission to the conqueror. The senators and men of rank who survived Pharsalia hastened to make their peace with Caesar, all except Cato, who had not shaved or cut his hair since Caesar crossed the Rubicon, and now sailed to Africa to resist to the last.

Pompeius fled to Egypt. Thither Caesar followed him only to learn the news of his death. When the bloody head of his chief enemy and sometime friend was handed to him Caesar turned away, tears in his eyes.

Years before Caesar had planned to bring Egypt under the Roman rule: but this plan had been defeated. Now he found everything in confusion there. The old king, dying two years earlier, had left his kingdom to his children, Cleopatra, then sixteen, and a baby boy. By Cleopatra, who even as a young girl had those extraordinary powers of mind and charm that have made her famous through the ages, Caesar was fascinated. Her wit and gaiety, her beauty and changefulness, held him entranced: and week after week he stayed on in Alexandria, while a dangerous insurrection was being planned by the ex-vizier of the old king. Suddenly it broke out. Caesar had but a handful of troops: to save his fleet from being used against him he had to set fire to it with his own hands. From the dock the flames spread to the palace and destroyed the great Alexandrine library, the most wonderful in the world. Caesar himself only just escaped: he had to swim across the harbour, holding his papers in one hand.

see caption

CLEOPATRA
from a coin

The danger was serious but brief. Reinforcements arrived from Cilicia: the Egyptian rebels were defeated: the ex-vizier put to death: Cleopatra and her

brother made rulers over Egypt under the protection of Rome. Caesar in the spring crossed to Asia Minor, where he came, saw, and conquered, as he himself said. In September he was in Athens: in October in Rome: in December in Africa. There, at the battle of Thapsus, he crushed out the last spark of opposition. Cato, who had fled to Utica, killed himself, much to Caesar's distress. He admired the sturdy independence of the old man and would have spared him. His daughter Portia was married to Marcus Junius Brutus, a Pompeian whom Caesar had pardoned and loved as a son.

The secret of Caesar's clemency, which astonished his contemporaries, lay partly in his own nature, partly in his clear purpose to re-establish life in Rome on a firm and lasting foundation. His mind had no bitterness. Bitterness arises out of some inner uncertainty; Caesar had a rare certainty as to what he wanted to do and as to his being able to do it. He was not afraid of other people or of their judgements. He had no need to compare himself uneasily with them. He could stand on what he did, irrespective of what they thought about it. He had come to build, not to destroy. He had seen the failure of Marius and of Sulla. Sulla had tried to restart Rome on a false basis—the rule of one party in the State, standing on the bleeding bodies and broken fortunes of the other. He had failed. His system had crumbled, and in its ruin it had brought the whole State to the ground. Moreover, Sulla's system had left no room for growth. Rome's task in the world had grown enormously and the old machine was quite incapable of fulfilling it. Caesar wanted to create a new machine that could govern not a city but a world.

see caption

A ROMAN COIN
celebrating the murder of Caesar

Caesar worked with the energy and power of a giant at his colossal task. Every part of the State was in disorder—the army, the navy, the treasury, the laws, trade, the whole business of government. He had to reconstruct the whole, and in the space of little more than a year he did much towards this. And besides these great tasks there were lesser ones—the reform of the calendar, of the system of weights and measures, of the language. Reforms are never popular. The change from bad to good is slow and gradual. Caesar's followers were not made as rich as they had hoped. His measures were directed to filling, not private pockets, but the coffers of the State.

The people loved him. Their lot was vastly improved. But a growing body began to say that he was behaving as a tyrant and that things were no better than they had been under the old government. Some of these people were sincere republicans who were afraid that Caesar was trying to make himself king. Among them was Marcus Junius Brutus.

Brutus had married Cato's daughter and shared many of Cato's ideas. Round him there gathered a knot of men, among whom the ablest was Caius Cassius, who determined to free the city of the tyrant. To the minds of Brutus and Cassius it seemed that Caesar was destroying the seeds of greatness in all other men, to make himself supreme. Shakespeare makes Cassius argue thus:

The Penalty of Greatness

Cassius. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
'Brutus' will start a spirit as soon as 'Caesar'.
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art sham'd!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was fam'd with more than with one man?
When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,
That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O! you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I. ii.

Caesar was warned of the conspiracy but took little heed. He had always taken his life in his hand. He knew that he walked in constant danger. When a

soothsayer warned him to beware the Ides of March he only laughed; and when the Ides (March 15) came and his wife implored him to stay indoors, he paid no attention but set out for a meeting of the Senate as usual to transact his daily business, hearing petitions and so on.

It was the day chosen by the conspirators. One of them detained Marcus Antonius, who generally watched over his chief's safety: the others gathered round Caesar. At a sudden signal, they fell upon him with their daggers. Caesar was unarmed. At the foot of the statue of Pompeius, which he had himself caused to be set up in a place of honour, he fell. Pierced by six and thirty wounds he died. Marcus Brutus raised his dagger, dyed with Caesar's blood, and holding it aloft declared that he had freed Rome from a tyrant.

see caption

A CINERARY URN

So Caesar fell (44). Years of bitter civil war followed. Then at last Caesar's nephew and adopted son, Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus, did that which Brutus had slain Caesar to prevent—changed the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire. All the Emperors bore the name of Caesar. Throughout the vast world over which the Roman eagles flew, Julius Caesar was worshipped almost as a god.

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see caption

A ROMAN WATER-CARRIER
with his water-skin on his back

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