

JULIUS CÆSAR



THE PIRATES AT ANCHOR

JULIUS CÆSAR

BY

JACOB ABBOTT

with ENGRAVINGS

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PREFACE

It is the object of this series of histories to present a clear, distinct, and connected narrative of the lives of those great personages who have in various ages of the world made themselves celebrated as leaders among mankind, and, by the part they have taken in the public affairs of great nations, have exerted the widest influence on the history of the human race. The end which the author has had in view is twofold: first, to communicate such information in respect to the subjects of his narratives as is important for the general reader to possess; and, secondly, to draw such moral lessons from the events described and the characters delineated as they may legitimately teach to the people of the present age. Though written in a direct and simple style, they are intended for, and addressed to, minds possessed of some considerable degree of maturity, for such minds only can fully appreciate the character and action which exhibits itself, as nearly all that is described in these volumes does, in close combination with the conduct and policy of governments, and the great events of international history.

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CHAPTER I

MARIUS AND SYLLA

THERE were three great European nations in ancient days, each of which furnished history with a hero: the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans.

Alexander was the hero of the Greeks. He was King of Macedon, a country lying north of Greece proper. He headed an army of his countrymen, and made an excursion for conquest and glory into Asia. He made himself master of all that quarter of the globe, and reigned over it in Babylon, till he brought himself to an early grave by the excesses into which his boundless prosperity allured him. His fame rests on his triumphant success in building up for himself so vast an empire, and the admiration which his career has always excited among mankind is heightened by the consideration of his youth, and of the noble and generous impulses which strongly marked his character.

The Carthaginian hero was Hannibal. We class the Carthaginians among the European nations of antiquity; for, in respect to their origin, their civilization, and all their commercial and political relations, they belonged to the European race, though it is true that their

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capital was on the African side of the Mediterranean Sea. Hannibal was the great Carthaginian hero. He earned his fame by the energy and implacableness of his hate. The work of his life was to keep a vast empire in a state of continual anxiety and terror for fifty years, so that his claim to greatness and glory rests on the determination, the perseverance, and the success with which he fulfilled his function of being, while he lived, the terror of the world.

The Roman hero was Cæsar. He was born just one hundred years before the Christian era. His renown does not depend, like that of Alexander, on foreign conquests, nor, like that of Hannibal, on the terrible energy of his aggressions upon foreign foes, but upon his protracted and dreadful contests with, and ultimate triumphs over, his rivals and competitors at home. When he appeared upon the stage, the Roman empire already included nearly all of the world that was worth possessing. There were no more conquests to be made. Cæsar did, indeed, enlarge, in some degree, the boundaries of the empire; but the main question in his day was, who should possess the power which preceding conquerors had acquired.

The Roman empire, as it existed in those days, must not be conceived of by the reader as united together under one compact and consolidated government. It was, on the other hand, a vast congeries of nations, widely dissimilar in every respect from each other, speaking various languages, and having various customs and laws. They were all, however, more or less dependent upon, and connected with, the great central power. Some of

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these countries were provinces, and were governed by officers appointed and sent out by the authorities at Rome. These governors had to collect the taxes of their provinces, and also to preside over and direct, in many important respects, the administration of justice. They had, accordingly, abundant opportunities to enrich themselves while thus in office, by collecting more money than they paid over to the government at home, and by taking bribes to favor the rich man's cause in court. Thus the more wealthy and prosperous provinces were objects of great competition among aspirants for office at Rome. Leading men would get these appointments, and, after remaining long enough in their provinces to acquire a fortune, would come back to Rome, and expend it in intrigues and maneuvers to obtain higher offices still.

Whenever there was any foreign war to be carried on with a distant nation or tribe, there was always a great eagerness among all the military officers of the state to be appointed to the command. They each felt sure that they should conquer in the contest, and they could enrich themselves still more rapidly by the spoils of victory in war, than by extortion and bribes in the government of a province in peace. Then, besides, a victorious general coming back to Rome always found that his military renown added vastly to his influence and power in the city. He was welcomed with celebrations and triumphs; the people flocked to see him and to shout his praise. He placed his trophies of victory in the temples, and entertained the populace with games and shows, and with combats of gladiators or of wild beasts,

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which he had brought home with him for this purpose in the train of his army. While he was thus enjoying his triumph, his political enemies would be thrown into the back ground and into the shade; unless, indeed, some one of them might himself be earning the same honors in some other field, to come back in due time, and claim his share of power and celebrity in his turn. In this case, Rome would be sometimes distracted and rent by the conflicts and contentions of military rivals, who had acquired powers too vast for all the civil influences of the Republic to regulate or control.

There had been two such rivals just before the time of Cæsar, who had filled the world with their quarrels. They were Marius and Sylla. Their very names have been, in all ages of the world, since their day, the symbols of rivalry and hate. They were the representatives respectively of the two great parties into which the Roman state, like every other community in which the population at large have any voice in governing, always has been, and probably always will be divided, the upper and the lower; or, as they were called in those days, the patrician and the plebeian. Sylla was the patrician; the higher and more aristocratic portions of the community were on his side. Marius was the favorite of the plebeian masses. In the contests, however, which they waged with each other, they did not trust to the mere influence of votes. They relied much more upon the soldiers they could gather under their respective standards, and upon their power of intimidating, by means of them, the Roman assemblies. There was a war to be waged with Mithridates, a very powerful Asiatic monarch, which

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ROMAN PLEBEIANS

promised great opportunities for acquiring fame and plunder. Sylla was appointed to the command. While he was absent, however, upon some campaign in Italy, Marius contrived to have the decision reversed, and the command transferred to him. Two officers, called tribunes, were sent to Sylla's camp to inform him of the change. Sylla killed the officers for daring to bring him such a message, and began immediately to march toward Rome. In retaliation for the murder of the tribunes, the party of Marius in the city killed some of Sylla's prominent friends there, and a general alarm spread itself throughout the population. The Senate, which was a sort of House of Lords, embodying mainly the power and influence of the patrician party, and was, of course, on Sylla's side, sent out to him, when he had arrived

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within a few miles of the city, urging him to come no further. He pretended to comply; he marked out the ground for a camp; but he did not, on that account, materially delay his march. The next morning he was in possession of the city. The friends of Marius attempted to resist him, by throwing stones upon his troops from the roofs of the houses. Sylla ordered every house from which these symptoms of resistance appeared to be set on fire. Thus the whole population of a vast and wealthy city were thrown into a condition of extreme danger and terror, by the conflicts of two great bands of armed men, each claiming to be their friends.

Marius was conquered in this struggle, and fled for his life. Many of the friends whom he left behind him were killed. The Senate were assembled, and, at Sylla's orders, a decree was passed declaring Marius a public enemy, and offering a reward to any one who would bring his head back to Rome.

Marius fled, friendless and alone, to the southward, hunted every where by men who were eager to get the reward offered for his head. After various romantic adventures and narrow escapes, he succeeded in making his way across the Mediterranean Sea, and found at last a refuge in a hut among the ruins of Carthage. He was an old man, being now over seventy years of age.

Of course, Sylla thought that his great rival and enemy was now finally disposed of, and he accordingly began to make preparations for his Asiatic campaign. He raised his army, built and equipped a fleet, and went away. As soon as he was gone, Marius's friends in

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the city began to come forth, and to take measures for reinstating themselves in power. Marius returned, too, from Africa, and soon gathered about him a large army. Being the friend, as he pretended, of the lower classes of society, he collected vast multitudes of revolted slaves, outlaws, and other desperadoes, and advanced toward Rome. He assumed, himself, the dress, and air, and savage demeanor of his followers. His countenance had been rendered haggard and cadaverous partly by the influence of exposures, hardships, and suffering upon his advanced age, and partly by the stern and moody plans and determinations of revenge which his mind was perpetually revolving. He listened to the deputations which the Roman Senate sent out to him from time to time, as he advanced toward the city, but refused to make any terms. He moved forward with all the outward deliberation and calmness suitable to his years, while all the ferocity of a tiger was burning within.

As soon as he had gained possession of the city, he began his work of destruction. He first beheaded one of the consuls, and ordered his head to be set up, as a public spectacle, in the most conspicuous place in the city. This was the beginning. All the prominent friends of Sylla, men of the highest rank and station, were then killed, wherever they could be found, without sentence, without trial, without any other accusation, even, than the military decision of Marius that they were his enemies, and must die. For those against whom he felt any special animosity, he contrived some special mode

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of execution. One, whose fate he wished particularly to signalize, was thrown down from the Tarpeian Rock.

The Tarpeian Rock was a precipice about fifty feet high, which is still to be seen in Rome, from which the worst of state criminals were sometimes thrown. They were taken up to the top by a stair, and were then hurled from the summit, to die miserably, writhing in agony after their fall, upon the rocks below.

The Tarpeian Rock received its name from the ancient story of Tarpeia. The tale is, that Tarpeia was a Roman girl, who lived at a time in the earliest periods of the Roman history, when the city was besieged by an army from one of the neighboring nations. Besides their shields, the story is that the soldiers had golden bracelets upon their arms. They wished Tarpeia to open the gates and let them in. She promised to do so if they would give her their bracelets; but, as she did not know the name of the shining ornaments, the language she used to designate them was, "Those things you have upon your arms." The soldiers acceded to her terms; she opened the gates, and they, instead of giving her the bracelets, threw their *shields* upon her as they passed, until the poor girl was crushed down with them and destroyed. This was near the Tarpeian Rock, which afterward took her name. The rock is now found to be perforated by a great many subterranean passages, the remains, probably, of ancient quarries. Some of these galleries are now walled up; others are open; and the people who live around the spot believe, it is said, to this day, that Tarpeia herself sits, enchanted, far in the interior of these caverns, covered with gold and jewels,

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but that whoever attempts to find her is fated by an irresistible destiny to lose his way, and he never returns. The last story is probably as true as the other.

Marius continued his executions and massacres until the whole of Sylla's party had been slain or put to flight. He made every effort to discover Sylla's wife and child, with a view to destroying them also, but they could not be found. Some friends of Sylla, taking compassion on their innocence and helplessness, concealed them, and thus saved Marius from the commission of one intended crime. Marius was disappointed, too, in some other cases, where men whom he had intended to kill destroyed themselves to baffle his vengeance. One shut himself up in a room with burning charcoal, and was suffocated with the fumes. Another bled himself to death upon a public altar, calling down the judgments of the god to whom he offered this dreadful sacrifice, upon the head of the tyrant whose atrocious cruelty he was thus attempting to evade.

By the time that Marius had got fairly established in his new position, and was completely master of Rome, and the city had begun to recover a little from the shock and consternation produced by his executions, he fell sick. He was attacked with an acute disease of great violence. The attack was perhaps produced, and was certainly aggravated by, the great mental excitements through which he had passed during his exile, and in the entire change of fortune which had attended his return. From being a wretched fugitive, hiding for his life among gloomy and desolate ruins, he found himself suddenly transferred to the mastery of the world. His

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mind was excited, too, in respect to Sylla, whom he had not yet reached or subdued, but who was still prosecuting his war against Mithridates. Marius had had him pronounced by the Senate an enemy to his country, and was meditating plans to reach him in his distant province, considering his triumph incomplete as long as his great rival was at liberty and alive. The sickness cut short these plans, but it only inflamed to double violence the excitement and the agitations which attended them.

As the dying tyrant tossed restlessly upon his bed, it was plain that the delirious ravings which he began soon to utter were excited by the same sentiments of insatiable ambition and ferocious hate whose calmer dictates he had obeyed when well. He imagined that he had succeeded in supplanting Sylla in his command, and that he was himself in Asia at the head of his armies. Impressed with this idea, he stared wildly around; he called aloud the name of Mithridates; he shouted orders to imaginary troops; he struggled to break away from the restraints which the attendants about his bedside imposed, to attack the phantom foes which haunted him in his dreams. This continued for several days, and when at last nature was exhausted by the violence of these paroxysms of phrensy, the vital powers which had been for seventy long years spending their strength in deeds of selfishness, cruelty, and hatred, found their work done, and sunk to revive no more.

Marius left a son, of the same name with himself, who attempted to retain his father's power; but Sylla, having brought his war with Mithridates to a

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conclusion, was now on his return from Asia, and it was very evident that a terrible conflict was about to ensue. Sylla advanced triumphantly through the country, while Marius the younger and his partisans concentrated their forces about the city, and prepared for defense. The people of the city were divided, the aristocratic faction adhering to the cause of Sylla, while the democratic influences sided with Marius. Political parties rise and fall, in almost all ages of the world, in alternate fluctuations, like those of the tides. The faction of Marius had been for some time in the ascendancy, and it was now its turn to fall. Sylla found, therefore, as he advanced, every thing favorable to the restoration of his own party to power. He destroyed the armies which came out to oppose him. He shut up the young Marius in a city not far from Rome, where he had endeavored to find shelter and protection, and then advanced himself and took possession of the city. There he caused to be enacted again the horrid scenes of massacre and murder which Marius had perpetrated before, going, however, as much beyond the example which he followed as men usually do in the commission of crime. He gave out lists of the names of men whom he wished to have destroyed, and these unhappy victims of his revenge were to be hunted out by bands of reckless soldiers, in their dwellings, or in the places of public resort in the city, and dispatched by the sword wherever they could be found. The scenes which these deeds created in a vast and populous city can scarcely be conceived of by those who have never witnessed the horrors produced by the massacres of civil war. Sylla himself went through with

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this work in the most cool and unconcerned manner, as if he were performing the most ordinary duties of an officer of state. He called the Senate together one day, and, while he was addressing them, the attention of the Assembly was suddenly distracted by the noise of outcries and screams in the neighboring streets from those who were suffering military execution there. The senators started with horror at the sound. Sylla, with an air of great composure and unconcern, directed the members to listen to him, and to pay no attention to what was passing elsewhere. The sounds that they heard were, he said, only some correction which was bestowed by his orders on certain disturbers of the public peace.

Sylla's orders for the execution of those who had taken an active part against him were not confined to Rome. They went to the neighboring cities and to distant provinces, carrying terror and distress every where. Still, dreadful as these evils were, it is possible for us, in the conceptions which we form, to overrate the extent of them. In reading the history of the Roman empire during the civil wars of Marius and Sylla, one might easily imagine that the whole population of the country was organized into the two contending armies, and were employed wholly in the work of fighting with and massacring each other. But nothing like this can be true. It is obviously but a small part, after all, of an extended community that can be ever actively and personally engaged in these deeds of violence and blood. Man is not naturally a ferocious wild beast. On the contrary, he loves, ordinarily, to live in peace and quietness,

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to till his lands and tend his flocks, and to enjoy the blessings of peace and repose. It is comparatively but a small number in any age of the world, and in any nation, whose passions of ambition, hatred, or revenge become so strong as that they love bloodshed and war. But these few, when they once get weapons into their hands, trample recklessly and mercilessly upon the rest. One ferocious human tiger, with a spear or a bayonet to brandish, will tyrannize as he pleases over a hundred quiet men, who are armed only with shepherds' crooks, and whose only desire is to live in peace with their wives and their children.

Thus, while Marius and Sylla, with some hundred thousand armed and reckless followers, were carrying terror and dismay wherever they went, there were many millions of herdsmen and husbandmen in the Roman world who were dwelling in all the peace and quietness they could command, improving with their peaceful industry every acre where corn would ripen or grass grow. It was by taxing and plundering the proceeds of this industry that the generals and soldiers, the consuls and prætors, and proconsuls and proprætors, filled their treasuries, and fed their troops, and paid the artisans for fabricating their arms. With these avails they built the magnificent edifices of Rome, and adorned its environs with sumptuous villas. As they had the power and the arms in their hands, the peaceful and the industrious had no alternative but to submit. They went on as well as they could with their labors, bearing patiently every interruption, returning again to till their fields after the desolating march of the army had passed away,

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and repairing the injuries of violence, and the losses sustained by plunder, without useless repining. They looked upon an armed government as a necessary and inevitable affliction of humanity, and submitted to its destructive violence as they would submit to an earthquake or a pestilence. The tillers of the soil manage better in this country at the present day. They have the power in their own hands, and they watch very narrowly to prevent the organization of such hordes of armed desperadoes as have held the peaceful inhabitants of Europe in terror from the earliest periods down to the present day.

When Sylla returned to Rome, and took possession of the supreme power there, in looking over the lists of public men, there was one whom he did not know at first what to do with. It was the young Julius Cæsar, the subject of this history. Cæsar was, by birth, patrician, having descended from a long line of noble ancestors. There had been, before his day, a great many Cæsars who had held the highest offices of the state, and many of them had been celebrated in history. He naturally, therefore, belonged to Sylla's side, as Sylla was the representative of the patrician interest. But then Cæsar had personally been inclined toward the party of Marius. The elder Marius had married his aunt, and, besides, Cæsar himself had married the daughter of Cinna, who had been the most efficient and powerful of Marius's coadjutors and friends. Cæsar was at this time a very young man, and he was of an ardent and reckless character, though he had, thus far, taken no active part in public affairs. Sylla overlooked him for

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a time, but at length was about to put his name on the list of the proscribed. Some of the nobles, who were friends both of Sylla and of Cæsar too, interceded for the young man; Sylla yielded to their request, or, rather, suspended his decision, and sent orders to Cæsar to repudiate his wife, the daughter of Cinna. Her name was Cornelia. Cæsar absolutely refused to repudiate his wife. He was influenced in this decision partly by affection for Cornelia, and partly by a sort of stern and indomitable insubmissiveness, which formed, from his earliest years, a prominent trait in his character, and which led him, during all his life, to brave every possible danger rather than allow himself to be controlled. Cæsar knew very well that, when this his refusal should be reported to Sylla, the next order would be for his destruction. He accordingly fled. Sylla deprived him of his titles and offices, confiscated his wife's fortune and his own patrimonial estate, and put his name upon the list of the public enemies. Thus Cæsar became a fugitive and an exile. The adventures which befell him in his wanderings will be described in the following chapter.

Sylla was now in the possession of absolute power. He was master of Rome, and of all the countries over which Rome held sway. Still he was nominally not a magistrate, but only a general returning victoriously from his Asiatic campaign, and putting to death, somewhat irregularly, it is true, by a sort of martial law, persons whom he found, as he said, disturbing the public peace. After having thus effectually disposed of the power of his enemies, he laid aside, ostensibly, the government of the sword, and submitted himself and his

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future measures to the control of law. He placed himself ostensibly at the disposition of the city. They chose him dictator, which was investing him with absolute and unlimited power. He remained on this, the highest pinnacle of worldly ambition, a short time, and then resigned his power, and devoted the remainder of his days to literary pursuits and pleasures. Monster as he was in the cruelties which he inflicted upon his political foes, he was intellectually of a refined and cultivated mind, and felt an ardent interest in the promotion of literature and the arts.

The quarrel between Marius and Sylla, in respect to every thing which can make such a contest great, stands in the estimation of mankind as the greatest personal quarrel which the history of the world has ever recorded. Its origin was in the simple personal rivalry of two ambitious men. It involved, in its consequences, the peace and happiness of the world. In their reckless struggles, the fierce combatants trampled on every thing that came in their way, and destroyed mercilessly, each in his turn, all that opposed them. Mankind have always execrated their crimes, but have never ceased to admire the frightful and almost superhuman energy with which they committed them.

CHAPTER II

CÆSAR'S EARLY YEARS

CÆSAR does not seem to have been much disheartened and depressed by his misfortunes. He possessed in his early life more than the usual share of buoyancy and light-heartedness of youth, and he went away from Rome to enter, perhaps, upon years of exile and wandering, with a determination to face boldly and to brave the evils and dangers which surrounded him, and not to succumb to them.

Sometimes they who become great in their maturer years are thoughtful, grave, and sedate when young. It was not so, however, with Cæsar. He was of a very gay and lively disposition. He was tall and handsome in his person, fascinating in his manners, and fond of society, as people always are who know or who suppose that they shine in it. He had seemed, in a word, during his residence at Rome, wholly intent upon the pleasures of a gay and joyous life, and upon the personal observation which his rank, his wealth, his agreeable manners and his position in society secured for him. In fact, they who observed and studied his character in these early years, thought that, although his situation was very favorable for acquiring power and renown, he would never feel

any strong degree of ambition to avail himself of its advantages. He was too much interested, they thought, in personal pleasures ever to become great, either as a military commander or a statesman.

Sylla, however, thought differently. He had penetration enough to perceive, beneath all the gayety and love of pleasure which characterized Cæsar's youthful life, the germs of a sterner and more aspiring spirit, which, he was very sorry to see, was likely to expend its future energies in hostility to him. By refusing to submit to Sylla's commands, Cæsar had, in effect, thrown himself entirely upon the other party, and would be, of course, in future identified with them. Sylla consequently looked upon him now as a confirmed and settled enemy. Some friends of Cæsar among the patrician families interceded in his behalf with Sylla again, after he had fled from Rome. They wished Sylla to pardon him, saying that he was a mere boy and could do him no harm. Sylla shook his head, saying that, young as he was, he saw in him indications of a future power which he thought was more to be dreaded than that of many Mariuses.

One reason which led Sylla to form this opinion of Cæsar was, that the young nobleman, with all his love of gayety and pleasure, had not neglected his studies, but had taken great pains to perfect himself in such intellectual pursuits as ambitious men who looked forward to political influence and ascendancy were accustomed to prosecute in those days. He had studied the Greek language, and read the works of Greek historians; and he attended lectures on philosophy

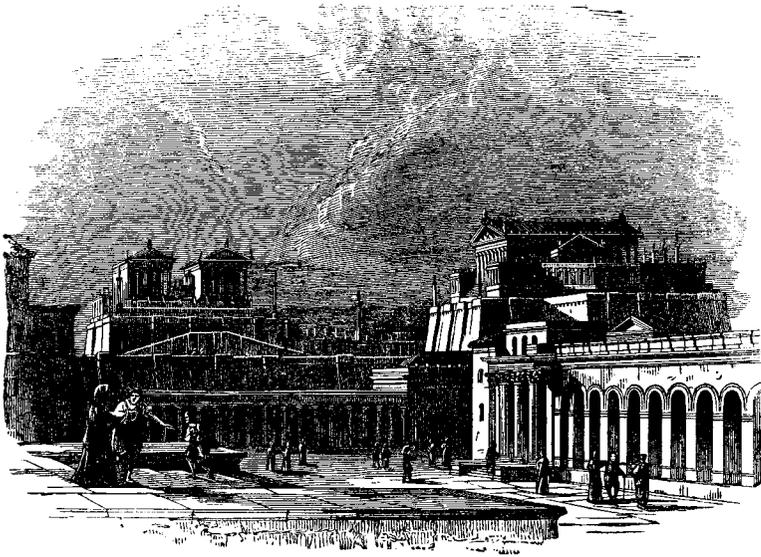
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and rhetoric, and was obviously interested deeply in acquiring power as a public speaker. To write and speak well gave a public man great influence in those days. Many of the measures of the government were determined by the action of great assemblies of the free citizens, which action was itself, in a great measure, controlled by the harangues of orators who had such powers of voice and such qualities of mind as enabled them to gain the attention and sway the opinions of large bodies of men.

It must not be supposed, however, that this popular power was shared by all the inhabitants of the city. At one time, when the population of the city was about three millions the number of free citizens was only three hundred thousand. The rest were laborers, artisans, and slaves, who had no voice in public affairs. The free citizens held very frequent public assemblies. There were various squares and open spaces in the city where such assemblies were convened, and where courts of justice were held. The Roman name for such a square was *forum*. There was one which was distinguished above all the rest, and was called emphatically The Forum. It was a magnificent square, surrounded by splendid edifices, and ornamented by sculptures and statues without number. There were ranges of porticoes along the sides, where the people were sheltered from the weather when necessary, though it is seldom that there is any necessity for shelter under an Italian sky. In this area and under these porticoes the people held their assemblies, and here courts of justice were accustomed to sit. The Forum was ornamented continually with

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new monuments, temples, statues, and columns by successful generals returning in triumph from foreign campaigns, and by proconsuls and prætors coming back enriched from their provinces, until it was fairly choked up with its architectural magnificence, and it had at last to be partially cleared again, as one would thin out too dense a forest, in order to make room for the assemblies which it was its main function to contain.



A ROMAN FORUM

The people of Rome had, of course, no printed books, and yet they were mentally cultivated and refined, and were qualified for a very high appreciation of intellectual pursuits and pleasures. In the absence, therefore, of all facilities for private reading, the Forum became the great central point of attraction. The same kind of interest which, in our day, finds its gratification

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in reading volumes of printed history quietly at home, or in silently perusing the columns of newspapers and magazines in libraries and reading-rooms, where a whisper is seldom heard, in Cæsar's day brought every body to the Forum, to listen to historical harangues, or political discussions, or forensic arguments in the midst of noisy crowds. Here all tidings centered; here all questions were discussed and all great elections held. Here were waged those ceaseless conflicts of ambition and struggles of power on which the fate of nations, and sometimes the welfare of almost half mankind depended. Of course, every ambitious man who aspired to an ascendancy over his fellow-men, wished to make his voice heard in the Forum. To calm the boisterous tumult there, and to hold, as some of the Roman orators could do, the vast assemblies in silent and breathless attention, was a power as delightful in its exercise as it was glorious in its fame. Cæsar had felt this ambition, and had devoted himself very earnestly to the study of oratory.

His teacher was Apollonius, a philosopher and rhetorician from Rhodes. Rhodes is a Grecian island, near the southwestern coast of Asia Minor. Apollonius was a teacher of great celebrity, and Cæsar became a very able writer and speaker under his instructions. His time and attention were, in fact, strangely divided between the highest and noblest intellectual avocations, and the lowest sensual pleasures of a gay and dissipated life. The coming of Sylla had, however, interrupted all; and, after receiving the dictator's command to give up his wife and abandon the Marian faction, and

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determining to disobey it, he fled suddenly from Rome, as was stated at the close of the last chapter, at midnight, and in disguise.

He was sick, too, at the time, with an intermittent fever. The paroxysm returned once in three or four days, leaving him in tolerable health during the interval. He went first into the country of the Sabines, northeast of Rome, where he wandered up and down, exposed continually to great dangers from those who knew that he was an object of the great dictator's displeasure, and who were sure of favor and of a reward if they could carry his head to Sylla. He had to change his quarters every day, and to resort to every possible mode of concealment. He was, however, at last discovered, and seized by a centurion. A centurion was a commander of a hundred men; his rank and his position therefore, corresponded somewhat with those of a *captain* in a modern army. Cæsar was not much disturbed at this accident. He offered the centurion a bribe sufficient to induce him to give up his prisoner, and so escaped.

The two ancient historians, whose records contain nearly all the particulars of the early life of Cæsar which are now known, give somewhat contradictory accounts of the adventures which befell him during his subsequent wanderings. They relate, in general, the same incidents, but in such different connections, that the precise chronological order of the events which occurred can not now be ascertained. At all events, Cæsar, finding that he was no longer safe in the vicinity of Rome, moved gradually to the eastward, attended by a few followers, until he reached the sea, and there

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he embarked on board a ship to leave his native land altogether. After various adventures and wanderings, he found himself at length in Asia Minor, and he made his way at last to the kingdom of Bithynia, on the northern shore. The name of the king of Bithynia was Nicomedes. Cæsar joined himself to Nicomedes's court, and entered into his service. In the mean time, Sylla had ceased to pursue him, and ultimately granted him a pardon, but whether before or after this time is not now to be ascertained. At all events, Cæsar became interested in the scenes and enjoyments of Nicomedes's court, and allowed the time to pass away without forming any plans for returning to Rome.

On the opposite side of Asia Minor, that is, on the southern shore, there was a wild and mountainous region called Cilicia. The great chain of mountains called Taurus approaches here very near to the sea, and the steep conformations of the land, which, in the interior, produce lofty ranges and summits, and dark valleys and ravines, form, along the line of the shore, capes and promontories, bounded by precipitous sides, and with deep bays and harbors between them. The people of Cilicia were accordingly half sailors, half mountaineers. They built swift galleys, and made excursions in great force over the Mediterranean Sea for conquest and plunder. They would capture single ships, and sometimes even whole fleets of merchantmen. They were even strong enough on many occasions to land and take possession of a harbor and a town, and hold it, often, for a considerable time, against all the efforts of the neighboring powers to dislodge them. In case,

however, their enemies became at any time too strong for them, they would retreat to their harbors, which were so defended by the fortresses which guarded them, and by the desperate bravery of the garrisons, that the pursuers generally did not dare to attempt to force their way in; and if, in any case, a town or a port was taken, the indomitable savages would continue their retreat to the fastnesses of the mountains, where it was utterly useless to attempt to follow them.

But with all their prowess and skill as naval combatants, and their hardihood as mountaineers, the Cilicians lacked one thing which is very essential in every nation to an honorable military fame. They had no poets or historians of their own, so that the story of their deeds had to be told to posterity by their enemies. If they had been able to narrate their own exploits, they would have figured, perhaps, upon the page of history as a small but brave and efficient maritime power, pursuing for many years a glorious career of conquest, and acquiring imperishable renown by their enterprise and success. As it was, the Romans, their enemies, described their deeds and gave them their designation. They called them robbers and pirates; and robbers and pirates they must forever remain.

And it is, in fact, very likely true that the Cilician commanders did not pursue their conquests and commit their depredations on the rights and the property of others in quite so systematic and methodical a manner as some other conquering states have done. They probably seized private property a little more unceremoniously than is customary; though all belligerent nations, even in

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these Christian ages of the world, feel at liberty to seize and confiscate private property when they find it afloat at sea, while, by a strange inconsistency, they respect it on the land. The Cilician pirates considered themselves at war with all mankind, and, whatever merchandise they found passing from port to port along the shores of the Mediterranean, they considered lawful spoil. They intercepted the corn which was going from Sicily to Rome, and filled their own granaries with it. They got rich merchandise from the ships of Alexandria, which brought, sometimes, gold, and gems, and costly fabrics from the East; and they obtained, often, large sums of money by seizing men of distinction and wealth, who were continually passing to and fro between Italy and Greece, and holding them for a ransom. They were particularly pleased to get possession in this way of Roman generals and officers of state, who were going out to take the command of armies, or who were returning from their provinces with the wealth which they had accumulated there.

Many expeditions were fitted out and many naval commanders were commissioned to suppress and subdue these common enemies of mankind, as the Romans called them. At one time, while a distinguished general, named Antonius, was in pursuit of them at the head of a fleet, a party of the pirates made a descent upon the Italian coast, south of Rome, at Nicenum, where the ancient patrimonial mansion of this very Antonius was situated, and took away several members of his family as captives, and so compelled him to ransom them by paying a very large sum of money. The pirates

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grew bolder and bolder in proportion to their success. They finally almost stopped all intercourse between Italy and Greece, neither the merchants daring to expose their merchandise, nor the passengers their persons to such dangers. They then approached nearer and nearer to Rome, and at last actually entered the Tiber, and surprised and carried off a Roman fleet which was anchored there. Cæsar himself fell into the hands of these pirates at some time during the period of his wanderings.

The pirates captured the ship in which he was sailing near Pharmacusa, a small island in the northeastern part of the Ægean Sea. He was not at this time in the destitute condition in which he had found himself on leaving Rome, but was traveling with attendants suitable to his rank, and in such a style and manner as at once made it evident to the pirates that he was a man of distinction. They accordingly held him for ransom, and, in the mean time, until he could take measures for raising the money, they kept him a prisoner on board the vessel which had captured him.

In this situation, Cæsar, though entirely in the power and at the mercy of his lawless captors, assumed such an air of superiority and command in all his intercourse with them as at first awakened their astonishment, then excited their admiration, and ended in almost subjecting them to his will. He asked them what they demanded for his ransom. They said twenty talents, which was quite a large amount, a talent itself being a considerable sum of money. Cæsar laughed at this demand, and told them it was plain that they did not

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know who he was. He would give them *fifty* talents. He then sent away his attendants to the shore, with orders to proceed to certain cities where he was known, in order to procure the money, retaining only a physician and two servants for himself. While his messengers were gone, he remained on board the ship of his captors, assuming in every respect the air and manner of their master. When he wished to sleep, if they made a noise which disturbed him, he sent them orders to be still. He joined them in their sports and diversions on the deck, surpassing them in their feats, and taking the direction of every thing as if he were their acknowledged leader. He wrote orations and verses which he read to them, and if his wild auditors did not appear to appreciate the literary excellence of his compositions, he told them that they were stupid fools without any taste, adding, by way of apology, that nothing better could be expected of such barbarians.

The pirates asked him one day what he should do to them if he should ever, at any future time, take them prisoners. Cæsar said that he would crucify every one of them.

The ransom money at length arrived. Cæsar paid it to the pirates, and they, faithful to their covenant, sent him in a boat to the land. He was put ashore on the coast of Asia Minor. He proceeded immediately to Miletus, the nearest port, equipped a small fleet there, and put to sea. He sailed at once to the roadstead where the pirates had been lying, and found them still at anchor there, in perfect security. He attacked them, seized their ships, recovered his ransom money, and took the men

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all prisoners. He conveyed his captives to the land, and there fulfilled his threat that he would crucify them by cutting their throats and nailing their dead bodies to crosses which his men erected for the purpose along the shore.



THE PIRATES AT ANCHOR

During his absence from Rome Cæsar went to Rhodes, where his former preceptor resided, and he continued to pursue there for some time his former studies. He looked forward still to appearing one day in the Roman Forum. In fact, he began to receive messages from his friends at home that they thought it would be safe for him to return. Sylla had gradually withdrawn from power, and finally had died. The aristocratical party were indeed still in the ascendancy, but the party of Marius had begun to recover a little from the total overthrow with which Sylla's return, and his terrible military vengeance, had overwhelmed them. Cæsar himself, therefore, they thought, might, with prudent management, be safe in returning to Rome.

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He returned, but not to be prudent or cautious; there was no element of prudence or caution in his character. As soon as he arrived, he openly espoused the popular party. His first public act was to arraign the governor of the great province of Macedonia, through which he had passed on his way to Bithynia. It was a consul whom he thus impeached, and a strong partisan of Sylla's. His name was Dolabella. The people were astonished at his daring in thus raising the standard of resistance to Sylla's power, indirectly, it is true, but none the less really on that account. When the trial came on, and Cæsar appeared at the Forum, he gained great applause by the vigor and force of his oratory. There was, of course, a very strong and general interest felt in the case; the people all seeming to understand that, in this attack on Dolabella, Cæsar was appearing as their champion, and their hopes were revived at having at last found a leader capable of succeeding Marius, and building up their cause again. Dolabella was ably defended by orators on the other side, and was, of course, acquitted, for the power of Sylla's party was still supreme. All Rome, however, was aroused and excited by the boldness of Cæsar's attack, and by the extraordinary ability which he evinced in his mode of conducting it. He became, in fact, at once one of the most conspicuous and prominent men in the city.

Encouraged by his success, and the applauses which he received, and feeling every day a greater and greater consciousness of power, he began to assume more and more openly the character of the leader of the popular party. He devoted himself to public speaking in the

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Forum, both before popular assemblies and in the courts of justice, where he was employed a great deal as an advocate to defend those who were accused of political crimes. The people, considering him as their rising champion, were predisposed to regard every thing that he did with favor, and there was really a great intellectual power displayed in his orations and harangues. He acquired, in a word, great celebrity by his boldness and energy, and his boldness and energy were themselves increased in their turn as he felt the strength of his position increase with his growing celebrity.

At length the wife of Marius, who was Cæsar's aunt, died. She had lived in obscurity since her husband's proscription and death, his party having been put down so effectually that it was dangerous to appear to be her friend. Cæsar, however, made preparations for a magnificent funeral for her. There was a place in the Forum, a sort of pulpit, where public orators were accustomed to stand in addressing the assembly on great occasions. This pulpit was adorned with the brazen beaks of ships which had been taken by the Romans in former wars. The name of such a beak was *rostrum*; in the plural, *rostra*. The pulpit was itself, therefore, called the *Rostra*, that is, The Beaks; and the people were addressed from it on great public occasions.¹ Cæsar pronounced a splendid panegyric upon the wife of Marius, at this her funeral, from the *Rostra*, in the presence of a vast concourse of spectators, and he had the boldness to bring out and display to the people certain household

¹ In modern books this pulpit is sometimes called the *Rostrum*, using the word in the singular.

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images of Marius, which had been concealed from view ever since his death. Producing them again on such an occasion was annulling, so far as a public orator could do it, the sentence of condemnation which Sylla and the patrician party had pronounced against him, and bringing him forward again as entitled to public admiration and applause. The patrician partisans who were present attempted to rebuke this bold maneuver with expressions of disapprobation, but these expressions were drowned in the loud and long-continued bursts of applause with which the great mass of the assembled multitude hailed and sanctioned it. The experiment was very bold and very hazardous, but it was triumphantly successful.

A short time after this Cæsar had another opportunity for delivering a funeral oration; it was in the case of his own wife, the daughter of Cinna, who had been the colleague and coadjutor of Marius during the days of his power. It was not usual to pronounce such panegyrics upon Roman ladies unless they had attained to an advanced age. Cæsar, however, was disposed to make the case of his own wife an exception to the ordinary rule. He saw in the occasion an opportunity to give a new impulse to the popular cause, and to make further progress in gaining the popular favor. The experiment was successful in this instance too. The people were pleased at the apparent affection which his action evinced; and as Cornelia was the daughter of Cinna, he had opportunity, under pretext of praising the birth and parentage of the deceased, to laud the men whom Sylla's party had outlawed and destroyed. In a

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word, the patrician party saw with anxiety and dread that Cæsar was rapidly consolidating and organizing, and bringing back to its pristine strength and vigor, a party whose restoration to power would of course involve their own political, and perhaps personal ruin.

Cæsar began soon to receive appointments to public office, and thus rapidly increased his influence and power. Public officers and candidates for office were accustomed in those days to expend great sums of money in shows and spectacles to amuse the people. Cæsar went beyond all limits in these expenditures. He brought gladiators from distant provinces, and trained them at great expense, to fight in the enormous amphitheaters of the city, in the midst of vast assemblies of men. Wild beasts were procured also from the forests of Africa, and brought over in great numbers, under his direction, that the people might be entertained by their combats with captives taken in war, who were reserved for this dreadful fate. Cæsar gave, also, splendid entertainments, of the most luxurious and costly character, and he mingled with his guests at these entertainments, and with the people at large on other occasions, in so complaisant and courteous a manner as to gain universal favor.

He soon, by these means, not only exhausted all his own pecuniary resources, but plunged himself enormously into debt. It was not difficult for such a man in those days to procure an almost unlimited credit for such purposes as these, for every one knew that, if he finally succeeded in placing himself, by means of the popularity thus acquired, in stations of power, he

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could soon indemnify himself and all others who had aided him. The peaceful merchants, and artisans, and husbandmen of the distant provinces over which he expected to rule, would yield the revenues necessary to fill the treasuries thus exhausted. Still, Cæsar's expenditures were so lavish, and the debts he incurred were so enormous, that those who had not the most unbounded confidence in his capacity and his powers believed him irretrievably ruined.

The particulars, however, of these difficulties, and the manner in which Cæsar contrived to extricate himself from them, will be more fully detailed in the next chapter.