CAESAR
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PART THREE

THE CIVIL WAR
We have already seen the circumstances under which Pompey was proclaimed sole consul. This decision of the Senate gave him full dictatorial powers. He retained within the city of Rome the imperium which was attached to the office of pro-consul; he could dispose of the public funds as he pleased, and he could raise troops throughout Italy. Broadly speaking, he was endowed with discretionary powers, thanks to the time-honoured formula of public safety which declared the country to be in danger. 'He was the first of the Romans,' says Appian, 'who at the head of two large provinces and of several legions, and possessing a considerable fortune, was invested with the authority of a monarch by virtue of being the only consul.'

Henceforward he set no limit to his ambitions, and convinced of his omnipotence, he considered that he no longer needed Caesar. More than that: he persuaded himself that the only person who might hamper him in the realization of his plans was the man who nominally was still his associate. So long as Caesar stayed in Gaul, wrestling with the difficulties of his conquests, all was well. The day was fast approaching, however, when his proconsulship would end and he would be back in Rome. Pompey was fully aware that then he would have a formidable rival to contend with.

Therefore, without openly breaking with Caesar, he took advantage of his own increased power in order to undermine in advance, and for that matter, by strictly legal methods, that power Caesar would claim in the near future.

It was to this end that he brought in a bill authorizing any citizen to institute legal proceedings against any magistrate who had filled a public office since the year 70 (the year of his first consulship) and had been guilty of electoral corruption or underhand intrigue. This would permit anyone to come forward and accuse Caesar, who had used such methods openly and on a large scale. It was not enough, however, to furnish easy pretexts for summoning Caesar before the judges; it was equally necessary to make certain that these judges would be
ready to pronounce his condemnation, and should occasion arise, to help them in their task. That is why another bill was introduced aiming at the reorganization of the judiciary procedure. Lists were drawn up from which the judges were to be chosen, and of course Pompey allowed only those names to appear which suited him. The number of barristers taking part in the proceedings was limited 'so that the judges would not be bewildered and confused by their great number'. The time for the counsels' speeches was fixed in advance (two hours was the maximum for the accusation, and three for the defence), and—a serious matter—the accused were not permitted to ask eminent personalities to speak before the tribunal in their favour. The judges were given an armed guard to protect them against all violence and to insure that their deliberations were not interfered with. In order to encourage denunciations, Pompey had the ingenious idea of accepting as accusers those persons who had already been convicted for similar reasons. By denouncing other people who had been guilty of the same offence as themselves they would obtain the remission of their own penalties.

Caesar's party had been quick to detect the significance of these laws. 'They urged Pompey', says Appian, 'to concern himself with the maintenance of order instead of inviting informers to pry with hostile eyes into the past conduct of the first men of the Republic, among whose number they made Caesar's name heard.' Pompey was annoyed. 'It displeased him', writes the same author, 'that people should regard Caesar as being above the law, while he himself had come under its provisions in connection with his second consulship.'

The senators, in order to show that they were in full agreement with Pompey and no doubt in an effort to encourage him to persevere in his course, showered him with praises, granted him two more legions, extended his powers in the provinces he commanded for a further period of four years, and authorized him to deduct each year from the public funds a sum of one thousand talents for the maintenance and payment of his troops.

While Pompey was extending the range of his authority and influence in Rome, Caesar was engaged in fighting Vercingetorix and his allies. He was kept informed of these disturbing developments, but was too much taken up with directing military operations to do anything about them. His 'reply' came in due course, and it was overwhelming: it was a report announcing to the people of Rome
the surrender of Alesia and the end of the rising. The Senate, quite
crestfallen, could do nothing but decree new thanksgiving celebrations
in his honour, increasing them considerably in order to save face.
Twenty days were granted.

Caesar's supporters made the most of their opportunity. On the
strength of the precedent which had just been created in Pompey's
favour, they asked that 'in view of the countless battles fought by
Caesar for the Republic' he should be accorded either a second
consulship or a prolongation of his command.

A great debate took place on this subject. Pompey announced that
he possessed letters from Caesar asking for a successor and for the
termination of his proconsulship, but at the same time he acknowledged
that it would be perfectly justifiable to allow him to canvass for the
office of consul, in spite of his absence.

This move appeared to be clever enough, but in reality it was
rather clumsy. As he was supposed to be in close touch with his
associate, Pompey could claim to be well informed of his intentions.
Unless he was caught out in a deliberate lie, the truth of his allegations
could not be questioned. It now turned out that, contrary to the
reports of his agents, Caesar was not anxious to prolong his stay in
Gaul and was ready to give up his post to someone else. As for the
suggestion that he should be allowed to present himself while absent
as a candidate for the consulship, Pompey could not have helped
knowing that it would meet with unyielding opposition and that
there was no risk of its being adopted. He had, however, failed to
take into consideration the foresight and shrewdness of Caesar, who
was quite capable of seeing through his game.

As was to be expected, Cato rose to protest vehemently against
this proposal. He demanded that Caesar should lay down his arms
and come as a private individual to ask his fellow citizens for their
votes. Pompey did not insist, and the request presented by Caesar's
supporters was rejected.

Caesar then understood that he had the Senate against him and
that Pompey was in league with his opponents. He turned to the
tribunes of the people, using the old and tested method which had
so often brought him success. He reached an understanding with
them that a similar request should be presented to the comitia, 'in
order that his candidacy should not oblige him to leave his province
prematurely before he had ended the war'. This, according to
Suetonius, was his pretext.

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In reality, Caesar was simply concerned with a precaution to protect his safety. If at the expiration of his command he came to Rome as a private citizen to present himself as a candidate for election, the recent law of Pompey would enable the first person who came along to bring him before the tribunals during the period which must necessarily elapse before his election could take place; and the new judiciary procedure offered sufficient guarantees to make his condemnation appear to be certain. In getting himself elected while he was away he would not incur this danger, and on his arrival in Rome would pass without any transitional period from one public office to another, which would render him invulnerable. There was, however, yet another difficulty. By the law of 342, which was still in force, a citizen could not become consul again until ten years had passed. Caesar, who had been consul in 59, could not be legally re-elected before 48; in other words, he would not be able to present himself as a candidate until the comitia of July, 49. But his governorship came to an end in March, 50. Consequently, with no official appointment, Caesar would be forced to stay away from Rome for the space of fifteen months, vegetating in idleness! There was one remedy for this distressing prospect: it was the extension of his powers to cover the period. The Senate had just extended the powers of Pompey for another four years, and he only exercised them theoretically, through his legates. Caesar, who carried out his duties in person, without leaving the territories entrusted to his vigilance for a single day, considered that he fully deserved to be treated on the same footing for fifteen months. His claim met with fierce resistance.

While he was engaged in the task of exterminating the Bituriges, new consuls were taking over their duties in Rome: M. Claudius Marcellus and S. Sulpicius Rufus. The former, in particular, distinguished himself by his hostility towards Caesar. Not only did he categorically oppose any prolongation of his powers, but he started upon an active campaign urging his immediate recall and appointing his successor before the time fixed by law.

His task was facilitated by the malicious rumours concerning Caesar which were then being spread in Rome. At that time he was attacking the Bellovacii under Correus. Gloomy reports were circulated grossly exaggerating the extent of his difficulties. For instance, Caelius wrote to Cicero, his friend and master, who was at the moment away from the capital: 'A great many things are being said about Caesar, and they are not pleasant things. So far, however, they are only whispered.
One person claims that he has lost all his cavalry, which I am inclined to believe; another says that the Seventh Legion has been defeated and that he himself is encircled by the Bellovaci and cut off from his troops. . . . Such news is secretly passed round in the circle you are well acquainted with.

Exploiting these rumours, Marcellus had the question of Caesar’s recall and replacement put on the agenda for the session of June 1. Caesar’s supporters obstructed this move very ably. The same Caelius, in another letter to Cicero, has given a good description of the tactics they employed: ‘You know the routine: the discussion concerning the renewal of the appointment for the Gallic provinces is proposed. Someone is there with an opposition all prepared. Another intervenes and does not want any special province to be discussed until the Senate is able to make a statement which applies to them all. The game continues, and what with the quibbling over one thing after another, the business may drag on for two years or more.’

At last, on September 30, the debate opened. The atmosphere was no longer the same, however. The impression caused by the victorious conclusion of the campaign in Gaul was fresh in everyone’s mind. Uxellodunum, the last pocket of resistance, had just fallen. There was no longer anyone left to fight against. The Senate was carried away by this final and total success. Cato was the only one to support the proposal of Marcellus. As for Pompey, he let it be known that he opposed it because ‘for so short a time it was not worth while to wrong an illustrious citizen who had done great things for his country’. He did not, however, disguise the fact that after the appointed period had expired Caesar should, in his opinion, at once relinquish his command. The matter rested there.

Freed from his military worries, Caesar could now devote himself more actively to political battles. These had begun to turn in his favour, but there was always the same difficulty: he could not direct them efficiently when he was so far from Rome. More than ever he needed an active and energetic agent on the spot—another Clodius, in short.

In his second Philippic, Cicero has noted with great exactitude the methods Caesar employed to recruit his associates: ‘As soon as a man crippled with debts and reduced to poverty was known to him to be vicious and daring, he hastened to admit him to his intimacy.’

Among the young hotheads who had formerly attracted notice by
demonstrations against Caesar which were as untimely as they were futile, C. Scribonius Curio occupied the first place. Born about 84, he was now entering upon this thirty-fifth year. An intimate friend of Clodius, he had married his widow. As he was a still more intimate friend of Antony, who had just thrown in his lot for good with that of Caesar, it was perhaps through Antony that Caesar approached him. To begin with Caesar paid his debts, which Valerius Maximus estimates at sixty million sesterces. We may safely speculate that this was simply an advance payment on his future fees, for it was he who during the months to come would have to bear the main burden of defending Caesar's interests. Curio set about it most intelligently. At first, he was careful to keep their agreement secret. 'He thought', writes Dion Cassius, 'that the more he still passed as a friend among Caesar's enemies, the better he would get to know their most important secrets.' In order to mislead the opposition, he affected a certain hostility towards his new patron, who had him elected as tribune of the people. From that time Curio distinguished himself by the strangest proposals, according to Dion Cassius. They were directed against Caesar, but also against the influential senators devoted to Pompey. 'He did not want them to be adopted,' writes the same author, 'but his aim was that after they had been thrown out no other which was directed against Caesar could be accepted.' Then, one day, he laid before the Senate an impressive bill about the need for repairing the great roads of the Republic, and he asked to be named as their curator for the next five years. Appian gives us an explanation of this curious step: 'He knew quite well that he would not obtain what he asked, but he hoped that Pompey's friends would speak against him and in this way would provide him with a perfectly natural reason for showing his opposition to Pompey. Since it turned out as he had expected, he could openly change sides.'

On January 1, 50, the new consuls came into office. They were C. Claudius Marcellus, cousin of the previous one, and L. Aemilius Paullus. Marcellus had special reasons for bearing a grudge against Caesar, who only recently had conceived a plan to take away his wife: for he was the husband of the young Octavia who was to have been sacrificed in order to ensure the success of the matrimonial combination Caesar offered to Pompey, and nothing but the latter's refusal had saved the unfortunate husband from a cruel humiliation. He was, as Caesar realized, a dangerous enemy and unlikely to allow himself to be influenced, but his fellow-consul Paullus could be bought.
Deeply in debt, he made no difficulties about agreeing to a bargain. For a sum of 1,500 talents he promised to be silent and not to obstruct Caesar during his entire consulship.\textsuperscript{217} Nothing else was asked of him.

On March 1 of the year 50 the consul Marcellus, on the pretext that Caesar's powers were shortly coming to an end, thought the time had come to attack him, and proposed the nomination of successors to the governor of the Gauls and of Illyricum. Paullus, faithful to his promise, said nothing. When his turn came to speak, Curio declared himself against this proposal. He knew how to manoeuvre very skilfully, however, and started by adopting an attitude of perfect neutrality. He found Marcellus' proposal excellent: its only fault was that it was incomplete. In his eyes it was not enough to appoint a successor to Caesar, but someone also must be found to take Pompey's place. Curio considered this to be the only way to re-establish order in Rome and to make the Republic safe from all dangers.

His project aroused vehement protests from Pompey's followers. They pointed out that it was not at all the same thing; that Caesar's command was expiring, while Pompey's term was not, and that it was unjust to deprive him of his powers before the time was up. Curio would not be put off and made another proposal: let Caesar be given successors when the time came for Pompey to be replaced. In other words, if they were anxious to preserve the latter's powers until the date originally fixed, they had only to extend those of Caesar until the same date. He argued that 'given the state of mutual suspicion of these two citizens, Rome could not enjoy an enduring peace unless they both returned to the condition of private individuals at the same time'. Appian adds that Curio spoke in this manner 'because he knew that Pompey would not agree to be stripped of his authority'.

Pompey's reaction, however, was quite unexpected. He knew how to upset his opponent's calculations. He was away from Rome (he had just recovered from a serious illness and was convalescing near Naples), but as soon as he heard what had happened in the Senate he addressed a long epistle to the assembly. It opened with a eulogy of Caesar's achievements. That enabled him to pass on more easily to his own. After stressing the fact that he had not solicited the honours granted him, and that he had only accepted them against his will and at the earnest request of those who had besought him to save the Republic, he announced that he offered spontaneously to

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relinquish the authority vested in him—without waiting for the time of its expiration.

As soon as he was back in Rome, Pompey appeared before the Senate and repeated his declaration. He added that 'in his capacity as Caesar's friend and associate' he could let it be understood that Caesar would willingly do likewise and that 'after having accomplished so many great things, he would return to attend to his duties of supreme pontiff in full enjoyment of the honours and repose which were his due'. After this formal promise, the Senate might have immediately proceeded to the question of appointing the successors to the pro-consul of the Gauls. Curio, however, was not satisfied. The mere promise to renounce his powers was not enough, he observed; they must be relinquished on the spot. So long as that was not done, no one had the right to take Caesar's command from him. And carried away by that vehement eloquence which he used to such advantage, he violently attacked Pompey. It was a matter of vital importance not to leave so much power in the hands of one man. There was everything to be gained by playing off one rival against another, if one of them tried to make an attempt against the Republic. It was obvious that Pompey was aiming at tyranny; only Caesar with his army could make him hesitate and force him to lay down his command when it expired. However, in order to give himself an air of impartiality, Curio concluded that if Caesar and Pompey dared to resist, they would both have to be declared enemies of the people and an army would be raised to fight them. His proposal was not accepted. Thereupon, using his prerogative as a tribune, Curio brought the session to a close and the Senate adjourned without having decided anything. After all, that was exactly what he wanted.

Before they dispersed, the patres had decreed that Pompey and Caesar should each detach one legion from their forces; they claimed that these reinforcements were needed in Syria, where the military situation, since the disaster which had cost Crassus his life, was causing grave concern. In reality, their principal aim seems to have been to favour one rival at the expense of the other. At any rate, that was how Pompey interpreted it, and he was determined to exploit the decision in order to weaken Caesar's military power. Therefore he announced that, for his part, he would release the legion which he had lent to his associate in 53. Caesar, while fully grasping the true implications of this measure, obeyed without protest and at the same
time sent his own contingent. Thus, on the eve of decisive events, Caesar found himself deprived of two legions while his rival not only kept his own intact but was preparing to lay hands on those very troops which he himself had relinquished. The operation had to be registered as a pure loss for Caesar. He managed, however, to turn it to his advantage. The soldiers of Pompey’s legion each received a gratuity of 250 drachmae before they left. In parting, Caesar asked them to give their master the worst possible account of him. The officer sent by Pompey to take over the legion agreed, in exchange for an unknown sum, to recount numerous fancy stories to his chief: Caesar’s troops were worn out with fatigue; they were weary of their long service; their one and only idea was to get home; they would leave Caesar to join Pompey as soon as they had crossed the Alps; Caesar would be defeated by his own legions the moment Pompey appeared; all the soldiers detested Caesar and longed to serve under Pompey’s orders, and so on, and so forth.

Pompey was overjoyed when he heard these reports from his subordinate. He did not doubt their truth for a moment and his confidence in his forces became unshakeable. ‘When he was told,’ writes Plutarch, ‘that if Caesar marched on Rome it was difficult to see what troops there would be to resist him, he replied, smiling with self-assurance: “Wherever in Italy I strike the ground with my foot, legions will come forth.”’

In the meantime the two legions that had arrived in Rome, instead of being sent to some seaport to embark for Syria, were ordered to go to Capua to take up their winter quarters on the pretext that the situation in the east had become stabilised.

The days passed. All attempts to continue the discussion concerning the affairs of Gaul were frustrated by Curio’s veto. And during all this time Caesar remained in his province, serenely waiting for the day when he would be elected consul while still absent from Rome—a thing which, in Pompey’s eyes, could not be allowed to happen.

The people in Rome were living through anxious weeks, filled with dark forebodings, waiting for the storm which everyone knew was bound to break. In one of his letters to Cicero, dated September, 50, Caelius sums up the situation that had arisen: ‘The nearer we come to the inevitable struggle, the more we are struck by the greatness of the danger. On this ground the two most powerful men of the day will come into conflict: Pompey has decided that Caesar cannot become consul before he has relinquished his army and his provinces.'
And Caesar is convinced that there is no salvation for him unless he keeps his army... Thus these great demonstrations of affection and this great alliance are going to end, not in hidden animosity, but in open war.

Such was, in fact, the prevailing opinion, and the Senate began to mistrust one as much as the other of the two antagonists. This state of mind among the senators must be remembered when we examine the 'strange' session which took place probably in the course of the same month.

The consul Marcellus, persevering in his efforts to strike at Caesar, resorted to a rather ingenious method. In the past, the question under discussion had taken this form: *Should Caesar's successors be appointed and Pompey stripped of his command?* He conceived the idea of dividing it into two separate parts which he put to the vote one after the other. The first, *Should Caesar's successors be appointed?* received a unanimous affirmative answer. To the second, *Should Pompey be stripped of his command?* the majority replied in the negative. Marcellus was triumphant: he saw his plan succeeding to perfection. But Curio was on the watch. He immediately intervened, insisting that the question should be restored to its original form which envisaged the simultaneous replacement of the two rivals. This time, the vote gave quite a different result: by a majority of 370 to 22, the answer was in the affirmative, and so the assembly had unequivocally expressed its wish to see both these disturbing competitors disappear from the political scene.²¹⁸ ‘This vote, far from being hastily considered, faithfully reflected the real feelings of the Senate,’ Paul Guiraud once wrote on this subject, and he was perfectly correct. If the senators allowed themselves to be taken in at first by the astute move of Marcellus, Curio’s timely correction did not fail to bring them back to a proper evaluation of the existing state of affairs. To be sure, all members of the Senate feared Caesar. But there were many who mistrusted Pompey. If they had to choose between the two, it would be better to put up with the latter. The ideal solution, however, was to get rid of both. Such, in my opinion, is the meaning of this vote which J. Carcopino has described as ‘an unequalled example of incoherence in deliberation’²¹⁹.

As the session was closing, Marcellus, while realising his defeat, tried to intimidate his colleagues by flinging at them this gloomy prophecy: ‘You will have Caesar for master.’ But he did not admit that he was beaten, and continued his manoeuvres.²²⁰
THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT

A little later, in October, disturbing reports were spreading in political circles. Important troop movements had been observed in Gaul. Caesar was concentrating his legions in the south-east and bringing them nearer to Italy. This was the basis for the rumour of Caesar’s march on Rome. It was untrue, or at any rate premature, and in government circles was known to be so, but Marcellus, pretending to believe it, made the most of it by asking the Senate that Caesar should be declared an enemy of the Republic and that the troops stationed in Capua should be sent against him. Once again he met with the opposition of Curio, who was able to prove to the senators that the news in question was false. The assembly agreed with the tribune and the enraged consul exclaimed: ‘If I am prevented from providing for the people’s safety by the votes of the Senate, I will provide for it on my own account, in my capacity as consul.’ Thereupon he walked out, inviting his colleague to follow him. Paullus obeyed, still without comment. The two consuls nominated for the following year also went with him.

The four magistrates went straight to Pompey who, this time observing the regulations, was waiting on the outskirts of Rome. With great solemnity Marcellus made his announcement: ‘My colleagues and I order you to march against Caesar in the country’s defence. We are giving you the contingents of the army which are at Capua or in the other garrisons of Italy, and we authorize you to increase them as you see fit.’

Pompey replied that he bowed before the orders of the consuls, ‘unless’, he added somewhat enigmatically and no doubt alluding to the problematical chances of a last-minute agreement, ‘there is something better to be done.’ And he began his preparations straight away. Curio, unable to stop them, since they were carried on outside the city boundaries where his authority as tribune ceased, called upon the people. He exhorted them to refuse obedience to the orders for mobilization which Pompey was about to issue. Time was short, however, for it was at the beginning of December and his term of office was nearing its end. ‘Then,’ says Appian, ‘he became afraid for himself, and as he no longer could hope to serve Caesar’s interests in Rome, he lost no time in reaching the decision to go and join him.’
CHAPTER 38

Alea Jacta Est

Caesar ended the year 51 with the solemn proclamation that henceforth Gaul was to be a Roman province from the Pyrenees and the Alps to the Rhine and the Ocean. He devoted the first months of the following year to the political and administrative organization of the conquered territory. He had been cruel and inexorable on the battlefield, but now that all the vanquished peoples had made their act of submission and recognized his authority he wanted to show himself lenient towards his new subjects and tributaries. All the nations kept their own names, boundaries, and laws. Even if he emptied their temples of nearly all the treasures with which they were formerly crammed, he did not touch their religion, and the Gauls were free to pray to their gods in their own fashion, as in the past. Their practices and customs were likewise respected. All such things left Caesar quite indifferent. What did interest him were money and manpower. He fixed the tribute from conquered Gaul at forty million sesterces. This was relatively little. Jullian explains this moderation by the fact that the extensive pillage had provided him in advance with the tribute of several years. This is an intelligent conjecture but not very convincing. We may be sure that if Caesar had seen any chance of taking more, he would have done so. The moderate sum he fixed most probably corresponded exactly to the available assets of a country which had been burnt, sacked, devastated, and deprived of all its resources and means of production in the course of a long war of extermination.

He took out the balance in manpower. That, after all, was what he needed most at the moment. In preparation for future events, his aim was to reinforce his army by every possible means. Henceforward the military contingents raised each year in Gaul would form a valuable contribution to his campaigns. This was perhaps the kind of tribute which best suited the national character of the Gauls. 'Instead of fighting among themselves against Rome,' Camille Jullian observes, 'they would fight for Caesar against other Romans.' As for their conqueror, he derived a double advantage from this
method, as the same historian has pointed out: he gained useful auxiliaries and he stripped Gaul of its defenders.

He established his headquarters at Nemetocenna (Arras), where Commius formerly reigned as master. It was an excellent observation post for keeping a watch on the Belgae whom he still mistrusted. He arrived there in December, 51, having gone immediately after the surrender of Uxellocunnum on a brief tour of inspection in the Province which events had so long prevented him from visiting. In the summer of 50 he embarked on a sort of pre-electoral tour across Cisalpine Gaul in connection with his second consulship. Hirtius takes great delight in describing the enthusiastic welcome accorded Caesar by the inhabitants of this province. We should like to believe that it was not a command performance and that the transports of joy with which the people hailed his arrival were perfectly sincere, but we must not lose sight of the fact that it was in Caesar's interest to prove to public opinion in Rome how deeply his provinces were attached to him, and that it is very possible that certain hints had been given by his agents to the cities through which he was to pass.

Thus the summer drew to a close. Autumn had come, the decisive autumn which was to cut the knot of Caesar's destiny. He now followed the debates of the Senate with close attention and kept himself accurately informed of the intrigues of his enemies. He knew all about their efforts to deprive him of his command, and resolving to defend himself to the end, he took his precautions. Upon his return from Cisalpine Gaul he wished to review all his troops. The legions dispersed throughout the territory were given orders to go to the country of the Treveri. Then he went there himself, made a careful inspection of the units, and gave them new winter quarters which brought them appreciably nearer the region of the Alps. He finally returned to Nemetocenna, and in the second fortnight of December left for Ravenna, ready for any eventuality. As soon as he arrived, he learnt that the legions sent back by him and intended for the war against the Parthians had been kept in Italy and put at the disposal of Pompey. Perhaps it was Curio who brought him the news. We do indeed find him at about this time all aflame beside Caesar. He urged the proconsul to assemble all his forces immediately and to march on Rome. Caesar, who apparently had not finished regrouping his troops, avoided precipitating matters and continued to drag on the negotiations. He informed the Senate that he would be ready to relinquish his command of Transalpine Gaul and to content
himself with Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum and with only two legions which would remain under his orders until he was named consul. Marcellus remained adamant. Then it was Caesar’s turn to adopt a different tone and another language. It was towards the end of December, the 27th or 28th. He drew up the following ultimatum to be presented to the Senate: ‘He, Caesar, agreed to lay down his command if Pompey relinquished his at the same time; but if Pompey failed to do so he would come with all speed to Rome, ‘to avenge the country and to avenge himself’.

Curio was instructed to bear this message to Rome and to give it to the consuls who were entering upon their office on January 1, so that they could communicate it to the Senate. Caesar’s envoy accomplished what was then considered a regular feat, covering the 140 miles between Ravenna and Rome in three days. He arrived on the morning of January 1, and just had time to hand Caesar’s letter to the new consuls, C. Claudius Marcellus II and L. Cornelius Lentulus, as they were entering the assembly. Both of them, already pledged to Pompey, tried to ignore it. But Caesar already had a new agent on the spot: his quaestor Antony, whom he had just had elected as people’s tribune and who was preparing to take over the part which his predecessor had played with such zeal. His reiterated demands, vigorously supported by his colleague Q. Cassius (whom Caesar had also succeeded in attaching to his cause), obliged the consuls to tell the Senate about the document. Finally the letter was read. The proposals it contained demanded the taking of a vote. Lentulus, who was presiding, categorically objected. He was a very astute parliamentarian. He at once presented an agenda on ‘the general situation of the Republic’ which would bar the way for Caesar’s message, and he followed up his motion with a brief but energetic statement: he pledged himself not to fail in the common cause if the senators decided to give proof of courage and firmness; but if they were looking towards Caesar and seeking his favours, he would decide for himself without reference to the resolutions of the Senate.

The assembly listened to the warning and did not move. Pompey’s new father-in-law, Scipio Metellus, was heard to explain the point of view of his son-in-law who, vested with the imperium, was waiting at the gates of Rome. ‘It is Pompey’s intention,’ he announced, ‘not to desert the common cause if he is supported by the Senate; but if the Senate hesitates, if its action lacks vigour, it will be perfectly useless to ask his help later on when the Senate thinks it necessary.’
Marcellus, the consul of 51, who had great influence among the moderate senators, called for prudence. In his opinion, before settling the question, they ought to raise troops and make sure of the support of the army. An obscure member, M. Calidius, even dared submit an unexpected proposition to his colleagues: Pompey should leave for his province, where logically he belonged anyway; thus any pretext for an armed conflict would be avoided. Several voices were raised in support of his motion. Lentulus, however, indignantly refused to put it to the vote, heaping furious invectives upon its author. Then Marcellus, intimidated by this torrent of abuse, withdrew his own proposal as well and the terrorized senators voted the fatal decree: within a time limit which should be fixed at once, Caesar must disband his army. If he did not do so, he would be considered as an enemy of the State.

Antony used his power of veto, but the majority wished to disregard it and considered it invalid because in this case consular, and not praetorian, provinces were involved. A discussion started on the interpretation of this point of law. It continued until sunset and the session ended without coming to a decision. The senators were asked to return the next day. In the evening they went to Pompey to receive directions from him. In order to overcome any future opposition they hunted up the abstainers. ‘All the friends of the consuls, the intimates of Pompey and those who nursed old grudges against Caesar were carried off to the Senate.’ That, at any rate, is how Caesar reports the proceedings.

As soon as the session of January 2 opened it degenerated into a battle. Pompey’s followers held the field and prevented Caesar’s faction from speaking. It was in vain that Caesar’s father-in-law Piso offered to go himself to acquaint Caesar with the situation; it was in vain that other supporters of the proconsul of Gaul tried to propose that an official delegation should be sent to him. All these attempts met with the stubborn resistance of Pompey’s partisans, directed by the trio: Cato, Lentulus, and Scipio.

‘Everything was carried on in haste and confusion,’ writes Caesar. Nevertheless, no definite conclusion was reached during this second session which indeed ended in the greatest disorder. The days of January 3 and 4 were reserved for the comitia; the Senate did not sit. On the 5th, however, the discussion continued. This time the attack was essentially directed against Antony who persisted, though to no purpose, in using the threat of his authority as tribune. To make an
end of it the consuls ordered him to step down from his seat, which was tantamount to his expulsion. Antony complied and left the assembly ‘raging like one possessed’, and calling the gods to witness that ‘the sanctity and inviolability of the office of tribune had been outraged’. His colleague Q. Cassius went with him. Curio followed the two tribunes.

On January 7 they at last voted the senatus consultum ultimum which, according to the time-honoured formula, charged the consuls and those proconsuls who were in the neighbourhood of Rome (hence Pompey), to keep watch that the public weal should suffer no harm. The praetor L. Roscius Fabatus, one of Caesar’s former legates in Gaul, and young L. Caesar, his cousin’s son, were ordered to inform him of the Senate’s decision. Severe penalties were imposed upon the recalcitrant tribunes.223

Antony and Cassius lost no time in making their escape. Disguised as slaves, they fled from Rome under cover of night and went to join Caesar.

The latter was still at Ravenna waiting for the Senate’s reply to his ultimatum. ‘He hoped’, we read in De bello civili, ‘that perhaps a certain sense of justice might bring matters to a peaceful conclusion.’ However, he could scarcely be unaware of the violently hostile tendencies which had been apparent in the Senate from the beginning of the session. Each day he heard of some new measure openly aimed against him. Mobilization was ordered throughout Italy. The cities received notice of the contributions they had to provide. The requisition of arms had begun. And then, to crown all, they appointed his sworn enemy L. Domitius as his successor.

Caesar could hesitate no longer. The time for action had come. There was nothing left for him but to follow the stormy path which opened before him.

Caesar entered upon it with great prudence. He was not yet sure of his strength, and besides, he sensed treason in the air. He knew that assiduous advances had been made by his opponents to his most faithful lieutenants, but he did not know which of them had consented to be bought. The greatest secrecy and the most minute precautions were therefore necessary at the start. He had to avoid giving the enemy the slightest cause for suspicion so as to take him unawares and swoop down upon him in a sudden devastating attack. In the evening of the 9th, or on the morning of the 10th of January, he learnt of the measures decided upon during the session of the 7th,

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and of the flight of the tribunes. Discreetly, a few cohorts were sent off in the direction of the Italian frontier. A detachment made up of the most trustworthy centurions and soldiers was commissioned to cross the border clandestinely, and without any hostile demonstrations to penetrate into the town of Ariminum (Rimini), one of the keys to Italy, from the Gaul side. As for himself, during the whole afternoon he affected an uncontrived, lighthearted manner. He appeared in public, was present at a fight of gladiators, showed keen interest in the construction of a school where these 'artistes' were to be trained, and finally sat down to dinner with a large gathering of gay companions. Some time during the meal he rose, and pretending that he suddenly felt indisposed, begged his guests to excuse him for a few moments. He left the house furtively. A conveyance, to which the mules from the neighbouring bakery had been harnessed to put people off the scent, was waiting for him. He stepped in and the carriage went off at full speed. A few faithful followers who were in the secret followed him by different routes. Night was falling. One by one the lights which here and there lit up the road went out. Soon it was completely dark. The driver of the carriage ended by losing his way and wandered about at random in the dark. With the first rays of dawn they came upon a passer-by who served as their guide. But Caesar did not dare to continue his journey in the carriage by daylight. He preferred to leave the vehicle and set out on foot along the narrow winding paths. At last he arrived at the Rubicon, which marked the boundary of his province. There his cohorts were awaiting him.

From this time it becomes impossible to follow the exact order of events and to distinguish the true from the false. The ancient authors seem to have taken a particular pleasure in embellishing their accounts of this episode with evocative and not always very well-founded details. Some of them, however, suggest a direct, first-hand observation which cannot be disregarded. Asinius Pollio, the celebrated friend of Horace, Virgil, and Augustus, and one of the few intimates whom Caesar admitted to his confidence, wrote down for posterity his impressions as an eye-witness. But they have reached us through the somewhat free rendering of Plutarch. The chief thing we gather from them is that Caesar seems to have hesitated at the last moment. Appian, who does not mention the source of his information, gives the same impression. He even attributes to Caesar the following words on this occasion: 'Friends, if I do not cross this river, my
holding back will be the source of my misfortunes; if I do cross it, it will bring misfortune to the whole human race.' In order to induce him to advance, Suetonius finds it necessary to introduce at the last moment a miraculous and providential flute-player who, seizing the instrument of one of Caesar's musicians, rushed towards the river sounding the march with all his might and drew from Caesar this final cry which has ever remained fresh in the memory of mankind: 'Let us go forward whither the signs of the gods and the injustice of our enemies call us. The die is cast!'

All this is a little too much in the style of fiction for the historian to accept it without seeking elsewhere for the facts. Suetonius also makes a brief reference to the horses which on Caesar's orders were set free as an offering to the god of the River Rubicon in order to win his favour for the projected enterprise.\textsuperscript{224} This is a point which deserves some attention. It is certain that Caesar himself, whose indifference in religious matters was notorious, had no need to fortify his own decision by a proceeding of this kind. There were, however, the soldiers who were simple, uneducated men, animated for the most part by a very real faith. This gesture must indubitably have been made for their benefit, and its aim was to get them into the right frame of mind. They must have been greatly surprised at finding themselves suddenly brought to the banks of the river which separated them from their homeland and ordered to cross it, which in their eyes amounted almost to sacrilege: they must have shown signs of uneasiness which had to be dispelled. Hence the symbolical offering in which the mounts of some of Caesar's horsemen were called upon to play their part. Are we to take it that all his troops showed themselves to be satisfied and reassured? This is hard to believe. Caesar no doubt had to use methods of individual persuasion, overcoming resistance and objection at the last moment, while taking care not to reveal too soon the true extent of his intentions. Moreover, the crossing of the river was no easy matter. In the \textit{Pharsalia}, which in some respects is almost as much the work of an historian as of a poet, Lucan gives us some extremely valuable information not to be found anywhere else.\textsuperscript{225}

For instance, he lays particular emphasis on the difficulties of the crossing: 'The Rubicon rises in a small spring and flows feebly when the heat of summer beats down upon its surface, but the winter gives it strength; rain and the Alps, melting at the damp breath of Eurus, had swollen its waters.' There could be no question of Cæsar's
waiting to construct a bridge. He remembered the method he had used in Gaul for crossing the Allier in almost similar circumstances. As at that time, the cavalry formed a barrage to check the current, and then, by an accessible ford, the infantry 'easily made a passage through the already broken waters'.

This is how the crossing of the Rubicon by Caesar and his army appeared to the eyes of a poet. It is much nearer the truth than the spectacular scene imagined by the historians. We will leave out the colloquy which Lucan introduces at the last moment between Caesar and the 'gigantic spectre of the Homeland in agitation', and we will keep his version of Caesar's words when, after crossing the river, he set foot on the opposite bank: 'Here I bid farewell to peace and outraged justice. It is thee, O Fortune, whom I follow. Away with treaties! Let us surrender to destiny! Let War be our judge!'

The date was January 12, 49, at dawn.
The Flight Before Caesar

Day had dawned, the day which was to witness the first tumult of civil war. The feeble rays of the morning light struggled through a sky heavy with clouds. The troops had entered Ariminum while its inhabitants were still asleep. Caesar's arrival was heralded by the sharp clamour of sife and trumpet, to which the horn added its harsh lingering note. This music woke the sleepy citizens. Jolted from bed, they seized their arms and rushed to the market place. It was occupied by the Roman troops. They saw the military standards shining in all their splendour, and they were able to distinguish in the centre of the gathering the gaunt outline of the imperator haranguing his army. Then they 'shuddered with fear', and perhaps also with cold on that bleak winter morning, and, 'giving up all idea of resistance', they went back to their homes.

The celebrated speech which Caesar delivered to his soldiers assembled in the forum of Ariminum must be regarded as a sort of manifesto made to mark the opening of hostilities.

Caesar appeared before his army 'shedding tears and rending the garments on his breast', declares Suetonius. Beside him stood the fugitive tribunes who had arrived the night before and were still dressed in the miserable garb of slaves. The setting was carefully prepared. It aimed at rousing his hearers by a skilful display of the injustices which their leader had recently had to endure. For at this point he was going to disclose to them the real reasons of the expedition he had undertaken, and to announce his break with Pompey, of which his troops—who had heard little of the political changes and upheavals of the past months—were unaware.

He began by reminding them that he had always taken the part of Pompey and supported him in his quest for titles and honours. He exhibited the will he had made in favour of his ally, and accusing him of ingratitude, he solemnly declared it void. There followed a long diatribe against 'this chief enervated by a long peace', and against the 'wicked men' with whom he had allowed himself to be surrounded and who were turning him from the right path, 'out of
jealousy and the desire to disparage Caesar's glory'. Then he introduced the tribunes to his soldiers, and pointing to the evidence of their tattered clothes, he revealed the persecution they had suffered. That, too, was Pompey's doing, since the Senate was only following his instructions when it condemned them. Caesar knew, however, that the soldiers were chiefly interested in their own fate. Well, he told them, this was what was going to happen: he would be deprived of his command. He would thus be forced to disband his legions. What was to become of them? It was at this point that all ears must have strained in rapt attention to catch the words of the orator who, forcing his voice and accompanying his speech with eloquent gestures, tried to make himself heard as far away as possible.

'If they take away the price of my labours,' he exclaimed, 'let them at least reward my soldiers for a long war! . . . After so many campaigns, where can they go in the infirmity of their old age? What dwellings will they have when they retire? What fields will our veterans be given to cultivate? What walls will shelter their tired bodies?' Once more he attacked Pompey: 'So thou dost prefer, O Great One, that it should be the pirates who become settlers!' And in a fiery peroration he exhorted them to follow him in the struggle that was beginning. To convince them even more, he went so far as to announce that he would not hesitate to divest himself even of his ring in order to reward all those who were willing to assist him in the defence of his honour. It appears (at any rate, according to Suetonius) that the gesture which he repeated several times of showing the ring-finger of his left hand ended by giving rise to a curious misunderstanding. The soldiers at the back, who were unable to hear him and could only follow his gesticulations with their eyes, thought he was promising them all the right to wear the ring: in other words, to be enrolled in the census of the equites, with the 400,000 sesterces needed for admission to this privileged military order. We do not know what their reaction was when they discovered the real meaning of Caesar's words.

This speech seems to have been received at first with what we usually call 'mixed feelings'. Now the soldiers knew what it was all about and what they had to expect. The prospect did not appeal to them all in the same degree. Lucan speaks of a 'pious respect' which restrained them and made them hesitate to soak the sacred soil of their native land in blood. It is equally possible that a good many of them had had enough of fighting after all these years and were
longing to return to their homes as soon as possible. As more than once before in the difficult moments Caesar had experienced with his legionaries, a resolute 'coach' was needed to fire their enthusiasm and to bring all wavering to an end. On this occasion Lucan attributes the rôle to the centurion Lelius of the Thirteenth Legion, 'decorated with the crown of oak leaves, and whose arm had tamed with an oar the swollen waves of the Ocean and broken the foaming floods of the Arctic Rhine'. Reproaching him for his excessive patience and magnanimity, he begged Caesar to lead him and his comrades to battle; and he made this terrible pledge: 'If you order me to plunge my sword into my brother's breast, my father's throat, and the womb of my wife who is with child, though my arm may quiver with loathing, yet it shall accomplish everything. If it be necessary to despoil the gods and set fire to their temples, the torches of your soldiers shall melt the divinities together with the treasure; and whatever the walls you wish to see levelled to the ground, our arms shall propel the battering ram to dislodge them from their base even if Rome were the city you ordered us to destroy.'

Then a unanimous acclamation resounded: 'All stretched their hands high and pledged themselves for the war, whatever it might be and wherever he might call them.'

Thus Lucan ends his account. We do not guarantee the complete authenticity of the scene he describes, but its presentation fits in well with the situation which had been created. However, what is essential to remember is that the soldiers ended by following Caesar and obediently went wherever he sent them. That same day he dispatched two columns: one (five cohorts), under the command of Antony, was instructed to occupy Arretium (Arezzo) for the purpose of an eventual thrust towards Rome; and another (three cohorts), commanded by Curio, was ordered to follow the Adriatic coast and to take immediate possession of Pisaurum (Pesaro), Fanum (Fano) and Ancona, with the object of cutting Pompey off from the sea. Pisaurum was occupied on the same day, Fanum on the next and Ancona on the day after, which was the 14th. Antony made his entry into Arretium on the 15th. Caesar remained at Ariminum.

The day after his arrival, the Senate's two envoys appeared. On their way they had learned that Caesar had entered Italian territory and that their journey would therefore be considerably shortened. The young L. Caesar duly fulfilled his mission by notifying to his formidable kinsman the official terms of the decision which had been
reached concerning him. After this, in his private capacity, he told him that he had a personal communication to make on behalf of Pompey. Pompey was anxious to justify himself in Caesar's eyes. Caesar must not think that what had taken place was in any way due to a wish to offend him. He, Pompey, had always placed the interests of the State before his own. Caesar should act in the same way and sacrifice his rancour for the sake of the Republic.

This tardy advance on the part of his adversary could not alter Caesar's intentions. The die had been cast. It was not in his interest, however, to leave it unanswered and to show himself intractable and opposed to any attempt at a settlement. Nevertheless—and he was to use these tactics again on more than one occasion—while insisting upon his wish to reach an understanding and to prevent the fratricidal war which he deplored more than anyone else, he took care to lay down conditions which no enemy capable of continuing the struggle could accept.

Caesar began by setting forth his grievances: they had taken from him, 'under humiliating conditions', the privilege which the Roman people had granted him—to stand for the consulship under exceptional circumstances; they had snatched from him six months of his command by obliging him to return to Rome. All these sacrifices he had accepted with resignation; and meanwhile they were raising troops throughout Italy, they were depriving him of two legions, Rome was under arms. In spite of all that, he was ready to put up with everything for the good of the State—on the following conditions:

1. Pompey should leave for his provinces.
2. They should both disband their troops.
3. Everyone in Italy should lay down his arms.
4. The régime of terror should be abolished in Rome.
5. The liberty of the people's assembly should be restored.
6. The Senate and the people should be secure in the exercise of government.

An interview between himself and Pompey would make it possible to reach a satisfactory agreement and to settle all the points under dispute.

Furnished with Caesar's proposals, the messengers set out again. On reaching Rome they learnt that neither consuls nor Senate were there any longer. All of them, including Pompey, had just left the capital and gone off in the direction of Capua. Why?

Tidings of the crossing of the Rubicon must have reached Rome

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by January 15. More news came in every hour: the legions were advancing with giant strides, towns were being occupied as by magic. The first refugees began to arrive, and following them came an ever growing, ever more terrified mob, spreading rumours which became increasingly alarming as the crowds poured in. They said that Caesar was bringing with him great numbers of strongly armed troops, that his soldiers showed a spirit which no violence could oppose. As for Caesar himself, they no longer saw him as they had known him in the past: he appeared to their terror-stricken minds as a fierce and bloodthirsty conqueror coming to the assault of Rome at the head of wild hordes who had orders to pillage the city before the eyes of its inhabitants. To add to the general panic, accounts of wonders and heavenly portents betokening future events—the invention of unbridled imaginations—passed from mouth to mouth in all circles, rich and poor alike. In one place it had rained blood, somewhere else the marble statues had been seen to sweat; here several temples had been simultaneously struck by a thunderbolt, there a woman had given birth to a monster. Unknown stars lit up the night sky, and a comet, the star which had the reputation among the ancients of heralding the worst catastrophes, swept the suddenly darkened heaven with its tail.

Public prayers were decreed. The people clamoured for both Caesar and Pompey to be deposed and deprived of their commands, which was the only means of stifling the incipient civil war. Cicero proposed to re-open negotiations with Caesar. The Senate re-assembled. Some of its members, in a state of extreme alarm, regretted that they had rejected Caesar's ultimatum. Others seemed disappointed at the lack of energy shown by Pompey, who had allowed himself to be taken unawares by the turn of events. That unfailing friend of Cato, Favonius, remarked somewhat ironically that now was the time for him to 'strike the ground with his foot' and to make legions issue from it. Pompey took the joke very badly and replied with a furious speech: 'You will have them if you are willing to follow me, if you are not afraid to leave Rome, and even Italy, should occasion demand. For it is neither such and such places nor such and such habitations which constitute the strength and liberty of nations, but, wherever there are free men, strength and liberty are found.' Then he poured out threats against all who hesitated to follow him, and for the sake of their attachment to fortune or possessions failed to arm themselves for the defence of the Republic. He issued a decree
that all the treasure and offerings deposited in the temples must be removed from Rome. Then he departed. The consuls declared themselves to be in agreement with him and began to make their preparations for leaving. The senators were still in a state of utter perplexity and spent the night deliberating. At dawn it was decided to evacuate Rome.

On hearing this, the people, who were already panic-stricken, completely lost their heads. Dion Cassius has described the scenes of confusion and despair to which the exodus gave rise.

The instinct of flight propels everyone at random and drives before it a nation on the run; in long files dense crowds rush along; one might think that lighted torches had taken possession of the roofs, or that, shaken by some force which undermined them, the houses were already tottering and leaning over—so eagerly does the bewildered crowd hasten its steps through the town; and it hurls itself towards the unknown as if no other hope remained to terror-stricken minds but to get outside the walls of their native city.

The authorities set the example. The consul Lentulus, who had been instructed to proceed with the removal of the treasure, scarcely waited to hear that his personal luggage was ready before he left everything and went off post-haste. The senators, and all those who, thanks to their official position, were obliged to leave Rome, hurried in deepest distress to the temples, invoking the gods, making vows, kissing the ground. Accompanied by their friends and relations they made their way to the gates of the city, causing the very air to resound with their wailing, which was echoed by the lamentations of their families. Those who remained behind, abandoned to their sad fate, shed bitter tears in anticipation of the misfortunes that awaited them.
HAVING found no one in Rome to whom they could give a
report of their mission, L. Caesar and L. Roscius continued
their journey. They finally succeeded in joining the consuls
at Teanum, a small town some eight miles north of Capua. The next
day at Capua there was a meeting of the senators who had left Rome.
Pompey communicated Caesar’s propositions to them. Cicero con-
sidered them as ‘ridiculous’, but nearly all his colleagues were in a
conciliatory mood and anxious to reach an agreement. The general
opinion was that they might come to an understanding on the basis
of the conditions proposed by Caesar, but only if he evacuated
Ariminum and led his troops back to the other side of the Italian
frontier. Even Cato seems to have abandoned his uncompromising
attitude, and Cicero did not fail to record that this fierce Republican
‘preferred servitude to civil war’, while declaring in the same breath
that he was grieved to see that ‘they refused Caesar nothing’. And
he concluded with deep bitterness: ‘In yielding to-day to an avowed
rebel, who has already used violence against the Republic, they have
far less honour than if they had from the first allowed him to stand
for the consulship without coming to Rome.’

Nevertheless, everyone was pessimistic. The same Cicero, whose
testimony is so valuable here, admits that most of the senators believed
‘Caesar would not abide by the proposed conditions and had only
formulated them in order to stop their preparations for war’. Two
days later, echoing a rumour that was circulating, Cicero wrote to
Atticus: ‘They assure us that since Caesar sent his proposals through
L. Caesar, he has continued his levies more energetically than ever,
that he has seized strategic points and is putting garrisons into them.
What a scoundrel! What a brigand!’

His information was perfectly correct, but he omitted to give the
reasons which had inspired Caesar’s military activity at this early stage.
He had just learned grave news which, although not entirely un-
foreseen, affected him deeply: his faithful Labienus, his right-hand
man, the most capable and devoted of his legates, instead of answering
POMPEY'S RETREAT

his call and coming to headquarters, had gone over to the enemy camp and placed himself at Pompey's disposal. Caesar apparently had suspected him for some time. Confidential warnings had drawn his attention to the conduct of Labienus during the last period of the war in Gaul. Although he had subsequently affirmed that such suspicions seemed to him totally unjustified, there is every reason to think that from that time he had been on the watch and had no longer confided his plans to him. Now, on learning of his betrayal, Caesar confined himself to returning his money and baggage. That was all his vengeance.

Why had Labienus become a traitor? What could have been his motives? It can scarcely have been love of money: during the eight years of war in Gaul he had been able to amass immense riches. Was it ambition? Caesar had made him his first lieutenant and had given him preference over all his other associates. Was he dreaming of taking Caesar's place? It is possible, but in that case, on going over to Pompey he must have had it in mind to sacrifice him likewise to his designs, for it was not merely to become Pompey's second-in-command that he had decided to give up being Caesar's. . . . We are reduced to accepting the explanation of Dion Cassius, insufficient and summary as it is:

Labienus, opulent and covered with glory, began to live with greater pomp than befitted his rank. Caesar, who saw that he wanted to be his equal, no longer showed him the same affection. Labienus could not resign himself to this change; he was afraid he might fall into disgrace, and so he deserted him.

His action was hailed by Pompey's partisans with cries of joy. 'Labienus is a real hero,' Cicero proclaimed triumphantly, 'it is a long time since anything more worthy of a good citizen has been done.' He considered it a 'terrible blow' to Caesar, particularly in view of the influence Labienus enjoyed in the army. 'This example will have many imitators', he tells us. He was mistaken; Caesar's officers remained faithful to their commander.

But it was the very presence of his one-time associate at Pompey's side which might have fatal consequences. If he did not know all of Caesar's plans, he knew exactly what forces he had at his disposal and in what state they were. He could give his new master useful information on the numerical weakness and the shortages of material

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from which the conqueror of Gaul was suffering at the moment. The mobilization decreed for the whole of Italy would considerably and speedily reinforce the ranks of Pompey's army, which already included the two legions stationed at Capua. It was necessary to get the start by quick action and to take advantage of the confusion and uncertainty which had gripped the population of the peninsula since his appearance on the southern bank of the Rubicon. Caesar had propaganda tracts distributed everywhere, urging the people to have confidence in him and to remain calm. At the same time he revealed the point reached in his negotiations with Pompey and besought the latter to submit the dispute that divided them to arbitration by a tribunal. This move did not fail to produce the desired effect. At Iguvium (Gubbio), which was defended by Q. Minucius Thermus at the head of five of Pompey's cohorts, the population joyfully welcomed Curio and his three cohorts. Thermus, who had intended to fortify the city, quickly gauged the state of mind of the inhabitants and withdrew with his soldiers as soon as he learnt that Caesar's troops were approaching. On the way his men deserted and went home.

The surrender of Iguvium coincided with the arrival of the Senate's messengers at Caesar's headquarters. They brought the reply to his recent propositions. It did not satisfy him at all. He could not agree to their obliging him to evacuate Ariminum before granting him his demands. Moreover, though Pompey had at last promised to leave for his provinces, he had not fixed a definite date. Thus Caesar concluded that 'if he had not left when his [Caesar's] proconsulship ended, he could not even be accused of breaking his promise'. Finally, his offer to meet Pompey in order to deal face to face with all the questions under dispute had been passed over in silence. That, he wrote afterwards, 'destroyed all hope of peace'. Therefore the two envoys of the Senate were sent away empty-handed and the negotiations definitely broken off. The civil war continued its course, and Caesar himself assumed command of the operations. 'Trusting to the spirit of the towns' (the example of Iguvium must have appeared to him conclusive), he set out to conquer Picenum, a district where Pompey and Lentulus had great influence. His army was of the most modest proportions: scarcely ten cohorts, those of Curio and Antony, which now came under his own command. The immediate objective was Auximum (Osimo), a place about seventy miles from Ariminum and near the shores of the Adriatic, which makes it

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possible for us to get a glimpse of his plan to occupy the coast and prevent Pompey from crossing to the east.

The town was defended by P. Attius Varus, one of Caesar's bitterest enemies. He had decided upon total mobilization in all of Picenum and intended to resist to the limits of his power. On hearing of Caesar's approach, the city magistrates went to see the general. They declared that without presuming to set themselves up as judges of the differences which separated Pompey from Caesar, they considered that the latter, who had done so much for the Republic and had so many glorious achievements to his credit, deserved better than to be refused entrance to their city. 'Let Varus also think of the future and of the risks he is running,' they added with a certain enigmatical shrewdness. Pompey's general did not have to be told this twice. He gathered his men and fled with all speed. A small detachment of Caesar's vanguard went off in pursuit of him. After a show of battle, Varus' soldiers deserted him. Some went home, others went over to Caesar, who welcomed them with congratulations. He also congratulated the magistrates, who had made this operation so easy for him, and promised 'not to forget what they had done'.

Meanwhile Caesar's Twelfth Legion arrived at last from Transalpine Gaul. Now he would have at his disposal at least twenty cohorts. That enabled him to march confidently in the direction of Asculum, the principal town of the region, defended by the proconsul Lentulus Spinther with ten cohorts.

Leaving Auximum on February 4, Caesar followed the coast and occupied Firmum, Truentum, Cingulum. . . . Everywhere the effects of his propaganda were to be felt. All the cities on his route hastened to open their gates to him and spontaneously offered their help. Cingulum, founded and built by Lentulus at his own expense, hurriedly disowned its benefactor and sent a delegation to meet Caesar, assuring him that its inhabitants 'only had one wish: to carry out all the orders he might choose to give them'. Caesar contented himself with asking for soldiers; they supplied them. Everywhere the officers of Pompey, to whom the defence of the towns had been entrusted, withdrew their troops when they heard of Caesar's advance. This was not always due to cowardice or to their fear of measuring their strength against Caesar's legionaries, as we are left to infer from his Civil War. It seems rather that they were acting in conformity with the directives of Pompey, who had definitely given
up all idea of immediate military action and was trying to get as many of his troops as possible away without contacting those of Caesar, and to transfer them to Greece, where he would have the sea between himself and his adversary. He had, however, failed to foresee, or had underestimated, the demoralizing effect which these continual ‘strategic withdrawals’ would produce on his soldiers. Furthermore, rumours of the concentration of a powerful fleet of transport ships at Brundisium were spreading rapidly and suggested the prospect of an approaching departure for an unknown destination, which did not appeal to them in the least. All this explains the surrenders and mass desertions which Caesar is too much inclined to attribute essentially to his personal prestige and to his military successes.

Lentulus Spinther, like so many of his colleagues, abandoned the town entrusted to his care. He tried to take his cohorts with him. The soldiers, like so many of their comrades, refused to follow him. With the exception of a handful of men, who remained loyal to him and withdrew towards Corfinium (Pentima), all of them either reported at Caesar’s outposts or went home.

Caesar remained only twenty-four hours at Asculum, just long enough to incorporate the masses of new deserters into his army and to complete his stocks of provisions. He was in a hurry to reach Corfinium. This town, which occupied a strong position amid high mountains about a hundred miles from Asculum, was considered to be the stronghold of central Italy. It was placed under the authority of L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, the new governor-elect of Gaul. This vain individual of limited talent and vision, whose hatred for Caesar was of long standing, was cherishing strange ambitions. Entirely given over to his rancour, he did not share the views of Pompey, who favoured the prudent tactics of an organized retreat and was anxious to avoid premature battles. Domitius, on the contrary, counting on Caesar’s numerical weakness and the advantages of his own position, was convinced that the enemy’s strength would be broken before Corfinium. After that, it would remain only to strike them as they fled and cut them to pieces. Instead of preparing to leave Italy to carry the war into the east, it would be better to defeat Caesar on the soil of the homeland. A considerable number of politicians, who were not particularly anxious to expose themselves to a hazardous and tiresome crossing in winter weather, shared his views, and instead of conforming to Pompey’s instructions to assemble at the port of embarkation, they delayed at Corfinium beside Domitius.

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On February 14, after six days' marching, Caesar appeared in front of the town. Domitius prepared to defend it and called upon Pompey to help him. With two armies, he wrote to him, and taking into consideration the difficult ground, they could easily encircle Caesar and cut off his supplies. If, however, Pompey did not come to his aid he would be in danger himself. Pompey replied that he refused to run the risks of an improvised offensive, that Domitius had undertaken to hold out against Caesar without his advice or orders, and that it would be better for him to leave the town before it was completely hemmed in and to join him with all his troops.

When Pompey's reply reached its destination, it was already too late. The siege had begun, and Caesar's troops, reinforced by the Eighth Legion, which had just joined him, and by the contingents raised during the last levies in Gaul, covered all exits from the city. It only remained for Domitius to surrender or to resist. He chose the second alternative. Pompey's reply was kept secret. Moreover, he even circulated reassuring news which led the people to expect that help was imminent, and he used every possible means to fire his soldiers for battle. It was not long, however, before the truth leaked out. It was learned what Pompey's letter had really contained. Meanwhile rumours were spreading that Domitius was preparing for flight without concerning himself about the fate of his troops. Thereupon his soldiers revolted. They placed their leader under arrest and sent a deputation to Caesar, declaring that they were willing to open the gates of the city and to hand Domitius over to him.

It was past midnight. Caesar thanked the envoys for their offer and accepted it while enjoining them not to rush matters. He told them to return to the city and together with their comrades to keep careful guard at the gates and ramparts.

No one in Caesar's camp slept during that night. He had sentinels posted in a continuous line all along the earthworks he had erected for the siege 'so that they stood elbow to elbow and occupied the whole position.' The officers were instructed to go round and to watch that no one passed secretly through the lines.

The soldiers' delegation re-entered Corfinium. On learning that he was going to be delivered up to Caesar, Domitius had a violent fit of despair. Resolving to end his days and escape the fate which was in store for him, he ordered his slave-physician to pour him out some poison. The man pretended to obey and gave him a potion
which was merely a strong narcotic. This caused Domitius to fall
into a deep sleep.

Among the official personages who had trusted to the military
talent of Domitius and were shut up with him in the city, there
figured P. Lentulus Spinther, the former hapless commander of
Asculum. After having already fled once from Caesar, he now found
himself caught again, this time in the trap of Corfinium. He did not
let himself sink into the same state of discouragement. Since in the
end he could not avoid falling into Caesar’s hands, why, he wondered,
should he not forestall the event so as to appear to be surrendering
voluntarily to him? That might, he still hoped, induce the conqueror
to treat him with greater indulgence. He was a man of moderate
influence, lost in the intricacies of political struggles. He was under
great obligations to Caesar. It was thanks to him that he had been
able to enter the College of Pontiffs, to obtain Nearer Spain as a
praetorian province in 59, and to obtain the consulship in 57. Closely
associated with Cicero, he had taken sides against Caesar, probably at
the latter’s insistence. Now he was going to atone for his ingratitude
by prostrating himself at the feet of his benefactor.

Night was drawing to a close when the voice of Lentulus Spinther
was heard from the top of the ramparts calling to Caesar’s sentinels.
He was asking to speak with him. Caesar consented to receive him.
Under a strong escort of Domitius’ soldiers, Lentulus Spinther was
brought before him. Caesar did not give him time to finish the
speech in which, recalling their former friendship, he implored for-
giveness. He assured Lentulus that his fear was out of place and
unjustified. It was not to harm anyone that he had crossed the frontiers
of his province, but to defend himself against the hostile machinations
of his enemies. What he wanted was to liberate the Roman people,
who were being oppressed by a handful of individuals, and to re-
establish the flouted authority of the tribunes. And to prove the
clemency which inspired him he pardoned Lentulus, who reassured
about his own fate thought the moment had come to concern himself
with that of his fellows. Would Caesar but authorize him to return
to Corfinium! What a comfort it would be for all those who were
waiting there in anguish for their destiny to be decided upon if they
beheld in his person a living example of the mercy of the conqueror! Caesar, immediately evaluating the great moral advantage he might
gain from such a demonstration, gave Lentulus permission to return
to the town. As soon as day broke, however, he and all the others—
senators, sons of senators, military tribunes, knights etc.—must present
themselves at his camp to give themselves up as prisoners.

At the appointed time a fairly large group appeared, unarmed and
suppliant, at Caesar’s outposts. Besides Lentulus, there were the
former praetor L. Caecilius Rufus, the senators S. Quintilius Varus
and L. Rubrius, and . . . the ‘suicide’ Domitius, who was in the
best of health and appeared to be charmed to have returned to life
thanks to the ‘mistake’ of his doctor. Soldiers crowded their passage.
Boos and insults rained down upon them. Caesar was obliged to
intervene personally to protect them. He nonchalantly passed along
their ranks, took note of the faces he knew, singling out those who
had requited his former favours with ingratitude and, after having
briefly reproached them, set them all free. He did not detain one of
them. They could go whenever and wherever they chose. Domitius
could not believe his ears. Lentulus was exultant. They were all
profuse in their thanks. Caesar disdainfully cut short their eloquence.
The magistrates of Corfinium had just placed in his hands the sum
of six million sesterces which had been intended for the wages of
Pompey’s troops and which Domitius had deposited in the public
treasury of the town. With a scornful gesture, Caesar returned the
money to his enemy and dismissed everyone. The deserting soldiers
were waiting to offer him their fidelity and obedience. He accepted
their oath, and without losing an instant gave orders to march. They
were bound for Brundisium. The pursuit of Pompey had begun.

Caesar’s capture of Corfinium, which had cost him only a week’s
stay on the outskirts of the city without obliging him at any time to
use the force of arms, had immediate repercussions. The praetor
L. Manlius hastily left Alba with six cohorts, his colleague Rutilius
Lupus evacuated Terracina without delay, taking with him the three
cohorts which had been put under his orders. Both of them intended
to conduct their soldiers to Pompey’s headquarters. These soldiers,
however, deserted on the way and, headed by their standard-bearers,
repaired to the camp of Caesar. Pompey was at Luceria when the
siege of Corfinium began. Considering it to be lost in advance, he
accelerated the movement of his troops towards Brundisium and on
the 21st, hearing of the capitulation of Domitius, went there himself.
Numerous transport ships which had been requisitioned in the various
Mediterranean ports were already waiting there. More kept arriving
each day. Troops were flowing in from all sides: recruits newly
raised in Apulia, contingents which had escaped Caesar’s net, foreign
mercenaries. A few days later it was the turn of the consuls, the people's tribunes who had joined the government clique, and the senators with their families—briefly, all those who from self-interest or conviction had thrown in their lot with Pompey. He himself was directing the evacuation. First, he sent the consuls and senators off towards Dyrrachium. Then the embarkation of the troops began. As he was none too sure of the attitude of the inhabitants, most of whom had shown themselves to be definitely in favour of Caesar, he dug trenches inside the town, barricaded all the streets with the exception of two, which gave him access to the sea, and ordered the population to remain indoors during the entire evacuation. Thirty cohorts had already been able to leave Brundisium when Caesar reached the outskirts of the town. His first thought was to prevent the departure of the rest of Pompey's army. That is why he set out to block every exit from the port and to bring all its movement to a standstill, without, however, succeeding completely: accustomed to operations of this kind in dealing with land fortifications, his technical assistants did not prove to be equal to their new task requiring as it did the active co-operation of naval forces which Caesar lacked at that time. It is a strange thing and worth noting that he thought this was a suitable moment for renewing his offers of peace and reiterating his desire to re-open negotiations with Pompey and his party. Even before he had set out for Brundisium, on finding among the prisoners taken by his troops a workmen's prefect in Pompey's service, he had liberated the man and sent him to his master with further proposals. He insisted particularly upon his wish to have a personal interview with Pompey who obstinately refused to meet his former associate. This step did not lead to anything, as Pompey had once more withdrawn. On his arrival before Brundisium, while pursuing his preparations for the blockade, Caesar tried to renew these negotiations. This time, he called upon one of his legates, Caninius Rebilus, who was a relation and friend of L. Scribonius Libo, father-in-law of Pompey's younger son. He sent him to Libo on his behalf. The proposition was always the same: a meeting with Pompey. He was convinced that if this interview could take place it would result in a just agreement which would end the war. As for Libo, it would be his glory to have contributed by his efforts to bring about a cessation of hostilities. Libo allowed himself to be persuaded; he went to see Pompey and succeeded this time in obtaining a definite answer: as the consuls were absent, there could be no question of entering into negotiations
without them. In face of such a refusal nothing was left for Caesar but to carry on the war, without respite, and to the very end.

In his book *De bello civili* he insists repeatedly upon his ardent desire for peace and upon the efforts he made—which to his regret remained fruitless—to bring the fratricidal struggle to an end. His eagerness to gain the sympathy of his reader by attributing to himself this noble and generous attitude is evident, but it is certain that at this time Caesar would have welcomed with the greatest satisfaction the realization of what it is usual to call a compromise peace, which, as he considered himself to be the victor, could only turn out to his advantage. The prospect of fighting Pompey outside Italy and far from his bases did not appeal to him. He had no fleet to convey his troops and war material to the east. Pompey’s agents had requisitioned all the ships in all the ports, and Caesar found only deserted harbours when he arrived. It was the same with regard to provisions: Pompey had carried off everything. Wherever Caesar went there was nothing left for him. Under these circumstances, to embark in pursuit of an enemy amply provided with foodstuffs and material would have been extremely imprudent. Moreover, Caesar lacked funds for continuing the war. There was scarcely anything left from the innumerable raids he had carried out during the eight years of war in Gaul. He had not changed in his way of dealing with money: as in the past, the more he had, the more he spent; and for the pleasure of performing a magnificent gesture he did not hesitate literally to throw it out of the window, with superb nonchalance. Above all, he was well aware of the danger hanging over his head: the threat from the west. Pompey had kept seven legions of seasoned, well-armed troops in Spain. Nothing was easier for the legates who commanded them than to take advantage of Caesar’s absence by going into Gaul and drawing into their game the newly conquered peoples who held his name in execration. After which they could unite to overrun the Cisalpine, push on to Rome, and wrest the whole peninsula from him while he was away.

As for Pompey’s stubbornly uncompromising attitude, it is also very easily explained. Since the outbreak of hostilities he had suffered nothing but defeats. Obliged to abandon Italian soil, he knew he was in a bad position to negotiate with his rival. As matters stood, peace could only be made at his expense, and one way or another he would have to acknowledge Caesar’s supremacy as much from the military as from the political point of view. He refused, however, to admit that
he was beaten. On the contrary, he was convinced that with the powerful means still at his disposal (both men and war material) he could be sure of victory in the end. The problem was to hold out as long as possible and—to use an expression which has been somewhat overworked in recent years—to let time operate in his favour. The task which was considered the most difficult, was carried out with complete success: Caesar, in spite of all his efforts, was unable to prevent him from achieving the evacuation of all his army. Plutarch claims that 'many people regarded this departure as one of the best stratagems of the war'. This 'stratagem' was not so complicated, after all. Pompey had placed a few lightly armed soldiers on all the ramparts and towers at wide intervals to put the enemy on the wrong scent. A signal was agreed upon to call them when the evacuation of all the troops was finished, and some swift sailing boats were left in an easily accessible place to pick them up.

The departure took place in profound silence. The population, confined to their homes, managed none the less to find a way of informing Caesar by going up to their roofs and making pre-arranged signals. On being given the alarm, Caesar had the ladders prepared and ordered his troops to go forward. The soldiers scaled the walls. The inhabitants, coming out of their houses, ran to meet them, warning them of the traps and snares set by Pompey. Caesar's troops were obliged to make a long detour to reach the port. When they arrived, Pompey and his fleet were already far away.
CHAPTER 41

Caesar Goes to Rome

After Pompey's departure, Caesar became master of the whole peninsula. The war continued, however; or rather, it was just beginning; for the military operations so far had consisted only of evacuations and capitulations in which it was impossible to detect the slightest inclination to fight.

In spite of the startling success of prestige which had come to him, Caesar found himself in a very awkward position. He was beset on all sides by difficulties, both present and to come. Spain had remained faithful to Pompey. So had Sicily, Sardinia, and Africa. Not only did that mean important military contingents which might be used against Caesar, but, in addition, his adversary held the fate of the metropolis in his hands through his possession of those provinces upon which it depended for its food supplies. Pompey could easily starve the whole country by stopping deliveries of corn from the two large islands. Such indeed seems to have been his plan, if the accounts of contemporary writers are to be trusted. For the moment, the great majority of the population of Italy seemed won over to Caesar. But on the day when he could no longer ensure its provisioning, he would immediately lose his popularity, and a general revolt caused by famine would infallibly lead to his downfall. Then, if Pompey so much as appeared, he could take possession of the Republic without striking a blow, and receive the blessings of the people by putting a few cargoes of Sicilian corn at their disposal. Besides, there was the threat of the Spanish legions, which were watching him from the other side of the Pyrenees, while across the Adriatic, sheltered from any immediate danger, Pompey was proceeding with his preparations for war. Everything had to be dealt with at once and with practically no resources.

The most awkward thing of all was that legally Caesar had no powers and was only exercising a de facto authority resting upon his recent successes. He therefore considered it necessary to begin by regularising his own position. Pompey had been followed in his retreat by the two consuls and a great number of senators. There
were, however, still enough of them left, either in Rome or in small localities in the neighbouring province, to form an assembly which, holding its sessions under the protecting eyes of the gods of the Capitol, would be the true Senate, as opposed to the assembly of 'rebels' who had left their own country and must be regarded as having forfeited the right to exercise any authority whatsoever. Once they were reassembled, the senators would have to settle all the questions which had been left in suspense: the nomination of new governors for the provinces to replace those men who belonged to Pompey's party; the authorization to embark upon a campaign in Spain; the opening of the credits needed to meet the expenses it would entail, and—most important of all—the granting of absolute powers to Caesar with a view to ensuring that continuity of government which had been interrupted by the departure of the consuls.

From Brundisium he instructed his two associates, the tribunes Antony and Cassius, to convene the Senate; in order that he could appear before it legally—sometimes Caesar showed the strictest regard for the law—the meeting had to take place outside Rome so that no one could reproach him with having crossed the line of the pomerium without laying down the insignia of his command. His two chief propaganda agents, Balbus and Oppius, were charged with creating a favourable atmosphere by 'working upon' the most influential senators.

First among these was Cicero. Recent events had taken this father of his country completely unawares and his correspondence at this period reflects his extreme confusion. He did not know which side to take or which way to turn. Caught up in the general panic, he had left Rome, but, instead of keeping his appointment with Pompey, he changed his mind and went to Formia to settle down in his country house. Amidst the tranquillity of these rustic surroundings he would be better able to come to a decision. Should he, or should he not leave Italy? He was in this quiet retreat when he received the letter from his friend Lentulus Spinther apprising him of the generous treatment he had just received from Caesar. This moved him to congratulate the victor on his clemency towards the prisoners of Corfinium.

Was this clumsy of him or was it a clever calculation? Perhaps it was both. The great barrister had apparently taken Pompey's side and 'with his heart' had followed him to Brundisium in order to share his destiny to the end. Really it was quite otherwise: he was
beginning to be seriously worried. Had he acted wisely when he staked everything on Pompey? At heart, he was no more for the one than for the other. What alone mattered to him was to preserve his personal prestige and the authority which fifteen years of political activity had finally won for him. After having declared himself ready to celebrate in verse Caesar’s accomplishments in Britain, he had become more and more reticent as he beheld the era of difficulties opening before the conqueror. Now, however, here he was invading Italy and, in the space of two months, traversing the country from one end to the other without meeting any resistance. Here was material proof of his power. Moreover, Caesar’s troops were operating near his own property, while Pompey’s were far away. It was therefore as well to take a few precautions, but without compromising himself for the future which might have some surprises in store. Thus, it came about that while he was referring to Caesar as a ‘scoundrel’ and a ‘brigand’ in his letters to Atticus, he made advances to him which he scarcely troubled to veil, and showered him with praise.

His letter reached Caesar at the moment when he was preparing to leave Corfinium for Brundisium. The legions had already started and he was dispatching his last letters before setting out himself. Cicero’s communication gave him an extremely pleasant surprise. He was particularly anxious to gain his support and to entrust him with the defence of his cause at the next senatorial assembly. With this aim in view he had already instructed his best agents, Balbus and Oppius, to proceed with great discretion to sound the illustrious orator; but so far he knew nothing of his reactions. Now here was his unsolicited reply—and how promising it was! Although extremely busy, he called one of the messengers who was just starting back, hastily wrote a note of thanks, and sent it by him to Formia.

In this letter telling Cicero how touched he was by his attention, Caesar managed to convey between the lines a pressing invitation to come to Rome. ‘Could I but see you’, he said, ‘and benefit by your enlightenment and your prestige, your position and indeed all you are able to accomplish!’

Another letter which reached Cicero simultaneously was written by Balbus and Oppius. This one contained a concrete offer for him ‘to work for a reconciliation between Caesar and Pompey’. The rôle of mediator was assigned to him because his correspondents considered that it would be ‘more honourable and easy for him than
for any other person, in view of his connections with both the one
and the other'.

These suggestions throw a strange light on the attitude which
Caesar adopted on the eve of the forthcoming session. Once again,
he stressed his desire to reach an agreement and bring the war to an
end—in spite of the fact that his recent proposals had been rejected
by Pompey. He could not have had any doubt that this new advance
would fail just as the former one had done. If Caesar proposed to
take such an initiative once more, it was solely to gain the support of
those among the senators who showed themselves to be in favour
of a peaceful solution of the conflict, and he thought he had every
reason to count Cicero among them.

The latter, however, was not in the least attracted by the prospect
of arbitrating in this difficult situation. He wanted above all to remain
detached and, without becoming involved in the struggle, to wait
until one of the adversaries finally gained the victory. That is why
it was a remarkable blunder on his part to send Caesar his letter of
congratulations. He now realised that by so much as holding out
the tip of his finger he had allowed his whole hand to be caught.
It was therefore high time to become disengaged. Not wishing to
offend his formidable correspondent, however, he replied with a
confused and evasive letter, in which compliments and fears were
intermingled. This by no means satisfied Caesar. Wishing to be
clear about the whole business, he decided to go and see Cicero
personally. He had just started for the capital. On March 26 he
arrived at Beneventum, the next day he was at Capua, and on the
28th at Sinuessa (Mondragone). From there he sent Cicero a letter
which, besides being an answer to his own, was intended to prepare
the ground for their interview. Two days later, the two men met
at Formia. They had not seen each other for ten years.

The conversation which took place between Caesar and Cicero
can be reproduced with a good deal of accuracy thanks to the details
contained in one of Cicero's letters to Atticus. Cicero's presence in
Rome during the forthcoming deliberations of the Senate was the
principal, if not the only, subject of their talk. Caesar began by
revealing his plan of approaching Pompey with the object of finding
a peaceful solution, though, should this fail, he was prepared to carry
on the war wherever his rival might try to offer resistance. Cicero
thereupon explained that he intended to keep out of the conflict.
Caesar replied that such an attitude on his part would be 'his
condemnation' and that his example would make everyone hold back. To this Cicero answered that 'his position was exceptional'. A discussion then followed.

'Af ter a good deal of arguing back and forth', Caesar offered a solution in the nature of a compromise: Cicero should take part in the debates as a mediator between himself and Pompey. Here is the dialogue that ensued:

_Cicero._ Shall I have complete liberty of action?
_Caesar._ I do not pretend to dictate the part you should play.
_Cicero._ Very well, I will urge the Senate to prevent you from going to Spain and from carrying the war into Greece. I shall speak in favour of Pompey at every moment.
_Cicero._ That I do not want.
_Cicero._ So I imagine. Therefore I will not go to Rome.

This obstinacy finally irritated Caesar. He cut the interview short and in a somewhat icy manner told Cicero 'to think it over', ending with this sentence, which the latter tells us 'made him tremble': 'If you refuse to give me help I must seek it where I can, and then there is nothing which might not be feared.' Thereupon they separated. Caesar went away obviously annoyed. Cicero was really alarmed. 'I have offended him,' he confided to Atticus, 'of that I am quite sure.' Perhaps he already regretted his uncompromising attitude. Now it was too late.

Caesar left Formia the same day and, after passing through Pedum, where he had an estate, he reached the outskirts of Rome one or two days before the date fixed for the opening of the Senate.

The population of the capital was waiting for him with mixed feelings. The wild panic of the exodus was forgotten. Life was back to normal and business continued in spite of the absence of the consuls and the interruption of the sessions of the Senate. The praetors were giving audiences, the aediles were preparing for the games, the 'well-to-do' were investing their money. Left to its own resources, the great city seemed to adjust itself perfectly to the situation. The people had learned with real satisfaction that Pompey and his troops had crossed over to Epirus. This meant that the war had moved away from the peninsula and everyone could go about his business in peace. To be sure, among the wealthy the arrival of the new master was awaited with certain apprehensions. The most contradictory rumours were going round concerning his intentions.
Huge capital levies were hinted at which would provide Caesar with the necessary funds for carrying on the war. People even went so far as to say that he would not be content, as Pompey had been, with decreeing a contribution towards the war, but would simply lay hands on the citizens' possessions without ceremony.

A few detachments of his vanguard made their appearance in Rome. They had left rather an unpleasant impression on Cicero, who saw them pass through Formia. "They look scarcely human," he confided to Atticus. It is true that when levying troops in the regions he had occupied, Caesar had not been particular as to the choice of his recruits, and that certain doubtful elements had answered his call with alacrity. According to Cicero, "not a single degraded individual failed to respond," and he estimated that "private wealth and public funds would not be enough to pay for the debauchery, the excesses, the prodigality, and the needs of so many miserable wretches lacking everything." In any case, the news that Caesar did not intend to delay in Rome and had announced that he was in a hurry to fight in Spain must have been received with a sigh of relief in many quarters.

On April 1, the senators assembled to hear Caesar speak. We do not know the exact number of members present, but it seems that the gathering exceeded the limits of a private council. Two former consuls attended: Volcatius Tullus and S. Sulpicius Rufus. The session opened with a speech by Caesar. He recalled the "injustices done to him by his adversaries", the "brutal and unheard of treatment" of the tribunes of the people, his attempts to obtain an interview with Pompey and the latter's constant evasions. Then he asked the assembly to grant him the credits needed for his forthcoming campaign in Spain. Sulpicius Rufus spoke next. This wise and level-headed man, a learned jurist who was held in great esteem, had already seen the possibility of civil war looming on the horizon at the time of his consulship in 51, and had tried, by opposing the hostile measures taken against Caesar, to prevent the matter from becoming irreparable. Determined to remain neutral, he had left Rome, but he did not follow Pompey and, in response to Caesar's invitation, came to meet with his colleagues in the hope of furthering the cause of peace. In his speech, of which only a brief mention has come down to us, he begged Caesar to give up the war in Spain, assuring him that by so doing he would become entitled to his country's unfailing gratitude.

The majority of the assembly approved of these utterances. This placed Caesar in a very delicate position. Sulpicius Rufus had said...
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exactly what Cicero had proposed to say. During the interview Caesar had categorically refused to agree to it. Now that this point of view turned out to be shared by the majority of the council, could he persevere in his uncompromising attitude? That was likely to cause at the outset an unfortunate conflict with this assembly which he had called himself and which, having responded to his invitation, deserved a more tactful handling. All the same he did not mean to give up his plans. The war in Spain was decided upon; it would therefore take place. It was only a question of disguising his real intentions by clever manoeuvring. Instead of giving a clear answer to the exhortation which had been addressed to him, Caesar evaded the issue. He announced that he was ready to send envoys to Pompey offering to re-open negotiations with a view to making peace. In this way he gave proof of an evident desire to bring the conflict to an end, and appeared to be resolved to anticipate the wishes of the assembly. He even made this the occasion for striking a noble attitude, and declared 'that he himself did not have the fear which Pompey had expressed at a recent session, namely that sending envoys to an adversary was a recognition of his authority and an admission of uneasiness on the part of those who sent them'. He considered that this opinion betrayed 'a spirit without either breadth of view or vigour'. As for himself, he 'had tried to be first in matters of military prowess and he wanted to show himself superior in justice and equity as well'.

The senators approved of his proposition. How could they do otherwise? When it came to naming the delegates, however, each of them made excuses. They all remembered the threat of Pompey, who on leaving Rome had proclaimed that he would make no difference between those who stayed on and those who openly went over to Caesar's side. 'Three days were thus lost in discussions and excuses', writes Caesar. That, however, fitted in excellently. At the end of this delay he showed signs of impatience. He 'urgently' begged the members present 'to attend to the common weal and to govern with him'. 'If fear made them shrink from the task,' he added, 'he, at any rate, would not shirk the burden, and he would govern the State by his own means.' No one replied.

With this declaration the 'session' came to an end. On leaving the conference building, Caesar spoke to the people who were crowding around, impatient to know the result of the deliberations. He repeated his opening speech to the senators, made reassuring comments on the state of provisions, and promised each citizen a
special allocation of seventy-five denarii. Then, without further delay, he took the affairs of the Republic in hand. There was no longer any question of sending envoys to open negotiations with Pompey, and it seems that when his father-in-law Piso mentioned the matter to him, he showed acute displeasure. On his own authority he proceeded to the nomination of the principal officials of the State. The praetor Lepidus found himself in charge of the general administration. Antony obtained the command of all the armed forces of Italy. The provinces were given new governors. M. Licinius Crassus, the eldest son of the triumvir, was sent to Cisalpine Gaul; C. Antonius, brother of the tribune, to Illyricum; Valerius to Sardinia; Curio, raised to the rank of a propraetor, was to go first to Sardinia in order to turn out Cato, and from there to North Africa, where he was likewise to get rid of the Pompeian governor. Foreseeing the future extension of naval operations in his war against Pompey, Caesar began the simultaneous construction of two fleets: one on the Ionian, the other on the Tyrrenian coast. The son of the barrister Hortensius and Cicero’s son-in-law Dolabella were chosen to superintend the work and eventually to command the fleets. With the help of the people’s tribunes, he caused an important legislative measure, which he had very much at heart, to be voted by the comitia: Roman citizenship, which he had been promising for a long time to the peoples of Cisalpine Gaul, was henceforth granted to them by the lex Romnia. That allowed him to increase the number of his soldiers, since these new Roman citizens were ipso facto subject to military service. All his orders were obeyed and carried out without the slightest protest. Only once, on the occasion of the vote for the credits he needed, did he meet with opposition. Anxious to open hostilities and lacking the necessary funds, Caesar wished to be authorized to make use of the public treasure which the consul Lentulus, in the general confusion, had failed to remove during the exodus in January. The comitia complied with his request, but after the law had been voted, one of the tribunes, L. Metellus Celer, corrupted by his enemies (that, at least, is what Caesar claims), objected to it in a vehement speech and declared that he was going to implement his right of intercessio. Without paying the slightest attention to him, Caesar set out for the temple of Saturn, where the wealth of the State was deposited. Metellus interrupted his speech and pursued him. He caught up with him on the threshold of the temple and tried to stop him from entering by invoking the sacred laws concerning the
inviolability of the public treasure. 'Caesar replied to him', Plutarch tells us, 'that this was no longer the time for laws but for arms.' Metellus would not give in. He ended by exasperating Caesar. 'If you do not approve of what I am doing,' the latter cried out, 'be off! In time of war, you have to hold your tongue. When I have laid down my arms and peace is restored, you may continue your fine speeches.' Thereupon he walked towards the gates of the treasury. They were shut. He demanded the keys. He was told that Lentulus had taken them with him when he left. Without losing time in vain discussions, Caesar sent for the locksmiths and ordered them to break open the locks. Metellus, encouraged by a few voices which were heard among the gathering crowd, tried once more to protest. Whereupon Caesar, at the end of his patience, 'raised his voice' and threatened to strike him down on the spot if he went on pestering him. 'And you know well enough, young fool,' he added, 'that it is not more difficult to say than to do it.' Frightened, Metellus held his tongue and withdrew. The gates were forced open and Caesar entered the sanctuary. There he found 15,000 ingots of gold weighing altogether about 30,000 lbs., and 30,000 ingots of silver weighing roughly 230,000 lbs. He took possession of all of it and left the capital after a stay of eight days.

'Then,' writes the poet Lucan in his Pharsalia, 'for the first time, Rome was poorer than Caesar.'
CHAPTER 42

The Siege of Marseilles

The Spanish war began at . . . Marseilles. Caesar had left Rome at the head of the Thirteenth Legion on April 7. Joined by the two others, the Eighth and the Twelfth, he crossed Etruria and followed the coast in the direction of Narbonne. There he was to join the three legions of Fabius to whom before setting out he had sent instructions to meet him. When he reached the other side of the Alps, he learnt, probably at Nice, that the people of Marseilles had declared their intention of barring the gates of their city to his troops and that they were making active preparations for war. Further information revealed that a deputation of young Marseillais in Pompey’s service had just appeared in the town bearing a message from their leader exhorting the inhabitants to embrace his cause in the coming struggle. At the same time rumours reached him that Domitius, the luckless defender of Corinium, whom he had so generously set at liberty, was sailing towards Marseilles with seven warships equipped at his own expense and manned by recruits from among his farmers and slaves.

Surprised and worried, Caesar wanted to get to the bottom of it all. He halted his march and summoned the members of the Directorate of Marseilles to ask them the reasons for this attitude.

The Fifteen appeared before him, their brows adorned with wreaths of olive leaves intended to symbolize their peaceful intentions. Caesar tried to win them to his cause. ‘Their duty’, he said, ‘was to follow the example of all Italy rather than to obey the dictates of a single man.’ The magistrates replied that they could decide nothing of themselves and that they were obliged to refer back to their fellow citizens, or in other words, to the assembly of the Six Hundred, who represented them.

The reply which they subsequently brought back to Caesar has come down to us in three different versions. First, there is Caesar’s own testimony in his De bello civili. Taken as a whole, it more or less corresponds with that of Dion Cassius. Both are contradicted by the
text of Lucan, which is singularly close to the interpretation of Velleius Paterculus, whose suggestions deserve careful attention.

Caesar distinguished three points in the reply of the Marseillais:
1. Neither was it their business nor were they qualified to determine which of the two rivals was right or wrong.
2. Since both were benefactors of their city, they were indebted to the one as much as to the other.
3. That was why they had decided to give their help neither to Caesar nor to Pompey and not to receive either of them into their town or ports.

To Dion Cassius, the reply appeared as follows:
1. Considering themselves to be incapable of judging this question, the Marseillais did not wish to know which of the two adversaries was defending a bad cause.
2. As allies of the Roman people, they were as well disposed towards the one as towards the other.
3. If they came as friends, they would be received without arms. If they presented themselves for the purpose of war, the gates of the town would be closed to the one as to the other.

In the two cases the meaning of the reply seems clear. Marseilles wished above all to remain neutral and not to become involved in the conflict. If it were attacked, however, it would defend itself.

Lucan sees the matter differently. ‘Deign to trust yourself to these walls,’ the Marseillais ask Caesar, in his account, ‘may this be a region free from crime and safe for Pompey and for you, so that . . . if you both agree to negotiate, it will be a place where you can come without arms!’

In these lines of the poet of the Pharsalia, there is as it were a reflection of the significant passage of Velleius Paterculus, in which it is stated that ‘Marseilles showed more loyalty than prudence in wishing at an inauspicious moment to intervene as arbitrator in this great quarrel’.

Whichever version we may decide upon, the fact remains that the words of the inhabitants of Marseilles did not agree with their actions. Clerc, the learned historian of ancient Massilia, considers that Caesar need not have minded in the least that Pompey’s propaganda was circulating freely in a city which claimed to have adopted an attitude of strict neutrality. We do not, however, see how he could have resigned himself to watching the work of fortification which was rapidly progressing on the land side and was intended to protect the town against the assaults of an enemy who could be none other than
himself, since he alone was in a position to attack Marseilles by land. It was therefore against him that these preparations were directed. Moreover, he knew that while his conversations with the citizens were in progress, Domitius had arrived at Marseilles and had been given an enthusiastic welcome.

Caesar does not tell us the reply he made to the spokesman of the deputation. We are obliged to refer to Lucan, always mindful of the amplifications inherent in his poetic interpretation. In any case, he evidently did not allow himself to be won over by the clever words of the Marseillais speaker and he saw through their game. "These Greeks are very ill advised to trust to our haste," he cried out, 'his face tense with anger.'

He had guessed their calculations. They probably imagined that Caesar, who was in a hurry to cross the Pyrenees and attack the legions of Pompey, would be satisfied with their assurances of neutrality and would continue his march. Then, having been spared by him, they could with complete impunity turn to Pompey, whom they preferred. For, in spite of their solemn assurances, they were definitely on the side of the latter, as their chief interests demanded they should be. Caesar's victory would have meant for them the end of the régime of the aristocratic republic which they had constituted, and a complete upheaval in their system of government.

'You shall be punished for having wished for peace,' Caesar concluded, 'and you shall learn that, as long as I live, nothing is more certain than a war when I am in command.'

'With these words,' adds Lucan, 'he changed his direction and marched towards the town which untrumblingly awaited him; then he saw the walls closed and furnished with a compact circle of warriors.'

It is certain that in Caesar's mind the 'insolent' attitude of the people of Marseilles deserved exemplary punishment. In addition, however, there were military considerations which had to be reckoned with. Once his legions had crossed the Pyrenees, Marseilles would remain a constant threat. It was essential for him to make his army secure from any danger in the rear, and to keep his lines of communication with the peninsula open. His only mistake was that he judged it would be a perfectly simple operation which would not delay him appreciably. Spain remained his principal objective. He sent his legate Fabius ahead with three legions, and camped in front of Marseilles with the rest of his troops.
A disagreeable surprise was in store for him: he had expected to deal with a mere handful of improvised fighters, armed in a haphazard manner. He found that this city of forty thousand inhabitants had not only called to arms all its able-bodied men (numbering about ten thousand), but had furthermore recruited numerous auxiliaries from outside: notably some Albici, rough mountaineers, accustomed to bear arms,' who, as Caesar himself testifies, 'were not outdone in valour' by the Roman troops, and several contingents of foreign mercenaries who came from more or less everywhere. There were also the slaves of Domitius, to whom he had promised freedom in reward for their efforts. Their reserves of equipment were constantly increasing. Regular armament factories had been established inside the town, working uninterruptedly. Strong teams of workmen were engaged in repairing the outposts and ramparts.

Caesar, who was accustomed to estimate the strength of the forces before him, was not slow in measuring the dimensions of his task, and he summoned another three legions to his side together with a certain number of specialized troops, archers, slingers, etc.

The most difficult undertaking was to counter-balance the sea power of the Marseillais. The seventeen warships they possessed had been reinforced by the fleet of Domitius as well as by a considerable number of small units composed of trading vessels which they had seized in every port on the coast and transformed into warships (a current practice among the ancients). Caesar had no fleet at his disposal. He was therefore obliged to build one, and he put twelve vessels in hand at the shipyards of Arles. As, however, he knew that they would not be ready for at least two months, he pressed on in the meantime with the operations connected with the siege. Here, too, there was the difficulty of time. A causeway, towers, barracks, everything had to be constructed, and this required a considerable quantity of wood. Hence he had to begin by cutting down the trees in the surrounding districts; then they had to be sawn up and brought before the walls of Marseilles. The work started in a sort of feverish frenzy. Caesar was in a tremendous hurry to be off; yet he remained there in order to stir the workmen to greater activity by his presence. He could be seen everywhere: supervising the workshops, down in the trenches, touring the forests. None of these were spared, not even the famous 'sacred wood', which was venerated in the whole country and inspired all men with a religious terror. This time, however, 'the hands of the bravest trembled', says Lucan. No one among
his soldiers dared to strike the first blow on these awe-inspiring trees. Caesar was there, inspecting the work. When he saw the most hardened of his veterans paralysed by fear, he seized an axe and brandishing it cleft a century-old oak, its crown lost in the clouds. After which he coldly declared, "Now, so that none among you need hesitate to cut down the forest, think that it is I who have committed a sacrilege." And the soldiers obeyed, 'not because they had banished their fear,' writes the poet, 'but because they had balanced the anger of the gods against that of Caesar.'

Impatient to end this task and with his mind set on Spain, where Pompey's followers, profiting by his delay, were completing their preparation for resistance, Caesar did not wait for the work undertaken at Arles to be finished. As soon as some of the assault engines were ready, he tried to attack the fortifications of Marseilles. Several of these towers, the very sight of which had been enough to spread terror among the Gauls, were brought up to the walls. Hidden inside the moving fortresses, the Romans riddled the enemy ramparts with arrows and tried with blows from their battering rams to dislocate the whole structure of the defences. But, from above, flames, enormous fragments of rock, an avalanche of spears and blazing branches of oak made the attackers give way and the forerunners of our armoured cars beat a retreat. Then it was the turn of the Marseillais to prepare to attack, under cover of night. They hid flaming torches under their shields and rushed out. These torches, which they hurled by thousands into the enemy entrenchments, set up vast fires which were spread by the wind. The causeway caved in. The work of several weeks was wiped out in a few hours, and Caesar was back again where he had started. This is no doubt the sally of the besieged to which Dion Cassius alludes when he writes that 'the Marseillais, besieged by Caesar drove him back'. It was after this set-back, according to the same author, that he entrusted the continuation of the siege to Trebonius and left for Spain. If we turn to *De bello civili*, where Caesar's stay before Marseilles is discreetly presented in no more than a few lines, we note that this decision coincides with the arrival of the fleet ordered at Arles. This meant that the campaign was going to enter a new phase. The land operations would be subordinated to the naval and, judging that the fleet of Decimus Brutus must now take over the leading rôle, Caesar went on his way, put out and disappointed.
CHAPTER 43

The War in Spain

Two weeks later, escorted by nine hundred horsemen, Caesar made his entry into the camp which Fabius had established near the town of Ilerda in Catalonia, where Pompey's followers had concentrated all their forces.

Spain was governed in the name of Pompey by three legates: L. Afranius (Nearer Spain—the valley of the Ebro and the eastern part of the peninsula); M. Varro (Further Spain—the valley of the Guadalquivir and the upper and middle parts of the valleys of the Guadiana, the Tagus and the Douro), and M. Petreius (Lusitania, the two Estremaduras and Salamanca). Of the seven legions that were there, six had been recruited in Italy (three of these were placed under Afranius' command and three under Petreius) and one in Spain from among the inhabitants of the country, which was under the orders of Varro.

As the zone of military operations was limited to the province of Afranius, his colleague Petreius joined him with his legions. M. Varro remained with his troops where he was. Although officially Afranius and Petreius were considered as equals, each taking turns in assuming supreme command, it was the former who seems to have had the greater authority.

'Better as a dancer than as a statesman,' Dion Cassius has said of him. Perhaps... Nevertheless, he had served under Pompey in the campaigns against Sertorius and Mithridates. As for M. Petreius, he was known as one of Caesar's bitterest enemies and it will be remembered that he insulted Caesar before the whole Senate at the time of Cato's arrest.

Caesar had equally strong, if not superior, forces at his disposal. He had mobilized six legions, of which three were still engaged before Marseilles. To make up for their absence, he sent Antony orders to accelerate the march of the legions that had left Brundisium for Gaul (the Eighth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth). They were to join the three legions of Fabius in Spain as soon as possible. With auxiliaries numbering 10,000 foot and 6,000 horse at his disposal,
Caesar's troops reached a total of 25,000 men which, once the three legions kept at Marseilles became available, following the surrender of that city, would be raised to 37,000.

Fabius had done his best while waiting for the arrival of his chief. Having succeeded in forcing a passage across the Pyrenees, without much opposition from Pompey's forces who had immediately withdrawn into the interior of the country towards Ilerda, he took up his position on the right bank of the Sicoris (the Segre of to-day), which separated him from the enemy zone. Avoiding all military initiative, he confined his activities to flooding the region with letters and emissaries, trying to win over the neighbouring towns to Caesar's cause. As his provisions were coming to an end and as there was no longer anything left to be requisitioned in the sector which he occupied, he had two bridges constructed giving him access to the opposite bank. Thenceforward his horsemen were able to carry out effective raids, but in the course of one of these expeditions the bridges broke under the violence of the gale and were carried away by the swollen river. Fabius' cavalry had great difficulty in escaping from Pompey's men, who wished to make the most of their opportunity and had started in pursuit of them.

Two days later Caesar made his appearance. Informed of what had happened, he immediately went to the scene of the accident, inspected the repairs which were being made, expressed surprise at their slow progress and ordered that they should be completed 'in the course of that same night'.

The remainder of the day was passed in examining the lie of the land. He closely surveyed the surroundings of the place which sheltered his enemies. Situated on the plateau of the mountain at the foot of which the modern town of Lerida is built, the Ilerda of ancient times dominated the Sicoris valley from a height of about 350 feet and was protected at nearly every point by steep escarpments. About two miles to the south there rose the hill of Gardeny, defended by rugged slopes, where Afranius and Petreius had established themselves with their legions, leaving the cavalry and baggage encamped on the plain. Memories of Gergovia came to his mind. The task promised to be difficult. However, he was there to accomplish it. All hesitation was out of the question.

The night was spent in meditations and calculations. At dawn the troops were given orders to prepare for combat. They were sent towards the enemy position and halted in a triple line of battle
ROMAN SPAIN

Map showing the extent of Roman Spain in the early first century BCE, shortly after the death of Julius Caesar.
at the foot of the hill which protected the Pompeian camp. This, however, was not done for the purpose of attack. Caesar had organized this demonstration in order to enable him, unknown to the enemy, to establish his own camp some six hundred and fifty yards away from theirs. While the two first lines remained under arms facing the foe, the third, safe from any surprise attacks, set to work. At nightfall the trench was ready. Then Caesar withdrew the double curtain of protection and installed his troops behind the entrenchment of which the sudden discovery was a surprise as unexpected as it was unpleasant for the Pompeians. There was nothing left for them but to resign themselves willy-nilly to put up with this formidable neighbour. That was what they did. In three days the work was completed and a strong rampart surrounded the whole camp. Then, without further delay, Caesar was ready to go into action.

In his survey of the country on the day of his arrival he had noticed a hillock in the middle of the plain which stretched from the hill of the enemy camp to the town of Ilerda. This hillock, to-day known as Puig Bordel, had not been occupied, which showed the carelessness of his adversaries if not their ignorance of military strategy. He immediately seized this advantage and occupied the hillock which permitted him to cut his opponents off from the town, where all their provisions were stored and which had become their sole base for supplies.

Hoping to surprise the enemy by a lightning attack, he launched an assault by his antesignani who in exceptional circumstances served him as shock troops. The legions followed to support them. On this occasion Pompey’s men realised the manoeuvre in time, and taking a short cut, succeeded in overtaking and repelling Caesar’s troops, who were taken unawares by a manner of fighting hitherto completely unknown to them. Pompey’s soldiers, as a result of fighting against the natives, had come to adopt their tactics, which simply consisted of having none at all. They hurled themselves upon the enemy in a disorganized mass, without any thought of keeping their lines or following a systematic plan. If they met with too great resistance, they made off to some spot where they regrouped unobserved to swoop down again at another point. Caesar’s legionaries, who were accustomed to go into battle in impeccable columns and to advance or retreat on command and in close formation, were utterly bewildered. In spite of reinforcements and the personal
encouragement they received from Caesar, they were almost surrounded, and it was only after the fiercest hand-to-hand fighting that they succeeded in breaking free and returning to their camp. Caesar has given the number of his casualties: 70 killed and more than 600 wounded. We have no means of checking the accuracy of the number any more than that of Pompey's casualties which he estimates at 200 killed, without even an approximate indication of the number of wounded.

Two days later a violent storm broke. It melted the snow on the mountains and swept away, on the same day, the two bridges which had only just been repaired. Henceforward Caesar was wedged between two rivers, the Sicoris and the Cinga, in a space of twenty-five miles, cut off from all communication with the cities which, in response to Fabius' appeal, had entered into an alliance with him and had agreed to supply him with provisions. Furthermore, the large convoys of food coming from Italy and Gaul were no longer able to reach his camp. To crown his misfortunes, his foragers and their escort were held up on the opposite bank of the river. The rising of the waters lasted many days. 'The great scarcity of foodstuffs made the soldiers suffer cruelly,' writes Caesar. To call things by their true name, there was a real famine in his camp. He tried to overcome it by makeshift methods. They all proved ineffectual. As for the bridges, it was impossible to rebuild them. The swollen river and the enemy placed all along the bank prevented him.

Afranius and Petreius knew how to exploit these difficulties by circulating exaggerated versions of them among the population of the province and among their friends in Rome. At the same time the rumour spread—no doubt originating from the same source—of the impending arrival of Pompey, who, it was said, was following the coastal route of North Africa and making his way towards Spain at the head of his legions. This propaganda bore fruit, and finally public opinion in Spain as in Rome believed that Caesar was lost and Pompey victorious. This resulted in sudden conversions and startling changes. Emigration was intensified. People hastened to offer their allegiance to the supposed head of the Republic.

Caesar did not allow himself to be downcast. Once more, he was able to dominate events and make the impossible possible. At all costs he had to escape from the grip of the two rivers which were strangling his army. The whole problem was how to transport this army to open ground, where it could communicate freely with its
supply centres. Consulting his memory and recalling the lessons learnt in his campaign in Britain, Caesar set to work upon a mass production of light little boats which would make it possible for him to send a legion across to the opposite bank. When that had been done, a bridge was begun at both ends and finished within forty-eight hours. From then onwards the convoys could safely reach his camp and his horsemen were able to give chase to Pompey’s foragers, who, thinking they were out of his reach, had spread through the whole region. But, above all, it was the news of the victory of Decimus Brutus over the Marseilles fleet which contributed so greatly to raise Caesar’s prestige. Dion Cassius even goes so far as to write: ‘If the people of Marseilles . . . had not been shut up within their walls as a result of this defeat, nothing could have prevented Caesar’s ruin.’

Immediately a great change came about. There was no further mention of the supposed victory of Afranius; the rumour of the forthcoming arrival of Pompey’s legions faded away and many of his cities went over to the other side. This produced a deep demoralization in the ranks of Caesar’s enemies.

Wishing to save his horsemen the long detour they had to make each time they crossed the bridge, Caesar had numerous ditches hollowed out to divert some of the water of the Sicoris and thus to make a ford. The work went on day and night. Pompey’s men were dismayed when they were faced with the accomplished fact. Caesar’s cavalry could now easily cut them off from all their bases. Moreover, since the recent change-over in favour of Caesar, the country seemed to be less and less safe for them. Afranius therefore decided to evacuate Ilerda and to carry on the war in Celtic Iberia, where the population, remembering the war of Sertorius, still remained firmly attached to Pompey. Octogesa, a fortress on the Ebro, was selected as the centre where his forces were to concentrate.

When Caesar’s soldiers from the heights near their camp saw the long procession of enemy wagons filing out of the fortified enclosure, they were furious. Everywhere they gathered in groups, until the military camp began to resemble some public square on election day. The discussions became more and more heated. Speakers rose spontaneously and voiced the anger and disappointment of their comrades at seeing the enemy escape from their grasp, which meant an inevitable lengthening of the war. Finally it was decided to ask the officers to go to Caesar and to tell him that they were ready to cross the river by way of the ford which the cavalry had used.
THE WAR IN SPAIN

This was exactly what he wanted. He thus appeared to be yielding to the pressure of his soldiers in taking the dangerous risk of throwing men, hampered by their arms, into a river with an extremely strong current. Since, however, they themselves asked for it, he could not but accede to their wishes. Precautions were taken. The less vigorous were made to stand aside. The pack animals were unharnessed and placed above and below the ford in order to lessen the force of the current. After this, Caesar's legionaries marched to the assault of the waters. They came through admirably, judging by Caesar's own testimony. 'A small number of soldiers lost their weapons owing to the violence of the current,' he writes, 'but the cavalry came to their help. There were no losses.'

This, however, was not the end of their trials. There were others awaiting them, and no less severe. Their object was to get ahead of Pompey's forces by short cuts and to block the road that led to Octoges. It was an arduous march. Sometimes they had to cross deep ravines, and then again to scale heights which seemed inaccessible. A great part of the way they had to hoist themselves on to each other's shoulders and pass their arms from hand to hand. 'But no one shrank from this effort,' comments Caesar, 'each one thinking that all hardships would be over if they could succeed in keeping the enemy from reaching the Ebro and in cutting off his provisions.'

It was in fact a struggle of speed which had to decide who should first occupy the mountain passes. Caesar won the race. Then, his army clamoured for battle. Legates, tribunes, centurions—all rushed to him and urged him to engage the enemy. The morale of the troops was excellent, the only thing they asked was to fight, such a favourable opportunity must not be allowed to escape, and so on, and so forth. Caesar refused.

At the time this decision filled his followers with amazement—They could make nothing of it. Some gave vent to bitter complaints. Caesar let them talk, but he remained inexorable. It was only afterwards, in writing the history of this campaign, that he gave his reasons. They are worth remembering.

Caesar flattered himself that he might be able to end the war without fighting and without exposing his troops. He was satisfied that he had cut off the adversary from his sources of provisions; why then should he lose a certain number of his soldiers, even in a victorious battle? Why should he sacrifice
the men to whom he owed so much? Why, in short, should he
tempt Fortune? Particularly since it was no less worthy of a
general to conquer by the wisdom of his decisions than by the
force of his arms.

Accordingly, Caesar contented himself with depriving Pompey's
troops of all access to the Ebro, and he established a fortified camp in
close proximity to the enemy.

The next day, the soldiers of Afranius and Petreius, taking
advantage of the absence of their leaders, who had gone on a tour of
inspection, came crowding out of their entrenchments and went off
towards Caesar's camp. The 'fraternization' was beginning. It
opened with the shouts of those who had friends and compatriots in
the ranks of the opposing army. They inquired about them, they
asked to see them. Then conversations started and were carried on
in a most cordial spirit. Pompey's men threw out feelers. Would
it be wise to trust to Caesar? What fate was in store for them if they
went over to his side? They were assured that they need have no fear,
that they would be received with open arms. Caesar, listening in his
tent, followed the course of these colloquies. At a given moment
he was told that the soldiers of Afranius and Petreius were ready to
desert, on condition that the lives of their leaders were spared. He
assured them of this. A few moments later, a delegation composed
of centurions of the highest rank in Pompey's army presented itself
in the name of the soldiers to arrange the terms of an agreement.
Next, it was the turn of the officers. A large number of military
tribunes also came to see him, commending themselves to his
generosity. The son of Afranius, who did not dare to appear in
person, negotiated through a legate. During this time the two camps
seemed to merge into one. Pompey's men took their friends in
Caesar's army to visit them in their camp, and vice versa. Joyful
celebrations were organized everywhere, accompanied by copious
libations.

Afranius and Petreius came hurrying back as soon as they realized
what was happening. The former seemed inclined to bow to the
general will, but the latter would not hear of it. He armed his slaves
and his personal guard, rushed to the entrenchments and drove Caesar's
men from his camp; those who fell into his hands were put to death.
Next, he gathered all his soldiers and obliged them to swear to remain
faithful to their leaders and not to desert. They obeyed, and thus
ended the beautiful dream which had begun to take shape in the course of an improvised and ephemeral armistice.

Caesar's reaction was characteristic. He made no attempt to lay hands on Pompey's men who were left behind in his camp. They were free to decide upon their fate. There were a great many, even among the officers, who preferred to stay with him. Others kept on arriving each day, coming over from the camp of Afranius, whose cause they considered as definitely lost.

The position of Pompey's forces was indeed becoming more and more difficult. Not only did mass desertsions take place—in spite of the recent oath—so that their total strength rapidly diminished, but they had not even enough supplies to provide decent nourishment for the men who, for the moment at least, remained at their posts. On account of the scarcity of food, Afranius resolved to give up his plan of reaching Octogesara and to return to Ilerda, where they still had some stores of corn. He struck camp and set out. Caesar followed him. He halted some three and a half miles farther on. Caesar halted likewise. Afranius started again; so did Caesar. Methodically and without haste he continued his elastic blockade. He knew what he was doing. Pompey's army was obliged to camp on unfavourable ground, far from any water supply. At last, worn out with hunger, thirst, and exhaustion, it halted. The army no longer had the strength to prevent Caesar from enclosing it on all sides with a rampart and a ditch. Then Afranius made a desperate attempt: he tried to cross the ford of the Sicoris. Caesar anticipated this move by stationing a close network of guards on the river bank, and sent his Germans on patrol.

Cut off from every necessity, without forage, water, bread or wood, Afranius sent emissaries to Caesar, declaring himself ready to open negotiations, provided that they were not conducted in the presence of the troops.

Caesar agreed in principle, but contrary to Afranius' request he insisted that the conversations should take place publicly, in front of the soldiers. It was not that he cared for their opinion or their approval; his intention was to administer an authoritative lesson to Pompey's two legates before their own subordinates, who then would realize what unworthy leaders they had served and how much it would have been to their advantage to embrace a cause so just and so ably defended as Caesar's.

As he could not do otherwise, Afranius submitted to these demands.
It was agreed that they would meet in the open air, on neutral ground, at an equal distance from both camps. The troops, massed in their respective entrenchments, were present at the interview of their chiefs. Petreius refused to appear before Caesar. Afranius was thus the only one to speak.

He pleaded his cause and that of his army none too brilliantly. He said there was no reason to blame either the leaders or the soldiers for their desire to do their duty. Now, after undergoing so many privations, they admitted that they were defeated. They begged that 'if any room were left for pity' they might be spared 'the extreme penalty'.

Caesar's reply was crushing for the vanquished leader. Associating him with his colleague Petreius, he charged them both with the entire responsibility. From the outset he, Caesar, had wanted peace. That was why, even when conditions were most favourable, he had refrained from engaging in battle 'so that in all things the field should be as open as possible for concord'. In spite of the treason of which his soldiers had been the victims and the massacre of their comrades, they had protected the enemies who were in their power. Even the troops of the opposing army had given proof of their goodwill by opening peace negotiations on their own initiative. But they, their leaders, abhorred peace. Now they had what they deserved. Nevertheless he was not going to take advantage of their humiliation by crushing them under the weight of their defeat. He spared them all punishment and left them at liberty to go where they chose. But they must leave Spain without delay, and they must disband their troops. He had no need of them to swell his own forces. On hearing the word 'demobilization,' the audience in the trenches was exuberant with joy. Caesar writes:

By voice and gesture they made it understood that this must be done at once and that all the promises in the world would not be regarded as sufficient guarantees if it were put off until later.

As a matter of fact, the demobilization began there and then. It was decided that the natives and all those who had a dwelling or property in Spain should be demobilized immediately; the others were to be taken back to Gallic territory and disbanded as soon as they came to the River Var. No one would be forced to enlist in Caesar's army, but volunteers would be accepted. They would all be provided with rations, thanks to his care, until they reached the
Var. Any belongings which had been taken by Caesar's troops from Pompey's men in the course of hostilities must be returned to their rightful owners; those who now held them should be paid back in money by Caesar after a fair price had been estimated. This decision naturally stirred up numerous arguments which were all spontaneously referred to his judgment.

In two days about a third of the army was demobilized. The men who were leaving had to be given their pay. Afranius and Petreius refused to do this on the pretext that it was not yet pay day. Once again Caesar had to remind these recalcitrant generals of their duty.

The troops accordingly started off in the direction of the Italian frontier. Caesar chose to accompany them. When they reached the banks of the Var, which marked the extreme limit of the Roman Province, he made the following farewell speech:

'You, my enemies!... You know that I did not put to death those who had been sent to surprise my camp... that I did not exploit my advantage when you were cut off from all water... If you retain some gratitude in your hearts for my conduct towards you on these two occasions, tell all the soldiers of Pompey about it.'

Then he left them, and the men, free and returned to civilian life, joyfully crowded on to the bridge which opened the road to their native land.

But Caesar's task in the peninsula was not finished. Following the capitulation of Afranius and Petreius, he was master of Nearer Spain. There remained Further Spain. It was in the hands of Varro, who showed some inclination to resist, encouraged by the example of Marseilles which after nearly six months was still holding out against Caesar's legions.

He was not a very formidable enemy, however, this M. Terentius Varro. He was an eminent man of letters who had been led astray into politics. He had always maintained cordial relations with Caesar, but at a certain moment he had allowed himself to be tempted by Pompey's offer to become his legate. After that he found that he was obliged to embrace the latter's cause officially. But he continued to deal tactfully with Caesar, and was careful to avoid compromising himself in his eyes by any openly hostile acts or words.

His attitude changed when he heard of Caesar's difficulties, first before Marseilles and later before Ilerda. 'Then', the author of De bello civili notes with nonchalant irony, 'he also began to lean in the same direction as Fortune.' He decreed a general mobilization in
his province, insisted on an oath of fidelity to Pompey and to himself, ordered the construction of a powerful fleet at Gades and Hispalis, requisitioned the treasure and all the precious objects from the temple of Hercules, disarmed the civilian population, and imposed a war contribution of eighteen million sesterces, in addition to twenty thousand pounds of silver and a hundred and twenty thousand measures of corn.

The towns suspected of being in sympathy with Caesar (there were some which retained a favourable impression of his administration) were singled out to bear the heaviest burden and were given garrisons whose upkeep was particularly expensive. Citizens proved to have spoken in favour of Caesar were arrested and their goods confiscated. A regular reign of terror, which Varro justified as a necessity of war, swept through the whole province; it did not, however, succeed in putting a stop to the active propaganda of Caesar’s agents, who were energetically preparing the ground for him. Varro quite realised that, as a whole, the population of his province had taken Caesar’s side, and that his own situation was becoming increasingly precarious. Nevertheless, trusting to his forces (after the recent levying of troops he had at his disposal two legions and thirty cohorts of cavalry), and to his fleet, the construction of which was just being completed, he prepared for the struggle.

His plan was to concentrate all his troops at Gades. On his island, plentifully furnished with provisions and protected by his navy, to which Caesar could oppose nothing of any strength, he only had to wait until somewhere in the east, beyond the sea and far from his haven, a decisive battle between Pompey and Caesar settled the issue of the war.

However, Caesar took a different view of the situation. He considered it necessary to start by liquidating this last centre of resistance in Spain. He knew, moreover, that the population was on his side anyway, and for all practical purposes he regarded the whole province as being already in his hands. So much so that prior to any military action he sent an edict to the magistrates and heads of the cities of Further Spain announcing his forthcoming arrival at Corduba and calling upon them to come there to receive his directives. His agents made it their business to spread this message throughout the province. Everyone obeyed.

At the same time the inhabitants of Corduba informed Varro that, if he appeared before their city, he would find the gates shut. He
heeded the warning and marched towards Gades. Half-way there, he received a letter advising him that the Senate of that city, in agreement with the commander of the garrison, had decided to surrender unconditionally to Caesar. Thereupon he once more changed his direction and marched on Italica, whose inhabitants upon his approach decided to forbid him access to their city. Finally, no longer knowing which way to turn, he wrote to Caesar that he was ready to capitulate and to hand over all the troops that remained to him. Caesar sent him young Sextus Caesar, the son of his cousin the flamen Quirinalis, who had just joined his staff.

After handing over the troops, Varro went to Corduba. Caesar was already there. On the day of his arrival he had called together the representatives of the town and the delegates from all those cities which had hastened to obey his summons. Before this assembly, which included natives as well as Roman citizens and those who had acquired Roman citizenship, Caesar expressed his gratitude: he thanked those who had facilitated his seizure of their town and those who had helped to drive out Pompey’s forces. He repealed all Varro’s rigorous decrees, returned the sums collected as contributions to the war effort, liberated the citizens who had been arrested on account of their suspected sympathies for himself, and restored all confiscated property to its rightful owners. Collective and individual rewards were distributed. So also were promises for the future.

When he saw Pompey’s erudite legate appearing before him, Caesar showed neither surprise nor indignation. He received the report of his financial administration with the calm attention of a business man, collected the funds that he handed over at the same time as his powers, and took note of the number of ships and the quantities of provisions which were to be delivered to him.

Caesar remained in Corduba no longer than forty-eight hours. From there he went to Gades, where his stay was even shorter. His first act was to restore the votive objects and all the money taken from the temple of Hercules, to which he was attached by a distant but lasting memory. Before leaving the town he named his faithful Q. Cassius governor of the province, and taking possession of the fleet that Varro had ordered, he embarked for Tarraco (Tarragona), where he arrived within five or six days, probably on the 1st of October.

Delegations from nearly the whole province were awaiting his arrival. As at Corduba, he dispensed favours to those who had
worked for him. It must have been there that he received the news that the siege of Marseilles had entered upon its last phase. The defenders of the town, suffering from famine and ravaged by an epidemic, vanquished at sea, their numerous sallies driven back, after struggling stubbornly for more than six months had asked for a truce and pledged themselves to offer their submission to Caesar as soon as he arrived. His presence before the walls of Marseilles was therefore becoming imperative. He announced that he was going there without delay, and started off.

When he reached the pass of Pertus, he stopped before the trophy set up by Pompey in 71, after his victory over Sertorius. He re-read the proud triumphant inscription on its base: 876 towns conquered, from the Alps to the extreme limits of Further Spain. Caesar wanted to give his rival a lesson in modesty: beside the superb monument intended to immortalize Pompey's achievements, Caesar had a simple stone altar erected, as though he wished to appeal to the gods rather than to the memory of men.
CHAPTER 44

The Mutiny of Placentia

TRAVELLING by way of Narbonne, Caesar arrived in Marseilles during the last days of October to receive the submission of the town. Though apparently moderate, his conditions proved to be cruelly hard for the great Mediterranean city. Of her rich domains she was only allowed to keep the territory which originally belonged to her—Nice and the island of Hyères. Caesar took her entire fleet and all her money. The Marseillais had to surrender all their arms and all their war matériel. Their ramparts were to be demolished. Severe restrictions were imposed upon their trade, and Narbonne profited in consequence.

Caesar was in the midst of making these arrangements when he received two important announcements in quick succession. He was informed that he had just been named dictator in Rome, and he heard that the legions which were passing through Placentia had mutinied there and were indulging in acts of lawlessness throughout the surrounding country.

Everything called him to Rome. It was, however, imperative to settle the affair of Placentia. He went off in all haste, leaving at Marseilles an occupation force composed of two legions as a precaution against a possible attack from Pompey who was in control of the sea and of North Africa. There was also reason to fear Domitius, who had succeeded in escaping on the eve of the surrender.

It is useless to search Caesar's writings for the slightest allusion to the uproar provoked at Placentia by the mutiny of the soldiers. He passes over the entire incident in silence. It is to Appian, and above all to Dion Cassius, that we owe our knowledge of this very characteristic episode which is particularly illuminating as regards the relations between Caesar and his troops.

These relations had little in common with those which generally exist between soldiers and their commander. Caesar's attitude towards his men was rather that of a great industrialist towards his workers. He paid and fed them generously, he granted them bonuses for extra work and rewarded them for acts of courage. The oath
of allegiance which bound them to Caesar took the place of a contract, but they were by no means reduced to a state of passive obedience. They were known to raise their voices and to make their protests heard, even to the point of threatening to strike, when they felt things were not going right for them. Such occurrences were not frequent, however. Caesar had an infinite capacity for getting the greatest possible effort out of his subordinates, and he knew how to stop just when that limit was reached. He asked a great deal of them, but he could be generous, and he maintained their discipline through the lure of the booty of which a large proportion was left to them and sometimes even the whole amount. After the war in Gaul every one of his legionaries had been able to amass a substantial fortune, and they dragged along in their wake all kinds of packs and bundles filled with a variety of objects, often valuable, and in charge of their slaves—prisoners of war graciously presented them by Caesar. The campaign in Spain had disappointed their expectations. Just as their leader had been generous in the course of the previous campaigns, allowing them to sack the cities and camps of the enemy to their hearts’ content, so now he was strict and inexorable: they were fighting as Romans against Romans, hence any act of pillage was strictly forbidden. More serious was the fact that Caesar ostensibly avoided battle, caring little for the discontent and anger of his troops, as they saw the opportunity slipping by of capturing at least the arms and equipment of the foe. With regard to the civilian populations, who had been so eager to announce entire submission to the conqueror, the order was equally definite. Their property and their persons were to be respected.

In short, the legionaries left the Iberian Peninsula with the feeling that they had wasted their time and had made a bad bargain. On reaching the Var, they saw the men of the defeated legions joyfully going off in whatever direction they chose, while they, the victors, had to pursue their way towards an unknown destination. Where were they going? No one knew exactly, but there was every indication that a long arduous march was ahead of them, and they were expecting to be sent somewhere beyond the sea into barbarous unknown lands. This prospect did not appeal to them. Most of them were in their eleventh year of war and were beginning to have had enough of it. Perhaps some agent in Pompey’s pay had managed to penetrate into their ranks and was fanning the flame. Be that as it may, the discontent ended by assuming vast proportions and by
gaining large masses of the army. It came to a head when the troops arrived at Placentia (to-day known as Piacenza), a little town in Cisalpine Gaul situated on the Po. The Ninth Legion set the example. The pretext was not lacking: they had been complaining that they had not yet received the bonus of five minae which Caesar had accorded each legionary before their departure from Brundisium. Other complaints piled up. They accused him of deliberately lengthening the war; they could go on no longer, they were broken with fatigue, they were no longer in a fit state to bear arms; they would not go any farther; at their age, and after all the effort they had expended, they ought to be allowed to think about resting. This was followed by threats: if Caesar did not discharge them voluntarily, they would go over to Pompey. A group of leaders set the pace, carrying along those who were weak and undecided, assuring them that they would obtain all they wanted from Caesar since he had the greatest need of their services. In the meantime, they felt they were entitled to a certain advance payment on their future gains. This they took by sacking the houses of the civilian population—no doubt considering that having been forced to leave Spain with their hands empty they should not miss this opportunity of filling them, even though it had to be done at the expense of their compatriots.

All this was extremely trying. Since that distant day in the year 57, when a similar incident had occurred at Besançon, Caesar had never had to complain of any case of collective insubordination, however slight, within his army. To be obliged to face it just as he was preparing to enter upon a campaign against Pompey which presumably would be decisive was doubly to be deplored. Would this not provide an obvious confirmation of the malicious rumours spread in Pompeian circles about the demoralization of his troops and the spirit of defeatism which reigned among his soldiers? He resolved to resort to the severest measures in stamping out the revolt, and to re-establish discipline in his army with pitiless harshness.

As soon as he arrived he made a rapid investigation which enabled him to see the situation clearly. Apart from a few scattered units which had remained outside the movement, the great mass of the soldiers had been won over by the rebel propaganda and were blindly following the leaders, who numbered scarcely more than a hundred. Among these a kind of insurrectionary committee composed of a dozen members had taken over the direction of operations. Caesar
made a note of their names, guided by the information of the centurions whom he consulted.

The first task which had to be accomplished was difficult and not without danger. He had to regain the confidence of all these rough and embittered men, to wrest them from the influence of their ‘bad shepherds’, and to revive their taste for battle and adventure. To punish them all was impossible: they were too numerous. He had recourse to a method which he understood to perfection and which he was in the habit of employing in difficult situations: persuasion. He was going to speak to them, to plead the cause of order and obedience with those who seemed to have taken as their motto: disorder and insubordination. Formerly, at Besançon, he had confined himself to talking to his subordinate officers. This time, he considered the matter to be more serious and felt obliged to address the soldiers directly. He realised, however, how dangerous it was for him to appear before this hostile and excited crowd. He gathered his bodyguard around him and under their protection approached the mutinous legionaries who had been summoned to hear him.

His speech has been reproduced by Dion Cassius, but with literary amplifications which clearly do not belong to Caesar. The substance of it, however, seems authentic, and in the absence of a better source we will have to use this text in attempting to piece together what Caesar said in this delicate situation.

He began by warning his listeners that he intended to speak ‘with complete frankness, without disguising anything’. ‘He was fond of his soldiers, he cherished them as a father does his children,’ he wanted to be loved by them in return, but ‘he was not going to be a party to their faults in order to win their affection’. Then he loaded them with reproaches, one after another, and each heavier than the last: ‘Having an abundance of everything you need... receiving your pay fully and regularly, finding plentiful provisions always and everywhere [as a matter of fact, this was not exactly the case, as Caesar knew quite well], never having to endure fatigue or danger without profit, always liberally rewarded for your merits and scarcely ever reprimanded for your faults: you are content with none of all this!’ The excesses they had committed were unpardonable. Men who bore the name of Romans had acted ‘like Celts!’ ‘Is it not a shameful thing’, he cried, ‘that we should do no harm to the Gauls brought into subjection by the war and that, like the Epirotes, Carthaginians, or Cimbrians, we should ravage the country on this
side of the Alps! ' He thought it was 'disgraceful' that his men should pillage their own country 'left intact by the enemy', and that it was 'preposterous' that, having come topunish the crimes of their adversaries, his troops should 'show no less ardour in seizing other people's property'.

He was not addressing these reproaches to all of them. 'They fall only on those whose cupidity has dishonoured the others.' It was the hidden agitators, who were working against him in the shadows and who 'were bringing shame and infamy' upon everybody, whom he was going to attack. He had not been unaware of their intrigues but he had shut his eyes in the hope that they would mend their ways. Since, however, their audacity 'had no limits' and they were trying to push 'those who were blameless' into rebellion, he would act with severity.

It could not be tolerated that the commander should be ruled by those who were placed under his orders. And then he pronounced the terse maxim advanced to justify the fundamental principle of dictatorial power: 'Nature has established two laws necessary for man's salvation: some must command, others must obey.' Since this was so, he would never be coerced into granting anything to soldiers in revolt; never would violence make him yield. And in the haughty and disdainful apostrophe which he hurled at them the voice of his pride rings out with perfect clarity: 'What is the good of being descended from Aeneas and Julius? What is the good of having held the position of praetor and consul and of having been vested so long with proconsular powers, if I am to be the slave of one or two from among you?' He was not afraid of anything. 'What is the threat or apprehension,' he asked, 'which could reduce me to that? The fear of being killed? But even if you have all resolved to do away with me, I would rather die than lower the prestige of authority and forswear the sentiments demanded by the dignity with which I am vested.' The rebels were threatening to desert and go over to Pompey's army? Let them go! 'You can desert my banners, you whom I do not know how to name,' he cried out to them. Pompey was welcome to such soldiers! But they were not to think that they could do as they pleased. The interests of the Republic were going to be safeguarded. And so were his own.

Concentration spread among the soldiers after this speech, Appian assures us. All the officers fell at Caesar's feet imploring his mercy. Pretending to yield, though reluctantly, he then announced that he
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was going to submit the guilty to the law of fate. He ordered the list (which evidently was based on information obtained from the responsible leaders) to be read aloud. It contained a hundred and twenty names. Fate was to indicate the twelve among them who must suffer capital punishment.

According to Dion Cassius, Caesar had arranged everything so that fate should designate the men he had chosen in advance. When the names of the twelve victims marked by 'destiny' were proclaimed, a curious incident took place. One of them protested vehemently, alleging that he had been absent from the camp when the mutiny had occurred. An inquiry established the truth of his contention. Caesar quickly settled the difficulty: in place of the soldier the centurion who had denounced him was put to death.
CHAPTER 45

Caesar's First Dictatorship

We have already seen that when Caesar passed through Rome before his departure to Spain he placed the entire internal administration of the State in the hands of the praetor Lepidus. We do not know what kind of an agreement bound the two men together, but from all appearances it seems likely that a regular bargain had been concluded between them and that the time had now come for Lepidus to carry out his part. While Caesar was fighting against Pompey's legions beyond the Pyrenees, the people's comitia in Rome, judging that in the absence of the consuls, who had gone off with Pompey, the Republic could not remain without a supreme and legally constituted authority, had voted a law giving the praetor the right to nominate a dictator in the place of the absent consuls. Lepidus used it as might have been foreseen: he entrusted the dictatorship to Caesar.

The latter proceeded with adroitness and prudence. He began by distributing official places and honours. Lepidus immediately received his reward: the governorship of Spain, now liberated from Pompey's control. So did Decimus Brutus, whose naval victory before Marseilles had decided the city's fate, and had had a considerable effect on the course of the operations against Afranius and Petreius. Raised to the consular rank, he was given newly conquered Gaul as his province. Sicily was given to P. Albinus and Sardinia to S. Peducaeus. The magistrates who had followed Pompey were not replaced as the year was nearly over: for the few remaining weeks their duties devolved upon temporary deputies, chosen among the tribunes and officials who had remained on the spot. Caesar named new magistrates, however, for the following year. He likewise remembered the high priestly dignity with which he was vested: the seats left vacant in the College of Pontiffs he gave to candidates of his own choice 'without observing the established rules', according to Appian.

The economic situation caused Caesar serious anxiety. As had happened before, the announcement of his forthcoming arrival stirred up fears in some and hope in others. There was considerable
alarm among the wealthy. Capital had disappeared from circulation with the outbreak of the civil war. Money was becoming scarce. There was no longer anything to be borrowed, and creditors tried by every possible means to recover their loans. Debtors, for their part, persisted in their refusal to pay, or else, instead of making payments in ready money, preferred to forfeit their mortgaged property. But since the price of land had dropped as a result of the general insecurity, the compulsory sales ordered to give satisfaction to their creditors had disastrous results for the debtors and were far from contenting the creditors, who wanted to be paid in cash. Numerous were those who were waiting for Caesar's arrival to propose that he should use the special powers granted him by his new office to decree the general abolition of all debts. This ended by causing a panic among the capitalists who foresaw their impending ruin.

Caesar showed great circumspection. Without sending the demagogues away, he turned a deaf ear to them. He understood too well that this measure would antagonize all the wealthier groups. He did not care to do this. On the other hand, he could not afford to overlook all those people of modest means who were crippled with debts, but whose votes in the comitia constituted one of his principal sources of strength. He therefore discarded the suggestions of those who favoured the abolition. What was owing would continue to be owing, but he decided that the real estate offered by the debtors in payment should be evaluated on the basis of pre-war prices by specially appointed commissioners, and that the sums paid out as interest, either in money or securities, should be deducted from the total amount of the debts. This meant a reduction of about twenty-five per cent. The measure proved ineffective. The creditors considered that they had been wronged, since one fourth of their assets had been taken away from them. The debtors were equally disappointed, because they were still burdened with the greater part of their liabilities. The general uneasiness was by no means dispelled. On the contrary, it was aggravated as a result of the more and more persistent rumours concerning the forthcoming proscriptions ordered by Caesar. Money continued to be obstinately hidden in the coffers of the rich. At this point Caesar made a bold move: he limited private holdings to 15,000 drachmae in silver or gold. 'His objective,' says Dion Cassius, 'was to induce the debtors to pay off certain sums and the creditors to lend to those who were in need, or to force the rich to make themselves known and to leave no one in possession of
large fortunes which might give rise to disturbances during his absence.\textsuperscript{203}

This decision was hailed with enthusiasm in plebeian circles. They even wanted to go further. They viewed the rich with such distrust and animosity that voices were heard in the comitia proposing that slaves should be set to check up on their masters' fortunes, and for a given reward to denounce those among the upper classes who did not conform to the stipulations of the law in question. Caesar, who was presiding, opposed this suggestion and categorically refused to insert the clause in his bill. Moreover, probably in order to reassure the property owners, against whom it was directed, he 'swore on his life', says Dion Cassius, 'that he would never believe the charges brought by a slave against his master.'

Judging that he had thus warded off the principal financial and economic difficulties, Caesar tackled the legislative work of his adversary. The \textit{lex Pompeia de ambitu}, intended to check intrigue, had hit numerous politicians who had declared themselves for Caesar. The only way to show them his gratitude was to deliver them from the hardships which this law inflicted upon them. He did not, however, wish to lay himself open to reproach by taking the place of the people in granting this favour. That is why he had his friends rehabilitated by a decision of the \textit{comitia}. In carrying out this measure he also recalled all persons condemned for the same reason before the time of Pompey's law. Notable among them was A. Gabinius, one of the most notorious prevaricators of his time, whom he appointed as his legate.

Another measure of wider scope aroused considerable excitement in political circles. It was the recall of the exiles. This heralded the settling of extensive accounts at the expense of all those over-prudent—people who had been waiting to take sides. Judging from the letter which Cicero had written to Atticus as far back as the previous January—that is to say, about a year earlier—this measure was part of the programme Caesar had formed at the very beginning of the civil war. In March, before Brundisium, he had been heard to declare that he was going to recall the outlaws, but, unlike Sulla, 'only those whose condemnation had been contrary to the ancient laws of Rome.' In May, Antony, who had already become his right-hand man, 'announced loudly', again according to Cicero, the return of those who had been banished. At the same time S. Sulpicius, whose son was nevertheless fighting in Caesar's army, let it be known that if the outlaws were recalled he himself would go into exile.
But not all proscribed persons benefited by this favour. For instance Milo, Clodius' murderer, who had taken part in the defence of Marseilles, was excluded. So was C. Antonius, consul in 63, who thus finally atoned for a very old enmity towards Caesar. On the other hand, the recall was extended to the descendants of all the victims of Sulla's rule, who were reinstated with all their rights restored.

We now come to the third and last of the important legislative measures which marked Caesar's first dictatorship: he granted Roman citizenship to the Cisalpine Gauls of the cities beyond the Po. This was the fulfilment of a promise made at least twenty years before. We have seen how, on returning from his quaestorship in 68, he sought allies among them to help him in the struggle he was preparing to wage against the Senate. Three years later, at the time of the first conspiracy of Catiline, he wanted to draw them into a conflict which, if it had broken out, would have made a deep rift between their province and Rome. During his first consulship, braving the opposition of the aristocratic party, he had the right of citizenship conferred upon a colony across the Po. Now, at last, he could live up to the promise he had made to his faithful supporters who had always honoured him as their master and had given him effective help in his military operations.

We have very little information—no more than a mere mention—concerning the free distribution of corn which Caesar decreed by virtue of his dictatorial powers. We might perhaps recognize in it a distant echo of the suggestions made by Licinius a quarter of a century earlier, to which he seems to have listened with an attentive ear. He found no difficulty in covering the expenses which it entailed: he had the offerings deposited in the Capitol and the principal temples of the city confiscated for the benefit of the State.

All this took him ten days. On the eleventh he had himself named consul, fixed the date and the arrangements for the Latin festival and left Rome. Why this sudden departure?

Dion Cassius claims that Caesar 'was influenced by the augurs who announced that he would meet his death in Rome if he remained'. We know that this great pontiff professed complete indifference in religious matters and only showed himself superstitious when it was to his advantage. All the same he was able to assess the positive content which might be concealed in the warning of those who represented an institution over which he had supreme control, and
to profit by it. This reason, however, was of secondary importance. There were others, far more compelling, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

At all events, Caesar did not fail to surround his departure with solemn rites calculated to produce the greatest possible effect on the masses. An official ceremony took place in the Forum. It had been arranged that at a given moment a kite would fly over the assembled crowd and drop a branch of laurel upon Caesar. Naturally the bird could not be expected to be perfectly accurate, and the branch fell to the side, landing on one of the people accompanying him. That, however, was considered enough to count as a good omen. The celebration of the sacrifice which Caesar offered to Fortune was the occasion of what in reality was a rather common accident: when the bull saw the sacrificer approaching with his knife raised to strike, it took fright and broke its bonds. The animal succeeded in reaching a swamp and swam across. This too was interpreted as the most favourable of signs.

A huge crowd saw Caesar off when he left the capital. By way of farewell, they cried out to him: 'Peace! Peace!', and begged him to come to terms with Pompey.

But the children of Rome did not share their parents' view. As soon as Caesar had departed, they divided into two groups. The first called themselves Pompeians, the second Caesarians. After which they engaged in a mock battle. Dion Cassius assures us with the utmost seriousness that the victory that day was clearly for 'the Caesarians'.
CHAPTER 46

The War in Greece

This sudden departure has been interpreted as a clever stratagem intended to outwit Pompey, and to enable Caesar, unexpectedly and without his rival's knowledge, to transport his troops across the sea at a moment when normally he should have been in Rome entering upon his consular duties. This is quite unlikely. If Caesar had wanted to leave his adversary in the dark about his departure he would not have surrounded it with so much publicity, and would not have allowed so large a crowd to follow him far beyond the gates of the city. Pompey had left enough agents and accomplices in Rome to be informed immediately. We may therefore confidently assume that he knew Caesar had left the capital. Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that, although he was on the other side of the Adriatic, he still had observers on the Italian coast who undoubtedly told him of Caesar's arrival at Brundisium—all the more so since this arrival was in no way a secret.268

If, however, Caesar did not trouble to disguise his journey, he certainly must have been hoping that, although Pompey knew him to be at Brundisium, he would never imagine that he was going to attempt a landing on the Greek coast, in mid-winter and under extremely adverse circumstances. Did Caesar himself consider this possibility when he set out? We cannot be sure. The state of his army, judging from the reports he was receiving from Brundisium, scarcely made it possible to plan an operation for the near future. The troops had reached their destination in lamentable condition and many were suffering from illness. A large number of his soldiers had deserted en route. As a result, the total strength of each legion, which in theory amounted to 6,000 men, had been depleted to little more than 2,000. Moreover, the morale was deplorable. The methods employed by Caesar to stifle the mutiny at Placentia had not affected the attitude of the soldiers. It was unchanged: they had had enough. They no longer wanted to fight, they were tired of the interminable and exhausting marches which were imposed upon them. Above all, they did not wish to leave Italy. They were well aware that in
directing them towards Brundisium Caesar intended to cross the sea in pursuit of his rival. This prospect did not appeal to them in the least. Then there was another difficulty. The number of transport ships at Caesar’s disposal was very insufficient, and it was virtually impossible for him to procure any more.

All these problems could only be solved on the spot, and by Caesar’s personal intervention. At Rome he had obtained all he wanted. By leaving the city before the inauguration ceremony arranged for January 1, Caesar seemed to show how little he cared for the dignity of the consular office, now that he effectively held all the powers that were attached to it. Perhaps reasons of the most elementary precaution (mentioned by Dion Cassius) were added to the obviously imperative motives which prompted him to cut short his stay in Rome, where his presence was no longer needed, and to transfer his activities to the place where they were urgently required.

Caesar arrived at Brundisium on December 22. From his first inspection he realized that nothing was ready for starting upon a campaign. There was little in the way of arms and equipment and there were scarcely any provisions. Out of the twelve legions he had summoned only five had presented themselves, and they were for the most part the ‘penitents’ of Placentia. They had arrived with their baggage, their slaves and their pack animals, laden with all the booty they possessed. How was all that to be trans-shipped?

Caesar set bravely to work. He did everything in his power to procure ships and foodstuffs. His efforts were as good as wasted. At this point he conceived an idea which at first seems paradoxical—namely, to go and take what he needed from the enemy.

To be sure, in order to accomplish this it was first of all necessary to reach his adversary and after that to beat him. A week’s stay in the area was enough to show Caesar that Pompey’s naval patrol was none too well organized. The supreme command of the fleet, which counted no less than five hundred vessels, had been entrusted to Bibulus, who was far from being a stranger to Caesar. This amateur admiral, instead of using the powerful means at his disposal to establish a rigorous blockade of the Italian coast, scattered his squadrons more or less everywhere and stationed himself with the greater part of his forces (a hundred and ten ships) at the island of Corcyra, convinced that he would not have to intervene before the coming of spring.

It was here that Caesar’s special gift was to come into play—the gift of catching circumstances on the wing and of using to advantage
the 'strategy of opportunities' to which he owed his most brilliant victories. There were two obstacles in the way of his crossing: the enemy fleet and bad weather. He decided, as a result of his observations, that the first need not be considered: for the moment the sea was practically open. This left only the bad weather. There were, however, calm periods from time to time. Considering everything, Caesar must have reached the conclusion that it was better to attack the waves immediately than to wait for the end of the winter and then be obliged to force a passage through the formidable fleet of the enemy.

He accordingly resolved to risk his bold stroke without further delay. He was all the more anxious to do this since, by opening the campaign three months earlier, he would give his army hopes of ending it sooner, and at the same time he would prevent the complete demoralization of his soldiers who, bored to death with inaction, poorly fed, and a prey to wasting gastric illnesses, were an easy target for the defeatist propaganda of those agitators of Placentia who had escaped punishment. In the night of December 31 to January 1, the sea appeared a little calmer and the meteorological signs gave hopes of a favourable wind next day. Caesar meant to take advantage of it. He did not even wait for the arrival of the two legions under Cassius, which at the conclusion of the war in Spain had been sent to the Baetica province, and from there had received an urgent call to go to Brundisium. Determined not to waste the opportunity which Nature herself appeared to be spontaneously offering him, he assembled his legionaries early in the morning, and in a few words explained what he was going to undertake. He particularly stressed the moral effect which their sudden landing was likely to have on the enemy, and he did not fail to draw their attention to the fact that this was the very day when he should have been in Rome 'enjoying the splendid ceremonies of his inauguration as consul'. He urged them to seize everything they needed from Pompey: food, munitions, forage. Taken unawares, he would not be able to offer any effective resistance.

There was so much persuasive eloquence in his exhortation that the soldiers allowed themselves to be convinced, and without protest they responded to his appeal and even agreed to leave all superfluous baggage behind, so that as many men as possible could embark.

At the end of the speech they ran towards the harbour. While the troops were being crowded into the transport ships the sky clouded
over, the sea became stormy, and a contrary wind began to blow. The departure had to be put off, but no one returned to land. Ready to weigh anchor, they waited for a favourable moment. They had to wait till January 4. In the meantime the two legions under Cassius reached Brundisium. They were crammed into the already overcrowded ships, and the expedition started in rather rough weather. Caesar took 15,000 men and 600 horses with him.

About noon the next day the convoy arrived apposite Palaeste at the foot of the Cerannian mountains. The disembarkation was carried out without incident. The enemy gave no sign of life.

The whole day was taken up with landing operations. The empty boats were sent back during the night in order to fetch the remainder of the troops. Without giving his army a moment’s rest, Caesar crossed the mountains which rose before him and pushed on as far as Oricum, situated about twenty-five miles to the south. He arrived there after having marched all night. The land was so difficult that he had been obliged to divide his troops into several echelons which were numerically weak, ‘so that’, as Appian observes, ‘if anyone had been warned of their approach nothing would have been easier than to wipe them out’. But Pompey did not move, and at daybreak, after a great deal of difficulty in getting all his troops together, Caesar appeared before Oricum. Pompey’s commandant, L. Torquatus, wanted to defend it, and called the inhabitants to arms. They let him know, however, that they would not fight against ‘a lawful representative of Roman authority’. Torquatus took the hint and came to Caesar to offer him the keys of the city and his own services. Caesar accepted both. The squadron which was stationed in the bay of Oricum was not there. It had been sent out to escort an important convoy of corn. When Minucius Rufus, who was in command of it, heard of the town’s surrender, he had the whole convoy sunk and escaped to Dyrrachium.

It was then that Bibulus was informed of what had happened. It seems that on learning of Caesar’s landing he flew into a great rage and swore, rather late in the day, that he would destroy the whole of Caesar’s fleet. He therefore set out in pursuit of the transport ships which were returning empty to Brundisium. He managed to catch up with them and captured thirty which he burnt with all their crew. He did not stop at that and determined to close the sea to Caesar by blockading the coast and the ports. Stationed before Oricum with his numerous ships, he did in fact succeed in isolating Caesar and
preventing any communication between him and those of his lieutenants who were still in Italy.

After the capitulation of Oricum, Caesar turned towards Apollonia, where events took exactly the same course, except that the commandant of the city, Staberius, preferred to take flight in order not to fall into Caesar’s hands.

Being master of these two cities, Caesar considered the time had come to announce his arrival to Pompey by sending him a new bearer of peace proposals in the person of Vibullius Rufus, taken prisoner for the second time in Spain. He suggested to Pompey that they should both give their word, immediately and in the presence of the troops, to disband them within three days. As to the conditions of peace, since they had never been able to reach an agreement, they should refer the matter to the Senate and the comitia. It was clear that this would be considerably to Caesar’s advantage, at the expense of Pompey, and consequently the proposals were unacceptable to the latter. By making this conciliatory gesture, however, Caesar appeared both to be carrying out the recommendations given him on leaving Rome and seeking to please his soldiers, who thus received clear proof of his efforts to bring the war to an end. Thereupon, leaving the defence of Oricum to M. Acilius, his legate, and the command of his troops to his other legate, Statius Murcus, he went off at the head of a single legion to receive the submission of the neighbouring cities and to make requisitions.

In the course of this tour he was informed that Bibulus, the commander-in-chief of Pompey’s fleet, and his assistant P. Scribonius Libo—the step-father of Sextus Pompey, whom he had formerly tried to interest in his negotiations—had expressed the wish to meet him ‘to discuss important questions’. Thinking that this was in response to the mission which he had entrusted to Vibullius Rufus, Caesar left his legion and returned with all haste to Oricum. The two envoys of Pompey were told that he was ready to receive them. Only one of them appeared: Scribonius Libo. Visibly embarrassed, he tried to make excuses for his colleague, speaking of Bibulus’ excitable temperament and of certain old grievances he was still nursing which dated back to the time when he had shared the consular dignity with Caesar. The latter allowed him to go on. Finally Libo got down to facts: neither he nor Bibulus had any authority to negotiate a treaty, but if Caesar wished, he was quite prepared to transmit his
proposals to Pompey, and a truce could be concluded between the two belligerents, while they were waiting for his answer.

It was then that Caesar understood the real object of this move, which had nothing to do with the offer he had sent through Vibullius Rufus. The fleet of Bibulus was in a difficult position. If it cut Caesar off from his ships and his reserves, he in turn barred its access to the land and deprived it of fresh water. Therefore he replied that if Bibulus and Libo wanted the blockade to be suspended, they too must suspend their watch at sea. If they refused to do so, he would continue his blockade. As for the negotiations, they could very well take place without reciprocal concessions. All he asked was that the immunity of his envoys should be guaranteed. The answer he received was evasive in the extreme. Whereupon Caesar put an end to the conversation, dismissed Libo, and, as he says in his book, ‘no longer thought of anything but how best to pursue the war’. The fact that no news had come from Vibullius Rufus since his departure made him all the more determined on this course.

It was not until later, after the war was over, that he learnt how his proposals had been received. They had been indignantly rejected, and Pompey was actively preparing for the struggle. He had started off from Macedonia, and was travelling by forced marches in the direction of Dyrrachium, where all his munitions and provisions were stored. He wanted at all costs to keep these from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Caesar also resolved to march on Dyrrachium, which attracted him for similar reasons. The road was long and arduous. It had to be covered literally at a run. Another tremendous effort was required of his troops. He explained his reasons in a brief harangue which he delivered to the legionaries before giving the order to march: ‘If we arrive at Dyrrachium before Pompey’, was his main point, ‘it will be we who gather the fruits of all his labours of last summer.’ Such language went straight to the hearts of the soldiers, and the race began. Who would get there first? By different routes which, however, seemed to meet in places, the two adversaries forged ahead, day and night, without a moment’s respite, drawn to the same goal. Who would get there first? Wherever Pompey had passed, farms and barns were burning to prevent Caesar from collecting any provisions. Wherever Caesar passed, the trees were felled and the bridges destroyed to block the way for Pompey. ‘If he or Caesar’, writes Appian, ‘saw from afar dust or fire or smoke, each thought
that these signs betokened the enemy's presence, and hastened his march still more.' Who would get there first? Neither of them allowed his troops time to eat or sleep. At night, by the light of torches flaring in the icy wind of the mountains, they each led their armies, following the harsh cries of their guides piercing the darkness. The route was covered with stragglers who, overcome with exhaustion, had thrown down their heavy gear and sunk into a deep sleep; others cowered in dark crevices, remained hidden in the gorges and afterwards deserted. Who would get there first?

It was Pompey. He took up his position in the vicinity of the town, and with his fleet reconquered Oricum which had been left completely undefended. Caesar had to halt on the north bank of the Apsus, which henceforward was to separate him from Pompey's army. It was January. The two adversaries remained immobilized in their respective positions: neither of them wished to start the battle. Pompey needed time to train his young recruits, and Caesar was waiting for the arrival of the legions he had left at Brundisium.

Two months went by. Still the reinforcements did not come. In March, Caesar began to be seriously worried. He foresaw that with the beginning of spring, his transport ships would fall an easy prey to Pompey's fleet, which would regain its freedom of movement once the good weather set in. At all costs, therefore, he had to take advantage of the two or three remaining weeks to attempt the crossing. He had already sent orders to Antony at Brundisium to set sail without delay. There was no response. Then he became alarmed. He thought he had been betrayed. Whom did he suspect? The leaders or the soldiers? Perhaps both. So he imagined that nothing short of his presence on the spot would enable him to get to the bottom of the trouble, and he resolved to go to Brundisium to end all the intrigues and to bring the rest of his army to Greece. The mouth of the Apsus was closely watched by units of Pompey's fleet. Only a light unidentifiable skiff had any chance of slipping through unobserved. But how could he cross the wide expanse of the sea in a frail little boat at this stormy season? The peril was certain and the risk was too great. Caesar decided to go all the same.

In order not to arouse the suspicions of the enemy guarding the opposite bank of the river, he told no one of his intentions, but gave orders to find a speedy boat as well as a first-rate pilot. The latter, Caesar said, was to hold himself in readiness for one of his messengers. At the appointed time the owner of the skiff saw a man approaching.
He was simply dressed and had one or two slaves with him. Without a word he seated himself in the bottom of the boat. It was night. There was a gale blowing. The pilot seemed to hesitate. Upon a signal from the traveller, the slaves began to reason with him, persuading him to start, explaining that in such weather it would be easy to escape the vigilance of Pompey’s sentinels. They ended by convincing him, and, braving all obstacles, the boat managed to reach the mouth of the river thanks to the efforts of its oarsmen. There, however, it met the waves of the sea, which driven by the tempest forced the current upstream. This time the pilot’s courage failed him. He wanted to yield to the raging waters and go back. It was then that the unknown traveller drew himself up before him, crying out: ‘What fearest thou? Thou art carrying Caesar!’ ‘Quid times? Caesarem vehis!’ Plutarch and Appian have amplified this astounding exclamation, the force of which lies in its brevity. Lucan has paraphrased it; as a poet, he must be excused.269

Dumbfounded, the pilot and the rowers renewed their efforts and succeeded in putting out to sea, but hardly had they done so when the wind hurled the boat on to the shore. The day was about to break and the light would inevitably make Caesar visible to the enemy. ‘After uttering profuse recriminations against the spirit of his destiny which was jealous of his enterprise’, says Appian, to whom we are indebted for the most detailed account of this incident, Caesar resigned himself and allowed the pilot to turn back.

‘This fearlessness on the part of Caesar’, writes the same author, ‘was admired by some of his friends; others blamed him on the grounds that it was a foolhardy act befitting a soldier but not a general.’ And Dion Cassius offers the following explanation for it: ‘He [Caesar] had such a high opinion of himself, and cherished such great hopes which he had formed rashly or from certain predictions, that he had no doubts about his safety even when everything seemed to be against him.’

Be that as it may, he gave up the idea of making a second try, and sent one of his officers, Fulvius Postumus, to Brundisium with his instructions.

This messenger was to go first to Gabinius, who, it will be remembered, had taken advantage of the amnesty which had been decreed and had gone to Rome, where Caesar placed him at the head of the troops who were to form the second expeditionary corps. If Gabinius refused to embark immediately with his army, the order was to be
given to Antony; and finally, if the latter refused, its execution was to be entrusted to F. Calenus, who, without occupying a prominent position on Caesar’s staff, nevertheless enjoyed his full confidence and was often used by him for missions entailing great responsibility. But he had also foreseen the possibility that none of these three might obey. That was why Postumus was further provided with a special message addressed to the soldiers, inviting them to follow him and embark with him.

Caesar’s fears appeared to be unjustified. Gabinius obeyed at once. So did Antony. Two convoys started immediately. Gabinius, who did not want to risk a sea crossing which he considered dangerous, made his troops take a long detour by going through Illyricum, with the result that nearly all his soldiers were massacred by the inhabitants of that country. Antony, on the other hand, who was not afraid of embarking with the other half of the army, arrived safely at Nymphaeum, having lost in all only two vessels, which ran aground and were captured by Pompey’s forces.

While waiting for reinforcements, Caesar, feeling that he was too weak to engage in battle, sought to put the interval to good account and set about undermining the enemy morale by exploiting the longing ever present in the hearts of the majority of the soldiers to see the end of the war. Nothing but a narrow stream separated the two camps. The men had formed the habit of going there to talk to each other across the river, and by a sort of tacit understanding no projectiles were thrown during these meetings. Caesar took note of this. He instructed one of his assistants—the ex-tribune P. Vatinius, who had become his legate and who was known to have a good resonant voice and an easy way of speaking—to go to the riverside one day when the assembly was particularly numerous and animated, and to address all the Pompeians who were present. This was done. Taking up his position on the bank, Vatinius called to the opposite party, complaining that Caesar’s peaceful intentions were being obstructed and that his envoys were refused a hearing. He embroidered upon this theme at great length, sometimes with indignation and then again in a tone of lament. Both sides listened in rapt silence. Then a voice was heard from among Pompey’s men, announcing that the officer Aulus Terentius Varro promised to come the next day to the same place so that together they might go into the question of sending envoys. This declaration produced a deep impression on both sides. Once more the fleeting hope of an approaching peace was lighted
in the hearts of the men. When they returned the following day, it was before an immense crowd that Vatinius stepped forward to wait for his interlocutor. He was probably somewhat surprised when he saw appearing before him Labienus in person, whom incidentally he knew very well. The conversation started. It was suddenly interrupted by a rain of missiles coming from no one knew where. It is possible that this incident was provoked by Pompey's faction, since it was aimed primarily at Vatinius. He only escaped thanks to his soldiers, who gathered round him and covered him with their shields. Labienus, who had no doubt had a hand in engineering this scene, immediately seized his opportunity by crying out bombastically: 'You may as well stop talking about negotiations; for us there can be no peace until the head of Caesar has been brought to us.' Then he withdrew, and the crowd dispersed, carrying with it the ashes of an extinguished hope.

The day came at last when Caesar saw the fleet of Antony passing off Apollonia and Dyrrachium, driven by the wind beyond his position. Pompey also followed the enemy convoy with his gaze, cursing the inertia and negligence of his admirals, who had been unable to intercept it. From that time they both prepared for action. Caesar made his plans for joining up with Antony as soon as the place of his landing was known. Pompey considered how he could bar the way to the troops who were arriving. He did not succeed in this. Then he left the banks of the Apsus, fearing he would be surrounded by the two armies, and went to take up his position with all his troops on the outskirts of Dyrrachium.

Caesar arrived on the third day. From a neighbouring height, he viewed the camp established by his enemy, chose the position which suited him best and pitched his own camp. The idle period of the campaign was over; they were going to pass on to action. Caesar soon realised, however, that Pompey did not mean to fight. Firmly entrenched behind his fortifications, he appeared to be patiently waiting for hunger and sickness to reduce the fighting power of Caesar's troops to nothing. Caesar was thus obliged to embark upon a type of siege which was new to him and very much to his disadvantage. Hitherto he had only beleaguered an enemy who had suffered in previous battles and had used up a great part of their munitions, an enemy supplied with limited provisions and enclosed in a small space. This time he had to carry out his operations with troops which had reached the limit of their endurance, while his
adversary disposed of an army which was intact and well rested. Not only did Pompey have large stocks of food, but, as his access to the sea was assured, he could increase them whenever he liked, thanks to his powerful fleet which controlled all sea routes. Moreover, the space enclosed within his line of defence contained pastures and cornfields of which he would soon enjoy the benefit, while Caesar could obtain nothing from the arid mountainous ground on which he was encamped.

The principal difficulty, however, lay in the huge expanse over which Pompey had extended his front in order to oblige Caesar to stretch his troops to the utmost and to increase the work of investment to an infinite degree. 'It was a completely new war,' writes Caesar in his book, 'and of an unusual kind.'

He then conceived the plan of taking the city by treason. He sought among the men surrounding Pompey for the one who would lend himself best to this task. His choice fell on L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus, consul of the previous year, who moreover passed for one of his most violent enemies. He instructed young Cornelius Balbus, nephew of his old friend and attached to his staff since the beginning of the civil war, to penetrate into Pompey's camp and to enter into negotiations with Lentulus Crus. The young Spaniard, possessed of incredible courage (according to Velleius Paterculus), managed to slip into the enemy camp. He had several conversations with the ex-consul, but they did not come to an understanding, as the latter had apparently fixed too high a price for his betrayal. Then Balbus set to work to corrupt the soldiers who were entrusted with the defence of the city gates. This time he succeeded better and was able to buy the help of some of them. It was agreed that if a detachment of Caesar's army arrived during the night at one of these gates, they would find it open. Caesar himself took command of it and set out for the appointed place. It was only to fall into a trap organized by Pompey's partisans. At a given moment, when he had gone far enough along the narrow passage between the marshes and the sea leading to the town, Pompey's soldiers fell upon his rearguard, who were not expecting an attack. He lost a great many soldiers and had considerable difficulty in getting away. 'He only just missed being killed himself', Dion Cassius assures us.

After this misadventure, Caesar abandoned all such attempts and resolutely faced the prospect of a long campaign of attrition. He wanted to begin by assuring his own supplies for the months to come.
Legates were sent into the country to requisition all available foodstuffs; compulsory deliveries were imposed upon the towns and villages, but all this produced only very meagre results as Pompey had not failed to collect everything there was to take. It was therefore necessary to hold out with non-existent reserves until the next harvest, and Caesar's army lived through long weeks of famine. They were reduced to replacing the bread they lacked by 'substitutes', which caused intense surprise to those of the enemy, who chanced to come across a specimen. Several times Caesar tried to force the issue by provoking a battle, but Pompey would not allow himself to be led into any such adventure. Once again, probably to give some shadow of satisfaction to his soldiers, who were utterly worn out, Caesar made a pretence of offering to make peace with his enemy. He sounded Pompey's father-in-law, who first listened to the suggestions of Caesar's envoy and then replied by a formal refusal to take any steps whatsoever to discuss the matter with his son-in-law. So the two-sided siege continued to weave the daily pattern of its minor incidents.

Among the foreign horsemen employed by Caesar there were two brothers, Roucillius and Ecus, who commanded the contingent of conscripted Allobroges. They had been through all the Gallic campaigns in the ranks of his army and their valour had won them numerous rewards. These, however, do not seem to have satisfied them, since they were taking for their personal profit all the booty assigned to their unit, and were, moreover, appropriating to themselves the pay of the horsemen who composed it. On top of all this, in order to extract even larger sums from the army treasury, they sent false statements of accounts to the quaestor, changing the number of their troops—obviously to their own advantage.

These underhand dealings were finally brought to the knowledge of Caesar, who was most disagreeably surprised. He appreciated the courage of the two brothers and, in consideration of the services they had rendered him, he was ready to overlook a great deal. Above all, he did not think it was the moment for harsh action or for making enemies. He therefore summoned Roucillius and Ecus and gave them a sharp reprimand, letting them understand, however, that the way to pardon was not closed to them, provided they abandoned their dishonest practices. The affair was not followed up, but rumours of the scandal spread, and in the end everyone knew of the methods employed by the two Allobroges in the exercise of their duties.
entire army openly despised them. Their position became so intolerable that they decided to leave Caesar’s camp and go over to Pompey. Before betraying their chief, however, they borrowed considerable sums from his treasury, on the pretext that they wanted to restore to their comrades the money they had embezzled. Then, after buying a great many horses, which they meant to offer to Pompey as a token of their devotion, they left, taking with them a group of hangers-on.

They were welcomed with enthusiasm in the opposite camp. Pompey himself conducted them everywhere in order to show his troops these precious recruits. Then he retired with them into his tent and a long and important interview began. Roucillus and Ecus, who knew every detail of Caesar’s camp, had been careful to note the lay-out of his whole system of fortifications: the parts which were still unfinished and the points which were judged by the technicians to be the most vulnerable, as well as the number and competence of the troops in charge of their defence. Everything was minutely reported to Pompey.

Pompey, in possession of all this information, resolved to take the offensive. He formed two columns. One, composed of sixty cohorts, was to attack Caesar’s lines at the point which had been indicated as the weak spot of the whole system; the other was transported by sea and landed behind Caesar’s lines to take him in the rear. The operation succeeded perfectly, thanks to the dispatch and precision of the orders given by Pompey, who in the course of this campaign proved himself over and over again to be worthy of his reputation as a great captain. His cohorts confronted Caesar’s troops at dawn. The latter were submerged under an avalanche of projectiles of every kind and description which the enemy hurled down upon them and to which they could reply only by throwing stones, for lack of other ammunition. They could barely hold out against this heavy attack. At that moment the second column, which had reached the weak spot in Caesar’s defences by indirect paths, appeared behind them and forced them to take to flight. Antony, who was some three miles away from the threatened sector, hastened there with twelve cohorts and succeeded in stopping the advance of Pompey’s soldiers, but the left wing, which had borne the brunt of the attack, was definitely jeopardized. When Caesar arrived shortly afterwards with fresh troops, he had no choice but to accept the situation, and, giving in to necessity, he withdrew to new positions.

The retrenchment was just finished when his scouts came to tell
him that several enemy cohorts, probably not more than ten all told, were lagging behind in a deserted camp. At that, the desire to make up for the day’s defeat awakened in Caesar’s heart. Having thirty-five cohorts, he judged that the operation would be easy and, after leaving two at the entrenchment to delude the foe into thinking that his soldiers were still engaged on the work of fortification, he set out in great secrecy with all the rest of his troops to assault the enemy position. A quickly executed attack dislodged Pompey’s men and enabled Caesar to take possession of the camp. His forces were in the midst of clearing it of its last defenders when they saw Pompey in the distance. Upon learning of the incident, though rather late, he had hastily assembled his five legions and was bringing them back in support. This changed the situation completely.

The horsemen, frightened at the narrowness of the exits, started to panic. The infantry, seeing the cavalry in a state of wild terror, rushed to get out, afraid of being run over if they remained inside. But in their haste, instead of retreating in good order—which moreover was scarcely possible amidst the general confusion—the soldiers jumped pell-mell from the top of the ramparts into the trenches below. They fell on top of one another, crushing each other. Soon their bodies filled the ditch and formed a mound which enabled the late-comers to escape by scrambling over the heaped up corpses. Those model warriors, the standard-bearers, were the first to lose their heads. Out of the thirty-three who proudly raised their banners at the head of their cohorts, only one had the courage to remain at his post. All the others, dropping the precious but rather cumbersome emblems committed to their care, had only one thought—flight. It was in vain that Caesar wore himself out in desperate efforts to stop the fugitives. No one heeded him. There he was, running after his soldiers, catching them as they passed, clutching on to their armour, gripping their tunics, crying shame on them for their cowardice, imploring them to stop and pull themselves together. He was insulted, thrust back, pushed aside. One great fellow whom he had caught hold of, maddened with rage and fear raised his sword to strike him. 261 One of Caesar’s bodyguard succeeded in avert ing the blow by hitting the man’s shoulder.

The disorder was such that on reaching their own camp Caesar’s troops did not even think of placing sentries on duty; their sole idea was to collect the most valuable things in their baggage before continuing their flight. It is certain that if Pompey had pursued his
attack, he would have had no difficulty in storming Caesar’s defences and completing his defeat, which would have brought the war to an end there and then. He did not do so. Why? We are left to wonder. No one has been able to give a satisfactory explanation of his sudden inertia. Caesar, who was the first to be surprised at it, was inclined to attribute it to Pompey’s excessive caution. Pompey must have been afraid of a trap, he said. In any case, he was voicing the general opinion as well as his own thoughts when he declared, sad and downcast, on his return to his tent: ‘It would have been all over with us to-day if the enemy had known how to conquer.’

After a fearful day he passed a ghastly night. He was able to measure the full extent of the disaster. Disobeyed, abused, he had even reached the point of seeing one of his own soldiers raise his hand against him. He no longer recognized in this miserable herd of cowards his old comrades-in-arms, who for eleven years on end had shared his fortunes with him. Then, putting retrospective recriminations aside, he thought of the morrow. What was he going to do? All his projects were turned upside down. He was obliged to change his plan of action completely. He now saw quite clearly the defects of the one he had been following: he had taken up his position near the sea, which was controlled by the enemy, thus condemning himself to famine. Instead of lingering in these inhospitable surroundings, it would have been better to carry the war into a rich and fertile region such as Macedonia or Thessaly. That was what he resolved to do. Metellus Scipio was occupying Macedonia. Caesar had no doubts about being able to beat him, isolated as he was. If Pompey came to help him, so much the better: the enemy would have to fight far from their bases and without help from the sea.

The day dawned, showing the results of the rout. They were counting the dead. The bodies were lying in the ditches, on the entrenchments, all along the waterside, most of them crushed in the panic of the stampede, without any wound. The total came to five military tribunes, thirty-two centurions, a thousand soldiers. A little to one side, they were attending to the wounded. Caesar’s first concern was to assemble what was left of his troops in order to try to raise their courage. Trusting to the power of his eloquence, he made a speech suited to the occasion, exhorting them not to lose heart, not to attach too much importance to a ‘slight defeat’. Cleverly passing over the painful incident of the day before from which he had so narrowly escaped, he conjured up before the eyes of his legionaries
the shining glory of their past exploits: the whole of Italy won almost without losses, the two Spanish provinces pacified in spite of stubborn resistance, so many rich and powerful cities vanquished, so many fortresses stormed, so many mountains conquered and so many rivers made subservient to their will. . . . Who, then, must be held responsible for their recent misfortune? It is significant that he felt it necessary first of all to place his own person above all blame. He, Caesar, had done everything to win the victory; he had given them a favourable battleground, he had taken the enemy camp, he had pursued and defeated the foe. They had not known how to make use of all these advantages. They had neglected them. But the time for recriminations was past. Together, they must set to work to make up for their lack of success. 263

Caesar had judged rightly. The magic of his words had lost none of its power. Again this time it worked as strongly as ever. The audience, from the first legate to the last legionary, was won over, captivated, carried away with rapture. The officers especially, showed themselves to be deeply moved and overcome with shame. Some of them asked spontaneously to be punished in conformity with the disciplinary laws of the Roman army, and to lose their rank. Caesar refused. ‘Then’, says Appian, ‘they were all the more indignant with themselves.’ At any rate, scapegoats had to be found. The runaway standard-bearers were singled out for this rôle; shouts went up demanding their death and alleging that none would have failed in their duty if these cowards had not set the example. Caesar refused once more; all he did was to demote those who had survived their infamy, and to order disciplinary sanctions against them. ‘This moderation’, Appian assures us, ‘inspired all his army with such enthusiasm that they immediately asked to march against the enemy.’

The soldiers were gathering in little groups and, with their eyes turned towards Caesar, they swore not to leave the battlefield until they had beaten the enemy. He gazed with mocking indulgence at these faces, which were now animated with the fervour of war but which only the day before had been livid and distorted with fear. When some of his assistants advised him to take advantage of this enthusiasm, he replied that it was necessary to wait until the army had completely recovered from the violent excitement of the recent set-backs. He merely had his troops told to be patient a little longer, but asked them to remember their present ardour when the time came for taking the offensive. Then he sent off all his baggage. At nightfall
his legions left the camp by different routes, without the enemy’s knowledge. With two remaining legions Caesar waited for the dawn. Then he had the call sounded for them to assemble and, in full view of the astounded Pompey, he departed in perfect order after destroying all his entrenchments.

While he was besieging his rival before Dyrrachium, Caesar had detached two of the columns from his army, sending one (under L. Cassius Longinus) to Thessaly and the other (under Cn. Domitius Calvinus) to Macedonia. The former got into difficulties, but the latter succeeded in defeating Pompey’s father-in-law and invaded the region. His victory was followed by the submission of several towns.

Caesar went there, hoping to profit by the favourable situation created by his lieutenant’s victory. Only just free from the hornet’s nest of Dyrrachium, his legions moved along slowly, bearing numerous wounded in their train. They went a little out of their way in order to pass through Apollonia, where the serious cases were to be left. There was another reason which brought Caesar to this town: he had no money for the troops’ pay, which would soon be due. He counted on raising the necessary funds in Apollonia by imposing a new war contribution upon this rich city.

‘He gave to these matters just the time necessary for their speedy execution,’ we read in De bello civili. Then he marched toward Aeginium to meet Domitius. The journey was made under difficult conditions. A radical change of attitude towards him was noticeable in the region since the disaster of Dyrrachium had become known. None of the towns by which he passed wanted to supply him with provisions. In a hurry to join Domitius, Caesar did not wait to argue or fight. He put all this off until later.

The junction finally took place on July 24, and soon afterwards he reached Gomphi, the first town in Thessaly, coming from Epirus. He hoped to receive a more friendly welcome there, particularly as formerly the inhabitants of this city, of their own accord, had sent him a delegation placing all their reserves at his disposal. Again this time he was disappointed: when he arrived he found the gates of the city closed and the inhabitants resolved to resist him.

Then Caesar ordered an immediate assault. He spoke only a few words to his soldiers, who were starving, ravaged with illness, harassed and weary. He held out before their longing eyes glowing prospects of the riches which crammed the town and the immense quantities of provisions it possessed. He showed them these well-fed townsmen
who, thinking they were safe behind their walls, scornfully spurned them, mocking their distress. Let them be punished for their insolence, and let their fate serve as a lesson to others! To the attack, then! The town and everything in it was theirs.

These last words aroused indescribable enthusiasm. The prospect of unrestrained pillage, duly authorized after so many and such protracted restrictions, raised their spirits sky-high: wounded, sick, defeatists of every description suddenly became animated by a new strength and overflowed with war-like ardour. All went to the attack exultant with joy. The onslaught started at four o'clock in the afternoon. Before sunset the city was taken. Then the sacking began.

First of all they rushed for the food and drink. They found an enormous quantity of wine and became 'excessively drunk', as Appian observes. This was especially true of the Germans, who according to this author 'were particularly gay in their cups'. The orgy lasted all night. Caesar did not interfere. The next morning he had the call sounded and started on his way again at the head of this chaotic and lurching mass of twenty-five thousand men, most of them completely drunk, who went on drinking as they marched, 'celebrating a kind of bacchanalia', says Plutarch, 'all along the route'. But according to him a miracle had happened: 'This prolonged intoxication drove out the sickness which came from an opposite cause, and entirely changed the condition of their bodies.'

It was in this state of salutary inebriation that Caesar's legionaries arrived before Metropolis, situated some twelve miles from Gomphi. The inhabitants of the town, unaware of the fate which had befallen their neighbours, had also announced to Caesar that they refused to receive him.

This time he employed a different method. He merely exhibited before the ramparts of the town a few dignitaries of the sacked city, whom he had brought with him as prisoners. The effect of this demonstration was speedy and drastic: the gates of Metropolis immediately opened as by enchantment and the population welcomed him with great deference. He did them no harm, because he wished to illustrate to the other places in the region the contrasting treatment in store for those who welcomed him and for those who did not. The example appeared to be conclusive enough, and all the Thessalian cities, except Larissa which was already occupied by the troops of Metellus Scipio, submitted to Caesar. Caesar himself arrived in the plain of Pharsalus after seven days of forced marches. The crops were
nearly ripe. With an eye to the forthcoming harvest which he urgently needed, Caesar pitched his camp there.

When Caesar’s departure became known among Pompey’s followers, it was firmly believed that this was an open avowal of his inability to continue the struggle. Then there was great rejoicing. Some of them judged that the war was over, and several friends of Pompey, eager to gain importance, immediately left for Lesbos to announce the end of hostilities to his wife. Preparations started there and then for the return, and many were the calculations concerning the forthcoming revenge. Afranius was already accused of having surrendered without valid reason. Domitius proposed that once they were all back in Rome the senators who had followed Pompey should be charged to bring an accusation against those of their colleagues who had remained in Rome or who, while living in Pompey’s zone of influence, had failed to support him. They were already thinking about the elections, and candidates who wanted to prepare in advance hastened to send their slaves to Rome to reserve accommodations for them near the Forum, in view of the approaching electoral campaign. Caesar was considered to be finished, and three claimants were competing in advance for his office of Supreme Pontiff. As for Pompey, although he appeared to share the opinion of his supporters, he showed greater reserve. After Caesar’s withdrawal he called a council of war. Afranius recommended that Caesar should be left to perish from exhaustion in a foreign land, after being subjected to a severe blockade, and that they should embark at once for Italy, where there was no enemy army; then, once the authority of Pompey’s faction was restored in the metropolis as well as in Gaul and Spain, they could return once more to Greece in order to liquidate what remained of Caesar’s army. This project was opposed by Labienus, who succeeded in convincing Pompey that his enemy’s troops were nothing but stray units in full disintegration, that they would not be long in coming to place themselves under his banners, and that it would be shameful to leave now that Caesar was retreating all along the line. Adopting this point of view, Pompey led his army by way of Candavia to Larissa, where he joined the legions of his father-in-law. Then, after being informed by his scouts of the direction of Caesar’s march, he went to Pharsalus, where he took up his position on a hill about three miles east of the one which sheltered the camp of his enemy.
THE WAR IN GREECE

Pharsalus, August 9, 48 B.C. A memorable name—a memorable date. From Marathon to Stalingrad, humanity can scarcely count half a dozen which have made such a deep mark of the course of its history. Yet, rarely has a battle been improvised so hastily and in such a slap-dash, last-minute manner. 284

Pompey was in no way disposed to engage in action. Personally, he preferred to remain faithful to his tactics of dragging out the struggle as long as possible.

Such temporizing methods did not please his followers, who included politicians and foreign princes drawn willy-nilly into the adventure. ‘They were all saying’, Caesar afterwards wrote, ‘that the whole affair could be finished in a day, but that he [Pompey] enjoyed exercising his authority and that he considered consuls and praetors as his slaves.’ Pressed on all sides, urged and even threatened, Pompey gave way and, departing from his own plan, decided to open battle.

For the moment Caesar was unaware of all that was happening in the enemy camp, and he was growing impatient. The morale of his troops appeared to be restored. They were longing eagerly for combat. Dion Cassius says that ‘they all wanted to come to grips with the enemy. They flattered themselves that after ten years of war they were worth more on the day of battle than newly raised troops. They felt that age had taken from them the powers of endurance needed for the strenuous work of encampment, fortification, and the transport of provisions. In short, exhausted by their labours, they preferred to make an end of it with courage rather than to die of hunger’.

Knowing the spirit of his soldiers, Caesar made various attempts to provoke a battle. They all failed and finally, after having extracted all he could from the surrounding country, he had once more come to the end of his supplies and was threatened with famine. He accordingly resolved to change his position and to go and camp in a region whose untapped resources would enable him to feed his army, and he gave the signal for departure.

In the night of August 8 to 9, his troops began to strike camp. At dawn the tents were already rolled up and the slaves and pack animals were being sent off, when suddenly some scouts informed Caesar that they had just noticed a great deal of activity in the enemy camp, and that there was every sign of an impending battle.

This news changed his plans completely. In an instant everything
was decided. A brief order—and the purple tunic, the traditional signal for battle among the Romans, was placed in front of the praetorium. ‘Hardly had the soldiers seen it,’ writes Plutarch, ‘when, shouting with joy, they left their tents and ran to arms. In the meantime Caesar went off to the outposts to reconnoitre. He wanted to know how Pompey had formed his line of battle.

He was able to observe that the enemy’s chief effort was concentrated on the left wing under the command of L. Domitius. That was where Pompey had placed the two war-seasoned legions which Caesar had sent back in the year 50, in obedience to the orders of the Senate. All his cavalry, of which Labienus had taken over the command (an indication of the important part it was to play), all his archers and his slingers were likewise massed there. Moreover, Pompey himself had established his observation post in this spot. In the centre was Scipio with two legions of Italian recruits and the Syrian troops. Finally, the right wing, covered by the River Enipeus, was occupied by the cohorts brought back from Spain by Afranius and placed under the command of L. Lentulus Crus. There were altogether about 40,000 foot and 7,000 horse.

Against these large forces Caesar could oppose no more than 22,000 men, of whom only 1,000 were cavalry. He therefore had to use all his ingenuity in order to overcome this great disproportion of numbers. He succeeded in doing so by a method which has never since failed to arouse the admiration of military specialists of all countries and all times.

Reading the enemy’s mind like an open book, he put Antony in command of his left wing and ordered Cn. Domitius to take over the centre; he himself went to the right wing, where he took up his position with his best legion, the Tenth, opposite Pompey and Labienus. But he made a bold innovation which was contrary to the fundamental principles of the military science of his time: he did not hesitate to remove one cohort from the third line of each of his legions. This allowed him to form a reserve corps of six cohorts which were to guard his right flank, as he feared that it might be turned by the strong force of enemy cavalry whose attack he anticipated.

After these plans had been communicated to them, the officers led their units to their appointed positions. Then followed the traditional sacrifices. Caesar invoked the protection of the goddess whose direct descendant on earth he claimed to be, promised her a temple in Rome as an act of thanksgiving, announced that his battle-cry
would be *Venus Victrix*, and addressed to his army the following
speech, the substance of which seems to have been recorded fairly
accurately by Appian:

‘My companions! The greatest difficulties have already been
conquered. We no longer have to fight against hunger or scarcity,
but only against men. This day will decide everything. Remember
the vow you made in my presence at Dyrrachium. . . . There
stands the enemy against whom we set out from the pillars of Hercules;
there he stands, the enemy who fled before you in Italy; there he
stands, he who would have disbanded you without reward, granting
you neither triumphal honours nor military gratuities. . . . Think,
then, of every one of these things to-day, and at the same time
remember my generosity towards you.’

Then followed some advice of a purely technical character: at
the start they were to pay no attention to Pompey’s ‘allies’; they
were only ‘slaves, always ready to run away and surrender’. The
newly formed reserve corps were given orders to strike the enemy
in the face, instead of inflicting their blows, as was the custom in
fighting against cavalry, on the legs and thighs of the riders; for, as
Caesar added with biting scorn, ‘these fine dancers, bedecked with
flowers, so anxious to protect their handsome faces, will not be able
to endure the brilliance of steel shining so close to their eyes’. Then
he handed his officers the list of those in the opposite camp who were
to be spared in the course of the battle, and ordered the signal to be
given for the charge.

There was a painful silence. No one stirred. Motionless, with
gloomy countenances, the soldiers seemed to have got over the joyful
enthusiasm with which they had at first hailed the announcement of
the battle. Now they were realizing the implications of the fratricidal
struggle which was to range against each other, members of the same
family, childhood friends, former comrades-in-arms.

The same reaction could be observed in Pompey’s camp. ‘It took
a great deal,’ wrote Dion Cassius, ‘to strengthen their hearts with
courage.’

C. Crastinus, a humble centurion, ignited the spark. It is pos-
sible that his gesture was deliberately provoked by Caesar himself who,
passing along the ranks of the motionless army, stopped in front of
him and asked him how he thought the battle would end. ‘Thou
wilt conquer, imperator,’ cried the centurion, ‘and, dead or alive, I
am going to deserve thy gratitude.’ With these words he sprang
forward. A hundred resolute men forming a shock company followed him. Then everything was set in motion.

Pompey's cavalry attacked Caesar's right wing. Caesar's legions marched to attack Pompey's centre. The latter had ordered his soldiers to await their assailants without stirring from their positions. He hoped in this way to be able to break the first onset of the enemy troops who, after running the double distance, would arrive in front of his own out of breath and harassed. The reasoning was good, but it did not take into account the military experience of Caesar's veteran soldiers. When they saw that Pompey's forces remained on the spot without coming to meet them, they slackened their pace of their own accord and stopped half-way. They took the time needed to hurl their javelins and then started again with full force. The Pompeians stood their ground firmly and with courage.

The battle was 'terrible', according to Dion Cassius.

'Face to face and even able to speak to each other,' writes this author, 'they recognized their adversaries and called to them by name. . . . Some of them gave their murderers messages for their families. . . . Cries and groans rose on all sides, and this created a turmoil which spread from rank to rank. The cries of the foreigners were unintelligible and caused a deep terror.' Among the latter the Gauls and Spaniards distinguished themselves by particularly passionate ardour. 'They were as vigorous in their efforts to subdue the Romans as they had been to preserve their own liberty, and wanted to have them as companions in slavery.' As for the Oriental 'allies' of Pompey, it was quite different with them, if we go by Appian, who describes their attitude in crushing though measured terms:

As if they had only been called to witness the spectacle of this battle, they admired the firmness with which each kept his rank; and transfixed in a kind of ecstasy they did not dare to carry out the orders which had been given them to attack Caesar's camp, which was only guarded by the oldest of his soldiers.

The decisive moment of the battle came when the six cohorts kept in reserve by Caesar made their counter-attack against Labienus' cavalry, which was trying to surround Caesar's right wing. . . . 'They made such a vigorous charge against Pompey's horsemen that not one of them resisted', Caesar himself writes in his book. He does not say anything on the subject of the instructions he had given them
about the way they were to fight, but Plutarch assures us that the effect of his tactics was overwhelming:

These delicate young men could not endure the blows which were being struck at their faces, and not daring to look at the steel which shone so close to their eyes, they averted their gaze and covered their heads so as to protect their faces.

‘They were’, he specifies, ‘the flower of the Romans and the Italians.’ Finally, they broke their ranks themselves, and taking to flight, precipitated the defeat of Pompey’s army. The archers and slingers, who were left exposed and defenceless after their rout, were massacred. After that, without slackening their drive, the ‘cohorts of protection’ swept beyond Pompey’s left wing and took it from the rear. It began to bend. Then the ‘allies’ left everything and fled helter-skelter, crying out, ‘We are lost!’

Pompey’s central phalanx, which until then had stubbornly resisted all the assaults of Caesar’s infantry, felt the effect and gave way in its turn. Then Caesar had a remarkably good idea: he proclaimed through heralds in his army that the battle against the Romans was to cease, and that his soldiers were to confine themselves to giving chase to the ‘allies’. Pompey’s soldiers were invited to remain where they were, without having anything to fear. Caesar’s message was passed on from one to the other; the action stopped. The battle of Pharsalus was over.

Caesar’s task was far from being finished, however. He was a man who ‘knew how to conquer’. He knew that, cost what it might, it was necessary to take advantage of the confusion in the ranks of the enemy in order to destroy him once and for all. A large number of combatants from Pompey’s army, moved by essentially practical considerations, had left the battlefield in order to hurry back to the camp and to try before leaving to save the most precious things out of their baggage. It would not do to give them time to escape and thus to afford them a chance of recovering from their defeat.

It was getting late. The heat was overpowering. The troops, worn out with fatigue, could scarcely stand up. Caesar did not choose to notice it. He saw only one goal before him: the final crushing of his enemy which seemed to him within reach of his hand. He therefore ordered the storming of the camp. The troops did not move. Then Caesar went up and down the ranks of his army. He hustled his soldiers, pushed them forward, ‘held out his hands to
them in supplication', adds Appian. Finally, seeing that all his exhortations remained without effect, he repeated the gesture of Crassus and rushed forward himself. 'The determination and example of their leader', writes this historian, 'gave new courage to his soldiers.' The hope of seizing considerable booty no doubt also helped. They followed him.

Pompey's men, who were solely preoccupied with the ways and means of getting away safely, had no thought of defending their camp. Pompey, who had left the battlefield immediately after the defeat of his cavalry, hastily divested himself of the insignia of his command and his military uniform, and went off with precipitate haste, forgetting to take his personal correspondence and leaving the supper which was waiting for him untasted. When he reached the far gate he already heard voices, perhaps that of Caesar himself, as the Caesarian troops, who had crossed the palisades of the camp with irresistible dash, were forging ahead.

At the head of his soldiers, triumphantly brandishing his sword, Caesar penetrated into Pompey's camp and made straight for his tent. It was empty. For lack of anything better to do he ate the cooling supper of his rival and went out again. A strange spectacle greeted his eyes. Each tent was crowned with myrtles and decorated with precious fabrics. He glanced inside some of them: the tables were laden with goblets and bowls filled with wine. Sure of success, Pompey's officers had made arrangements to celebrate their victory worthily. Caesar's legionaries were already preparing to reap the benefit. He did not give them the time.

After deserting the camp, the remains of Pompey's army, including most of the military tribunes and centurions who had been joined by a group of senators, had taken refuge in the neighbouring mountains. They must be dislodged and not be given a chance of getting back to Larissa whither, according to Caesar's information, Pompey was heading. Forward, then, in pursuit!

Again Caesar had to overcome the reluctance of his troops. Once more it was necessary to insist, to be pressing, to be persuasive. Once more he succeeded in pushing his exhausted soldiers towards the heights which the Pompeians had just occupied. Without granting them an instant's respite, Caesar set his legionaries to the task: they had to surround the mountain with a line of contravallation. The enemy, by skilful manoeuvring, succeeded in forestalling the encirclement and in escaping in the direction of Larissa. Therefore,
at the last minute, the work had to be abandoned in order to pursue
them. They were finally overtaken after Caesar's troops had covered
five miles at one stretch. Once he had come up with the foe, Caesar
prepared for battle. The adversary stopped and took up their position
on another hill. It was necessary once more to dislodge them. Night
was falling, and everything was shrouded in darkness. Little did it
matter to Caesar. He had found a way of reducing the enemy to
helplessness. A river flowed at the foot of the mountain. An
entrenchment cutting them off from it would deprive them of water.
Yet again his legionaries had to shoulder a fresh task. Caesar spoke
to them once more. They obeyed. Late in the night the work was
completed: the Pompeians had no access to the river. Then they
sent their messengers asking for a truce. It was almost dawn.

In obedience to Caesar's orders, at the first rays of dawn all those
who had taken refuge on the mountain came down to the plain and
surrendered their arms. Then, with their hands extended, they all
threw themselves on the ground in a sweeping gesture of submission,
and begged the conqueror for mercy. Caesar let his eyes travel for
an instant over this mass of more than twenty thousand men prostrate
at his feet; then he ordered them to rise. A disappointment was in
store for him: not one of the prominent leaders of Pompey's army
was there. They had all succeeded in getting away. He went up
and down the ranks, recognizing those who had been captured before
and had again taken up arms against him after their liberation. Now
he was going to put them to death, but he allowed each of his lieu-
tenants to ask for the pardon of one condemned Pompeian. He
forgave all the others and instructed his soldiers to respect their property
and to spare them all violence.

Meanwhile, on the battlefield they were counting the dead and
digging a common grave. The losses suffered by the two armies
show a striking disproportion. Caesar avers that he lost thirty
centurions and two hundred soldiers. He alleges that 15,000 of the
enemy were killed, but Appian reduces this number to 6,000 while
observing that 'those who exaggerate bring the number of dead on
Pompey's side to 25,000'.

There followed the distribution of rewards. In accordance with
the military custom of the Romans it was for the soldiers themselves,
all assembled on the battlefield, to decide who were the bravest.
They unanimously granted the first award to Caesar. The second
went to him too, but in conjunction with the whole of the Tenth

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CAESAR

Legion. The third was given posthumously to the centurion Crastinus, whose body had been found bearing the marks of a sword thrust which had passed through his mouth and come out at the back of his neck. Caesar ordered that he should be given funeral honours and that a separate monument should be erected in his memory.²⁷⁰
CHAPTER 47

_After the Victory_

The war continued, however. So long as Pompey escaped him Caesar could not enjoy the fruits of his victory. The enemy coalition still had immense reserves at its disposal. At Corcyra it had an army which was intact and a fleet of more than three hundred vessels. Africa and Asia could supply it with men, money, and provisions in unlimited quantities.

Caesar realized that he must make it his first object, whatever the cost, to prevent Pompey from making contact with his supporters and from re-establishing his line of resistance. He was known to have left by the road leading to Larissa. The same day Caesar went off after him at a gallop, accompanied by his horsemen. The Sixth Legion was given orders to follow him by forced marches. He arrived too late. Pompey had rushed through Larissa like a whirlwind and no one seemed to know which way he had gone. Caesar saw then that his vanquished rival had passed beyond his reach for the time being, and that he would have to give up the hope of capturing him by a sudden bold stroke. He resolved to wait for the arrival of his legion, and began to face the prospect of carrying the struggle into a new theatre of war imposed upon him by his enemy. While he was recovering at Larissa from the superhuman strain of the previous two days, he was handed a letter which, according to Plutarch, gave him great joy.

Brutus, the son of his mistress Servilia, told him that he also was at Larissa, and asked permission to call upon him.

Urged by his uncle Cato, Brutus had somewhat unenthusiastically embraced the cause of Pompey. The latter attached him to his staff but gave him no actual command. Thus he had been able to keep out of the battle and to remain in a peaceful corner of the Thessalian countryside, immersed in his study of Polybius, while nearby the fate of his commander-in-chief and of the party to which he supposedly belonged was being decided.

Plutarch reports that before the battle started Caesar had given his officers strict injunctions to spare Brutus, "not to kill him in combat;
if he voluntarily surrendered to bring him to him; if he defended himself against those who would lay hold of him to let him go, and to do him no violence'. Why did Caesar take such an unusual interest in Brutus? The same Plutarch, covering himself with a prudent 'they say', suggests that 'he wanted to oblige his mother, Servilia in this matter'. We know that at that time the rumour had spread in Rome with peculiar persistency that Brutus was Caesar's son. This is a delicate problem which has never been definitely solved, and for good reason. . . . In any case, Plutarch claims that Caesar was convinced about it, 'because Brutus had come into the world at a time when his passion for Servilia was at its height'. The eagerness with which he now replied that Brutus could come, and that he would be happy to see him, betrays at least on Caesar's part a depth of feeling which exceeds the limits of an ordinary attachment. He had not seen Brutus for nearly twenty years. He remembered him as a grim, ungainly adolescent. He now saw before him a man in his prime, slightly awkward in manner, but singularly attractive, with an expression of firmness and determination. They talked for a long time, quite alone together, walking along a solitary path beyond the range of indiscreet ears. 271 Plutarch asserts that Caesar wanted to find out from Brutus where Pompey was going, and that Brutus gave him this information. Such a question on Caesar's part is possible, if not probable; not so the reply of Brutus. He could scarcely have told Caesar anything on this subject since he himself was in complete ignorance of the plans of his chief who, for that matter, had not even made up his own mind about his intentions. Moreover, the fact stated by Plutarch himself that the interview took place without witnesses makes it impossible for us to regard this allegation as anything but mere conjecture.

It was not before the end of the second day of his stay at Larissa that Caesar was able to obtain more precise information: Pompey had been seen to reach Amphipolis by way of the sea. Caesar was not equipped for crossing the water. From Larissa to Amphipolis by land was about one hundred and seventy miles. This did not deter him in the least. On horseback, taking his cavalry with him, he set out, while the legion attached to him followed in his footsteps some distance behind. Stoffel estimates that it took him six days to accomplish the journey. By that time, of course, Pompey was far away: according to the latest news he was at Mitylene, delayed by the storm, but proposing to gain the coast of Asia.
AFTER THE VICTORY

Once more Caesar set out. He intended to march after Pompey, from halt to halt, fully determined not to stop until he had caught up with him. It was therefore to Asia that he was going to lead the little army which accompanied him. Again the problem of transport arose. He only saw one solution: to reach Sestus on the Hellespont by land, and once there, to take his troops over to the opposite bank by some chance method to be improvised on the spot.

To begin with, this meant covering a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. After seventeen days of marching, Caesar’s soldiers arrived on the shores of that sea ‘made famous by Love’, at the place where Asia is nearest to Europe. There they came up against their main difficulty: How were they to cross to the opposite side? Caesar settled it in the simplest way possible. He seized all the boats he found on the beaches, and without worrying about the risks of embarking his men in such fragile craft, started to cross over.

In the middle of the straits Caesar came upon part of Pompey’s fleet which, under the command of L. Cassius, was making its way towards the states of Pharnaces on the Black Sea, no doubt in order to put itself at the disposal of that prince (who was a friend of Pompey), with a view to continuing the struggle. Then something paradoxical happened, or so at least it appears at first sight. We will quote Suetonius: ‘He [Caesar] did not take to flight, but approaching Cassius, was the first to ask him to surrender, and then received him as a suppliant.’

It seems that afterwards Cassius sought to justify this decision as the result of his fear of an attack from Caesar, which would have put his fleet in jeopardy. This explanation makes one smile. Thus the leader of a powerful squadron composed of ten fully armed warships capitulated unconditionally at the first demand of an enemy who possessed only a few frail boats which were in such condition that they must have had great difficulty in keeping afloat. With the means at his disposal Cassius probably could have sent Caesar’s whole ‘armada’ to the bottom within the space of a few seconds. If he did not do so it must have been because, with full knowledge of the facts, he preferred to desert his general and enter the service of the conqueror, to whom his betrayal brought an inestimable advantage. Thanks to the important naval forces which Caesar thus obtained, he could for the future take whatever sea routes he chose and so gain valuable time while substantially reducing the risks of his undertaking.
After taking possession of Cassius’ fleet, Caesar crossed the straits and reached the coast of Sigeum in Troas, where tradition places the tomb of Achilles. He halted, probably waiting for a favourable wind, in this land filled with memories of greatness. He followed the banks of the Simois, ‘whose waves wash over the shields, helmets, and valorous bodies of so many heroes’; he visited the promontory of Rhoetoeum, where the same tradition tells us that Ajax is buried. He went to see the ruins of Troy and looked for traces of its ramparts. This inspired Lucan to write one of the finest pages of his Pharsalia.\(^{272}\)

‘Without noticing,’ writes the poet, ‘he had passed a little stream which meandered through the dusty soil; it was the Xanthe. Carelessly he set foot upon a mound of turf; a Phrygian prevented him from trampling upon the shades of Hector.’ Nearby was a heap of ancient stones. ‘Thou dost not then look upon the altar of Jupiter Herceus?’ said his guide. ‘Then’, Lucan continues, ‘he hastily erected an altar of greenery and placed with the incense on the lighted flame the vows he proposed to fulfil.’

Here they are, as the ardent muse of the Iberian minstrel attributes them to him:

> Gods of these ashes, inhabitants of the Phrygian ruins,  
> Lares of Æneas, venerated to-day in Lavinium and Alba,  
> Pallas, whose image is hidden from the eyes of men;  
> It is I, the most noble descendant of the Julii,  
> Who come to offer incense here at your altar.  
> I adjure you on this ground, your first dwelling-place:  
> Prosper the continuation of my successes.  
> I will give back to you your peoples. The Phrygian walls  
> Shall be rebuilt by the grateful Ausonidae,  
> And Pergamos shall be reborn, daughter of Rome.

Then Caesar returned to his ships, and ‘exposing all his sails to the favourable breath of the caurus’ he went on his way, ‘impatient to make up for the time he had lost in Ilium’.

We do not guarantee the authenticity of this scene, but we can hardly imagine that Caesar, on arriving in the land of all these glorious shades, who had haunted him from childhood, would have spoken otherwise or failed to accomplish the religious gestures which the will of a poet imposed upon him.

After a brief stop at Chios, where an inscription has commemorated his passage, he halted at Ephesus. His arrival prevented Pompey’s
supporter T. Ampius Balbus from seizing the treasure of the temple of Artemis. At the news of Caesar’s landing he disappeared with all haste.273

Information on Caesar’s activities at Ephesus is scarce and fragmentary. Deputations from Ionia and Aeolia were awaiting him to assure him of their absolute submission. Caesar forgave them all. He liberated the Cnidians, ‘in honour of the mythologist Theopompus’, as Plutarch claims. It should be noted that the said mythologist was the father of the rhetorician Artemidorus, the first Greek tutor of Brutus, who was accompanying Caesar on his journey. No doubt Caesar was chiefly occupied with his preparations for the forthcoming expedition against Pompey, of whose itinerary he was still uncertain. Dion Cassius tells us that he ‘demanded money’ from the inhabitants of the province. That was to have been expected. But the historian adds, ‘he harmed no one, and did as much good as he could to all’. According to the same source, he drove out the publicans, who were harassing the people beyond endurance, and he substituted a single levy in place of the various taxes.

After obtaining a great deal of vague and contradictory information, Caesar ended by finding out that his enemy had abandoned the idea of reaching Syria and had gone to Cyprus. Guessing from this that Pompey was making his way to Egypt, whose ruler incidentally figured among his allies, Caesar hastily embarked for Rhodes, which had been fixed as the point where his army was to assemble. Without waiting for the remainder of his troops, who were arriving only in small groups, he set sail with the few cohorts he had on the spot, making use of Cassius’ triremes, to which he added a few ships requisitioned from the Rhodians. The departure was surrounded with the greatest secrecy. No one knew where they were going. Caesar had merely ordered the pilots to follow the light of his vessel during the night and his flag during the day.

His galley left on a moonless and starless evening, serving as a guide to the others. They sailed for three days and three nights. When land came into sight, they beheld a city which was completely white. It was Alexandria. On reaching port Caesar learnt that Pompey had just been assassinated.
CHAPTER 48

The War of Alexandria

Caesar was stunned by the news. At first he would not believe it. He asked those who announced it to produce some material proof, and perhaps he himself suggested that they should bring him the ring of the victim, so that it could be sent to Rome to convince the sceptics if need be. It was indeed brought to him, and with it a bundle of moderate proportions but rather disturbing appearance. On opening it, Caesar beheld a human head—the head of his rival.274

Contrary to the generally accepted version, he was not seized with dread and disgust at the sight of this gruesome present. He gazed at it attentively, as though he wanted to convince himself that it really was Pompey’s head, and not some trickery invented by those perfidious Egyptians to deceive him. It was only afterwards that he abandoned himself to the theatrical display of emotion which his historians have described, and which, according to Dion Cassius, made him ridiculous in the eyes of everyone present.

‘He wept and groaned,’ writes this author, ‘calling him [Pompey] citizen and son-in-law, and remembering the services they had rendered each other in the past.’ According to Plutarch, ‘he could not bear to look upon the scoundrel who had presented him with the head of Pompey, and turned away from him in horror’.

‘The scoundrel’, whose name was Theodotus the Sophist and who belonged to the inner circle of the counsellors surrounding the king of Egypt, was not in any way molested, however, and Caesar allowed him to depart scot-free.275 If Caesar actually had wanted to avenge the death of his former associate, he at least could have punished the one among his assassins who was in his power. Caesar did nothing of the sort.

Pompey’s assassination threw all his plans into confusion. He had started in pursuit of the fugitive general at the head of two legions and a detachment of cavalry, scarcely 4,000 men in all. The sword of a Roman officer in the pay of the ministers of Ptolemy XIV had spared him the task for which he was preparing. What was he going to do now? Although Pompey had disappeared, Caesar still had to
wipe out the remains of his party which after the defeat at Pharsalus had scattered in all directions. In order to do so he would have to set out for distant lands and undertake long marches across the desert. An expedition of this kind could be attempted only with considerable forces, abundantly supplied with provisions and equipment. It necessitated the immediate expenditure of huge sums of money.

Unfortunately Caesar's financial position was again extremely critical. Although the war in Greece had brought him brilliant military successes, it had produced but meagre pecuniary advantages. The war tribute which he had imposed brought in very little. Moreover, for political reasons Caesar had considered it necessary to be as lenient as possible in this respect. The sacking of the towns had been strictly forbidden. The one and only exception, Gomphi, had enriched only his soldiers. The eagerness of the Greek cities to offer their submission as he passed prevented him from carrying out the mass sale of entire populations to the slave merchants, which had formerly enabled him to realise fabulous sums in Gaul. But if his revenues had been considerably reduced, his expenditure never stopped rising and his budget grew steadily heavier. To stimulate the zeal of his soldiers he was compelled to offer them substantial rewards each time he entered upon a new campaign. These had not yet all been paid. He even owed money to his own officers, and the obligation of ensuring that his troops should receive their pay regularly was a burden that caused him serious concern. Once again he found himself up against the problem with which indeed he had long been familiar. Where was he to find money?

He remembered very opportunely that the father of the reigning king of Egypt had died without paying the full amount of the debt he had contracted for the services rendered him by Caesar during his first consulship in 59. It was to Caesar that Ptolemy owed the title conferred upon him by the Senate, 'Friend and Ally of the Roman People'. The remainder of the debt amounted to 17,500,000 sesterces. When his debtor died, Caesar made one of those lordly gestures so characteristic of him where money was concerned: he remitted seven and a half millions to the children of the deceased. Ten millions were still owing him, however. He considered that the moment had come to claim them, and he gave orders to land. To make it quite clear that he was not coming to Alexandria in his military capacity but as the official representative of the Republic to negotiate in the name of Rome on business of a purely civil nature,
he assumed the insignia of his consular office and stepped ashore preceded by his fasces.

The people of Alexandria took a different view of the matter. They thought that Caesar, no longer having Pompey to fight against, had come to impose the Roman yoke upon their city, and they interpreted the solemnity which surrounded his arrival as an attack upon the majesty of their king and the sovereignty of their country. Moreover, the city was teeming with Roman outlaws and political refugees, for whom the appearance of the supreme magistrate of the Republic accompanied by all the attributes of his formidable power was an ominous sign. In short, as soon as the laetors stepped down on to the superb marble quay which greeted travellers landing at Alexandria, the crowd rushed upon them and maltreated them severely. In order to escape, Caesar was obliged to take refuge in the royal palace which opened on to the quay.

He found the sumptuous dwelling of the Egyptian monarch occupied by two children: the brother and sister of young King Ptolemy XIV. The latter had gone off with his confidential adviser, the eunuch Pothinus, to take command of the army. He was opposing the entrance into the country of his elder sister Cleopatra, who had been driven out by him—or rather in his name—but had succeeded in recruiting troops in Syria and was now trying to return in order to take her place once more on the throne beside her brother.

Caesar immediately took possession of the palace and all adjoining buildings. He confined the royal children and their numerous servants to their private apartments, and had the premises within the palace enclosure occupied by his troops. Behind these solid walls he must have felt safe—all the more so since his ships were moored immediately beneath the edifice, ready to receive him in case of need.

He pretended not to attach much importance to the disagreeable incidents which had marked his first contact with the Alexandrians, and waited for popular agitation to die down of itself. He did not fail to send a messenger to Domitian, however, with orders to dispatch two legions to Alexandria without delay. Meanwhile he took stock of the situation. He had arrived at a moment when Egypt was on the verge of a civil war between two rival parties; Ptolemy XIV and Cleopatra merely served as symbols in the struggle. In his will, the deceased monarch had entrusted to Rome a sort of protectorate over his kingdom, hoping to preserve it from the internal strife which would inevitably break out owing to the youth and inexperience of
the children who were to succeed him on the throne. What the old king had feared was now happening. It was time to intervene, to re-establish order in the State, and harmony between brother and sister. 'Caesar considered that their quarrel came under the jurisdiction of the Roman nation, and particularly of himself as consul,' we read in De bello civili, 'and that the matter concerned him all the more since it was under his first consulship that an alliance had been formed with Ptolemy the father.' What he does not say, but what is easy to guess, is that in this way he could complete the seizure of Egypt by Rome and hasten the recovery of his credit. He therefore sent messages to Ptolemy and to Cleopatra, bidding the two of them to come back to Alexandria in order to submit their dispute to him.

While he was waiting for their arrival, and even more eagerly for the legions of Domitius, he ostentatiously adopted the most peaceful of attitudes which ended by calming the fears of the population. He assumed the manner of an amiable tourist, anxious to improve his mind. 'He made a tour of the town and admired its beauty,' says Appian. Also, no doubt, he did not fail to make a note of certain strategic points during his excursions. He visited the temples and the monuments. He bowed before the tomb of Alexander. Mixing with the crowd, he attended the lessons of the Alexandrian teachers. He was all kindness and affability towards the refugees from Pompey's party who visited him, and saw to it that Pompey's head was given a decent sepulchre. But he chose its site in the grove of Nemesis, and it was under the aegis of the goddess of vengeance that, by a sort of cruel subtlety, he had a temple built in memory of his enemy.

In the meantime young Ptolemy arrived, accompanied by Pothinus, his prime minister. Caesar received them as a courteous host in this palace which he had seized manu militari only a few days before. An interview took place between him and the king in which Pothinus participated. Actually the latter did all the talking in the name of his sovereign, who was merely a passive witness. Caesar must have felt a certain uneasiness as he beheld this false and crafty politician, to whom he nevertheless owed a certain debt of gratitude for having rid him in such an expeditious manner of his principal enemy. He may have wondered whether at the very moment when he was talking to this man as one statesman to another about questions concerning the interests of his country, some plot was not being hatched against him, and whether he might not expect to meet in his turn the same fate as Pompey.

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He set forth his demands: cessation of hostilities against Cleopatra, disbanding of Ptolemy's army, payment of the ten million sesterces still owing him. Pothinus replied negatively to the first two points. As for the payment of the debt, without disputing the validity of the claim, he urged Caesar to 'finish the important business he had to settle', while assuring him that on his return he would receive full satisfaction. Caesar remained firm. According to Plutarch, he declared to Pothinus that 'he did not need the advice of an Egyptian'. The money must be paid to him immediately, and his wishes carried out to the letter. Pothinus no longer dared to protest, but arranged it so that the treasure chests should be found empty. Whereupon Caesar, quite unmoved, laid hands on all the royal plate. He was taking this, he said, as an instalment of what was owing to him.

And now we must make way for Cleopatra.

Her nocturnal visit to Caesar has a fine dramatic appeal and is one of the principal features of the biography of this extraordinary woman. It is enough to captivate the imagination of anyone, even the least romantically inclined. At night... a boat gliding mysteriously into the port... a female form, fragile and graceful, hidden in the darkness, waiting for the auspicious moment to enter the palace... the faithful confidant who places her on his shoulders, rolled in a carpet like a bundle, and carries her through the endless passages to the royal chamber... her arrival at last in the room of Caesar, who gazes, bewildered but marvelling, upon the supple and delightful form, very scantily clad, which emerges from its wrappings.... All this might have come out of a spectacular film, yet it is based on the clear and exact account of Plutarch. This 'ruse of Cleopatra's', he adds, was 'the first bait by which Caesar had been caught'.

This brings us to a problem which ought to be cleared up: when, and under what circumstances, did Caesar and Cleopatra first get into touch with each other? Letters had passed between them before this meeting. The question remains as to who had taken the initiative. A passage from Dion Cassius explains how Cleopatra was able to interest Caesar in her fate by submitting to him through intermediaries a report of her dispute with her brother. This would have been during the days Caesar passed at Ephesus, immediately after the victory at Pharsalus. Perhaps he may have helped her to conscript those bands of Syrian mercenaries that were to enable her to return victoriously to Alexandria; for it is difficult to imagine, even at that period, a girl bearing the crown of royalty and only twenty years of
age, acting as a recruiting agent in the markets and brothels of Antioch. Caesar had every reason to support her action. Her brother’s government had taken Pompey’s side. By creating difficulties for Ptolemy XIV in his own country he prevented the king from giving help to the defeated fugitive of Pharsalus.

How did Cleopatra conceive the idea of addressing herself to Caesar? The same Dion Cassius supplies us with the answer to this question. The renown of the great conqueror had deeply stirred her imagination, and she felt powerfully attracted to him. She informed herself of his tastes and habits. She knew how prone he was to love and to indulge in sensual pleasures. In the words of Dion Cassius: ‘Ravishingly beautiful to see and fascinating to listen to, capable of taming all hearts, however rebellious they might be to love or cold from age, she thought it was very important to meet Caesar face to face, and considered her beauty as her greatest asset.’ We might criticize this text for putting the accent too much on the beauty of Cleopatra which, as we know, is definitely contradicted by her portraits. But the essential thing is that no doubt she herself shared the opinion of the Greek historian, and anyhow, must she not have thought that a girl of twenty would always be beautiful to a man of fifty?

She therefore sent him a message asking permission to plead her cause before him. The invitation to come at the same time as her brother, to submit it to Caesar for arbitration, served as a reply. But how was she to penetrate into the capital when all its approaches were closely guarded by Ptolemy’s soldiers? It was then that she decided upon the stratagem which has been described above.

Cleopatra remained with Caesar all night and shared his bed. The next morning he summoned the young king and asked him to be reconciled with his sister. On seeing her nonchalantly stretched out beside the great Roman leader, the lad flew into a violent rage. ‘In a fury he rushed out to his subjects,’ writes Dion Cassius, ‘crying out that he was betrayed; he tore the diadem from his forehead and threw it at his feet.’ A crowd formed at the gates of the palace. Some Roman soldiers dragged the king, still vociferating, inside the palace. But feeling was rising and the growing crowd became excited. Men ran up from all sides. They spoke of invading the palace and liberating the young monarch, who was being martyred by foreigners. ‘They would have seized him there and then,’ asserts the same author, ‘if Caesar, in alarm, had not stepped forward and,
from a place where he ran no danger, promised them to do everything they wanted.' Once the agitation had calmed down he called a public assembly of the inhabitants, had the will of Ptolemy Auletes taken from the royal archives and, with the document in his hand, presented himself before the people of Alexandria accompanied by Cleopatra and her brother.

Caesar spoke perfect Greek. It was in this language, which was in current use among the people of this cosmopolitan city, that he addressed the inhabitants of Alexandria. He began by reading the will. He particularly stressed the passage which specified that Ptolemy and Cleopatra should exercise the royal authority conjointly, under the tutelage of Rome. Then he solemnly proclaimed his intention of accomplishing the mission which devolved upon him as the official representative of the Roman Republic: to watch over the security of the royal children and to execute the wishes of their father. Whereupon he handed them the crown and asked them to be reconciled with each other. Young Ptolemy, who had scarcely recovered from the storm of despair which had recently shaken him, appeared utterly dejected. He obeyed Caesar's injunctions. Cleopatra was triumphant: once more she was queen of Egypt. To give a striking proof of his goodwill towards the Egyptian people and of his friendship for the entire royal family, Caesar presented Cleopatra's sister Arsinoë and the younger Ptolemy with the island of Cyprus, which the Romans had annexed some ten years before, and whose possession was still ardentlv coveted by the people of Alexandria. But Dion Cassius explains this gesture by saying that 'Caesar was so dominated by fear [of a popular insurrection] that, far from taking anything away from the Egyptians, he even gave them something which belonged to himself.'

In order to celebrate this event in a dignified manner, an enormous banquet was organized. Lucan, who seems to be reproducing the impressions of an eyewitness, describes it down to the smallest detail. 'On the couches the king and queen are seated, and beside them a greater power than themselves—Caesar. Cleopatra has lavishly painted her malefic beauty, little satisfied with the sceptre she holds, and with the brother who is her spouse. Bedecked with the spoils of the Red Sea, she wears its treasures on her neck and in her hair; the load of her jewels weighs her down, the whiteness of her bosom gleams through a veil from Sidon. . . . On ivory legs they have placed round tables made of wood from the forests of the Atlas. . . .
The golden dishes hold all the delicacies that the earth and the air, the sea and the Nile can offer, all that the vanity of a delirious luxury without the stimulus of hunger has brought from the confines of the universe; they have placed on the tables a quantity of birds and wild beasts, those divinities of Egypt; from crystal vessels the water of the Nile is poured upon their hands; goblets sparkling with a profusion of precious stones receive a wine which in only a few years has mellowed to a generous age...foreheads are crowned with wreaths of spikenard and the roses which perpetually bloom in this country; flowing cinnamon has been placed on their newly anointed hair...and the amomum has been freshly gathered from the neighbouring countryside. 277

The attempt to poison Caesar which Plutarch has reported must have been made in the course of this feast. It was discovered in time by one of his slaves, who had been charged to keep secret watch over all that happened. Plutarch is mistaken, however, when he asserts that following this discovery Caesar had Pothinus put to death as the instigator of the plot. He did not touch the eunuch for the time being and merely had him closely shadowed, himself remaining on his guard.

Ptolemy's minister, skilled in the art of laying traps, tried to make another attempt. Caesar was living under a constant menace which weighed him down. He anticipated an ambush at every corner of the endless passages which crossed and recrossed each other, forming a sinister labyrinth throughout the royal residence. At night, death seemed to prowl round his bed. He dared not go to sleep for fear of being surprised in his slumber by the hand of an assassin. 'This was the reason', writes Plutarch, 'why Caesar determined from that time to spend the nights in feasting in order to safeguard himself.'

While he gave himself over to the nightly entertainments which were perhaps not all forced upon him, the eunuch continued his scheming. 'He did not cease to say and do everything which could render Caesar odious and despicable,' writes Plutarch. He supplied the Roman troops with uneatable bread. He had the royal table set with wooden and earthenware dishes, claiming that Caesar had taken the others. And finally, he sent a secret order in the name of the king to the commander of the army at Pelusium, urging him to march on Alexandria in order to drive Caesar out. The latter, hearing of this move, forced the young monarch to countermand the order. Two emissaries were instructed to carry the royal message to Pelusium.
Others sent by Pothinus arrived there earlier, however. Forewarned, the general Achillas had Ptolemy’s envoys seized as soon as they arrived, and put to death. Then he marched on the capital. The war of Alexandria was about to begin.278

It is to be wondered whether this war, which the historians have judged so differently and often so severely, was a war at all. During the five months of its duration it scarcely extended beyond the boundaries of one city, or to be more exact, beyond one district of that city, except for the last two days. As for the siege, it centred on a group of buildings. A theatre was promoted to the importance of a fortress. The whole campaign hinged on the possession of a pier.

And who were the belligerents? Though on Caesar’s side professional soldiers were indeed seen, grouped in regular military formations, the most dubious and ill-assorted elements were to be found among the Alexandrians. The army of Achillas, which totalled 22,000 men, was for the most part made up of ‘Gabinians’, that is to say soldiers of the old Roman army of occupation which Pompey had formerly placed in Egypt under the command of Gabinius. Since that time they had changed a great deal. ‘They had grown accustomed to the easy life of Alexandria,’ the author of De bello Alexandrino writes about them. ‘They had forgotten the name and discipline of the Roman people, they had married, and most of them had children.’ Intermixed with them were recruits from among the pirates and brigands of Syria, Cilicia, and the neighbouring regions, confirmed criminals, outlaws, and runaway slaves, to whom the Egyptian government offered asylum on condition that they joined the army. This job lot of warriors did most of their fighting in peace-time. They besieged the royal palace to obtain an increase in their pay, they put to death the favourites of the king who had ceased to please them, and between mutinies they pillaged those parts of the town inhabited by the wealthy merchants of Alexandria. The author of De bello Alexandrino does these troops too much honour in saying that they did not ‘seem contemptible either with regard to their numbers, their composition, or their military experience’. It is certain—and this was soon to be proved—that if Caesar had had to contend with them alone, he would have finished the whole campaign very quickly. But, in addition, he had the entire city against him—a city of 300,000 people who had risen to drive out the ‘intruder’. They armed all slaves old enough to bear arms, they established huge workshops,
they accumulated enormous quantities of munitions, they sent recruiting agents and commissioners throughout the country with instructions to speed up the raising of troops. The town, which was very rich and had an abundance of supplies, paid all expenses. Public meetings were organized. The most prominent citizens addressed them. Their exhortations went straight to the heart of the audience. All were agreed on one point: if they did not drive Caesar out the country would become a Roman province.

Caesar, seeing that he was up against the unanimous hostility of the population, redoubled his appeals for help. He reiterated his urgent orders to Cn. Domitius to send him the two legions he had asked for, and commanded him to leave everything in order to march on Alexandria. In Syria he charged Mithridates of Pergamum, the great Mithridates’ natural son whose absolute devotion to his cause he counted upon, to recruit an army of mercenaries who were to leave for Egypt as soon as possible by way of Palestine and the desert.

All this would take time, and Caesar was well aware of it. While waiting, he was exposed to the danger of being attacked in the palace by the troops of Achillas supported by the civilian population. To be sure, in the last resort he could always re-embark, since his ships were close at hand. But he did not want to do this. He preferred a struggle to a humiliating flight.

He had made up his mind: he was going to remain until reinforcements arrived. The problem was therefore how to endure, how to organize resistance by makeshift methods. To start with, the sumptuous residence of the monarchs of Egypt had to be transformed into a fortified camp. He included the theatre within his system of defence. It was situated in the immediate neighbourhood and communicated with the port and the arsenal. The weak parts of the structure were reinforced with armour plate. Covered galleries were built to connect these improvised forts.

Achillas’ first concern was to regain possession of the Egyptian fleet, which lay moored at the quays of the Great Harbour and was at the mercy of a sudden attack by Caesar. In addition to the fifty ships which had been sent in support of Pompey and had returned after the battle of Pharsalus—all of them galleys with four and five banks of oars, fully equipped and armed—there were the decked boats, twenty-two in number, which had remained on the spot to guard the port, and the thirty-eight ships in the docks of the arsenal. By recovering them Achillas would have control of the sea and the
harbour, as well as the means of cutting Caesar off from his supplies and making all access to Alexandria by sea impossible for the reinforcements he was expecting.

It is quite possible that Achillas' plan had a wider scope and that he also planned to strike a decisive blow at Caesar himself. The character of the action once it began gives grounds for this hypothesis.

The attack was made simultaneously on the palace and near the harbour. As soon as Caesar realized the intentions of the enemy, he ordered his cohorts to take up their positions in the adjacent streets; he withstood the assault and repulsed all attempts of the Alexandrians to capture the palace. He could not prevent them from entering the harbour, however. Then he did not hesitate. At his command the whole Egyptian fleet, including the ships that were in the workshops, was set on fire. Only, the conflagration, once it had started, could not be stopped. The flames spread to the neighbourhood of the harbour and consumed the warehouses, the arsenal, and the famous library founded by Ptolemy Philadelphus. According to the tradition of Livy handed down by Orosius, 400,000 volumes were destroyed in the fire.²⁷⁹

Driven by the wind, the flames leapt from roof to roof. Alarmed at the extent of the conflagration, the inhabitants ceased their attack on the palace and turned to rescue the threatened districts. Caesar took advantage of this situation. 'He was always successful at making war', Lucan writes in this connection, 'by deciding swiftly upon his course and seizing his opportunities.'

He hastened to land a detachment on the island of Pharos, situated at the entrance to the harbour. This was of great strategic importance for him; whoever controlled the island could easily bar the entry of ships into the harbour, as the passage was very narrow. He put a garrison there, and for the rest, remained on the defensive. 'The combatants separated without a decisive result.' Thus the author of De bello Alexandrino sums up the events of the day. As for the fleet which had been given over to the flames and which might have been of great value to him in the future, at that time he neither had the necessary forces to man it nor, above all, the means of defending it against enemy attack.

While his compatriots were marching to the assault, Pothinus was waiting with an anxious heart, expecting them each moment to burst into the halls of the palace and bring him deliverance at last. But his
hopes were disappointed. He did not lose courage, however. On the contrary, he sent messengers to Achillas exhorting him to persevere in his struggle. They were denounced and arrested before they could cross the boundaries of the palace. This time, Caesar resolved to strike: he had Pothinus put to death in the same manner as Pompey, by decapitation. The executioner's sword struck with insufficient force, and the victim's head remained dangling from his neck for several moments.

The young princess Arsinoë and her counsellor and tutor Ganymedes, who both hated Caesar, were better inspired and escaped from the palace, taking refuge with Achillas. But the execution of Pothinus roused the Alexandrians, who saw in the murdered eunuch a martyr for the cause of national independence, and according to Dion Cassius 'were greatly angered'.

Caesar expected them to make a new attack which he seems to have particularly feared, because he tried by indirect methods to make peace. Ptolemy, who was being closely watched after the escape of his younger sister, was brought out on to the terrace on the roof of the palace. From there, with Caesar at his side, he recited to the people gathered below the lesson he had been taught: namely, that Caesar was not doing him any harm, and that there was really no reason for hostilities. After him, Caesar spoke. He pretended to believe that the Alexandrians were not making war upon him but upon their own king, and he urged them to negotiate with their ruler. Posing with a certain nonchalance as a disinterested party, he offered to mediate in the conflict between them and their sovereign. 'The Egyptians understood that this was a trick on Caesar's part and did not yield', writes Dion Cassius, who provides us with a detailed account of this curious scene which has been ignored by Drumann, the most meticulous of all the German biographers of Caesar, as well as by the learned Groebe, who revised and continued his work.

The Alexandrians enthusiastically acclaimed as queen the little princess who had escaped from the hands of the 'Roman tyrant'. Ganymedes then thought the time was ripe for him to become the first personage of the State. Achillas, however, did not share his opinion, and was not in the least disposed to submit to the authority of Arsinoë's favourite. A quarrel broke out. Finally the eunuch had the general assassinated, and assumed the direction of operations in his place. He showed himself to be an energetic and competent military leader.
During his compulsory stay with Caesar he had probably heard numerous tales concerning his exploits in previous campaigns. Therefore, obviously inspired by one of Caesar’s own favourite devices, he proceeded to deprive him of fresh water in order to force him to surrender through thirst. He first cut all his connections with the water conduits of that part of the town which was still in the hands of the Alexandrians. Then he brought up the sea water and made it flow into the sector occupied by Caesar. Within a few days the water there had become undrinkable.

‘From that time,’ writes the author of *De bello Alexandrino*, ‘there was such fear [among the Romans] that they believed themselves to be reduced to the last extremity.’ Caesar’s soldiers began to grumble. What need was there for him to linger on among ‘this human species most prone to treason’? Why did he not embark? The panic-stricken men gathered in the courtyard of the palace, clamouring for explanations. Caesar was obliged to comply. He appeared in front of his troops and unstintingly offered them consolation, advice, arguments. . . . By digging wells they would find fresh water . . . Since they remained masters of the sea, they could bring in water every day in transport ships. . . . As for re-embarking, that was out of the question. The Alexandrians would have ample time to prevent their retreat by occupying the high ground and the houses where the troops must pass. ‘Any plan of that sort must be given up,’ concluded Caesar, ‘and our only thought must be to win at all costs.’ The soldiers understood that there was nothing left but to obey, and started to bore wells.

Two days later the Thirty-Seventh Legion arrived, sent by Cn. Domitius to the aid of his chief. The wind prevented it from entering the harbour of Alexandria. The commander of the convoy, obliged to remain anchored off the coast, ran out of water in his turn and sent a messenger to Caesar advising him of his arrival and of the trying circumstances in which he found himself. Caesar, who was without water himself, decided to go personally to the spot. The best he could do under the circumstances was to try to bring the soldiers back in several empty ships which were to follow him.

He stopped on his way to enable a certain number of his sailors to replenish their water supply. Some of them, perhaps attracted by the prospect of pillage, ventured a little too far from the ships and fell into the hands of enemy horsemen. When the latter learnt from them of Caesar’s presence in those parts, alone and without troops, they
hurried to tell Ganymedes, who made the most of his opportunity. He armed all the boats that were in condition to sail, and went to meet Caesar who, as the wind had dropped, was on his way back, with the ships bearing the Thirty-Seventh Legion in tow. The two fleets came up with each other late in the evening. Ganymedes' squadron, which was weak and had been hastily improvised after the recent fire, was beaten, thanks chiefly to the valour of the Rhodian Division commanded by a courageous and energetic sailor by the name of Euphranor. The Alexandrians lost two galleys, one of which was sunk and the other taken by Caesar. Two of their ships were damaged, and the author of *De bello Alexandrino* asserts that 'if the night had not put an end to the battle, Caesar would have captured the whole of the Egyptian fleet'.

Ganymedes appeared to be in no way discouraged. At a council of war held the next day he proposed to replace the lost ships and even to add to their numbers. His proposal was adopted and the Alexandrians set to work with great energy. The ships which had been left on the Nile and at Lake Mareotis were brought in. They built others. 'In a few days they had twenty-two ships with four banks of oars and five galleys with five banks, to which they joined a great many smaller units.' This is reported by the author of *De bello Alexandrino*, and he certainly cannot be accused of bias in favour of the Alexandrians.

Once in possession of this fleet, Ganymedes brought it out to sea by means of the canals which he had opened and so made a surprise attack on the Romans. He hoped to be able to defeat them more easily in naval combat than in a street battle, where his numerical superiority would be of little advantage.

Caesar could oppose him with thirty-four galleys, which was a larger number of vessels, but though he possessed as many quinqueremes as his adversary, he only had ten quadriremes against Ganymedes' twenty-two.

If we trust the version of Dion Cassius, which in this case differs widely from *De bello Alexandrino* (whose chief aim is to interpret events in a light favourable to Caesar), the operation attempted by Ganymedes was a complete success. He managed to set on fire several Roman ships and towed the others away. Then he cleared the entrance of the Eunostos harbour which had been blocked by Caesar after his return with the Thirty-Seventh Legion, remained there at anchor and, as Dion Cassius says, 'did a great deal of harm
to the Romans'. Unfortunately, here his text lacks precision and it is impossible to determine exactly what this 'harm' was which he caused his enemy. One thing is certain: Caesar did not delay in taking his revenge.

In opening Eunostos harbour, Ganymedes had facilitated the movements of Caesar's fleet as well as his own. After some days of speech-making to revive the cooling ardour of his troops, Caesar ordered his fleet to sail round the island of Pharos, and appeared in battle array at the entrance to the harbour. He hesitated, however, to enter the narrow passage, fearing he might be forced to fight before being able to deploy all his forces. Ganymedes' men, who were posted opposite, were not long in noticing this, and began to taunt the Roman fleet for its timidity and uncertainty. Tired of hearing their offensive gibes, Euphranor the Rhodian offered to go ahead with his division and to keep the enemy engaged until all the squadron had been able to pass. His initiative ended the hesitation of Caesar who, after encouraging the Rhodian leader and showering him with praises, gave the order for battle.

The battle which had started with the bold advance of Euphranor was quickly cut short. Caesar merely dealt the Alexandrians a few rapid blows, seized five of their ships and withdrew in haste, probably because he was afraid he might find his retreat cut off by the inhabitants of Pharos. This island made things extremely difficult for him. Controlling the Heptastadium, that famous pier which joined it to the continent, it served as a base for all Ganymedes' operations and was the chief obstacle to his own. Therefore, the day after his attack on Eunostos harbour, Caesar planned a large-scale operation directed against the island itself. Before he embarked on it, he considered it indispensable to stimulate the courage of his legionaries by giving over to them everything which could be gained from the pillage of the many luxurious villas on the shores of this beautiful watering place, the favourite resort of wealthy Egyptians. Furthermore, he promised a large reward in money to whoever among his soldiers should be the first to set his foot ashore. This is worth noting. Caesar realized that the zeal of his troops was declining; the only way to keep their courage at a high enough pitch was to tempt them by prospects of rich booty and a bonus payable immediately and in kind. He knew his soldiers well. His offer let loose a wave of competitive ardour—with the result that in a matter of minutes the shores were invaded by his cohorts who
had jumped on to the landing boats. The inhabitants and the
defenders of the island scarcely had time to take refuge inside the
city. After giving his soldiers ample time to plunder the private
dwellings, Caesar had all the houses razed to the ground and established
a garrison in the fort which protected the mole on the island side.
Thus the first phase of the operation ended as a complete success.
Then came the second.

While he was throwing his legionaries, thirsting for booty, into
the assault of the island, Caesar sent off ten cohorts and a detachment
of cavalry charged with capturing the Heptastadium and the fort
which controlled it on the side of Alexandria. As the cohorts
approached the mole, they hurled such a mass of projectiles down
upon it that the garrison could not hold out and had to take shelter
behind the walls of the town. Caesar promptly landed three cohorts
on the Heptastadium (the narrow space on the pier did not allow the
deployment of larger forces) with orders to establish a line of defences
without delay. The Alexandrians, encouraged by their small numbers,
risked a sally. Their archers proceeded to riddle the teams of diggers
with arrows. A group of Caesar’s sailors and oarsmen left their boats
and climbed up on to the mole—some of them wanting to help the
soldiers to repulse the impending attack, the others moved merely
by curiosity, according to the author of De bello Alexandrino. A few
Alexandrian horsemen who came to take them from the side were
all that was needed to make them run away in disorder. Their flight
had fatal results.

When the soldiers, who had remained on the galleys awaiting their
turn to land, saw the fugitives rushing towards their ships, they hurried
to get away from the mole and removed the ladders for fear that the
enemy might use them. When the legionaries on the Heptastadium
saw this, they became panic-stricken, and dropping their weapons
and tools they ran towards the boats. Caesar, who had been on the
pier since the beginning of the landing, tried to prevent the rout.
He soon realised that nothing could stop this human herd driven by
a mad terror sweeping all before it in its wild course. Then he
did as the others had done. He no longer thought of anything but
his own safety and he began to run, forcing his way towards the
mooring place of his personal galley which immediately received him.
But at that moment it was invaded by an enormous mass of fugitives,
for whom questions of rank and discipline had ceased to count. In
a few seconds Caesar’s galley was overflowing, yet the human torrent
continued to pour in. . . . He foresaw what would happen. So much the worse for the others! Seizing a bundle of confidential documents which he kept in his cabin, he jumped into the water and started to swim towards the ships which were some distance away. Easily recognized thanks to his purple cloak, he was immediately singled out by the Alexandrian archers as the target for their arrows. To escape them he dived under the water and only his hand clutching the papers was visible above the surface. Then, freeing himself from the mantle which he left to float on the water, he swam off vigorously, while the Alexandrians continued to aim at the piece of purple cloth which was still drifting about. Chilled and numb, Caesar was picked up by the nearest ship, while his overloaded galley sank beneath the waves. This attempt cost him four hundred legionaries and about as many sailors and oarsmen. In addition, he had to endure a particularly bitter humiliation: his beautiful imperial cloak was fished out by the Alexandrians, and Ganymedes had it hung over the trophy immediately erected in memory of the flight of the Romans.

One might have expected that after this success the popularity of the commander-in-chief of the Egyptian troops would steadily increase. The contrary happened. Intrigues were being carried on underground. Others coveted his place at the helm of the State. On the pretext that it was humiliating for the Egyptians to be governed by a chit of a girl and a eunuch, a certain set conceived the idea that the best way to get rid of Arsinoë and her tutor was to appeal to Ptolemy. First they made a plan to carry him off from the palace. Caesar was keeping a careful watch over his precious hostage, however, and the attempt failed. Then they tried another method which at first sight seemed doomed to failure: they asked Caesar to give the Egyptians back their king so that they could deliberate with him about conditions for peace.

Contrary to what might have been expected, Caesar complied with this demand. The author of De bello Alexandrino, who was fully acquainted with the views and intentions of his chief, writes on this subject:

Caesar knew this perfidious nation only too well and their cleverness at making a pretence of feelings they did not have. However, he judged it best to give in to their request, believing that if they really meant what they said, the king would remain loyal to him after his departure, whilst if, as was more in keeping
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with their nature, they merely wanted a sovereign in order to make him their leader in this war, it would be more honourable and glorious for him to deal with a king than with a crowd of adventurers and slaves.

This gesture on Caesar's part was undeniably clever. It introduced an element of discord among his opponents and strengthened the position of the rivals of Ganymedes, who had shown himself to be the most dangerous of enemies. Henceforward, instead of being united in the fight under one leader, the Alexandrians would fritter away their energies against each other. Whichever party won, Caesar would ultimately profit by the quarrel.

The scene of Ptolemy's farewell to his illustrious protector as related in De bello Alexandrino contains elements of high comedy. That Caesar played his part admirably need surprise no one, but we are lost in wonder before the perfection attained by this boy of scarcely thirteen in the art of dissimulation. After having listened respectfully to Caesar's last recommendations—to 'take good care of the kingdom of his father', to 'bring his subjects to reason', to 'remain loyal to the Roman people and to Caesar', and so on, and so forth, Ptolemy burst into tears and begged Caesar not to send him away. 'It would be less sweet for him to reign', he said, 'than to enjoy the presence of Caesar'. It goes without saying that if these are really the words of the young prince, we are justified in calling them pure lies. It may be, however, that the grief he showed on this occasion was not entirely feigned. It is quite possible that he was not very anxious to leave this residence where, although under close supervision, he had led a calm and peaceful existence, and to go and live in the midst of the rivalries and intrigues which his liberation was sure to bring about, with the ever-present danger of falling victim to some plot hatched by the supporters of his younger sister. 'After having dried the young man's tears', writes the author of De bello Alexandrino, 'Caesar, who was moved himself, assured him that if he was sincere, they would soon meet again.' They did, indeed, and very soon afterwards . . .

I have already mentioned that Mithridates of Pergamum was charged by Caesar with forming an auxiliary army in Syria and Cilicia. This was a laborious task. It took about three months to recruit the troops, for at first the lesser Asiatic princes showed little
enthusiasm in responding to his appeal. He then sought assistance from Antipater, the military chief of Judaea. This intelligent and enterprising man, who had no trouble in dominating the weak Hycranus—high priest and ethnarch who nominally held supreme power—had great prestige among his neighbours. Following the example of so many Asiatic kings and statesmen, Antipater had sided with Pompey at the beginning of the civil war; then, after the battle of Pharsalus, he changed his views and tried to get back into the good graces of Caesar. The help he gave to Mithridates was most effective. In addition to the military contingent furnished by his own country, he persuaded the Arab chiefs to join in the enterprise. 'It was also thanks to him that reinforcements arrived from all parts of Syria,' writes Flavius Josephus, confirmed by Strabo who says that Antipater was able to win over other rulers of the region in support of Mithridates. At the head of his three thousand hoplites—a Jewish army of picked men (fifteen hundred, according to Caesar)—and bringing with him, for greater effect, the chief of the State in person, Antipater arrived at Ascalon, where Mithridates was waiting for him. From there they marched together, keeping to the coast and closely followed by the fleet, which was sailing in the same direction. They came to Pelusium, the key to Egypt, after a march of six or seven days. As the town refused to receive them, Mithridates beleaguered it and took it by storm the same day. According to Flavius Josephus, this success was due to the soldiers of Antipater: the first to be sent to the assault, they made a breach in the wall and thus opened the way by which the troops of Mithridates entered the city.  

Mithridates did not linger at Pelusium. Knowing how impatiently Caesar was awaiting him, he immediately continued his march. The dissident Jews of the region of Leontopolis, which was on their way, declared themselves in favour of Ptolemy and tried to stop their passage. Again, it was Antipater who smoothed over the difficulty. He sent his refractory co-religionists a message which had been drawn up by, or rather in the name of, Hycranus, and in which the high priest, using all the authority of his sacred office, exhorted them to rally to Caesar's side, to receive his army as friends, and to supply it with everything it needed. He was obeyed.

News of the advance of Mithridates reached Ptolemy's headquarters before Caesar was informed. The Egyptians marched to meet him and did so at Tal el Jahoudieh (the Roman Castra Judaeorum). *De bello Alexandrino* mentions this incident only in passing. We have to
look to Flavius Josephus to find the details of the battle. He is of course specially careful to stress the part played by his compatriot Antipater, who commanded the left wing of the army while Mithridates directed the right wing himself. ‘Once the battle had begun’, writes the author of The Antiquities of the Jews, ‘Mithridates’ wing weakened and would have been in the greatest danger if Antipater, who had already defeated the enemy on his own flank, had not come to extricate Mithridates from his difficulty and put the conquering Egyptians to flight. He pursued them with vigour, captured their camp and recalled Mithridates who had been driven back a long way.’ According to Josephus, Mithridates lost eight hundred men, while his Jewish ally only lost forty.

Once extricated from his ‘difficulty’, which thanks to Antipater had become a brilliant victory, Mithridates sent a report to Caesar informing him of the success of the battle and of the part Antipater had played in it. Caesar sent the Jewish commander a letter of thanks, and leaving a small garrison at Alexandria he started off, eager to join up with the reinforcements so impatiently awaited. At the same time the Egyptian high command ordered all its forces to go post-haste in support of their advanced troops, which after the defeat at the Camp of the Jews were in a precarious position.

Ptolemy’s army shortened its route by embarking on the Nile, under the protection of a strong fleet. Caesar, wanting to avoid the risk of a river battle in which he knew he would be unable to hold his own, made a detour and succeeded in joining up with Mithridates after a four-day march without coming into contact with the king’s troops, except at the last stage when they tried in vain to prevent him from crossing a tributary of the Nile.

He allowed his army a night’s rest, this time showing greater care to conserve his soldiers’ strength. The attack started the next morning, but at first little progress was made—‘because of the unfavourable ground’, states De bello Alexandrino. Perhaps it was also because the fighting spirit of his troops was no longer the same. Moreover, the Egyptian commanders had made good use of the delay in Caesar’s arrival; they had fortified their position and prepared their defences with great judgment. But, no doubt by mistake, one spot at the highest part of the camp had been left undefended. This negligence did not escape Caesar’s scrutiny when, as was his habit, he surveyed the enemy’s strategic dispositions from his outposts. Immediately and automatically the fate of the battle was thereby settled with
inexorable precision. A legate was given orders to force the unprotected position. Once this task had been accomplished everything went according to the usual programme: confusion among the enemy, a wave of panic, a general stampede, a wild flight towards the Nile. Ptolemy met his death on the river bank. They brought his body to Caesar. He removed the golden breastplate which the young king had worn for the battle and sent it to the Alexandrians to announce his victory and his return.

By the shortest land route, closely following his macabre present, Caesar returned to Alexandria at the head of his cavalry. The inhabitants were awaiting him in anguish. They were massed at the gates of the city, unarmed, wearing the garments of suppliants preceded by the sacred relics which had been taken from their sanctuaries for the occasion. Recognizing from afar the white horse of the conqueror, they stretched out their hands, fell on their knees and prostrated themselves before their victorious master. He acknowledged their submission, hastily threw them a few words of reassurance, and without slackening his pace hurried across the deserted entrenchments to the buildings, where he had left some of his troops charged with keeping the population in check during his absence. Shouts of joy acclaimed his return, but the author of De bello Alexandrino does not fail to point out that it was also the hope that this victory would end the war which made his soldiers so happy.282

The war was indeed over. Yet Caesar showed no intention of going away. He now had before him problems of a political order: the fate of this vast country which he held in his hands had to be decided upon. There were several possibilities. He could have reduced Egypt to the status of a Roman province. He did not do so, 'for fear', says Suetonius, 'lest under the control of an audacious governor it should become the centre of a revolution'. He could have left Cleopatra as the sole sovereign of Egypt, confident that by surrounding her with agents and counsellors of his own choosing he could keep a firm hold of the reins of the State. He knew, however, how hostile the Egyptians were to the idea of being ruled exclusively by a woman. He therefore gave her as consort the younger brother of the deceased king, and to remove all conceivable cause for future discord he had the young Arsinoë sent off to Rome. When all these matters had been settled he still did not leave. Why?

Much, perhaps too much, has been written about the famous cruise
on the Nile which Caesar made in the company of Cleopatra on a magnificent barge, of which the principal feature was a vast and luxurious cabin transformed into a bedchamber. The fact itself is true. Perhaps Appian’s estimate of four hundred boats taking part in this pleasure tour may seem a trifle exaggerated. We must, however, remember that a large number of persons would be called upon to accompany this celebrated pair of lovers: Caesar’s personal retinue, that of Cleopatra, the very numerous servants she took with her, as well as the strong military escort by which Caesar thought it wise to be followed.

It has been thought surprising that Caesar found time to relax in the arms of his mistress and conducted himself like an amorous tourist, while grave responsibilities were calling him elsewhere. Without pretending to determine the justice of these reproaches, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Caesar himself was better qualified than anyone else to decide whether he might allow himself a few weeks’ rest. For ten solid months since Pharsalus he had been making an uninterrupted and superhuman effort. Spring had come. He treated himself to a brief period of relaxation before returning to the task which still devolved on him. Because he made this decision does it follow that he was completely swept off his feet by Cleopatra, and totally bewitched by her charms? I do not think so. The appeal of sensual pleasures had never made Caesar oblivious of the interests of the State, still less of his own. It should also be noted that Cleopatra was in the last month of her pregnancy. On June 23 she brought a son into the world. Then Caesar left, arranging to meet the mother and child in Rome in the near future.
CHAPTER 49

Veni, Vidi, Vici

Once again Caesar took up his wandering existence, the life of the insatiable military adventurer. Ever since he had embraced this way of living it had become so familiar to him that any return to a normal existence such as he had formerly known in Rome would have seemed strange and unnatural to him. For twelve years he had carried his ambitions, his covetousness, his dreams of domination from one end of the world to the other. For twelve years he had passed at least half his days and nights leading his men on foot or on horse, and the remainder of his time in a soldier’s tent or on a bed hastily prepared in some dwelling or another. It sometimes happened that this dwelling was of royal splendour, but frequently he had to content himself with a miserable abode, pillaged and sacked in advance by his own soldiers. He slept where and when he could, generally very little, as he had a marked preference for carrying out operations and attacks by night. He ate what he found—where he found it; it was not always enough to satisfy his hunger, but he made up for that from the dishes of the enemy’s table. But this manner of life did not imply that he had in any way renounced physical enjoyment or the pleasures of the flesh. He readily accepted the rich gifts and sumptuous banquets offered him by the subjugated cities, often at his own instigation. And everywhere he had to have women. He desired them with a frenzied passion which increased as he grew older. Wherever he went he left his traces: among the women of Gaul and Spain, of Greece and Syria. . . . The news of his arrival caused husbands to tremble in advance, and moreover they knew that there was no resisting the power over their wives of this ‘bald-headed seducer.’ As a matter of fact most of the women accepted their fate with a good grace, and some even went to meet it with genuine eagerness. There were no signs of failing strength or weariness in this man of fifty-two. For his soldiers he continued to be the living and inflexible symbol of energy and endurance and the severe physical trials which he imposed upon himself.
with joyous unconcern seemed if anything to sharpen his intelligence, which constantly increased in lucidity, firmness, and penetration.

Such was the Caesar who, in the last days of June, 48, left the ancient land of the Pharaohs lying vanquished at his feet, to shoulder the task which was waiting for him. What was that task?

Pompey’s party, though bereft of its chief, still existed, unwilling to abandon the fight. Its principal leaders—the Catons, the Scipios, the Labienuses, who had been scattered after Pharsalus—had met again on African soil and were now conferring with the native sovereigns to resume the struggle against Caesar. It was necessary to forestall what they were planning to carry out as soon as Spain, where the sons of Pompey were already at work, had been drawn into the conflict—namely, an attempt to invade Italy from two sides at once: from the west by land and from the south by sea. In other words, Caesar had to surprise the enemy where he was, and prevent him from taking the initiative and launching an attack in Europe. A campaign in Africa was therefore imperative. Caesar knew that it would be an arduous and difficult undertaking, which would require careful preparation. Moreover it demanded considerable quantities of men and matériel, which could not be assembled overnight. This necessitated his personal presence in Italy, where the greater part of his army had returned after Pharsalus when it was no longer wanted. As a matter of fact, he was going there, but first he had to settle the fate of Asia and create some order out of the trouble and confusion that reigned after the collapse of Pompey’s power.

Taking advantage of the civil war, which brought the two Roman conquerors to grips, Pharmaces, king of Cimmerian Bosphorus (the Crimea), who was the son of the great Mithridates, conceived the ambition of restoring the ancient kingdom of his father and of re-establishing a power which once had dominated the whole of Asia Minor. He took possession of Colchis and of Pontus proper and he invaded Lesser Armenia and Cappadocia. Deprived of his kingdom, Deiotarus—who, when he made his submission to Caesar, had promised to furnish him with a military contingent and a fairly large contribution in kind—went to see Cn. Domitius Calvinus, to whom Caesar had entrusted the government of the province of Asia. He explained that he could not fulfil his engagement so long as he was
not reinstated in his rights. The author of *De bello Alexandrino* writes on the subject:

Domitian not only thought that this money was indispensable for the expenses of the war, but he also considered it would be a disgrace for the Roman people and for Caesar if the States of our friends and allies were usurped by a foreign prince.

Consequently he sent Pharnaces an ultimatum demanding the immediate withdrawal of his troops from Armenia and Cappadocia. The latter hastened to reply that he had just left Cappadocia and that if he remained in Armenia, it was ‘because his father had transmitted the sovereignty of this country to him’. In addition, he asked for permission to submit his case to Caesar, and declared himself ready to accept his verdict.

Domitian was not satisfied with this reply. He marched against Pharnaces and was defeated. After that he withdrew to where he had started from. ‘Swollen with pride over this success,’ writes Appian, ‘Pharnaces sacked the town of Amissium in Pontus, which was holding out for the Romans, sold all its inhabitants as slaves and had all the children castrated.’ He inflicted the same treatment upon some Roman merchants who fell into his hands and, after butchering the officials who collected taxes for the Roman Republic, he kept their families as hostages. Domitian, who was keeping cautiously on the defensive after his set-back, did not interfere. That was how matters stood when the news spread throughout Asia that Caesar had left Alexandria and was on his way to Tarsus.

He put in at Ptolemais, where Hycanus and his factotum Antipater, informed of his arrival, were awaiting him, perhaps at his request. Caesar was anxious to reward them generously for their help which had so largely contributed to the success of the expedition organized by Mithridates of Pergamum. In the presence of his political advisers, he held a conference with them, which from all appearances was of special importance.

The problem was how to consolidate the foundations of Roman power in Asia, which seemed greatly shaken as a result of recent events. Continuing the policy he had adopted in Gaul, Caesar planned once again to favour certain friendly States which would serve, with strong backing from himself, as so many Roman police forces in the region. The political and military rôle of the Jewish factor, the value of which was apparent to him from the reports of
his generals, engaged his attention. Close neighbours of Egypt, which in Caesar's mind formed the cornerstone of his system of Asiatic and African domination, the Jewish State could if necessary control and watch over the entire Phoenician and Syrian coast and considerably lighten the task of the governor of proconsular Asia, which was already quite complicated enough.

No historian has given us the slightest detail about this meeting, but we find in Flavius Josephus the text of the decree drawn up by Caesar at the close of the session. It reads:

I, Julius Caesar, Imperator, Pontifex Maximus, [Dictator] for the second time, have decided as follows, in agreement with my council: Whereas Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, a Jew, now as in the past, in peace as in war, has always given proof of his loyalty towards us and zeal in our cause, as attested by a number of generals; and whereas quite recently, in the war of Alexandria, he came to my assistance with 1,500 soldiers, and, sent by me to fight beside Mithridates, surpassed all other chiefs in valour—for these reasons I decree that Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, and his descendants shall be ethnarchs of the Jews according to the customs of their nation; that he and his children shall be numbered among our allies and friends and distinguished as such by name; that he and his children shall retain all the sacerdotal and pecuniary privileges established by their national laws; and if any disagreement should arise concerning Jewish customs, I decree that they be judges in the matter. I prohibit their being obliged to give winter quarters to the troops and the exaction of money from them.

Significantly enough, the town of Sidon immediately received a copy of this decree with the following preamble:

Caius Julius Caesar, Imperator [etc.] to the magistrates, the Council and the people of Sidon: Greetings. If you are well, it is good! I and the army are in good health. I am sending you, to place in your archives, a copy of the decree engraved on a tablet [of bronze] concerning Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, high priest and ethnarch of the Jews. I wish it to be reproduced in Greek and Latin. . . .

Other Phoenician cities also received a copy of the document.386

From Ptolemais, Caesar went to Tyre. He bore a grudge against

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this rich trading city for having sheltered Pompey and his family
during their flight. He imposed a heavy war contribution upon it
and took all the offerings from the temple of Hercules. From there,
still travelling by sea, he went to Antioch.\textsuperscript{287} He stopped at most of
the maritime towns he came to on his way. Judging from the coins
struck afterwards, we can trace his passage through Gabala, Laodicea,
and Rhosus. Everywhere he went, writes Dion Cassius, 'he raised
considerable sums on all possible pretexts'. And he adds: 'It was
not out of spitefulness that he did this, but because he had a great
many expenses.'

That was true, but above all he had to think of the enormous
amounts of money he would need in the near future: the triumphs
he would soon be celebrating (several were already due to him, and
their brilliance must be worthy of his reputation) would cost a very
great deal; the rewards he had promised his soldiers with blind
generosity, without regard for the means at his disposal, and which
had never yet materialized, must at last be paid to them—not counting
the immense sums which would be needed to launch the forthcoming
campaign.

Caesar did not stay long at Antioch. Scarcely twenty years had
passed since Pompey, in reducing Syria to a Roman province, had
allowed the inhabitants of the capital to keep their liberties. As soon
as he reached Ptolemais, Caesar hastened to assure them that he would
respect their freedom. He entrusted the province and the legions
garrisoned there to his young relative Sextus Caesar, ordered the
construction of a basilica (the Caesariuim) and an arena for gladiators,
had a bronze statue erected in honour of the goddess Fortune, and
continued his journey.

The next stage was Tarsus in Cilicia, where a sort of regional
assembly consisting of prominent citizens from all over the province
had been called and was awaiting him.\textsuperscript{288} The 'session' was brief.
Caesar rewarded the friends who had remained loyal, dealt severely
with the traitors and pardoned a few who had remained neutral.
At the same time he laid the foundations for a new internal organization
of the province. The inhabitants of Tarsus were so delighted with
Caesar's treatment of their town that they changed its name to
Juliopolis. The whole affair did not last more than four or five days.
Then he went on to Cappadocia, accompanied by Brutus, whom he
had met again at Tarsus and who from this time became permanently
attached to his staff.
Among the cases which Caesar had to deal with while at Tarsus was that of Ariobarzanes III, king of Cappadocia. This sovereign, who had supported Pompey at the beginning of the civil war, had been driven from his kingdom after the battle of Pharsalus by his own brother and rival, Ariarathes. However, it was Pharnaces who ultimately benefited from this state of affairs, because the inhabitants of the country, who were no doubt tired of these family quarrels among the royalty, surrendered to him of their own accord.

Brutus, who had some business to settle with Ariobarzanes (the fallen monarch owed him money), intervened in his favour with Caesar. The latter showed himself kindly disposed, and decided that the king should be reinstated to rule over his kingdom which, as we have seen above, had just been evacuated by the usurper Pharnaces; as for Ariarathes, this cruel and deceitful brother was to be put under his domination 'so that he should not be tempted to stir up trouble'. On his way through Cappadocia Caesar stopped at Mazaca, the capital of the kingdom, solemnly reinstated Ariobarzanes on the throne of his forefathers and continued by 'long marches' to travel towards the States of Pharnaces, following the same road that Cyrus and Alexander had taken before him.

While he was on the Galatian frontier, he saw coming towards him an old man clothed in the wretched garments of a suppliant and followed by a large crowd. It was Deiotarus, the most important of the three tetrarchs of Galatia, and king, without a kingdom, of Lesser Armenia. Caesar had known him for a long time: he had been his guest in the old days when, as a young man, he had his first military experience under Servilius Isauricus. He had not seen the king since, but during his first consulship he had actively promoted his interests in Rome, and it was thanks to him that the Senate confirmed the decision of Pompey to grant a royal crown to the tetrarch of Galatia. The civil war brought Deiotarus into the camp of Pompey, where, in spite of his advanced age, he personally commanded the contingent of six hundred horsemen he had been requested to raise. He disavowed his chief the day after the defeat at Pharsalus, and entered into relations with Caesar's legate Cn. Domitius, under circumstances we have already described. Now his ambition was not only to obtain the conqueror's pardon and to regain Lesser Armenia, which had been taken from him, but, furthermore, to drive out his colleagues, the two other tetrarchs of Galatia, in order to seize the whole country.

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Here he stood then, before Caesar, divested of his royal insignia, in a very humble posture, delivering a tearful speech, and imploring him not to judge him too harshly, because ‘finding himself in a country where Caesar had no troops, he had been obliged to place himself and his followers at Pompey’s disposal’. ‘It was not for him’, he went on, ‘to be the judge of the conflict which had arisen among the Roman nation: he had had to obey the authorities of the moment.’ Having said this, he deposited at Caesar’s feet all his royal insignia and waited for his fate to be decided. Numerous voices then rose from those accompanying him, pleading for his pardon. Brutus, who was at Caesar’s side, also put in a word. He had known Deiotarus during his first stay in Cilicia in 52–51. As in the case of Ariobarzanes, he had lent him money at a time when the tetrarch was in financial difficulties. His pleading in favour of his debtor was probably very ardent, although Caesar seems to have found it rather incoherent, judging by the comment he made about it: ‘I do not quite understand what this young man wants, but whatever it is, he wants it badly.’ After this he spoke himself. He reminded Deiotarus of ‘the numerous services he had rendered him and the decrees he had passed in his favour’; he told him that his ‘imprudence’ was ‘inexcusable’, for ‘a man so astute and so clever could not have been unaware of who was master in Rome and Italy’. In any event, he was willing to forgive him ‘in consideration of his services, of his former hospitality, of their friendship, of his age, and of the entreaties of his relations and friends’. He returned to Deiotarus his insignia of royalty, but demanded that he should immediately furnish him with a legion and all his cavalry. Then he entered Pontus.

When Pharmaces heard of Caesar’s arrival in his realm he was uneasy. He was not anxious to fight Caesar. He had closely followed his activities in the course of his journey and was not ignorant of the results obtained by Deiotarus at his meeting with the conqueror of Pompey. The pardon granted to the old tetrarch inspired him with a plan which seemed to him a clever one. He believed that by showing a conciliatory attitude he could persuade Caesar to negotiate; and that, as the latter was in a hurry to make war on Pompey’s faction in Africa, he would willingly agree to conclude peace in Asia as soon as he could. After his departure it would be easy enough to take up arms against his lieutenant, who, as experience had shown, was not a dangerous enemy. Hardly had Caesar crossed the frontier of Pontus
when Pharncases sent emissaries to propose that they should enter upon negotiations for peace. He begged Caesar not to come to his country as an enemy and assured him that he was ready to obey his orders blindly. Moreover he pointed out that he, Pharncases, had never chosen to help Pompey as Deiotarux had done; to whom, nevertheless, pardon had been granted. To make Caesar still more favourably disposed towards him the shrewd barbarian, knowing the conqueror's weakness for women, offered him his daughter 'in marriage' and, speculating on his money troubles, sent him, as was customary to a victorious leader, a massive crown of gold, while promising 'to do better later on' if his overtures were not rejected.

Caesar was quite able to see through these tactics from the start. He decided to answer cunning with cunning. Moreover, he needed to gain time until the troops promised by Deiotarux arrived, for at the moment he had only one legion, the Sixth, which he had brought from Alexandria, but which, as the author of De bello Alexandrino admits, 'was so weakened by fatigue and dangers that it scarcely numbered a thousand men'. As for the two others he had found on the spot, they were the ones who had allowed themselves to be so easily defeated by Pharncases; it was no use to rely on them. He therefore decided to drag out the negotiations as long as possible, while playing with Pharncases at the game of speeches and promises in which he excelled.

To start with, he talked at great length to his envoys, 'with gentleness', it is stressed in De bello Alexandrino. This must have made a deep impression upon these primitive men. 'There was nothing he would rather do', Caesar announced, 'than to pardon the suppliants.' If their master was prepared to keep his promises, he would not have to complain of his justice. But he must not bring up the case of Deiotarux. The attitude which Pharncases had adopted towards Pompey had been more profitable for himself, in sparing him from defeat, than it had been for Caesar, 'conqueror by the will of the immortal gods'. He was prepared to forgive him the insults and cruelties he had perpetrated on Roman citizens, 'since these wrongs were irreparable', but here were his conditions: the territory of Pontus must be evacuated without delay, the families of the tax collectors must be set free immediately, and everything which had been taken from Roman citizens or Roman allies must be restored in full. 'Then,' concluded Caesar, 'Pharncases might offer him the presents he was asking him to accept.'
After listening to Caesar's conditions, Pharnaces promised everything without hesitation, but, counting on what he imagined to be Caesar's impatience to leave, and reasoning that this ought to make him more accommodating, he tried to drag matters out in his turn. Another delegation was sent to Caesar to ask him for additional time to carry out his demands and to submit counter-proposals. Caesar replied politely but firmly that he insisted on his terms. Pharnaces managed to find other excuses, and for the third time his envoys made their way to the Roman camp. In the meantime, however, the reinforcements of Deiotarus had arrived, and Caesar merely sent the emissaries back, this time reproaching Pharnaces, among other things for having deserted Pompey, his benefactor, just when he needed his help. At the same time his troops received orders to march to the attack.

Pharnaces was camping about three miles from Zela at the foot of a hill which was crowned by the trophy his redoubtable father had erected to commemorate his great victory in 67 over the legate Friarius. Caesar took up his position on a height opposite and began to fortify it, setting the majority of his soldiers to the task. Pharnaces, who had immediately noticed this, wanted to take the position by storm to prevent him from establishing himself on the ground he had chosen.²⁹²

It seems that when Caesar was told of the enemy's preparations, he would not believe it. He thought Pharnaces was merely planning a sham manoeuvre for the sole purpose of hindering his work of fortification. Moreover, the ground which separated the two camps scarcely lent itself to an assault and offered natural obstacles which were supposed to be insurmountable. Pharnaces, however, paid no attention to this: with foolhardy audacity he ordered the assault and his army spread over the hillside like a tempest let loose. 'Caesar could not help laughing at this vain bravado', notes the author of De bello Alexandrino. He did not laugh long. Descending into the valley by paths 'where no sane man would have dared to venture' (in the opinion of the same author), the warriors of Pharnaces started to scale the opposite hill, without slackening their pace and in good order.

'Caesar was struck at such incredible temerity,' admits the same author, who seems to have been an eyewitness of this formidable ascent. Then Caesar understood that he had been caught unawares, and that he would have to make an immediate effort to resist the
attack which he had failed to foresee. He hastily recalled his soldiers from their work and told them to arm: No one had been expecting this, and the surprise caused a certain amount of confusion among the legionaries. They did not even have time to form their ranks before the chariots of Pharnaces, bearing warriors armed with scythes, penetrated Caesar's lines, mowing down the outer guards, hurling through the ranks of his army. Luckily for the latter, the difficulties of the ground prevented the assailants from moving about as they pleased, and reduced the extent of the damage they caused. The struggle was 'keen and stubborn', De bello Alexandrino admits. Finally the Sixth Legion, commanded by Caesar, succeeded in throwing the enemy down the side of the hill. But this success was far from settling the issue of the battle. It was only 'much later' that Caesar's left wing and centre defeated all the troops of the king and in their turn advanced to storm his camp. It was invaded and sacked. Pharnaces, who had succeeded in making his escape, was killed in flight.

'Caesar was tremendously elated over this victory,' states the author of De bello Alexandrino. Next to the trophy of Mithridates, which he respected because it had been consecrated to the divinities of war, he put up another. It was superb, and Dion Cassius tells us that it 'obscured and, to a certain extent obliterated', the one which had been erected by the barbarian king.

In the report which he sent to Rome, after having recalled Pompey's delays and procrastination in his campaign against the father of Pharnaces, he added with proud satisfaction: 'As for me—I came, I saw, I conquered.'

There is a certain exaggeration in this magnificent phrase, if we take a close-up view of the matter.
SECOND STAY IN ROME

AFTER Pharsalus, Rome remained for a long time in a state of uncertainty. To be sure, the outcome of the battle was known fairly soon, although Caesar did not send a report of it, apparently considering it unworthy of him, as a Roman citizen, to draw attention to a victory he had won over his own countrymen. 294

If, however, the people were not in ignorance of Pompey's defeat, they knew nothing of his fate. His tragic end remained unknown until the day when Caesar's messenger from Alexandria arrived in Rome bringing the victim's ring. At the same time they learnt that the victor was engaged in a new adventure of which the end did not seem near. Then came news about the difficulties besetting Caesar, who was besieged by the Alexandrians in the royal palace. Of course these difficulties were grossly exaggerated by his enemies, who even went so far as to spread the rumour that he had been murdered by the Egyptians.

All this created an atmosphere of confusion and uneasiness in the capital. The aristocracy were anxious, the people excited. Agitators appeared on the scene, preparing to take advantage of the unrest by starting some attempt of a revolutionary nature, directed mainly against the rich property owners. Caesar's fellow consul, Servilius Isauricus, who had remained in Rome, was unable to exert his authority. The city was on the verge of disaster. 295

Caesar, who was well aware of this state of affairs, had borne it in mind ever since his departure in pursuit of Pompey. He had then appointed Antony, who had supported him so ably at Pharsalus and had afterwards been deputed to take the legions back to Italy, as magister equitum, charged to represent him at Rome during his absence. It was not until the following October, however, that this official was able to set foot on Italian soil, because Pompey's fleet, cruising off Corcyra, had prevented all naval communication with the peninsula.

Antony arrived in Rome with precise instructions. Caesar wanted above all to be named dictator for the second time, but now these powers must be extended over a longer period—a year. At

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the same time Antony had been ordered to liquidate what was left of Pompey's party. Having learnt that some of the vanquished who had managed to escape from the rout were trying to re-enter Italy, Caesar specified in a letter to Antony that he was utterly opposed to their return and that all those who were not in possession of his personal authorization must leave the country immediately. The text of this letter has not come down to us, but Cicero, to whom Antony had communicated the message, judged that it was written 'under the influence of acute irritation'. This leads us to suppose that, in this case, Caesar did not trouble to disguise the strong animosity he continued to feel towards his adversaries.

The proscription, carried out on such a vast scale, produced serious consequences: the estates of the exiles fell into the hands of the State and would have to be sold by auction. This was the pretext for unbridled speculation. All those who had any ready money seized the opportunity of acquiring the possessions of the banished at bargain prices. Antony followed the general example. He even thought it clever to go on bidding until the properties fell to him at very high prices, hoping that when the time came to pay the treasury he would find some way of avoiding his obligations. Dolabella did the same. This personage, who has already engaged our attention elsewhere, played a particularly prominent part during these weeks of unrest. Knowing how to flatter the people, he succeeded in capturing their sympathies, and by anticipating their covetous desires and practising a policy of overt demagogical outbidding, he securely established his influence. Antony realised what Dolabella was doing, but although he had certain reasons for bearing him a grudge (Dolabella had for some time been the acknowledged lover of his wife), he tried to get on with him, because he needed him as a partner for their common activities.

The restlessness of the people did not calm down, however. The reduction of the debts by one quarter, which Caesar had decreed during his first dictatorship, had not satisfied anyone. The innumerable debtors, who went to make up the Roman populace, clamoured to be entirely delivered from their liabilities once and for all. At the same time the less well-to-do among the citizens, who without homes of their own were obliged to rent lodgings and who were generally very much behind with their payments, were hoping not to have to pay their landlords at all, and, in addition, to have their daily food supplied gratuitously by the State.
Such in general were the demands and complaints of the civilians. Among the soldiers the situation was still more disturbing. On returning to Italy the legions had been taken to the Campagna, where they were to go into winter quarters. There was no question of their being disbanded, as they had hoped. On the contrary, there was increasing talk of a new war, and soon preparations started for their transfer to Sicily. It was easy to guess that from there they would have to sail to Africa. Many of the legionaries protested, declaring that they had had enough of war, but a still greater number among them considered that the moment had at last come to force Caesar to fulfil the promises which had been made to them for so long and which had never been carried out. On this point they were soon agreed, and all of them—even including the men of that model legion, the Tenth—unanimously demanded the immediate payment of their gratuities, particularly those promised on the eve of Pharsalus. Otherwise they would not march. 297

Antony tried to appease them by going in person to the Campagna. He did not succeed. Then he referred the matter to Caesar. His letter arrived on the eve of the campaign against Pharnaces. Caesar immediately gave orders to his legates P. Sulla and Valerius Messalla to arrange matters. They arranged nothing at all and, greeted by a shower of stones on their arrival, they beat a hasty retreat. Cicero, who was staying at Brundisium at the time, saw them pass. 'Chased off by the legions,' he wrote to Atticus the next day, 'they went running back to their master.' They finally rejoined Caesar upon his victorious return to Syria.

After having rewarded the zeal of Mithridates of Pergamum by bestowing upon him his father's States, now delivered from the 'usurper', Caesar was arbitrating in the quarrel between the tetrarchs of Galatia and was trying to get Deiotarus and his two colleagues to agree together. His principal task in Asia was ended however. That is why, as soon as he received the disturbing news brought by Sulla and Messalla, he left for Italy. He was accompanied by Brutus, who had been given the delicate mission of winning over a certain number of prominent opponents who had taken refuge in the Greek islands. On reaching Lesbos, the residence of Marcellus, consul in 51, the boat stopped. Brutus went ashore. His master continued his journey.

Caesar landed at Tarentum. Cicero was waiting for him to offer his enthusiastic support. This was no surprise for Caesar. While
he had been in Asia, he had received several letters in which his former adversary offered him his services in the most obsequious manner. As Caesar probably did not consider him worthy of a personal letter, he let him know, probably through Brutus, that he was prepared to receive him as soon as he returned to Italy. Losing all sense of dignity or self-esteem, Cicero hurried to Tarentum in order to be on the spot when the conqueror arrived.

On seeing the eminent orator coming towards him, Caesar showed but mild pleasure. To be sure, such humility must have flattered him pleasantly enough, but it came too late. From a practical point of view it was of little use to him now. He did not consider he could any longer gain much advantage from Cicero’s prestige, his oratorical gifts and his connections, as he had proposed to do two years earlier, when Pompey fled to Greece. He therefore gave him to understand that the help of his intelligence was not urgently required. Moreover, their interview must have been extremely short. Caesar was in a great hurry to reach Rome, where the situation seemed to be going from bad to worse.

The mutiny of the legions in the Campagna was apparently taking on a far more serious character than the rebellion at Placentia. Caesar’s enemies had succeeded in exploiting the soldiers’ grievances, which were of a purely professional nature, in order to turn them into an instrument of war against him. It was only when he arrived that he was able to measure the full extent of their intrigues. The movement was inspired and directed by the military tribune of the Tenth Legion, C. Avienus. He had formerly served under Labienus, from which we may suppose that he now was acting on this officer’s instructions. His colleague, the military tribune A. Fonteius, and a few officers of lower rank—T. Salienus, M. Tiro and C. Clusinus, among others—were backing him up and rousing the soldiers more and more against Caesar.

Caesar thought it wiser not to go in person to treat with the rebels. Instead, he sent Sallust, one of his most reliable men, to settle the conflict by promising that as soon as the war was over all his soldiers should have a supplementary reward of one thousand *denarii* per head, over and above the sums already due to them.

‘The soldiers replied,’ writes Appian, ‘that it was no longer promises, but ready money that they wanted.’ They came near to putting Caesar’s envoy to death. The future historian of Catiline had to fly for his life, and returned to Rome in a sorry state to give his
Chief an account of the failure of his mission. The mutineers did not stop at that, however. Learning that Caesar was back, they resolved, since he did not deign to come and speak to them, to go and see him themselves and to set forth their demands to him by word of mouth. Whereupon all of them armed and marched in full force on Rome. On their way they massacred the rich and pillaged their estates. Two senators, the former praetors Cosconius and Galba, fell victim to their violence. And there must have been others who suffered the same fate.

Warned of their advance, Caesar’s first impulse was to send the battalion of his bodyguard against them. ‘He gave up the idea,’ says Appian, ‘fearing that the latter might go over to the rebels. He decided to defend Rome by using the legion which Antony had kept there to maintain order in the capital. Caesar stationed the troops at the various gates of the city and placed patrols in front of his residence to keep watch—‘for fear of pillage’, says Appian, but also perhaps because he was none too sure of the feelings of the Roman populace towards him. ‘He did not make any move until the rebels had reached the suburbs,’ writes Dion Cassius.

They had arrived. Immediately Caesar sent messengers to ask them what they wanted. The soldiers replied roughly they would tell that to Caesar himself. Then he authorized them to enter Rome, but after they had laid down their arms.

The rebels obeyed in part, keeping their swords, which they had formed the habit of carrying even when they were not on duty. Then they all went to the Campus Martius.

Caesar could not avoid the explanation demanded of him without losing all his prestige. He accepted the challenge with his customary cold courage. Without warning, no doubt intending to exploit the effect of the surprise, he appeared in the Campus Martius accompanied by only a few of his intimate associates, mounted the tribune, and sat down on the seat reserved for him.

Caesar is there! The news spread rapidly, and everyone came running up in haste. Taken by surprise and having no time to consult together, the soldiers appeared rather disconcerted and began by saluting their chief in military fashion. Then there was an embarrassed silence. Hence it was Caesar who challenged them first. He asked them to state what they wanted. All at once the situation seemed reversed: now they were called upon to justify their conduct.

Thereupon several spokesmen from the ranks rose to present their
common grievances to Caesar. 'They dwelt at great length on the fatigue they had endured, on the rewards they had hoped for and which in their opinion they deserved. Then they asked to be discharged from military service, and they were particularly insistent on this point.' These are the words of Dion Cassius, and he explains very pertinently what was at the back of their minds. Long accustomed to enrich themselves in wars, they actually had no desire to return to private life, 'but they meant to frighten Caesar and to obtain everything they wanted, believing that he needed them for his forthcoming African campaign'.

Caesar, who immediately saw through this stratagem, countered with a much better one. Without hesitating, he threw out these simple words to them: 'I disband you'.

His announcement did not fail to produce the effect he had expected. There was a deep silence. Then, curt and haughty, Caesar added: 'As for everything I promised, I will give it to you when I receive with others the honours of the triumph.' This statement affected the soldiers still more deeply. Not only was Caesar allowing them to go, but it was he who was dismissing them! He could therefore do without them. This upset their calculations completely. The coveted African booty, which in advance they had considered as their own and which was to have compensated them for all their disappointments in Greece and in Egypt, would now fall to others. After a single campaign, without having to endure all the fatigue and privation which had been their lot, others would gain the honours of the triumph which they themselves would not be able to enjoy after all these years of war!

Abashed, the soldiers stood silent and motionless, hoping that perhaps Caesar would change his mind and become more conciliatory. But he continued to sit there, impassive, without uttering a word. One of his companions then asked him to break the silence and to say a few words in order not to 'separate on this note of laconic severity from an army which had accomplished so many things under his orders'.

Caesar appeared to yield to this suggestion, which perhaps owed its inspiration to himself, and threw out to them briefly and in a tone of biting irony: 'You are right, citizens, you are worn out with fatigue and covered with wounds.' As for the promised rewards, they would receive them in spite of all: 'I do not want it to be said', he added, 'that after having used you in the hour of danger, I have
shown myself to be ungrateful.' Thereupon, as though he considered the matter closed and saw no further reason for returning to it, he started—very slowly, let it be noted—to descend the steps of the tribune.

Caesar's brief declaration had hit the mark. On hearing themselves addressed as 'citizens' instead of 'soldiers', these campaigners felt deeply humiliated. To be regarded as 'civilians' by their own general! That was a supreme insult to their soldierly self-respect. Caesar had judged accurately. He knew that most of these rugged men had their own professional code of honour, and he anticipated the reaction he would provoke by touching upon it. 'Exasperated at the persistency of his displeasure,' writes Appian, 'his soldiers cried out that they repented of the past, and begged him to keep them in his service.' From that point Caesar had won: the rebels were mastered. He was triumphant. But he still gave no sign of yielding, and pretending not to notice the entreaties which were rising towards him, he continued to descend the steps.

The soldiers would not let him go, 'pressing him with still greater insistence', according to Appian. He must stay with them! Let him punish those who were guilty! etc., etc. Unmoved, Caesar carried on his subtle game. He stopped for a moment, apparently hesitating, as though he did not know whether to be guided by duty or sentiment. Then, finally, he seemed to have made up his mind; he returned to the tribune and very solemnly began to speak once more. No one would be punished, but he was outraged to see that the Tenth Legion, which he had always singled out, was involved in this insubordination. 'Consequently,' he concluded, 'it is the only one I disband.' And as though he wished to crush them under the weight of his generosity and further emphasize the black ingratitude of the Tenth Legion, he declared that on his return from Africa they would receive everything which had been promised them. And since he was dealing with promises, he now added new ones to those still unfulfilled: 'When the war is over, I will distribute land to all.' If the land belonging to the State was not enough, he would part with his own; if all that was not sufficient, he would buy land from private owners. Loud applause and shouts of enthusiasm greeted his words.

As for the legion which had been sacrificed, Caesar did not bear it ill-will for long. 'Those who belonged to it', writes Appian, 'asked that they should be decimated, and that some of them should
be punished by death. Caesar, having been entreated with renewed insistence to relent towards soldiers who showed such sincere repentance, extended his pardon to all.'

After restoring order among his legions, Caesar turned to the affairs of the State. It was in September, 47. His second dictatorship did not expire until April, 46, but he was approaching the end of his second consulship. It was a mere formality to get himself nominated for the third time.

His most important task was to obtain funds. He had extracted from the vanquished and the 'allies' all they had to give and a good deal more. They were completely beggar. Now it was the turn of the Italian towns. We find in Dion Cassius a precise account of the procedure he used. 'He did not ill-treat anyone,' writes this author, 'but there, too, he raised money: sometimes demanding as a gift, crowns, statues, and other offerings; sometimes asking private citizens, and even municipalities, to give him loans. That is the name he gave to his exactions when he could not cover them with a plausible excuse. Moreover, he demanded them with the same relentless as if they had been sums which were owing him, and he never repaid them, constantly repeating that he had used up all his reserves for the Republic, and that he was forced to resort to loans.'

In spite of the repeated requests from plebeian circles, he again refused to proclaim the general abolition of debts. According to the author quoted above, his pretext was that he owed a great deal of money himself. But at bottom he probably reasoned that as long as the debts remained under the control of the creditors, this would enable him some day to confiscate more easily the sums they would endeavour to collect, so that the creditors, in a manner of speaking, had unwittingly become his depositaries and would ultimately work for his own benefit.

In the matter of collecting money Caesar was inexorable, and not even his closest associates were let off. Antony was not exempted from paying the price of his purchases into the State treasury, nor were Dolabella and P. Sulla. It is true that Servilia arranged to have some immense and magnificent estates knocked down to her at the lowest price, but Cicero insinuates that this was Caesar's way of compensating his old mistress for securing for him the favours of her own daughter.

Caesar let the scandal-mongers talk. Those whom it was in his
interest to silence were bought by titles and profitable positions. In order to satisfy cupidity wherever possible, he increased the number of magistrates and pontiffs. In appointing governors of the provinces for the coming year, he gave the son of Servilia Cisalpine Gaul, although hitherto Brutus had never held any office of senatorial rank. (He seems to have wished to attach this young man more and more closely to his own destiny.) Recently conquered Transalpine Gaul rewarded the zeal and courage of Decimus Brutus. Alienus received Sicily with the title of proconsul. S. Sulpicius Rufus, whom M. Brutus had succeeded in converting to Caesar’s cause during his recent diplomatic mission, was given Achaea as the price for his adherence to the new régime.

Thinking thus to have appeased the appetite of those who struck him as the least able to wait, Caesar judged that he could leave Rome without danger. From this time his sole concern was the war which was calling him once again, and he set out for Sicily, where he was to embark for Africa.
CHAPTER 51

The War in Africa

By cutting off Pompey's head, the Egyptian ministers had decapitated his party. With Pompey gone, who was to replace him? It was hard to say.

Immediately after Pharsalus a council of war brought together at Corcyra the scattered remnants of the party. Cato was present. During the whole conflict he had not deviated from his somewhat unusual attitude, that of an isolated individual free to act as he pleased. When Pompey had followed Caesar to Thessaly, he had remained at Dyrrachium with his fifteen cohorts. This enabled him to come to the conference at the head of a small army which was still intact. The question of continuing the struggle was discussed. The majority seemed in favour of abandoning it. Cato, who was supported by Pompey's elder son Cnaeus and a group of faithful partisans, declared himself ready to fight to the end. Then there was a split. Some of them, such as Cicero, went back to Italy hoping to come to terms with the new régime; others, who would not, or in many cases could not, do this went off in search of a land where they might take refuge and live in voluntary exile. But Cato, who was determined to find the fugitive Pompey in order to place the remaining troops at his disposal, sailed for Africa, in the direction of Egypt. At Pallura, in the Gulf of Bomba, he learnt that Pompey had been murdered. After that it was useless to continue the journey he had planned. Changing his route, he travelled towards the Roman province of Africa, where Pompey's governor Attius Varus was in charge. When he reached Utica after a long and difficult journey (he had been obliged to land at Benghasi and to follow the coastal route, which took him more than a month), Cato found a confused situation. Pompey's father-in-law, Scipio Metellus, who had escaped the disaster, was already there, as well as Labienus and Petreius. Pointing to his ex-consular dignity, to his newly acquired title of imperator, and to the fact that he shared the high command with his son-in-law in Thessaly, Scipio wished to impose his authority upon Attius Varus, who was by no means disposed to put himself under his orders.

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They thought of settling the problem by conferring the supreme authority upon Cato, who was not popular on account of his inflexible and difficult character, but who was universally respected for the integrity of his republican principles. Cato refused. A joint solution was also suggested; the command should be in the hands of a sort of duumvirate composed of Scipio and Cato. Cato refused once more; he asked that Scipio should be recognized as supreme commander, and gave him the troops which he had brought, only accepting the defence of fortified Utica for himself. As for Attius Varus, he was put at the head of Pompey's fleet as a compensation.

The new commander-in-chief whose descent served as a happy omen on the soil of Africa, where his ancestor had covered himself with glory, was pleased to be so easily rid of a troublesome colleague, and left Cato to do as he pleased in the internal organization of the town committed to his care. He himself energetically pressed forward the negotiations already begun with Juba, king of Numidia, whose participation in the struggle promised to be the decisive factor in the forthcoming campaign.

Since the distant days when Caesar had so irreverently pulled this barbarian monarch's beard, of which he was very proud, Juba had vowed implacable hatred towards the Roman conqueror, and all those who were ready to fight against him could count on his enthusiastic co-operation. Consequently he welcomed Scipio's proposals with keen satisfaction and agreed to put all his forces, which were considerable, into the struggle. He wished, however, to keep his complete independence and freedom of action. In the person of the Roman chief he saw no more than an associate of somewhat inferior rank, who in many respects depended on his goodwill, and this authorized him—or at least so he thought—to treat the latter with the greatest unconcern at times.

They succeeded in forming an army of sixty to seventy thousand men. The troops were stationed on several fronts. Detachments were sent to Hadrumetum, to Thapsus, to the towns south of Hadrumetum, and to Clupea, which controlled the east coast of the Cape Bon peninsula. Back in Numidia, waiting in reserve, were the troops of Juba, consisting of four legions formed on the Roman model, and a large number of native horsemen. Juba also possessed more than a hundred elephants.

They hastily finished their preparations, since Caesar's attack was supposed to be imminent. He was occupied in Asia, however, and
seemed to be in no hurry. This slowness ended by exasperating Pompey’s partisans, who for months had been on the qui vive and who could not endure inactivity. While waiting for the enemy offensive which still did not materialize, they began to make plans for a landing in Italy. They had an adequate fleet, and they had already taken soundings and attempted trial landings on the coasts of Sicily and Sardinia with light squadrons, capturing merchant ships, collecting booty, and being welcomed by certain cities which had kept up their connections with Pompey’s party.

After having crossed the straits of Messina at Rhegium, Caesar arrived on December 17 at Lilybaeum in Sicily, which he had chosen as his base for the forthcoming African expedition. From Rome he had given orders that troops, material, and means of transport should be assembled there without delay. These orders were sorely neglected. On his arrival at Lilybaeum he found only the legion of recruits, which had been camping there ever since its formation at the beginning of the civil war, and about six hundred horsemen. His plan of mobilization called for ten legions to be put into the field: five composed of veterans and five of soldiers recruited in the new levies. Out of the five ‘veteran legions’ intended to be part of the expeditionary force, four had taken part in the recent revolt. It was only in the last few days, as a result of Caesar’s words, that they had started to prepare their baggage, and they were by no means all equally enthusiastic. Caesar was unaware of their delay, however, and expected them to arrive at any moment. While waiting, and in order to give his soldiers the impression that they would be off in a matter of hours, he ordered them to board the ships and kept the sailors at their posts. He even took up his own position in a tent set up ‘so close to the sea that the waves almost beat against its base’.

Such is the explanation given in De bello Africano. We might add another reason which is apparent from the following lines: ‘He also kept the soldiers and sailors on board, because the inhabitants were talking of nothing but the large enemy forces.’ This would have had a demoralizing effect on the young soldiers and might have caused them to desert. Once they were penned in their floating barracks, this danger was removed.

Caesar continued to live in his tent for eight days. Among other things, he employed his time in superintending the auction of the estates which the banished followers of Pompey owned in that region.
Meanwhile some troops arrived—five legions. They were the recruits who, unlike their seniors, had meekly obeyed orders. With them was a single legio veterana, the Fifth, known as the legio V Alaudea. This was the famous legion of the ‘Lark’, formed in 51 of Cisalpine Gauls, who had subsequently received the right of citizenship and who, since they had not yet taken part in the civil war, had escaped the contaminating effect of the rebels’ propaganda. The horsemen alone (foreign mercenaries, Germans for the most part) did not delay long, 1,500 of them coming in the course of the week. As these contingents arrived, they were sent to Aponiana (one of the Aegates islands), where they were to wait for Caesar. After thus assembling about 25,000 legionaries and 2,000 cavalry in the space of a week, he instructed Alienus, the new governor of Sicily, to arrange for the prompt embarkation of the legions that were delayed, and left to join his fleet.

With Caesar’s galley leading, the fleet forged ahead in complete ignorance of his intentions. Everyone was wondering where he was making for. Even the ships’ captains had no idea. This time they had not received the usual sealed instructions bearing the name of their destination. What was the surprise Caesar had in store for them, and why all this mystery? Various explanations have been offered: It has even been claimed that Caesar himself did not know exactly where he was going. This is quite unlikely. It is much more probable that he had little confidence in his navigators, and, as the years of civil war had taught him thoroughly enough to put no trust in any of his assistants, he thought it best not to divulge the place of their landing until the end of the crossing.

When at last, on the fourth day, the African continent came into sight, they saw that they were approaching Hadrumentum, and all uncertainty was at an end. Caesar’s choice had fallen upon this important town, which had an enclosed harbour and would serve as an excellent base for his operations against Utica. At the last moment a storm rose and the violence of the gale scattered his convoy, so that only 3,000 foot soldiers and 150 horsemen were able to land with him.

Pompey’s partisan Considius was in command of Hadrumentum. With a negligence which was odd, to say the least, he did not interfere. Yet he had at his disposal two entire legions and several hundred horsemen, or about double Caesar’s forces, and it seems as though he could easily have thrust him back to sea. He did not do so. Caesar’s soldiers were able to disembark undisturbed without having
to use their weapons. Caesar, who was superintending the operations from his galley, was delighted to see that everything went off so smoothly. Alert and eager, he stepped on to the gangway in his turn. Just as he was about to set his foot to the ground he was seized with a sudden attack of giddiness, tripped, lost his balance, and fell flat on his face. A cry of horror went up from the ranks of soldiers assembled on the shore: in their eyes this fall was a terrible omen, presaging ill for their expedition. They felt they might as well give it up at once and return straight away to where they came from. In a flash Caesar gathered his wits and, mastering the sharp physical pain, he immediately grasped the fatal implications of the accident. He had enough presence of mind to transform it there and then into a solemn manifestation purposely devised by himself: instead of getting up, he stretched his arms wide, as though he wished to enfold the ground in a passionate embrace, and pretending to kiss the soil which his body was pressing, he cried out: 'I possess thee, O Africa!' The effect was tremendous. All terror vanished, and the soldiers—their faces serene again—resumed their task.

The strange inertia of Considius did not fail to attract Caesar’s attention; he saw in it a sort of tacit invitation. According to De bello Africano, the initiative of starting negotiations with the garrison commander of Hadrumetum originated with one of his legates, L. Munatius Plancus. Through a prisoner, he sent Considius a letter which, if not dictated by Caesar, was at any rate inspired by him. To his surprise, Pompey’s commander refused to negotiate. First of all he asked the bearer of the missive: ‘Where does this letter come from?’ On hearing the reply, ‘From Caesar Imperator’, he exclaimed: ‘The Roman people recognize no other imperator but Scipio’; then he had the messenger put to death, and without opening the letter, sent it on to his chief.

All through the night and part of the following day Caesar waited in vain for a reply. None came. In the meantime his situation had taken a dangerous turn. Cn. Calpurnius Piso, Pompey’s commander at Clupea, had seen Caesar’s convoy pass. Having discovered where he was landing, he hurried there with 3,000 native horsemen. A body of Numidian mercenaries, who were making their way to Hadrumetum to collect their pay, arrived at the same time. Hence Caesar was in danger of being encircled and cut off from his fleet. He gave orders to strike camp and withdrew, following the coast in a southerly direction. His troops stopped before Leptis, fifteen miles from
Hadrumentum. In order not to lose contact with the sea while waiting hourly for the arrival of the rest of his convoy, he took up his position on the shore outside the walls of the city. A few transport ships did indeed arrive in the course of the following days. This brought the total number of his forces to 8,000, which was far from being enough. Moreover, they were composed almost entirely of young soldiers recruited in the last levy, and their fighting value was extremely doubtful. Caesar was still in a difficult position: he was exposed to the danger of being invested by the troops of Scipio and Juba which far outnumbered his own, and of being starved and driven to the sea. He needed reinforcements and food, whatever the cost. He sent envoys to Sardinia and he dispatched one of his intimate associates, the banker Rabirius Postumus, to Sicily, where Alienus was being culpably slow. Greatly worried about the fate of the ships of his first convoy which had gone astray and which were in danger of being captured by the enemy, he wanted to go off himself in search of them. This decision produced a regular panic among the soldiers, who believed that he intended to return to Italy and abandon them to their fate. Fortunately, the missing ships turned up at the last moment, and Caesar cancelled his departure. As his provisions were rapidly diminishing, he assembled all his men and went off towards the interior of the country in search of food. After a march of some three miles, near Ruspina, he saw the enemy army advancing to meet him. It was the cavalry corps of Labienus who, on hearing of Caesar’s landing, had started off from Utica in a hurry to join battle with his former chief while the latter only had young soldiers under his orders. With his 12,000 Numidians, his 1,600 Germans and Gauls, and his archers and slingers, Labienus was sure of his superiority. All the more so since a very short distance behind him Petreius was marching with 6,000 native foot soldiers, 1,600 Numidian horsemen, and numerous slingers and archers.

It was too late to draw back. Obliged to join battle, Caesar resolved to remain on the defensive and to avoid all initiative, ‘ convinced that with so few troops he would have to depend on intelligence rather than force’, says the author of De bello Africano.

His men stood the first shock badly. ‘Consternation spread in the ranks, and above all among the new recruits,’ reports this writer. ‘All had their eyes turned towards Caesar and no longer did anything but parry the blows of the enemy.’ They could not prevent the latter from surrounding them completely. More and more serried, the
cohorts were thrown on top of each other, the ranks became confused; the legionaries, pressed on all sides, could no longer even move their arms and make use of their weapons; the battle degenerated into a pure and simple scrimmage. "Caesar had never been in such a critical situation," writes Colonel Stoffel in this connection, "since the battle of the Sambre, when Labienus, who was to-day putting him into such grave danger, had so greatly helped to save him from disaster."

He extricated himself by a master stroke which has never ceased to arouse the admiration of military specialists. He tore open the knot which was strangling him by a simultaneous effort of both his wings, and then sought to outflank the two truncated sections which the enemy army formed after the rupture. Having accomplished this, he charged each of the isolated segments which were now unable to help one another. The manoeuvre was on the point of succeeding when the reserves of Petreius appeared on the scene. When Caesar's troops saw them coming, their only thought was flight. It was a complete rout which, in spite of all his efforts, Caesar was powerless to check. "It is said," notes Appian, "that seizing with his own hands one of those who bore the Eagles, he himself dragged him back to the front." "That is where the enemy is!" he cried out with rage and sarcasm to the unhappy fugitive. Nothing could stop the stampede. "After putting Caesar to flight," Appian continues, "they [Labienus and Petreius] pursued him relentlessly and kept him on the run until Labienus, whose horse was wounded in the stomach, was unseated." Then Petreius halted the chase (in the course of which, according to Dion Cassius, he was wounded himself), saying to those around him, "Do not let us deprive Scipio, our chief, of the honour of victory."

Thus Caesar was able finally to take his army back to the camp—and in what a state!" He considered himself lucky that the weariness of the victors had prevented them from exploiting their success. "This defeat," writes Dion Cassius, "was a cruel blow for Caesar. The thought that he had been beaten by comparatively small forces, and the arrival which was soon to be expected of Juba and Scipio with all their troops, threw him into perplexity and he did not know what to decide upon. Unable as yet to carry on the struggle with any success, realizing at the same time both the hopelessness of remaining in his present position on account of the lack of provisions, and the impossibility of retreat since the enemy were pressing upon him by land and by sea, he was discouraged."
‘It was in these circumstances,’ adds the same author, ‘that P. Sittius came to his rescue and ensured his victory.’ Who was this man, and where did he come from?

We have already had a glimpse of him at the beginning of this book in connection with the abortive plot known as the first conspiracy of Catiline. Having inherited a considerable fortune, he tried to increase it by financial speculations. Once caught in the mesh, he could not stop, and, when his own capital was gone, he fell back on loans. After having contracted large debts in this way, he found that he was quite unable to pay them back, and in order to escape from his creditors he left Italy. He went to Spain, where he attached himself to Cn. Calpurnius Piso, governor of Nearer Spain, and it was probably through him that he entered into relations with Catiline or, more exactly, with those who influenced him at that time—Crassus and Caesar. Without knowing the latter personally, he must have had some correspondence with him. Here, perhaps, is the clue to the motives which caused him to transfer his activities to Mauretania, where we find him in the middle of the year 64, at the head of armed bands of Italian and Spanish adventurers. At any rate, from that time he became a kind of condottiere in the service of the native potentates and made an abundant living, changing from one to the other, siding with whoever paid best. On this occasion he offered his services to Caesar, undertaking to secure military assistance for him. Caesar accepted with eagerness. He was on the eve of a decisive ordeal, and he must have been wondering with acute anxiety how he was going to come through it.

Two days after the battle of Ruspina, leaving a fairly strong garrison at Utica, Scipio set out. He took with him eight legions and three thousand horsemen. After joining up with the army of Labienus and Petreius, he established himself three miles from Caesar’s camp. Juba, at the head of a strong contingent of cavalry and infantry, left his kingdom and joined Scipio. It was at this point that P. Sittius appeared on the scene. He was on the best of terms with the Moorish king, Bocchus, who had declared himself in favour of Caesar as early as 49, and who detested his neighbour and rival Juba. It was not difficult for Sittius to persuade the Moor that it was greatly in his interest to invade the kingdom of Numidia while its ruler was engaged in the expedition against Caesar. Bocchus was easily convinced, and in collaboration with Sittius threw himself upon the States of Juba, pillaging the towns, the villages, and the countryside and slaying the
inhabitants. When Juba was informed of this invasion, he abandoned his part in the contest which had just begun, and went home, taking his troops and still further taking back from the Pompeians a certain number of soldiers whom he had previously placed at their disposal. Thirty recently captured elephants were left to Scipio by way of compensation.

Abandoned by his powerful ally, Scipio was less eager to engage in battle, and confined himself to parading his troops from time to time in front of their entrenchments, for the purpose of 'frightening' the enemy. These tactics had fatal consequences. Most of the native chiefs who had answered his call to fight in the Pompeian army grew dissatisfied when they found that the hostilities were dragging on without any tangible opportunity to acquire booty, and they deserted in crowds. Caesar profited by their discontent. Many of them, seeing in him the nephew of Marius, whom they remembered with gratitude, went over to his camp. His clever propaganda spread insinuations among the towns attached to Pompey's cause and brought him useful help which enabled him to improve the provisioning of his army. He did not stop at that. Urgent messages were dispatched to Sicily calling upon Alienus and upon Rabirius Postumus, who had given no sign of life since his departure, to send him the rest of his troops 'without delay and regardless of the season or of adverse winds'. 'Otherwise', he told them, 'Africa would be lost and thrown into confusion' and there would not be left 'a single house sheltered from the fury of the enemy'.

'He was so full of impatience and in such a hurry', adds the author of De bello Africano, 'that the day after the letters went off he complained of the delay of his fleet and turned his eyes and thoughts day and night in the direction of the sea.' There was another thing on his mind: the troops at his disposal were for the most part entirely lacking in military experience; they needed instruction and practice in the use of arms. Caesar spent half his time superintending their exercises and teaching them how to fight. The other half was used in speeding up the construction of fortifications to which, faithful to his former methods, he attached great importance.

At last the convoy so eagerly expected arrived at its destination. It only brought a part of the troops which had been left in Sicily: two of the old legions (the Thirteenth and Fourteenth), 800 horsemen and 1,000 slingers. All the same, they were a considerable reinforcement. With nearly 30,000 men at his disposal, Caesar decided
to take the initiative. He marched on Uzitta, which served Scipio as a storage base for his army’s provisions. Scipio, determined to defend the town, massed his troops on the outskirts. Caesar did not attack, preferring to fight in open country. As there was no opportunity for doing this (Scipio, who was cautious in the extreme, did not want to risk a battle), he started the constructions for a siege. A war of positions began. By making his soldiers change their entrenchments every three or four days, Caesar methodically brought them nearer to the enemy. Meanwhile he circulated pacifistic messages among Scipio’s troops, telling them of his constant desire to bring the war to an end as soon as possible and to make peace. At the same time leaflets were distributed throughout the country. In these Caesar promised the natives that their property should be respected, while the Roman settlers were offered impunity, certain material advantages and even rewards. In this way he won over a fairly large number to his cause. Scipio sought to imitate him and tried the same methods on Caesar’s troops. This was a complete failure. ‘Not that some of them would not have embraced his cause if he had made promises similar to Caesar’s’, Dion Cassius writes. ‘But instead of talking of rewards, he addressed an ill-timed appeal to them to liberate the Roman people and the Senate. Hence, by taking the line which was more noble according to reason, instead of that which was more suited to the occasion, he attracted no one.’

While these things were going on a violent storm burst one night, ‘accompanied by hail as big as stones’. This was a cruel disaster for Caesar’s camp. The soldiers wandered about in the darkness, dripping wet, covering their heads with their shields to protect themselves from this avalanche. At the first light of dawn a grievous spectacle met their eyes: the whole camp was in ruins, all the provisions destroyed or spoiled, the tents carried away by the gale. Moreover, as though Fate took pleasure in adding to their trials, the rumour was spreading among them that Juba was about to return at the head of a formidable army accompanied by an enormous number of elephants. The fact in itself was true. Scipio, warned of the reinforcements Caesar had received, had sent word to the king of Numidia, still engaged in fighting the bands of Bocchus and Sittius, begging him to come and join him, since, to his mind, nothing but their common and co-ordinated action would make it possible to finish with Caesar. As Juba had left his appeal unanswered, he promised him in case of victory all the Roman possessions in Africa. Attracted by this tempting offer,
Juba marched to his assistance with three legions, strong formations of cavalry and light infantry as well as thirty elephants. Reports of these numbers, grossly exaggerated as the troops approached, helped to throw the devastated camp into a state of real terror. To stop the panic which was spreading through his whole army, Caesar took energetic measures. He assembled the soldiers, and deliberately overstating the extent of the danger to which they fancied they were exposed, he declared: 'You may as well know that in a few days the king will be in front of you with ten legions, thirty thousand horsemen, a hundred thousand lightly armed soldiers and three hundred elephants. Some among you may therefore stop their inquiries and conjectures and turn to me, for I am fully informed; if not, I will make them embark on the oldest of my ships and they shall go wherever the wind chooses to take them, and land wherever they can.' There was no more to be said, and all nerves were calmed as by enchantment.

The arrival of Juba did not cause much change. Scipio, who was a timid, over-cautious general, avoided all offensive action, determined to leave time to do its work and to wait for Caesar to use up his reserves of manpower and provisions. About two months went by in this way. Then came the day when the remainder of the troops, so eagerly expected, arrived at last.

They were the two legions, the Ninth and Tenth, which had distinguished themselves in such a special manner during Caesar's recent stay in Rome. It was not without uneasiness that he saw them disembark. In their ranks they brought all the agitators, all the ringleaders. Cleverly hidden among the others, these men who had managed to escape the threatened punishment were waiting for a propitious moment to set to work again. To begin with, there were the two military tribunes whose underhand activities were perfectly well known to him, and to whose pernicious influence he must have more than once been inclined to attribute the prolonged and repeated delays in the departure of his troops.

After an extremely stormy crossing on boats which were overloaded and greatly damaged by the tempest, the two legions set foot on African soil, dying of hunger and thirst, while the tribune Avienus came alongside very comfortably in a ship which he had reserved for his exclusive use when they left Sicily. Caesar was outraged. Seizing this pretext for ridding himself once and for all of the permanent threat represented by the presence of Avienus and his
accomplices in his army, he called a general assembly of the tribunes and centurions of all the legions the very next day and from his platform addressed the following declaration to them: 'I had hoped that certain men [among you] would give up their disorderly conduct and their impudence, and that they would not take unfair advantage of my patience, my leniency, and my kindness; but since they have observed neither rules nor regulations, I am going to punish them according to military custom, so that others may be on their guard against imitating their example.' Then, taking each one of his victims to task, he spoke as follows: 'C. Avienus! Forasmuch as in Italy you have stirred up the soldiers of the Roman people against the Republic and engaged in plunder and rapine in the municipalities; forasmuch as you have been useless to the Republic and to me; forasmuch as you have filled my ships with your personal following and your horses instead of putting my soldiers into them, and forasmuch as by this conduct you have become responsible for the lack of men at a time when the Republic needs them; for all these reasons I banish you ignominiously from my army, and order you to leave Africa this very day and as soon as possible. It is the same in your case, A. Fonteius, military tribune. I expel you from the army as a seditious and evil citizen. And you, T. Salienus, M. Tiro, C. Clusinus, forasmuch as after obtaining a command in my army, not by your courage but as a pure favour, you have shown neither valour in war nor good qualities in peace, and forasmuch as you have applied yourselves to inciting the troops against your chief rather than to carrying out your duties with honour and modesty, I judge you to be unworthy of holding a command in my army and I dismiss you, and order you to leave Africa as soon as possible.'

Having said this, he turned them over to the centurions and had them put on board ship, each one separately, and sent off to Italy.

The constant increase of Caesar's forces had seriously aggravated the problem of provisioning. The accumulated stocks were no longer enough for the number of mouths to be fed. Perhaps intentionally, Avienus had not brought any corn supplies with the convoy he was commanding; the country which formed the theatre of military operations, squeezed in turn by the two adversaries, was no longer able to provide anything whatsoever. Caesar did not hesitate for long. He had faced similar difficulties in the course of his previous campaigns and he knew the remedy.
Abruptly, he gave orders to prepare the baggage, set fire to his camp, and took his way to Aggar. To-day it is impossible to identify this place, but in the opinion of Veith, also subsequently adopted by Stephane Gsell, it must have been about eighteen miles to the southeast of his former position. He had been told that there he would find abundant supplies. Scipio and Juba followed him, always at a certain distance, always without engaging battle. They took up their position five miles from Caesar's new camp and settled down to wait passively. In spite of the few surprise attacks of their enemy, which, according to De bello Africano, all turned to Caesar's advantage, the two allies would not let themselves be drawn into a decisive battle, confining their activities to disorganizing Caesar's communications with the rest of the country, where his propaganda had succeeded in winning adherents to his cause.

Thus the days passed. Caesar had been in Africa more than four months. He had come there to measure his strength against the enemy on a battlefield, and now found himself forced into a war of attrition which was hard to endure and for which he was not prepared. This situation could not last, and Caesar resolved somehow or other to end it.

The author of De bello Africano writes: 'When Caesar saw that he could not by any manner of means draw the enemy into the plain and induce them to fight our legions... he went to camp before Thapsus.' In this he is in perfect agreement with Dion Cassius who is more specific: 'Reasoning that on account of their position he could not force them [Scipio and Juba] to come to blows, Caesar marched on Thapsus in order to join battle with them if they came to the help of that town, or to capture it if they did not interfere.' Thus then, failing another Pharsalus, he hoped at least to seize a town strongly fortified by nature. From there he would be able when necessary to defy the assaults of a numerically superior enemy, if the war was prolonged, instead of wandering from place to place at the mercy of unpredictable circumstances. Gsell considers that Caesar was running a great risk: by establishing himself at Thapsus, situated in the middle of a sort of peninsular bounded by the sea on one side and by a marsh on the other, he was isolating himself from the rest of Africa and could only expect to die of hunger, 'for revictualling by sea was problematical'. It is quite likely, however, that this difficulty had not escaped his attention when he made his decision, and that he did not attach the same importance to it as the learned historian of North Africa.
Caesar’s calculations turned out to be correct. Knowing the strategic importance of this town, Scipio marched to its assistance with all the troops at his disposal, including those of Afranius and the expeditionary corps of Juba. Unfortunately he did not seem to be in any hurry and allowed himself to be outdistanced by Caesar, who appeared before Thapsus at dawn on April 4, 46. ‘There was a pond,’ writes the author of De bello Africano, ‘and between this pond and the sea there was a passage of about 1,500 paces [roughly one and a half miles], by which Scipio wanted to pass to help the besieged. Caesar, who was expecting this move, had erected a barrier there the day before. Scipio, finding the passage closed, camped near the sea.’ Then he tried to carry out his plan: to block Caesar in by closing both isthmuses with a ditch and an entrenchment, the one to be held by his own troops, the other by Juba’s, while the garrison of Thapsus was to take Caesar from the rear. The plan was logical but it had one serious flaw: the two groups of the Pompeian army, separated by a lake, could not communicate with each other. The garrison of the town likewise remained isolated. Caesar, however, who occupied the central position, had all his forces together. They formed a single block which he could easily manipulate, striking now here, now there, in whatever direction he chose. Yet he did not provoke a battle. He confined himself to sealing off the approaches by posting two legions of recruits in front of the town, and he held himself in readiness for Scipio’s onslaught. As a matter of fact, this time he was not so sure of his soldiers. The majority had never before taken part in a battle. How were they going to stand the test? Moreover, his old companions in arms no longer inspired him with much confidence either. The memory of their recent mutiny was still fresh in his mind. He knew that the evil had thrust its roots deep and that he was far from having destroyed them all.

When the legions were drawn up in battle order, Caesar appeared before his troops. He dismounted from his horse to deliver his speech and, contrary to his usual custom, wishing to be closer to his soldiers, he began to pass along each of the ranks, one by one. He was cordial and familiar, at least outwardly, stopping in front of the old combatants, addressing each by name, recalling their accomplishments of former days. To the young he cited the example of the veterans, ‘exhorting them to rival the valour of their elders and to obtain by their victory the same renown and the same honours’.

The men were distracted as they listened to him. Their attention
was caught by the sounds of a tumult echoing from the enemy camp. What was happening there? No one knew. They imagined however that these were the unmistakable signs of an incipient panic that had taken hold of Pompey’s forces at the sight of Caesar’s legionaries ready to launch an attack. Their reasoning was simple: since the enemy was afraid, all they had to do was to march to the assault, taking advantage of his confusion. This seems likewise to have been the opinion of the officers. It does not, however, appear to have been shared by Caesar. In spite of the fact that he was urged from all sides, he persisted in his refusal to give the signal for battle, saying that ‘this type of attack did not please him’, while he strove ‘with all his power’ to hold back the impatient army.

Why this excessive caution on Caesar’s part at a moment when everything seemed to call for action? The text of De bello Africano, our only source of information on the subject, does not give us any clue. No commentator has been able to find a satisfactory explanation. Something must have happened at that moment which the author has not mentioned, perhaps simply because he did not know it. We can, however, quote Plutarch’s lines in this connection:

Some people claim that Caesar was not present during the action. Just as he was lining up his army and making his preparations, he had an attack of his usual malady. At the first sign, before being struck down by the illness and completely losing the use of his senses, he would have had himself carried, already seized with trembling, into one of the nearby towers and, stretched out on a bed, he would have waited for the fit to pass.

How much truth is there in this account? It should be noted that even Plutarch himself does not regard it as an incontrovertible fact. ‘Some people claim . . .’ That is not very positive. But he refers to Caesar’s illness as ‘his usual malady’, thus implicitly admitting that Caesar was subject to epileptic fits. Suetonius is quite definite on this point; he reports two attacks ‘in the midst of battle’. Unfortunately he gives us neither the date nor the place. If, however, in principle the fact is to be recognized as true, there is nothing to prevent us from supposing that one of these fits should have occurred at the period which agrees with Plutarch’s version. We can also infer from it that it was not the first time Caesar felt the effects of this illness, since he is shown to us as recognizing the symptoms in advance, without any surprise, and duly preparing for the attack.

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To return to the group which surrounded Caesar when, for some reason or other, he did not give the signal for battle. The men of the Ninth and Tenth Legions were not in a mood to wait much longer. Since their general delayed in giving the order to charge, they determined to give it themselves, and they forced a trumpeter to sound the advance. Immediately all the cohorts were set in motion and rushed headlong towards the enemy. It was in vain that the centurions tried to hold them back, imploring them to wait for the orders of their chief. The legionaries did not listen to them and bore down upon the enemy. It is to be supposed that in the meantime Caesar had recovered from his attack, and seeing that there was no way of curbing the eagerness of his soldiers, he placed himself at the head of his legions and went forward to the battle.

Two waves broke simultaneously, one rolling towards Scipio's, the other towards Juba's camp.

How can we explain this irrepressible ardour for battle which suddenly inflamed Caesar's legionaries? Florus believes that they were 'indignant to find that, although Pompey was dead, the war continued to spread'. But certainly that is not all. The author of De bello Africano has written the following significant lines:

In Africa, although the troops were far from being able to obtain what they needed, the high cost of foodstuffs had forced them to spend all they had. Our soldiers were so poor that only a few among them had tents made of hides; the others had to make shelters from their own tattered clothes, or from intertwined twigs and branches.

In short, at the end of the fourth month of the African war Caesar's army had been reduced to a poverty-stricken, hungry mass, whose covetous instincts were ceaselessly excited by the signs of opulence displayed with such arrogant nonchalance by the men of Pompey's party. But it was above all the idea they had formed of Juba's warriors, reputed to carry whole fortunes on their persons, which had inflamed their desires with burning intensity. The pillage of the enemy camp—that was the one great stimulus which drove them so furiously to the battle.

The author of De bello Africano appears to have belonged to the column which rushed upon the sector held by Scipio. The elephants on which this general was specially counting were but little help to
him. The target for a torrent of arrows and other missiles hurled down on them by Caesar's archers and slingers, these animals, fresh from the jungle and insufficiently trained for combat, became terrified by the whizzing of the slings and stones, turned round upon their own men, trampling them under their feet, and ran away. Florus even goes so far as to assert that they took fright at the first sound of the bugle. At any rate, the Moorish horsemen who were placed on the same wing, seeing that their support had gone, also turned and fled. There followed a general stampede of Scipio's entire army, which started to run—with Caesar's legionaries on its heels—along the shore of the lake towards Juba's camp, hoping to be able to take refuge among the Numidians. On arriving there, the fugitives saw that it was already occupied by Caesar's troops—probably by those who had rushed to storm the sector of Juba, while their comrades were attacking Scipio. Thereupon, abandoning all hope of escape, they halted their flight, laid down their arms and made the traditional gesture of surrender. It was in vain. They were overwhelmed by their assailants and their massacre started, under the very eyes of Caesar, who was there as a powerless spectator. The victims implored him to spare their lives and to stop the carnage. Caesar tried to reason with his legionaries. It was but lost labour. They paid no heed to him. Pompey's soldiers were butchered to the last man. That, however, was not enough. Intoxicated by the smell of blood, the victors did not consider that their task was finished. On the pretext of punishing those traitors in their own camp who had favoured the enemy, they turned upon a certain number of politicians in Caesar's entourage who were not lucky enough to please them. Several were struck down, among them Tullius Rufus, a former quaestor, who died of his wounds, and Pompeius Rufus, who only escaped death by taking refuge with Caesar. According to De bello Africano, there was a headlong flight throughout the camp of highly placed personalities, relentlessly pursued by the soldiers who 'after such a resounding victory thought that everything was permitted them'.

Here is the balance sheet of the battle: ten thousand of Pompey's men killed against fifty of Caesar's fallen in battle, in addition to a few wounded. These numbers clearly show the character and rhythm of the butchery which had just ended. Caesar figured in it as a passive instrument in the hands of his troops. It was they who had taken the initiative at the start; it was they who decided upon the fate of the vanquished when the battle was over. That did not

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prevent him from assembling his troops the next morning, in the manner of a happy and triumphant conqueror, in order to shower them with praise, to distribute rewards to the bravest, and to grant gratuities to all the veterans. Then, leaving three legions behind to continue the siege of Thapsus, he marched on Utica with the rest of his forces.

As soon as the rout started, Scipio, Juba, Labienus, Afranius, and Petreius, who above all were afraid of falling alive into Caesar's hands, had left the battlefield. Accompanied by their principal supporters, some had taken to the sea, while others went to the kingdom of Numidia. Cato, who had remained in Utica, which was in his charge, learned of the disaster from a messenger, who made the journey from the camp in three days. Almost immediately afterwards the first refugees arrived. The town had for some time been in a state of siege. All the native population, suspected of sympathizing with Caesar, had been disarmed and sent to a concentration camp. Only the Three Hundred, who formed a sort of municipal council, were kept inside the city.

Realizing the seriousness of the danger, Cato convened this assembly and all the Pompeian senators, who were present with their sons. He implored them to resist to the last man and to prepare for a merciless struggle. The senators welcomed his proposition with enthusiasm and declared themselves ready for any sacrifice. In particular they discussed the question of setting the slaves free in order to enrol them in the army for the siege. The Three Hundred appreciated this project far less. They were all rich property owners, merchants, and bankers, whose fortunes consisted largely of slaves. For them it represented an enormous loss and they did not want to undergo it. Moreover, they judged that the Pompeian cause was lost, and that after the defeat at Thapsus all further resistance was futile. Some among them showed their anxiety to win the conqueror's favour by holding the Romans in their midst as hostages in order to hand them over to him as soon as he reached Utica. Finally, the Three Hundred told Cato bluntly that they did not want to make war and were ready to surrender. Seeing that all was lost, Cato proceeded to evacuate all those among his compatriots who had cause to fear reprisals on the part of Caesar. Then he killed himself.

As Caesar was nearing the city of Utica, deserters who came hurrying to meet him informed him of what was happening there.
He learnt that all the members of the senatorial party had left and that Cato had remained alone in Utica. Guessing what he intended to do, Caesar accelerated his march, in the hopes of capturing his indomitable enemy alive. He did not succeed. According to Plutarch, on hearing of Cato's suicide he exclaimed with disappointment: 'O Cato, I envy thee thy death, since thou hast prevented me from saving thy life!' Then he saw, on the road leading to Utica, that L. Caesar was coming towards him, followed by a group of the inhabitants of the city. Throwing himself at his feet, the son of his former legate, who had passed into the service of the enemy, implored his forgiveness, 'asking for his life as sole favour'. Caesar, who had many reasons for bearing him ill-will, acceded to his plea; but later on he was able to find a very simple way of making him expiate his treason by handing him over to official justice.³⁰⁸

It was night when Caesar arrived before the gates of the city. He waited for the dawn to make his entry. The inhabitants were called together in a general assembly. He expressed his gratitude towards them for their sympathetic attitude and devotion to his cause, even under Pompeian domination. He was, however, greatly angered by the conduct of the Roman merchants settled in Utica and the Three Hundred, who had provided subsidies for Scipio. 'He censured them with severity', it is said in De bello Africano, 'and dwelt at length on the enormity of their crime.' Only the concluding passage of this diatribe has come down to us, as summed up in the above-mentioned book:

He consents to spare their lives, but he will have all their possessions sold. They may, however, buy them back by paying, as a fine and in compensation for their pardon, the sum which the sale would have produced.

The Three Hundred, who had been fearing far more rigorous sanctions, then asked that Caesar himself should stipulate the contribution he considered adequate, solemnly promising to pay him the money. He fixed it at 200 million sesterces, payable in six instalments spread over a period of three years. 'Far from refusing,' the same source assures us, 'they all thanked him, declaring that on that day Caesar had given them a second life.'

Thus the fate of Utica was settled. After that, the cities of the Roman province of Africa fell one by one under the domination of the victor. Vergilius capitulated at Thapsus on receiving news of
Cato's suicide, Considius fled from Thysdra when he heard of the rout of his party. Zama, the capital of Juba's kingdom, refused to open its gates to him when he returned from the battle. Then the inhabitants sent envoys to Caesar begging him to come to their defence against their own sovereign who, furious over his failure, was meditating revenge against the disloyal city. Their request was granted. Caesar went to Zama, received the submission of several Numidian chiefs, took Juba's horsemen into his service and sold his goods by auction, together with those of the Roman citizens who were residents of the town and had borne arms against Caesar. The kingdom was reduced to the status of a province—Africa Nova—and Sallust was made its governor. Then the conqueror departed, taking with him Juba's son, a child of five, as his prisoner.

Meanwhile the dethroned king had taken refuge in one of his estates together with the Pompeian general Petreius, another derelict wanderer after the lost battle. Reduced to the last extremity, Juba put an end to his life by improvising a duel under conditions which did not allow either of the participants to come out of it alive. Scipio had tried to reach Spain by sea. He was surprised by the squadron of Sittius. On seeing his ship encircled, he pierced himself with his sword and jumped into the waves. As for Afranius, who had tried to reach the Iberian peninsula by crossing Mauretania, he was overtaken on the way by the troops of the same Sittius, and put to death. Only Labienus and Attius Varus succeeded in escaping the fate which had struck down the great companions of the great Pompey. For how long?

Thus the campaign which had begun so inauspiciously and was conducted under such difficult conditions ended with a brilliant victory. It only remained for Caesar to enjoy his glory and celebrate his triumphs.

Before leaving Africa he did not fail to impose heavy penalties on the towns which had sided with his enemies: Thapsus had to pay five million sesterces (the natives, two million; the Roman settlers, three million), Hadrumetum eight million (the natives, three million; the Romans, five million). Leptis had to provide 300,000 pounds of oil, and Thysdra a quantity of wheat which to this day has not been determined.
CHAPTER 52

Triumphs

The news of the African disaster created profound consternation in political circles in Rome. No one had imagined that the collapse would be so soon and so complete. After the initial successes of Labienus a wave of optimism gave a new impetus to the fragile hopes which the people continued to cherish as they listened, in spite of the promptings of common sense, to unverifiable reports tending to present the events in Africa in a favourable light. This lasted until the day when the Romans learnt of the catastrophe of Thapsus and the tragic end of Pompey's chiefs. It was, above all, the death of Cato which was a cruel shock for the public. With him, the last pillar of the Republican party disappeared. It seemed as though the void he left could never be filled. This time, all illusions vanished. Nothing remained but to renounce all hope and to try to gain the favour of the conqueror. That indeed was the main preoccupation of the leaders of the former senatorial party. Since all further resistance would be useless, the only thing to do was to come to an understanding with Caesar and to give proof of unconditional loyalty by anticipating his wishes. They started by voting new thanksgiving celebrations in his honour. It will be remembered that on the first occasion a period of ten days had been granted; then, fifteen days; this time, they granted him forty. Next, they renamed him dictator for ten years, and they created a new office specially for him; that of prefect of morals—equivalent to the office of censor—which, while enlarging the sphere of his duties, conferred upon him for a period of three years unlimited powers in almost every department of public or private life.

It was likewise decided that the triumph which Caesar was going to celebrate upon his return to Italy should surpass all former triumphs in splendour and brilliance. As a result, he was accorded the right to be accompanied, not only by the lictors assigned to him in virtue of his present dictatorship, but also by those to whom his previous two dictatorships entitled him. That provided him with an imposing array of seventy-two lictors. A bronze statue was to be placed
opposite the temple of Jupiter Capitoline, which awaited the visit of the triumphant hero. It represented Caesar standing on a terrestrial globe, and bore an inscription describing him as a demigod.

This was not all. It was agreed that in future, whenever Caesar attended meetings of the Senate, he should sit among the consuls on a curule chair and that he should be the first called upon to express his opinion in the deliberations. The honour of opening the circus games also devolved upon him. According to Dion Cassius, a great many other honours were proposed and voted, but these were all that Caesar accepted.

Caesar was fully aware of the general state of mind and of the fear which he inspired among his recent enemies. Therefore his first care on reaching the outskirts of Rome was to call the Senate together outside the pomerium to reassure them about his intentions.

His speech, as recorded by Dion Cassius, seems rather vague and lifeless. We can scarcely recognize the language of Caesar with its clarity and precision, nor that personal note, both incisive and vigorous, which usually makes it so easy for us to distinguish his voice in spite of all the amplifications and rearrangements to which his words have been subjected by his interpreters. It is to be supposed that Dion Cassius, confronted with a dearth of documentation, had to fill in the gaps out of his own invention. The result was not particularly happy. It is nevertheless possible to establish the general outlines of the speech.

The opening is characterized by a genuine desire to calm the fears of his audience by giving them definite assurances—swearing ‘by Jupiter’—that he proposed to be, ‘with all possible moderation’, not their master but their chief. ‘How could I put any of you to death,’ he exclaimed, ‘you who have done me no harm, when, far from destroying anyone who sided with the enemy, I pardoned all those who were found only once in the enemy ranks, and even spared the life of many who fought against me twice?’ This was followed by an urgent appeal for unity and concord. ‘Let us resolutely unite, Conscript Fathers, forgetting all that is past as though it had been the consequence of some supernatural intervention, and let us begin to love each other unreservedly as new citizens.’

Caesar was well aware of the main cause of their alarm. His arrival had been preceded by that of the whole mass of his soldiers, who incidently were overjoyed to return to their own country after their long and arduous campaigns. The Romans, however, had
not forgotten the recent stay of these glorious warriors in the Campagna, and the pillage and devastation they had caused. They remembered with what anxiety they had awaited their arrival in Rome. Here they were again at the gates of the capital. What were they going to do there? And how long would they stay? Once the triumphs had been celebrated, what was to become of them, and what would be the next field for their activity?

To all these questions Caesar had an exhaustive answer, as though he had guessed them in advance. 'Neither need my soldiers give you any cause for fear', he continued (still according to Dion Cassius' text). 'You should look upon them only as the guardians of my authority and yours.' But there could be no question of disbanding them. 'There is more than one reason which makes it imperative that they should be kept on. . . . At every moment we need an army, since, living in a city like ours and possessing such an extensive empire, we cannot be safe without the help of an abundant supply of money and armed forces.'

Money . . . That delicate subject called for a fuller explanation. The question was being asked how the immense riches which Caesar had gathered in the course of his 'levies' in Italy, in Rome proper, and, above all, abroad, were to be spent.

'I have kept none of this money for my personal use,' he declared; 'far from it—I have expended for you all I possessed, as well as large sums borrowed from usurers. Some of this money was spent on the war, some of it is being reserved for you, so that you may use it for the adornment of the city and its administration.'

'Thus', Caesar concluded, 'it is I who have shouldered the odium of this contribution, while you are to enjoy its advantages.'

It must, however, have been his last words which produced the most resounding effect upon his hearers. 'Let no one among you suspect', he said, 'that I wish to cause the rich any aggravation, or to introduce new taxes. The ones we have will be enough for me and I shall make every effort to be rich with you rather than to rob anyone of his possessions.'

He repeated this speech before the assembly of the people, but as Dion Cassius says, 'although he may have succeeded in calming the general fears, he was unable to put all minds completely at rest'.

Judging, however, that he had done all that the circumstances demanded of him in this matter, Caesar devoted himself entirely to the preparation of his triumphs. There were four of them:
ex Gallio, ex Aegypto, ex Ponto, and ex Africa. In order to make a more striking impression upon the minds and eyes of his fellow citizens, he decided to celebrate them separately, on four different days, employing the intervals to complete the many complicated constructions required by the programme upon which he had decided. In carrying out this programme Caesar displayed an energy and ingenuity which would have made the most enterprising of modern music-hall directors green with envy. True, his previous experience in organizing public games, when he was an aedile, must have been extremely useful to him on this occasion. He established his headquarters near the Villa publica, where he was living temporarily while waiting for the day when, having celebrated his triumph, he would be officially allowed to enter the city. There he assembled all the treasures and riches he had extorted from the conquered countries and sent at different times to Rome: all these gigantic spoils were going to be exhibited as trophies. Numerous teams of joiners, carpenters, and wheelwrights were put to work to build the paraphernalia necessary to convey them (wagons, movable platforms, glass show-cases). The most rare and precious wood had to be used for this purpose, and, in order to achieve a perfect harmony in the general effect, Caesar insisted that a different kind of wood should be employed for each triumph to give it a distinctive note. Thus for the triumph of the Gauls, all the accessories had to be made from the lemon tree, for that of Egypt the wood had to be overlaid with tortoise-shell; acanthus was chosen for Pontus, and ivory for Africa. Statues representing the principal rivers which the exploits of his legions had made famous were ordered from celebrated sculptors, and the greatest painters of the period were commissioned to depict in life-like style the most outstanding episodes of his campaigns. The celebrated prisoners, specially kept for the triumph, were brought from their cells—Vercingetorix for instance, and Arsinœ. Little Juba II, who had just arrived in Rome, was sent to join them.

The exact date of the first triumph cannot be established. We know, however, that it must have been some time towards the end of August; in other words, towards the end of June, by the revised calendar. This places it in the middle of the summer, under the auspices of the most generous sun, the sun of the Roman countryside.

Since the previous day, the streets and squares of the city had been decorated with garlands, the temples were opened and incense was burning on all the altars. Since the previous day the immense Circus
Flaminius (where the procession was to pass before it entered the Velabrum and made its way across the Forum boarium to the Capitol) had been invaded by crowds of people, prepared to spend the night on the steps in order to have front places for the show. Others, less privileged, took up their positions all along the route of the procession. Hundreds of thousands were there—townsmen, country-dwellers, foreigners. All languages were to be heard. Countless multitudes had flocked to Rome, attracted by the prospect of the marvellous festivities and amazing revels which Caesar had announced.

At dawn all participants were assembled in the Campus Martius, which was the point of departure. At a given signal the procession began to move. At its head, with grave dignity, marched the senators and the magistrates in office. They were followed by musicians sounding their instruments in triumphal strains. Then, sometimes on litters borne by men, sometimes on wagons, there came the spoils from the great and wealthy cities of Gaul conquered by Caesar: gold and silver, in money and in ingots; weapons, banners, statues, crowns of gold, every kind of precious object taken from the temples and public buildings as well as from the coffers of rich citizens. The monotony of this long parade of piled-up booty, skilfully arranged in tiers on trays specially made for this purpose, was relieved by placards proclaiming in gigantic letters the names of Alesia, Avaricum, Uxellodunum. An enormous picture, sumptuously framed, represented Marseilles under the yoke. There followed the statues, one of the Rhine, one of the Rhone; and another of pure gold, symbolizing the Ocean in chains, which thus presented the defeat Caesar met with at the time of his expedition to Britain under the disguise of a superhuman exploit. Then, with their heavy tread, came the animals destined for the sacrifices at the Capitol: white bulls, their horns gilded and swathed, their backs covered with a ceremonial cloth. Behind them, hoisted on to a cart, came Vercingetorix, loaded with chains which jangled lugubriously at the slightest movement. He had been fetched from the dungeon, where he had been rotting for the last six years in expectation of this solemn day which was to be his last. After him, the seventy-two lictors of the dictator filed past with majestic solemnity, accompanied by men carrying vases in which perfumes were burning and by musicians playing zithers and flutes. At last, came Caesar.

In a chariot drawn by four white horses adorned with crowns, he stood erect like Jupiter Capitoline into whose hands he was going to
place the symbols of his victory. He was wearing the purple tunic and the ornaments of divinity which had been fetched the day before from the sacred treasure. Motionless, draped in a toga sewn with golden stars, his brow bound with a laurel crown, he held a sceptre surmounted by an eagle in one hand and in the other a branch of laurel. Stationed behind him, a slave held another crown over his head—the massive golden crown of Jupiter, of which the weight was too great for a human head to bear. Behind him followed his army. The soldiers, also crowned and covered with their decorations, ended the procession. At first they were lined up in their usual order, by cohorts and centuries, but this impressive formation did not last long. Soon the ranks were broken; the legionaries, heated by copious libations as they came along and excited by the cheers of the crowd lining their passage, became disordered, advancing and drawing back, colliding and pushing, congratulating each other, surrounding the chariot of their imperator, singing, shouting, and filling the air with deafening cries of Io triumpe.

After evoking, in more or less even rhymes, their exploits on the battlefield and the privations they had endured in the course of their campaigns, they began to banter their chief with friendly familiarity. At one moment they were giving him good advice and rules for his future conduct:

If thou actest well
Thy chastening it will bring.
If thou actest ill
Thou wilt be chosen king.

Then again they were making broad allusions to his prowess as a conqueror of the weaker sex:

Citizens, guard your wives,
We bring the bald seducer home.
He made love in Gaul
With gold borrowed in Rome.

Caesar, fixed in his hieratic attitude, seemed to hear nothing. Imperturbable, he pursued his way, ever mindful of the solemn dignity befitting the insignia he carried in his hands. But the soldiers had no wish to be silent. They went on bellowing at the top of their voices, shouting out disjointed verses, each one coarser than the last.
TRIUMPHS

All at once his ears were offended by a malicious ditty of perfidious insolence:

Caesar has subdued Gaul,
Nicomedes subdued Caesar.
Here is Caesar who triumphs,
He, who has subdued Gaul.
But Nicomedes does not triumph,
He, who subdued Caesar.

This time he lost patience. Such an allusion to an unfortunate incident in his youth, thirty years earlier, coming at the most solemn moment of his career, exasperated him beyond words past endurance. It was impossible to get away from these voices, which had broken loose from all control. The veterans surrounded his triumphal chariot from all sides, hurling their mocking jibes straight in his face. All his signs of displeasure, all his protestations, were in vain. 'He even tried to defend himself by invoking the oath', writes Dion Cassius. They answered him with bursts of laughter.

It was under these conditions that the procession entered the Velabrum. As he reached the temple of Fortune, Caesar felt the floor of his chariot giving way beneath him. A sudden jolt made him lose his balance and he slipped on to the ground. He was not hurt, but the axle of the conveyance was broken and it could no longer be used. Was this an accident, or a malicious trick designed by some crafty enemy to upset the triumph of the conqueror? We cannot say... It is certain that in the eyes of the Romans of that time such an incident was enough to stop the ceremony and bring the festival to an end. Caesar did not want this to happen. He at once ordered another chariot, took his place on it and the procession continued. He was, however, anxious to respect the feelings of pious superstition with which the Roman people were so deeply imbued by giving them immediate and complete satisfaction. On arriving in front of the Clivus Capitolinus, he stepped down from his chariot and, while they were dragging Vercingetorix to his execution, he knelt at the foot of the stairs which led to the temple of Jupiter. It was in this humble posture that he climbed one by one the steps of the Capitol, which according to the ceremonial he should have ascended erect, holding his head high and making the stones ring under his triumphant tread. Thus he atoned for having dared to challenge Fate. Dion Cassius adds in this connection that he was "heedless of the chariot placed
in front of Jupiter in his honour, of the image of the earth under his feet, and of the inscription.'

A few days later, the same ceremony took place on the occasion of the second triumph. This time there were no incidents. Although the order of the procession was the same, Caesar was nevertheless able to arouse the curiosity of the crowd and hold their interest. For instance, the enormous picture representing the ignominious death of Pothinus and Achillas could not fail to impress the common herd. The statue of the Nile was also in evidence, and a replica of the light-house of Alexandria sparkling with all its fires. The principal attraction, however, was provided by the princess Arsinoë, to whom fell the rôle which Vercingetorix had played in the previous triumph. Only this time, the effect produced was contrary to Caesar's expectations. The sight of the young girl in chains, dragged along at the head of a procession of less important prisoners, seems to have caused deep distress among the spectators. To be sure, foreign princesses had previously figured in Pompey's triumph after the war against Mithridates, but this was 'a thing never yet seen in Rome,' notes Dion Cassius: 'a woman and formerly treated as a queen, she was walking loaded with chains.'

Her sister Cleopatra was present at this painful spectacle. In response to the invitation of her illustrious lover, the queen of Egypt had come to Rome, bringing with her the most inoffensive of husbands (her own brother, aged scarcely eleven) and the child she had brought into the world in June, 47, shortly after the cruise on the Nile. The sight of this detested sister, whom she hated with all the passion of an ambitious and jealous woman, must have filled her with boundless joy. It is even possible that Arsinoë's humiliation was specially arranged by Caesar as a delicate attention to please a mistress who, in spite of all the infidelities he might have committed since his departure from Alexandria, continued to hold a special place in his heart, judging from the magnificent welcome he gave her when she arrived.

The third triumph introduced a note of comic relief: an enormous panel representing, in a manner which was not in strict accordance with the truth, Pharnaces flying as fast as his legs would carry him at the approach of Caesar's army. The triumphal chariot was preceded by a placard bearing these three words: *Veni, Vidi, Vici.*

Until now the triumphs had commemorated victories gained over foreign peoples and foreign sovereigns. The African triumph was
going to present a delicate problem. One did not triumph over the
defeat of one’s own fellow citizens, and there had been no question
of celebrating Pompey’s defeat after Pharsalus. The African war
was essentially a war against his collaborators and successors. Seen
in this light, Thapsus was equivalent to Pharsalus, and Caesar could
not be allowed to glory in it. He solved the difficulty by presenting
this war as having been directed primarily against the king of Numidia
and, as proof, he could think of nothing better than to exhibit as
chief prisoner the son of Juba, the child of five whom he had brought
back to Italy. He made up for this by introducing into the pro-
cession a series of striking pictures dramatizing the end of Pompey’s
struggle. One of them showed Scipio slitting open his stomach and
throwing himself into the sea; another depicted Petreius stabbing
himself to death in the middle of a meal, and yet another represented
Cato tearing out his own entrails like a wild beast. The effect pro-
duced was not what Caesar had counted upon, according to Appian.
‘The people,’ he tells us, ‘although restrained by terror, could not
help groaning as they realised their own ills.’

However, these same people did not have much time to indulge in
such bitter thoughts. Hardly had the ceremony ended when they
were invited to participate in a tremendous banquet for which 22,000
tables had been put up in the public squares in preparation for 200,000
guests. Masterpieces of the culinary art of the period were served
at it, and choice wines flowed in abundance. The feast lasted well
into the night. Towards the end, they beheld Caesar, who, leaving
the hall reserved for privileged guests, was preparing to go home,
luxuriously reclining on his litter, his feet shod with elegant sandals,
a wreath of flowers on his bare brow which was streaming with
perspiration.’ They all rose to accompany him to his residence,
following the Via Sacra, between two rows of elephants (twenty on
each side), symbolizing the submission of the continent of Africa
and bearing on their backs huge flaming torches which sent immense
columns of light up into the sky.

Their stomachs replete and their thirst fully sated, the Romans
went to sleep with heavy heads but light hearts. Their awakening
was of the most delightful. They were invited to come and take
take their share of the presents which Caesar in his munificence was offering
them on the occasion of his triumphs. At the beginning of the civil
war he had promised 300 sestertes to each of the inhabitants of the
capital who was entitled to a free ration of corn. He now paid this,
adding a hundred sesterces extra per head to make up for the delay. Each one also received ten bushels of corn and ten pounds of oil. Besides this, he announced that he would be responsible for paying all yearly rents which did not exceed 2,000 sesterces in Rome, and 500 sesterces in the rest of Italy.

At the same time the distribution of rewards was made to his legions. Each veteran received 20,000 sesterces, each centurion 40,000; the military tribunes and the chief of the cavalry 80,000 each. This did not pass off without incidents. Some of the legionaries considered that Caesar had spent too much money on the celebration of his triumphs and that it would have been better if he had increased the share of the soldiers, instead of squandering the money in such an unproductive manner and benefiting mere civilians, who had had no part in the fighting. Caesar was able with startling rapidity to cut short these claims, which seemed to him particularly out of place at such a solemn moment. He appeared unexpectedly in the midst of the malcontents and, seizing one of them by the scruff of the neck with his own hand, had him put to death there and then. Two others were turned over to the jurisdiction of the pontiffs and 'slain in the sacrificial manner' by the flamen of Mars, according to Dion Cassius. Their heads were exhibited beside the basilica of this god. After which, order reigned once more.

Now the games were going to begin. Caesar wanted to place the entertainments he was offering to the Roman people under the patronage of the goddess called to watch over his destiny, associating her with the memory of his dearly beloved daughter, who had died eight years before.

In 54, while he was waging war in Gaul, he had asked Oppius, one of his closest associates, in conjunction with a group of capitalists who likewise belonged to his entourage, to proceed with a vast financial operation. This involved the purchase of all the dwelling-houses of the district stretching from the east of the Forum to the Atrium Libertatis. The sums required reached the figure of a hundred million. Once the buildings had been demolished, a new forum bearing Caesar's name was to be erected on the site. He intended that by its sumptuousness and the luxurious convenience of its planning it should eclipse the old one, which was too closely associated in the minds of the people with the past and the glory of his predecessors. The work was interrupted at the beginning of the civil war, but after Pharsalus the contractors received orders to go ahead with all speed. This was
because the temple he had promised to Venus on the eve of that battle was to stand in the centre of the future Forum Julium. As he wanted the inauguration of the forum and the temple to coincide with his triumphs, Caesar did not even wait until the magnificent statue of the goddess ordered from the celebrated sculptor Archesilaos was completed; it was temporarily replaced by a clay model. The consecration took place in the presence of Cleopatra, who, as a supreme homage rendered to her by her glorious lover, had her effigy in gold placed beside Venus. There followed an uninterrupted succession of spectacles, sports, contests, and other entertainments which defied all comparison. The whole city was transformed into an immense amusement park, open from morning to night and from night to morning. Theatrical performances were given in all parts of the town by actors speaking all languages. In the Forum, covered with immense silken veils to protect the public from the burning summer sun, gladiator fights were presented. Athletes wrestled in the Campus Martius for three days in succession on a stage put up for the occasion. In the Little Codeta, a specially constructed artificial lake was the scene of a sham naval battle. Biremes, triremes, and quadriremes, rowed by four thousand oarsmen took part in it, representing the fleets of Tyre and Egypt, respectively. But it was the gigantic Circus Maximus, with its arena enlarged and surrounded by a water-filled ditch for the protection of the spectators, which was the centre of the principal attractions. The staging of an African big-game hunt, in which four hundred of the most authentic of lions took part, was the main item for five days. Then elephants made their appearance, and an animal belonging to a hitherto unknown species—the giraffe—which now made its début before the Roman public. After that there were chariot races, horse races, balls, and, to end up with, mock battles in which cavalry, infantry and elephants participated. In these exhibitions, side by side with the professionals who had been specially engaged, there figured numerous amateurs belonging to the highest ranks of society. Suétionius mentions among the gladiators a certain Furius Leptinus 'descended from a praetorian family' and Q. Calpenus, 'former senator and barrister'. Young men 'of the noblest birth' drove chariots and rode in the races. The highly popular war dance, known as the Pyrrhic, was executed by 'the sons of the great families from Asia and Bithynia'.

The people were dazzled, captivated. Such fabulous expenditure
struck the most robust imaginations with stupefaction. From the lower strata of the populace, however, a murmur was rising. Caesar’s legions were not the only ones to pronounce severe judgment on this wild extravagance. Dion Cassius mentions ‘violent invectives’ directed against Caesar, who was blamed for having ‘amassed the greater part of this money by unjust means, and for having misused it in such a way’. Such critics were rare, however, and did not dare to make themselves known. Already, in the words of Dion Cassius, coercion weighed the Romans down.
CHAPTER 53

After the Festivities

As he surveyed the interminable rows of tables round which his 'guests' were crowding, eager to cram down as much food as they could eat, Caesar must have experienced a sense of real alarm. There were too many of them. If one day all these unemployed should become dissatisfied for some reason or other and rise against him, everything would be lost. There was only one way of warding off the danger: the wholesale reduction of their numbers. This could be done if the surplus population from the capital went to live in the underpopulated districts which had long been calling for the help of men of goodwill, but so far had not succeeded in attracting settlers.

There were 320,000 people in Rome who, profiting by the free distributions of corn instituted by Clodius, were living at the Republic's expense. Caesar wanted to make a selection and to eliminate those whom he considered undesirable. He had just obtained some useful information. In order to fulfil his promise to pay a certain number of rents, he had asked the landlords of the houses where the recipients of the State subsidies lived for exact details concerning their civil status and income. Once this census had been taken, he proceeded to make a radical revision of the lists of citizens who had a right to this gratuity. More than half, or 170,000 to be exact, were excluded. The 150,000 who had been judged worthy of continued assistance formed a fixed contingent whose number would not vary. Vacancies resulting from death or some other cause were to be assigned to candidates chosen by lot from the names struck off the lists.

In this way Caesar created a privileged class of social parasites, provided with a kind of life pension and naturally inclined to support the régime which gave them a livelihood. But in depriving the 170,000 'victims' of their accustomed help, he was playing a dangerous game. For, except in a few special cases, it was no use counting on their eagerness to earn their daily bread by colonising distant desert regions. It was not the first time that such a prospect had been presented in glowing colours to the Roman proletariat,
without overcoming their unwillingness to move. It was the same again this time: instead of making a general exodus towards the land, they invented every possible reason for staying in Rome, preferring to vegetate there in the most miserable conditions rather than leave the city.

A still more redoubtable factor was represented by the organized colleges of workmen and artisans. Starting as harmless societies for mutual aid, they had soon changed in character and had become far-reaching electoral agencies upon which the fate of the candidates largely depended. They had been dissolved several times for being compromised in excessive political corruption. The last time this happened was in 64. Caesar, who knew their power, no man better, authorized Clodius to re-establish them during his tribuneship in 58. Now, judging that these organizations could only do him harm, he suppressed them again. An exception was made in favour of a few religious associations. In particular, he allowed the synagogues to remain, in recognition of the help the Jewish nation had given him during his campaign in Egypt.

To these two measures which deeply affected the interests of the Roman plebs, a third was added. Caesar excluded the plebeians from the tribunals, where they had been represented by their tribuni aerarii who had sat there as equals with the senators and knights. In the future the administration of justice would be exclusively in the hands of these two upper classes of society.

Thus a sort of first line of defence was established by which Caesar intended to protect himself in the course of his future activities. But the principal danger always lay with the Senate. So long as it had not been completely reorganized and brought under his influence, there could be no security for him. His new office of prefect of morals enabled him to make radical changes in this assembly, totally altering its character and transforming it into a flexible instrument for carrying out his personal policy. The circumstances lent themselves to his designs. After the collapse of Pompey’s party a great number of senatorial seats had become vacant. Caesar distributed them to his partisans. He did not stop there. In order to make sure of an overwhelming majority he increased the number of senators, giving seats to men whom he believed to be entirely devoted to him. These he took from more or less every sphere, whether in Rome, in the provinces, or abroad. Often he chose them among the non-commissioned officers in his army. This ended by provoking vehement
protests from his own soldiers who regarded it as an unpardonable act of favouritism. 319

Supporters of this kind, mass-produced and made to order, were not enough for him, however. He considered it necessary to rally the ‘opposition’ to him, or rather, what was left of it. Ever since Pharsalus he had wanted to do this, multiplying his advances and encouraging people to join his party. We have seen how he tried to win over Sulpicius Rufus and Marcellus on his return to Italy after the campaign of Pontus. Now the same work was to be resumed on a vaster scale and by a diplomatist of the highest order—Cicero. The latter had not waited for the outcome of events in Africa before offering his services to the conqueror, probably hoping to be rewarded for his eagerness by the acquisition of a prominent place in the new political hierarchy which was being created before his eyes. Cicero soon had to realize that such hopes were not for him and that he did not inspire the dictator with full confidence. Then, sulking, he withdrew into complete silence, and buried himself once more in his literary studies. However, Caesar was able to find a more profitable employment for Cicero’s energies, and while sparing his susceptibilities as much as was necessary, he made him his rabatteur de ralliements * (I owe this subtle definition to J. Carcopino). 320

This task does not seem to have been at all repugnant to the destroyer of Catiline. On the contrary, it gave him the chance of using to advantage his numerous connections and his undeniable gifts for negotiation and diplomacy. Besides, was it possible to say No to Caesar without running the risk of attracting his suspicion and distrust, of which the sinister consequences were already familiar to Cicero? . . . His new employment gave him many opportunities of helping his friends by intervening on their behalf with his ‘patron’. Some of his overtures were successful, others failed, and even among the exiles there were some who refused point-blank to accept his assistance.

The case of Marcellus, who had a great many friends in political circles in Rome, became the subject of lively comment. After he had rejected the offers transmitted through Brutus, Caesar had decided to leave him to his own devices, and pretended to ignore his existence. The concerted move of a group of senators had brought the matter up again. It was during one of the first sessions of the Senate after

* This cannot be exactly translated. There is a double meaning. A rabatteur is a beater and also a tout who collects information; a ralliement is an assembly.
the end of the triumphs. Caesar's father-in-law, L. Piso, had agreed to act as spokesman for the petitioners. From his place, he addressed his son-in-law, who was now occupying a seat apart beside the consuls. At his first word, young C. Marcellus, cousin of the exile, threw himself at the feet of the dictator. Simultaneously the senators sprang up with admirably timed co-ordination, stretching out their arms towards him to implore pardon for the proconsul. It was for Caesar to respond.

He was visibly surprised. Such collective demonstrations were not to his taste when the initiative did not come from him. All waited for his reply. He was going to speak. He began by attacking Marcellus, as though he had him there in front of him. He complained of his 'intractable' character, he reproached him with having repulsed his offers. He went further: he accused him of weaving plots, of inciting against him those former partisans of Pompey whom he had forgiven and admitted into his circle. To whom could Caesar have alluded if not to Brutus, whom the hermit of Mitylene had tried to dissociate from his new master during their interview? Caesar's speech gained momentum. It was as though he longed to free himself from a weight which oppressed him. His words were no longer meant for the refractory exile. Passing beyond him, he addressed himself to all those who were plotting and preparing to shorten his days. They could know, then, that he, Caesar, was not afraid of death. 'I have lived enough,' he cried, 'both for nature and for glory!' Then, changing his tone, as if he regretted having opened his heart to men who were indifferent, and in great part hostile towards him, he abruptly returned to Marcellus and concluded amid general surprise: 'Since such is the wish of this great body, the Senate, I pardon you, Marcellus.' The patres expressed their exuberant joy by loud acclamations. Each of the senators present wanted thereupon to offer Caesar personal congratulations on his clemency. One by one they filed past him, uttering suitable phrases in voices which shook with emotion. Cicero, when his turn came, was not content with a commonplace formula of gratitude. He improvised a whole speech, the first since his reappearance in the Senate.321

'At last,' he exclaimed, 'my voice shall cease to be mute in this assembly. Such rare kindness, such extraordinary clemency, this admirable moderation in one whose power is without limits—in a word, this incredible and well-nigh divine wisdom, do not permit me to stifle the avowal of my gratitude.'

This speech, which is among the finest of his long career as an
orator, is of a perfidious subtlety absolutely unique of its kind. It
breathes an incomparable duplicity of which the contours are so
attenuated that it is impossible to find any open proof of bad faith.
Yet, how many poisoned darts it let fly straight into Caesar’s face,
while seeming to toss bouquets at him!

What about his victories over ‘innumerable barbarian nations’? But these nations—‘neither nature nor destiny had made them
invincible, and there is no force which cannot be shaken and broken
by iron and effort’. They were brilliant, these victories, to be sure,
but Caesar did not win them unaided. ‘Numerous warriors have
backed up your courage’, he would have him note. The glamour of
his triumphs and the splendour of the monuments erected by his
orders should not deceive him; they could not last for ever: ‘The
work of men, they are mortal like their authors.’ Then came the
final impertinence: ‘When thou recallest thy military glories, thou
wilt be able to congratulate thyself often on thy valour, but still more
often on thy good fortune. ’ . ’ After that, Cicero dwelt on the
‘bitter complaints’ and the ‘horrible suspicions’ formulated by
Caesar. He believed them to have ‘little foundation’, but he would
examine them carefully—solely, according to him, in order to induce
the dictator to be more watchful of his safety. And as though he
had read in Caesar’s mind the question which haunted him, Cicero
wondered: Who, then, would dare to raise his hand against him?
One of his soldiers? A forgiven enemy? Who could be capable
of such an ‘excess of lunacy’? He could not say, but he did not
fail to point out that ‘the human heart has so many secret recesses,
so many hidden twists’! He actually took pleasure in probing the
wound of Caesar’s suspicions and in heightening his apprehensions!
‘In this way’, he said, seeking to justify himself, ‘we shall redouble
thy vigilance.’ Caesar’s words, ‘full of grandeur and wisdom’,
those disillusioned words I have lived enough had pained him. Let
him leave this stoical contempt for death to the philosophers! Let
him think of all the nation which needed him, and of the Republic
which looked to him for its salvation! Cicero admitted that they
were not doing Caesar full justice. There was a subtle insolence in
the hypocritical consolations he tendered him on this subject in his
peroration, but how magnificently they were phrased! ‘Work for
those judges who in time to come will pronounce upon thee with
more equity than we can do, because love and favour, hate and
jealousy will not influence their verdict.’

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The speech which Caesar had just made, and of which only a few fragments have come down to us, is particularly significant. Scarcely a month had passed since he had been the object of delirious oviations and servile adulation, and already enemy hands were working to destroy him. The strange accident during his first triumph, the unmistakably malevolent songs of some of his soldiers were perhaps mere fortuitous coincidences, but they fit in only too well with the machinations, of which we can trace the pattern from the bitter recriminations Caesar could not help uttering before the Senate.

This need not surprise us. Public opinion, or what is generally accepted as such, was not favourably disposed towards Caesar. It is true that by increasing the number of magistrates and seats in the Senate he had managed to win a few hundred devoted partisans whom he considered he had thus attached to his destiny, but how many thousands of hidden enemies, who had sworn his ruin, were waiting with pent up hearts for the occasion when they would be able to display their implacable hatred in the full light of day? The proscriptions which Caesar had decreed after Pharsalus had affected numerous families in the capital. The sale of the exiles’ possessions which followed as a consequence had caused them serious financial losses. A class of ‘new poor’ was being formed who were bound to hold Caesar responsible for their misfortune. At the same time, those who had acquired the auctioned goods at bargain prices were beginning to display a luxury which soon reached exorbitant proportions. Caesar intended to check this development by promulgating his famous luxury law, the *lex Julia somptuaria*, of which a few clauses have been preserved by Suetonius and by Cicero in his correspondence.

The principal object of this law seems to have been to prevent opulent Romans from squandering their money. It established the maximum sum which a citizen was entitled to spend in the course of a day. Anyone convicted of having spent more was forced to pay a fine equal to the amount he had exceeded. The wearing of purple garments and pearls as well as the use of litters was permitted only to ‘specially designated persons, of specified ages and on specified days’. Important restrictions were applied to the pleasures of the table. No more banquets! The number of guests who were allowed to gather at a meal was severely limited and a certain number of delicacies strictly forbidden. The sale of rare and costly commodities from abroad was likewise prohibited, and teams of inspectors were employed
to visit the markets and seize the illegal merchandise. Suetonius asserts that Caesar was not satisfied with these public raids. 'Sometimes he even sent lictors and guards by surprise to remove from the very tables where people were dining whatever had escaped the authorities.'

These are all the proscriptions of this law which have come to our knowledge. There must have been a great many others, but they remain unknown. What we do know—Cicero's letters go to prove it—is that this law was unfavourably received. The popular response to it was a sort of ironic scepticism, and its practical application met with a hidden but stubborn resistance on the part of those affected. Moreover, its existence was ephemeral, and scarcely three months after its promulgation it fell into disuse. This was on the day when Caesar, once more called to the battlefield by a fresh outbreak of the civil war, was obliged to leave Rome.
CHAPTER 54

The Last Battle

While Caesar was celebrating his victories and distributing rewards in Rome, the remnant of Pompey's party was being miraculously reborn from its ashes in distant Spain. The circumstances appeared to be particularly favourable for this resurrection. Q. Cassius, 324 chosen by Caesar to govern Further Spain after the surrender of Varro, turned out to be an incompetent administrator, who by his extortions had aroused general hostility both towards himself and towards Caesar, whom he was supposed to represent. He was detested by the natives and equally unpopular with the troops. One part of his army was indeed composed of inhabitants of the country and the other, although made up of foreign contingents, had become very Spanish in character since its arrival in the Peninsula. In the spring of 48, in obedience to Caesar's command, Cassius started his preparations for crossing over to Africa in order to cut Juba off and prevent him from giving any help to Pompey. At this point the two national legions which had been handed over to him by Varro detached themselves from him and marched on Ulia (Montemayor), where the three legions were stationed which had remained loyal to him. In the meantime Cassius had been recalled and replaced by Trebonius. Taking his booty with him he left the country, only to perish on his way in a shipwreck. The split between the legions continued, however. On learning of the regrouping of Pompey's coalition in Africa after the battle of Pharsalus, the two rebellious legions sent delegates to Utica charged with reaching an understanding with a view to common action. Scipio agreed to enter into negotiations with them, and ordered Pompey's eldest son, Cnaeus, who had also made his way to Africa after the murder of his father, to go to Spain and establish contact with these disaffected troops. On his way Cn. Pompey stopped at the Balearic Islands, which he wanted to capture. There he fell ill, and it was only after the battle of Thapsus that he landed in Spain. The situation had radically changed as a result of the crushing defeat suffered by Scipio's army. There was no longer any question of strengthening a coalition and
co-ordinating the actions of the two partners. The war in Africa was over. There were only two alternatives: to give up the struggle or to begin all over again. Cn. Pompey chose the latter. The two legions declared themselves unequivocally to be on his side. They were well aware that Caesar, now that he had his hands free, would make them pay dearly for their defection, and resolutely burning their boats, they engaged wholeheartedly in the impending struggle.

Helped by the prestige attached to his father's name, as well as by the cruel memories which the extortions of Caesar's former governor had left with the natives, Cn. Pompey had no difficulty in winning over a great many of the Spanish cities to his side. Survivors from Thapsus came to join him. Among others there were Labienus and Attius Varus—the only two left of the great Pompeian chiefs—and his younger brother Sextus. With their arrival the character of the enterprise changed and extended in scope. It was becoming possible to envisage the reconstitution of the ranks of the former army. Attius Varus with his naval experience took charge of the co-ordination of the maritime forces. Labienus undertook the task with which he was familiar of organizing the land troops. Townsmen and peasants were mobilized, and very soon Cn. Pompey found himself at the head of thirteen legions and a cavalry corps of several thousand horse.

Caesar was not unaware of the activity of the son of his unhappy rival. He did not, however, attach much importance to it. When he had landed in Sardinia after the campaign in Africa was at an end, he had given orders to his legates Q. Pedius and Q. Fabius Maximus, to go to Spain with a contingent of young soldiers and to bring this handful of rebels to reason. It was only after he had received a series of alarming reports from them, as well as reiterated appeals for help on the part of the few towns which had remained loyal to him, and therefore were expecting extremely harsh treatment from Cn. Pompey, that he resolved to set out himself. It was at the beginning of winter. It was scarcely four months since, on his return to Rome, he had resumed the daily routine of civilian life which, since 58, he had only known for brief intervals. Immediately caught up in the network of politics, he divided his time between the affairs of the State and the caresses of Cleopatra, whom he established luxuriously in a sumptuous villa on the other side of the Tiber. Perhaps he was not particularly anxious to don his military garb again after so short an interval, but he realised that his presence on the spot had become necessary, and so he left. He was convinced,
however, that this time his absence would be of short duration, and he departed from Rome before proceeding to the nomination of the new magistrates, putting off all such matters until his return.

'Caesar made the journey with such speed that both his own partisans and the enemy saw him before they had had the slightest news of his coming.' This is reported by Dion Cassius. His version has to be slightly modified, however. Cn. Pompey, who was besieging Ulia where the three legions which had remained loyal to Caesar were shut up, had been warned in good time of Caesar's approach. He even took care to post advance scouts all along the road which Caesar would take, instructing them to notify him as soon as the dictator appeared. But he had not foreseen that the inhabitants of Corduba, who were informed of Caesar's imminent arrival, would stop his couriers, so that Cn. Pompey did not learn of the presence of his enemy until Caesar was advancing against him at the head of his troops. As for the devoted Cordubans, they knew the stages of Caesar's itinerary so well that they were able to send him a deputation immediately, informing him of the capture of Pompey's scouts and suggesting that as a result he would have no difficulty in capturing their town by a surprise attack during the night. Caesar thought this was a good idea, and, instead of pursuing his journey to the headquarters of his legates, he halted and ordered them to send him all the cavalry they had raised in the province. From that time his presence in Spain was known everywhere. The besieged legions in Ulia managed to send him an urgent message, begging him to come to their deliverance. Sextus Pompey, in charge of the defence of Corduba, hastily appealed to his elder brother, Repeating the manoeuvre which had worked so successfully in Gaul, Caesar marched against this city, convinced that that was the best way of forcing Cnaeus to abandon the siege of Ulia in order to come to the help of his younger brother. That was, in fact, what happened. Leaving everything, the elder brother rushed to the rescue of Sextus. Nothing remained but to join battle. At that moment Caesar fell ill. His troops were given orders to withdraw, the siege of Corduba was postponed, and he had to give up the prospect of finishing off at one blow this presumptuous adversary whom he refused to take seriously.

Dion Cassius is the only one among the ancient writers who has given us any information (and how scanty it is!) about this illness of Caesar's which seems to have lasted some time. It is quite impossible
to discover its nature, but from his description were are led to understand that it was neither a passing indisposition nor one of the epileptic fits such as he may have had on the battlefield at Thapsus. It may be that it was just the toll taken by Nature, at whom he had always scornfully snapped his fingers until now. Remembering his mad cavalcades across the Pyrenees and the Alps, he had once more embarked on a tremendous long-distance expedition on horseback: from Rome to Obulco (about 50 miles from Corduba) in mid-winter. It had meant twenty-seven days of furious riding in the icy cold, buffeted by the biting mountain winds. This time, however, his powers of resistance were no longer the same. His constitution, worn out by twelve years of superhuman strain, gave way. It was a warning which Caesar had no thought of heeding. Moreover, there could be no question of his doing so. He was there to fight, and scarcely had he recovered before he returned to the task.

It was still winter. 'The soldiers, living in miserable tents, suffered a great deal and lacked provisions,' writes Dion Cassius, whose account serves as a valuable complement to De bello Hispaniensi, which is often confused and disjointed. Here, too, precedents were not lacking. If provisions were short, the only thing to do was to take them from the enemy. On being informed that Cn. Pompey had gathered all his stores at Ategua (Teba-la-Vieja), Caesar marched against this town, which was strongly defended by a large garrison, 'in the hope that the number of his soldiers and the terror with which the suddenness of his attack struck the inhabitants would make him master of it'.

His arrival did not produce the effect he had counted upon, and he was obliged to undertake a regular siege. Cn. Pompey, trusting to the courage and tenacity of the garrison, took up his position at some distance from the encircled city and delegated one of his best officers, Munatius Flaccus, to take charge of its defence. Several days went by without his making any attempt to help the besieged. The inhabitants of Ategua, who had been nursing the illusion that he would force Caesar to raise the siege, ended by discovering their mistake and thought of capitulation. However, they met with the firm opposition of the garrison who, fearing Caesar's eventual reprisals, preferred to resist to the end. Then the people tried to end the siege by indirect methods. Balls were thrown into Caesar's camp bearing messages which informed him of what was happening inside the town. On one of them it was written, 'A shield on the wall will tell
you the day when you can take the city'. Then a group of his legionaries, judging that the city was ripe for the assault, resolved to attack it without asking anyone's advice or receiving orders from their superiors. They did not get far. Pompey's forces let them scale the walls, and then they were taken prisoner. The besieged wanted to exploit this capture to their own advantage. An exchange was proposed to Caesar: his soldiers should be returned to him if he would allow Pompey's troops to come out of the town. Caesar replied that 'his custom was to dictate conditions, and not to accept them'. Matters remained at that point.

The siege continued. Inside the city they were still hoping to be liberated by Pompey. Instead of delivering them, however, he sent a message ordering Flaccus—in view of the inability of the chief of Pompey's forces to come to his help—to attempt a sally, and after breaking through the enemy lines, come with all his garrison to join him. Flaccus obeyed, failed, and went back into Ategua. Amidst the general discouragement the soldiers resigned themselves to sending Caesar one of their men, Tibetrius Tullius, to assure him of their repentant submission. 'Weary of bearing the continual attacks of your legions,' they told him through their spokesman, 'and of being day and night exposed to the swords and arrows of your soldiers, abandoned by Pompey, defeated by your valour, we rely on your clemency, we ask you to spare our lives.'

Caesar's answer seemed ambiguous: 'I shall be the same towards Roman citizens who surrender to me', he declared, 'as I have been towards foreign nations.' This could easily mean that they would have to share the fate of the unfortunate inhabitants of the cities which had been bold enough to take up arms against him. Such a prospect cannot have appealed to the soldiers of Munatius Flaccus, because the negotiations were broken off and the siege continued. However, some two weeks later their own chief sent Caesar the following note: 'L. Munatius to Caesar. Since Cn. Pompey is abandoning me, if you will spare my life I promise to serve you as faithfully as I have served him.' At the same time the representatives of the troops once more returned to Caesar to tell him that if he would spare their lives the city would be delivered to him the next day. 'He replied to them that he was Caesar,' writes the author of De bello Hispaniensi, 'and that he would keep his word.' That must have been enough for them. At any rate, they made no further objection, the gates of the city were opened and Caesar made his entry on February 19,
THE LAST BATTLE

45. His soldiers acclaimed him as imperator. It was the first time they had done so since he had crossed the Rubicon and given the signal for the civil war to begin. This was evidently a prearranged demonstration, agreed upon between himself and subordinate leaders of his troops, and chiefly intended to impress the followers of Cn. Pompey and the native population. As for Caesar himself, this modest success after so many brilliant victories, must have been of very small account.

Cn. Pompey had no sooner heard of the surrender of Ategua than he struck camp and withdrew. Caesar followed him. A brutal and violent man, according to the unanimous testimony of his contemporaries, Cn. Pompey showed himself to be a clever tactician on this occasion. He avoided battle and refused to respond to the provocations of the enemy. It is true that he was supported by Labienus, who was thoroughly familiar with the methods of his former master. In any case, the Pompeians played their game with skill and calm perseverance. The Spanish towns were growing impatient, however. Pompey received complaints and remonstrances from them. They accused him of dragging out the war—war is always too long, even for those who have no part in it—and of being hesitant, undecided, and solely preoccupied with his own interests.

Moving on from stage to stage, Cn. Pompey had arrived in front of Munda, where he was able to occupy a position which lent itself admirably to both offensive and defensive warfare. It was on the slopes of a hill, about a thousand feet above a vast plain which stretched southwards and was separated from the slopes by the marshes of a little river. Emboldened by the strategic advantages of his new position, Pompey resolved to try his luck, and drew up his army in battle array. Perhaps he merely wanted to make a demonstration calculated to silence those who were clamouring for action, and he may have cherished the secret hope that Caesar would not be so imprudent as to accept the battle under conditions which were definitely unfavourable to him. However it may have been, once his forces were deployed he made no further move, leaving the initiative to the enemy.

The latter appeared to hesitate. Impatient to finish this disheartening campaign which was using up to no purpose what was left of the courage and goodwill of his soldiers, Caesar was longing above all things for a decisive battle. And now, at the very moment when it was offered to him, his ardour seemed to have cooled. To be sure, he realised the disadvantages of the ground and the numerical weakness
of his troops, but how many times had he not triumphed over far more serious difficulties! This time it was dash and confidence in his fortune which were lacking. Perhaps he had not entirely recovered from the results of his illness and his mental outlook was affected. Florus tells us that before the battle he had been seen to be 'depressed, contrary to his habit'. He wanted to consult the gods. The sacrificial victim was found to have no heart, and the diviner interpreted this as a sinister omen. Then Caesar pulled himself together. His basic scepticism reasserted itself. He replied curtly to the priest: 'The portents shall be more favourable when it pleases me, and it should not be regarded as a marvel if an animal has no heart'; then, placing himself under the protection of Venus, he gave the order to attack.

'The sky was clear and calm,' writes the author of De bello Hispaniensi, 'and it seemed as though the immortal gods had created this day specially for a battle.' Caesar's legionaries moved forward. Cn. Pompey's troops remained motionless on their hill. When the soldiers came to the first slopes they halted. Why? De bello Hispaniensi accounts for this after its own fashion. 'It would have been dangerous to advance any farther, as the enemy, who had the advantage of the ground, was ready to charge upon us from above. Caesar, who had observed this, did not wish to expose his troops to unnecessary risks and ordered them to stop.' This seems an insufficient explanation. It is unthinkable that Caesar, with all his military experience, had not foreseen that the enemy would want to make full use of the advantages of their position, striving by all possible means to draw him on to the ground most unfavourable to him. He most certainly would have weighed up all these factors, but before launching the attack, and not at the moment when it was reaching its culmination. The explanation must rather be sought elsewhere, and it is very probable that it was the soldiers themselves who refused to go any farther. It is understandable that Caesar's officer who wrote De bello Hispaniensi was not anxious to report this, but what he wished to pass over in silence has been explicitly recorded by Appian.

'The two phalanxes were scarcely confronted with each other when Caesar's troops were seized with terror, and stupor was added to their fear.' Stupor? Let us call it surprise. Up to that time they had only dealt with isolated and relatively unimportant formations of Pompey's army which had been reconstituted thanks to the patient labours of Cn. Pompey and Labienus. Now they found themselves
face to face with its entire forces, deployed in their full strength: thirteen legions, twelve thousand light infantry and auxiliary troops, more than ten thousand horsemen, forming a total of close on 80,000 combatants. They themselves numbered scarcely 40,000, and they were frightened. If we further consider the influence of a few 'malcontents' of the Tenth Legion, we shall perhaps better understand the sudden confusion that took possession of Caesar's army.

When he saw his soldiers faltering, Caesar felt completely helpless. For the first time in his life he lost his head. Overcome with violent despair, he began to cry out against Fortune who 'had reserved him so unworthy an end'; for he imagined that nothing could save him. He was so convinced of this that the idea of suicide flashed across his panic-stricken mind, and as Florus says, 'the thought of death could be read in his face'. At the last moment, he tried to appeal to the deity. It was then that this confirmed atheist raised his eyes to heaven, stretching out his hands in a gesture of desperate supplication, invoking all the gods at once, imploring them 'not to make him lose the fruit of so many victories in one single battle'. Then, abruptly, with a sudden spurt of fierce energy, there was the miraculous recovery of a will reborn on the edge of the abyss.

Caesar sent away his horse. He divested himself of his shield, threw aside his helmet and sword which hindered his movements, and with his head uncovered, ran 'like a madman' into the front line. There he re-established the ranks, stopped the runaways and pushed the cowards forward. He shouted, he gesticulated, he threatened. Where threats were unavailing he entreated. When his voice failed him, he pleaded with his eyes to rally the soldiers. All his efforts were in vain. Nothing could avert the approaching catastrophe. This time it was all over. There was no hope left. Caesar had come to the end of all his resources, all his arguments. Fear had placed an insurmountable barrier between him and his men. It only remained for him to die, to be killed by the enemy and to end a world conqueror's destiny by dying like a soldier.

Unarmed as he was, he seized the shield of one of his attendants and leapt forward, shouting to the officers who surrounded him: 'It is here that I am going to perish and that you will see the end of the war.'

After that we only have to read Appian:

With these words he dashed from the ranks and advanced
towards the enemy until he was not more than ten feet away. A hailstorm of two hundred arrows descended upon him; some passed without touching him, his shield protected him from the others. Then each one of the tribunes came running towards him and fought at his side. This movement led the entire army to turn with vehemence against the enemy.

According to Florus, Caesar owed his final victory to an ingenious subterfuge:

Five enemy cohorts, which Labienus had sent to the relief of their camp, were running across the lines. This movement had the appearance of a flight. Caesar—either because he thought they were really fleeing, or because as an astute tactician he pretended to think so—seized this opportunity, charged after them as if they were troops on the run, and so raised his army’s courage, and lowered that of the enemy. His soldiers, thinking that they had won, put more ardour into the pursuit. Pompey’s troops, convinced that their comrades were in flight, started to fly themselves.

The fighting ended in the evening. ‘Never had Caesar waged a more bloody and more perilous battle,’ says Velleius Paterculus. According to De bello Hispaniensi, Cn. Pompey lost 33,000 dead. The rest of his army formed two groups. The one (about 15,000 men) barricaded themselves in Munda, the other (nearly 25,000) fled to Corduba. Labienus and Attius Varus died fighting. Their bodies were found on the battlefield. Cn. Pompey managed to escape in the direction of the Bay of Gibraltar, where his fleet was stationed. Seventeen of his senior officers were taken prisoners.

As Caesar entered his tent after the battle he said to his comrades: ‘I have often fought for victory, but to-day, for the first time, I fought for my life.’ His task was not finished, however. The survivors of the debacle had to be wiped out.

Leaving Fabius Maximus to continue the siege of Munda, Caesar marched on Corduba, where Pompey’s legions, who had been able to make their escape, were preparing to resist, supported by the garrison and by a crowd of slaves who had been promised their freedom as the price for the blood they shed. The inhabitants, who did not care to prolong the struggle, had sent envoys to Caesar announcing that they surrendered to his mercy. The fugitives from Munda, on learning of this move, set fire to the town. This only
served to facilitate Caesar's task when he stormed it with his columns. As for the incendiaries, he had them massacred to the last man. Twenty-two thousand were thus put to death; this is the number given in De bello Hispaniensi. In other words, nearly all the Pompeians who had managed to take refuge in Corduba were killed. From there, Caesar marched on Hispalis, where he had no difficulty in overcoming the short-lived resistance of a few elements of the population who had remained loyal to Pompey. Once master of the city, he called an assembly of the notables of the province. While waiting for their arrival, he went to Asta and from there to Gades. On the way he received the submission of most of the towns in Baetica. During this time Fabius Maximus had captured, in rapid succession, Munda and Urso (Osuna).

The first thing that greeted Caesar's eyes on his return to Hispalis was the head of Cn. Pompey exhibited in the public square. For several days he had succeeded in eluding the troops sent in his pursuit, but finally he was discovered hiding in a cave and was slain on the spot. After the father, the son! In less than three years, one after the other, two heads had been sacrificed to Caesar's ambition. The civil war was over.

The dignitaries were waiting for Caesar. When he appeared before them, his heart was hardened. They were all ungrateful wretches, he said. After having enjoyed his favours they had gone over to Pompey. 'With you, benefactions count as injuries, and injuries as benefactions,' he told them bluntly. 'Never have you been able to show unity in peace or courage in war.' Then he stated his demands: the towns would have to pay fines and deliver up to him their most costly treasures as punishment for their defection. Gades, his favourite city, was not spared—not even the temple of Hercules, to which only recently he had restored the riches carried off by Pompey, and where in former days, as a young quaestor, he had wept at the feet of the statue of Alexander the Great.
PART FOUR

DIVUS JULIUS
CHAPTER 55

At the Summit of Power

CAESAR travelled home in a comfortable four-seater chariot. He was beginning to preserve his strength, and did not wish to indulge in any more of the equestrian performances to which he had been so passionately addicted in the past. At his side was his great-nephew Octavius, whom he had taken to Spain as a contubernalis. He had become particularly attached to this shy and puny boy who seems to have borne the tender solicitude of his great-uncle with resignation.

At Narbonne the most prominent personalities in Roman politics were waiting for Caesar. They had not hesitated to undertake a journey of several days in order to pay their court to him and to be among the first to solicit his favours. There was only one whom he had expressly asked to come: this was Brutus, whom he had notified that he wished to congratulate him on his excellent administration of Cisalpine Gaul. Perhaps he also wanted to ask him for an explanation on the subject of his recent marriage to Cato's daughter, which must have been a disagreeable surprise for him.

Among all these men who had come to meet Caesar there was Trebonius, the unfortunate governor of Further Spain, who had had no active part in the military operations and seems to have vegetated in a state of semi-disgrace during the last campaign. We do not know when or how this ambitious and vindictive man conceived the idea of killing Caesar. We do know that he proposed to carry out his plan on the occasion of the conqueror's passage through Narbonne. It is astounding that he did not hesitate to confide in Antony (who had also hastened to meet the dictator), and even invited him to take part in the assassination. But still more astounding is the fact that the man who passed for Caesar's most faithful and devoted lieutenant, instead of immediately denouncing the plot to those whom it concerned, said nothing to anyone and contented himself with refusing the offer of Trebonius. The latter was not interfered with in any way, but, when he realized that he had chosen a bad moment, he abandoned his attempt, and like everyone else
joined the ranks of the petitioners, hoping to obtain from Caesar some profitable office.

Caesar did not stay long at Narbonne and reached the gates of Rome earlier than had been expected. The preparations for his triumph were not completed. The troops which were to participate in it had not yet arrived. He went straight to his estate at Lavicum, dismissing all those who were besieging him with requests. He did not, however, do this in order to recover from the fatigues of his long journey. He wanted to collect his thoughts in preparation for something which, in the present circumstances, seemed to him of paramount importance. Since the beginning of the civil war, when he had publicly torn up the will he had made in favour of Pompey, he had thought no more about it. The decision he was now taking enables us to form some idea of the apprehensions which weighed more and more heavily on his mind. His health was beginning to decline. His stomach troubled him. His epileptic fits were becoming more frequent and more serious. Physically, he was very weary. His words to the Senate, ‘I have lived enough’, were not a mere affectation on his part. They were the expression of a mental condition which was new to him, but which was the result of a long physiological process that had been going on secretly and imperceptibly during the years of political struggle and military battles. On September 13, in the solitude of Lavicum, Caesar wrote the lines which appointed Octavius as his heir and shaped the future of the Roman State. Then, returning to the daily round of public life, he passed once more within the walls of Rome. The will was confided to the care of the great Vestalis.

His triumph was celebrated at the beginning of October. The ceremony was less successful this time. The procession was marked by an incident: when the triumphal chariot was passing in front of the site reserved for the people’s tribunes, one of them, P. Aquila, did not rise to salute the conqueror. Caesar was beside himself. He stopped and cried out: ‘Very well, Tribune Aquila, ask me, then, to give back the Republic!’ He was deeply angered by such audacity, and for a long time afterwards, when granting a favour, he would add in a sarcastic tone: ‘Always provided Pontius Aquila consents to this . . .’ The public meal was second-rate; so much so that Caesar, who valued his reputation, felt obliged to order another which took place five days later. An unusual demonstration disturbed the games. Caesar had forced Laberius, the famous author of mimes, to come himself to direct the play which he had been
commissioned to write. The old man thought the request was humiliating on account of his age (he was over sixty) and his rank (he belonged to the equestrian order), but he did not dare to refuse. He took his revenge by introducing into the performance certain improvised lines, such as:

Henceforth, Romans, we have lost our liberty!

or:

He must fear many people,
Whom many people fear.

These last lines, above all, expressing as they did a scarcely disguised threat, produced a deep impression on the audience. 'At these words,' we read in the Saturnalia of Macrobius, 'all the people fixed their eyes on Caesar, and were pleased to see him unable to escape the shaft which struck him.' Caesar shrugged his shoulders. He revenged himself by having the palm of victory in the competition he had organized for the best mime awarded to someone else, but he did not deprive Laberius of his fees nor of the promised gold ring.

On the whole, if we are to believe Plutarch, this fifth triumph 'pained the Romans more than anything else'. They considered it to be the height of impropriety to glory in the destruction of 'the family of the greatest of Romans, struck down by misfortune'. Never had such men as Marius or Sulla triumphed over a Roman fellow citizen. This gesture was considered as an affront to the national dignity.

Immediately afterwards, Caesar retired from his consulship, as if he wanted to show how little importance he attached to it. He had himself replaced by Trebonius—who, as it turned out, had not wasted his time at Narbonne after all—and by his legate Fabius Maximus, who had so ably supported him in his operations against Cn. Pompey. He allowed the latter, as a special favour (incidentally, not well received by public opinion), to celebrate a triumph of his own. It took place a few days after Caesar's, although officially this modest and conscientious officer had not held a supreme command which alone would have entitled him to it.

In the meantime, the Senate had not ceased to shower Caesar with the most servile adulation. As soon as the news of the victory at Munda reached them on April 20, the senators had hastened to add a chariot race in honour of the victor to the programme of the festival of the Palilia, which was to take place the next day (this festival
was celebrated in Rome on April 21, the anniversary of the foundation of the city. Moreover, they had surpassed themselves by voting him fifty days of thanksgiving. Next, still without waiting for Caesar's return, they had organized another festival to commemorate his victories. This was to consist of circus games and a procession in which his image was to be solemnly carried beside that of Victory. According to Cicero, it took place in the midst of gloomy indifference. They had a statue erected for him in the temple of Quirinus, bearing the inscription: *To the invincible god.* This provided Cicero with a fresh pretext for being witty at Caesar's expense; he remarked to Atticus that he rejoiced to see Caesar associated with the god of war, and not with the goddess of health. Yet it was he, as Plutarch tells us, who was the first to propose that these honours should be decreed. The author of the *Lives* considered them to be 'of a grandeur still compatible with human nature', while those which followed, in the words of the same author, appeared so extravagant 'that they rendered him [Caesar] odious and insufferable even to the gentlest of people'. But Plutarch fails to add that this was precisely what the astute politicians in the Roman Senate were seeking to bring about. Dion Cassius, however, is quite frank about it: 'They [the senators] began to load him beyond measure with ever greater honours, some with excessive flattery, others mockingly. . . . They did this with the intention of drawing down envy and hatred upon him as soon as possible, in order to hasten his ruin.'

Here is an enumeration of the honours which I have reduced to the strictest minimum:

We have already seen that his statue was set up in the temple of a god. Another was to go to the Capitol, to be placed next those of the kings. Two more were to decorate the tribune of the orators in the Forum: one for having liberated the town from an alleged siege, the other for having saved his fellow citizens from the massacre which Cn. Pompey was supposed to have planned in the event of his capture of Rome. That did not seem to be enough. It was finally decreed that Caesar should have his statue in all the temples of Rome and in all the towns of the Republic. Thus, in the shelter of the sacred dwellings, his image would be everywhere present.

After the statues came temples. It was decided that a temple should be built 'to the new Concord', in memory of the peace Caesar had restored, and that every year festivals should be celebrated there in his honour. Then there was to be another which he was to
share with Clemency, and where he was to be represented hand in hand with the goddess. Yet another temple, 'to Liberty', was to commemorate Caesar's inscription in the annals with the agnomen of Liberator.

After the temples came festivals. There were to be annual ones to celebrate the anniversaries of his birth and of his principal victories. There were to be five-yearly ones to honour him as a heros. There were also to be perpetual ones: in all gladiator fights, both in Rome and in every other Italian city, one day was henceforth to be consecrated to him, and on that day the fighters were to kill each other to the greater glory of Caesar.

His person was declared to be sacred and inviolable. They swore to guard and protect his life, and whoever should fail to fly to his help if he was in danger would be given up to the powers of Hades.

Nothing remained but to proclaim him a god. This was done, and they bestowed upon him all the attributes with which the Romans were accustomed to honour their deities; a bed for lying in state, a special chariot for his images, litters for carrying religious offerings, etc., etc.

Caesar consented with a good grace to his own deification. If his enemies meant to harm him by exaggerating out of all proportion the extent of the honours ascribed to him, they were in effect rendering him a valuable service. The homage loaded upon him was in perfect harmony with his gigantic schemes, which appeared to be quite beyond the capacities of mortal man. Plutarch has observed this very clearly: 'He [Caesar] felt rising within him the thought of vaster designs and the desire for a new glory, as though he had exhausted the first. This passion was a kind of rivalry with himself ... a n ambitious zeal to put the future above the past.'

His eyes were now turned towards the country of the Parthians, where the honour of Roman arms had so cruelly suffered at the time of Crassus' unfortunate expedition. Once this stain had been removed and the country subjugated, he proposed to cross Hyrcania, following the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, to invade Scythia, to crush the peoples on the borders of Germany, and finally to reduce the latter country to the status of a Roman province, thus avenging the double set-back he had suffered in the course of the Gallic War. Thus the world would become Roman from the Caspian Sea to the limits of the Ocean, and he, Caesar, would be its master. Then he would witness the realization of the dream which ever obsessed him: to surpass Alexander. Three years was the time he required.
 CHAPTER 56

The March Towards the Throne

It was December. On the eve of the Saturnalia, in order to escape from the tumult of the popular festivities, Caesar decided to spend a few days with Octavius' stepfather at his property near Puteoli. An escort of two thousand men of his personal guard accompanied him, which shows that the suspicions of which his speech in the Senate had given an indication were still in his mind and that he believed his life to be threatened. Cicero, whose villa was near the house of Caesar's host L. Marcius Philippus, asked Caesar to do him the honour of dining with him. The dictator accepted. This was the occasion for Cicero's famous letter to Atticus which might be entitled 'Caesar on a Holiday'. It does indeed describe with remarkable precision one of his days of relaxation, and enables us to see the man himself, divested of those divine and heroic accessories which enveloped him from now onwards. Cicero went to his neighbour's house the morning after Caesar's arrival in the hopes of being received by him. He was not successful. The divine Julius was busy settling some accounts with Balbus. At about two o'clock in the afternoon Caesar went for a walk on the beach and took a bath. While he was bathing one of his attendants announced to him the death of Mamurra, his chief of engineers in the first Gallic campaign. This officer, after having become immensely rich, left his benefactor, who it appears had at one time been his most tender lover, and went off to Rome, where he led a life of brilliant gaiety and wild extravagance. Cicero tells us that on hearing the news Caesar 'did not even raise his eyebrows'. Then he had himself anointed and went to table.333

Caesar arrived at Cicero's house with all his guard; it seems that even the peaceful home of the old barrister did not inspire him with confidence. His host turned pale at the sight of two thousand soldiers entering his domain, but everything was satisfactorily arranged in the end. The officer in command of the escort made his men camp in the garden. The slaves and freedmen were directed towards the kitchens. Three special halls were given up to Caesar's retinue. The meal was highly successful. 'As he [Caesar] had taken a
purgative,' Cicero informs us, 'he drank and ate with as much appetite as gaiety.' Caesar was known to be a brilliant and witty conversationalist: 'His talk showed good taste and an exquisite savour.' 'Moreover,' adds his host, 'there was not a word about serious business. The conversation was entirely literary.' The next day, December 20, he went back to Rome.

The Senate had profited by Caesar's absence to pass en bloc all the decrees concerning the honours to be accorded to him. 'Thus,' explains Dion Cassius, 'the resolution would not seem to be the result of pressure, but the expression of their free will.' These decisions, says the same author, 'had been made by a unanimity of votes, except for that of Cassius and a few others, a circumstance which caused a great deal of comment.'

Who was this Cassius? Apart from the anecdote related by Plutarch and intended to underline the 'tyrannical' inclinations which characterized him from childhood, we know nothing about his early years. He first appeared in 53: he was then a quaestor under Crassus in the campaign against the Parthians. We are assured that he acquitted himself well, rendered his chief valuable assistance, and did his best to reduce the difficulties created by Crassus' tragic death. Tribune of the people in 49, he left Rome with the other members of Pompey's party, and passed into Caesar's service after Pharsalus. He had married one of the sisters of Brutus. He was called to the praetorship at the same time as his brother-in-law, but the latter, although his junior, was selected in his stead for the coveted office of praetor urbanus. Plutarch reports that when some of his friends questioned him about the motives for his choice Caesar replied evasively: 'To tell you the truth, the claims put forward by Cassius are better, but nevertheless Brutus must be given preference.' Was this for reasons of a sentimental order which attached him more closely to the latter? Very probably. But at the same time he must have known that it was an excellent way of creating ill-feeling between these two men whose close union might prove fatal for him.* Be that as it may, one thing is certain: Cassius, deeply hurt at seeing Brutus preferred to him, and believing that the young man himself had helped to bring about his defeat, broke off relations with him. This, however, did not prevent him from hating Caesar with all his soul for being originally responsible for his humiliation. His vote in the

* This hypothesis is fully developed in Brutus (Payot, Paris), by the same author.

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Senate should be remembered. It was the first sign of open opposition in that assembly since Caesar reached the summit of power. For the moment it made no change in the course of events, and the decrees, once adopted, were engraved in letters of gold on silver tablets.

Before placing them at the feet of Jupiter Capitoline, the senators decided, as Caesar had returned to Rome, to present them to him with ceremonious solemnity in order to emphasize still more the extent of the homage which the Senate was rendering to him.

Caesar was seated in the vestibule of the temple of Venus, surrounded by his followers and discussing the plans which the architects and artists had submitted to him. On being informed that the Senate in corpore, headed by all the officiating magistrates and followed by a large crowd of citizens of every rank, had come to see him, he pretended to attach no importance to the fact, and did not interrupt his conversation with those around him.

There stood the senators! One of them stepped forward to deliver a speech appropriate to the circumstances. Then Caesar casually turned towards him and prepared to listen, without deigning to rise from his seat. This was his revenge for the affront of the tribune Aquila three months earlier. His reply likewise was marked with superb insolence: instead of increasing the list of honours accorded to him, they should rather have reduced them... But he accepted them all the same.

All the ancient writers dwell upon the extreme indignation provoked by this attitude both among the members of the Senate and among the crowd which had gathered to witness the solemnity. We do not know, however, how this feeling was expressed, or exactly what happened. Plutarch confines himself to telling us that ‘all those, who were not obliged by their duties to stay, went away in a state of despondency’. That must have been a most disagreeable surprise for Caesar, who, as soon as he noticed it, went home in a very bad humour.

There he fell into a state of extreme agitation, tearing his cloak, crying out that they were seeking his death, and that he was ready to offer his throat to whoever wished to cut it. According to Plutarch, this sudden storm is to be attributed to the oncoming of an epileptic fit. In any case, Caesar was in a state of nervous depression at the end of the meeting, and obsessed with the idea that he was in constant danger of being assassinated.

Caesar was not satisfied to accept, with haughty condescension,
the honorific distinctions which the Senate had heaped upon him. He managed at the same time to seize numerous prerogatives of a more realistic character which enabled him to gather into his hands the whole power of government. He demanded, and obtained, that all his acts should be ratified by the Senate, and all public officials were obliged to swear, as soon as they entered upon their duties, that they would never oppose any measure emanating from him. Thus the patrum auctoritas practically ceased to exist. The Senate was reduced to a consultative assembly whose wishes the dictator could disregard without even being required to give his reasons. For the future it was Caesar who was to draw up the list of candidates for the consulship. He still left to the Senate what appeared to be the right of choosing between those who sought the praetorship, but in fact it was he who in the end decided upon the names which suited him. Those who pleased Caesar were candidates, and if they did not happen to possess the required rank and qualifications he had the power to grant them the necessary dispensations. In the future, Caesar alone would have the right to dispose of the finances of the State, and it was to his employees, recruited for the most part from among his own slaves, that he would entrust the administration of the treasury. As for the privileges of the people's tribunes, they would no longer enjoy them, since Caesar had had them conferred upon himself.

Thus he was vested with all the powers of a king. Nothing but the title was lacking. By an insinuating propaganda his agents sought to prepare public opinion for this, but the people remained obstinately hostile to every attempt to restore the monarchy. Caesar's enemies, hoping to hasten his ruin by exploiting his ambition, began to carry out their plan of action. A hidden but implacable war resulted.

It opened with an incident which at first sight seems insignificant. One day the golden statue which had just been erected in Caesar's honour on the rostra was found to be crowned with a diadem of narrow ribbon—the white fillet emblem of royalty. This was an attempt, still very cautious, to sound public opinion and to simulate a popular demonstration in favour of ascribing royal dignity to the dictator. There was an immediate reaction on the part of two tribunes of the people, C. Epidius Marullus and L. Caesitius Flavus who ordered the diadem to be torn down and 'thrown far away'. Posing as the defenders of Caesar's civic reputation, they claimed that they only wanted to protect him from the evil designs of those malevolent men who were planning to ruin him by imputing

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blameworthy intentions to him. Caesar was obliged to accept this explanation. He was silent. The matter was left there. For him, however, it was merely postponed. His emissaries were waiting for their opportunity to return to the charge.

During the last days of January the traditional Latin festival took place on Mount Albanus, not far from Rome. Caesar was called upon to attend in two capacities: as pontifex maximus and as dictator in office. He chose the second, which entitled him, in view of the privilege granted him by the Senate, to take part in the ceremonies wearing the royal purple toga and shod with the high red boots of the ancient kings. At the conclusion of the festival, on January 26, Caesar made his entry into Rome on horseback (a favour exclusively accorded to him), in every respect like a monarch of the old days. Numerous individuals who had been suitably rehearsed were stationed among the waiting crowd. As soon as he appeared, acclamations rang out and voices were heard hailing him as king. Immediately, the opposition party intervened and murmuring arose. The demonstrators, feeling that they were not sufficiently supported, stopped, disconcerted. Caesar saved the situation by replying with winning modesty: 'My name is Caesar, and not Rex,' which might be stretched to imply that he only saw in the salutations which had greeted him an allusion to his kinship with the gens of the Marci Reges, to which his mother belonged.

The two tribunes struck once again. They proceeded to make a rapid investigation, and having found the instigator of the movement had him arrested. From the legal point of view they were in the right. Demonstrations of this kind constituted an attack on the republican régime which they had sworn to defend, and could not be tolerated. But this put Caesar in a delicate position. If he took no action, he would appear not to care what happened to his partisans, and such an attitude could not fail to cool their zeal. Should he attack the tribunes? That would be revealing his ambitions prematurely and showing his hand at a moment which was not yet propitious. He found a way out of this dilemma. He immediately convoked the assembly and complained of being unjustly persecuted by Flavius and Marullus, who were stirring up the people against him in order to provoke disturbances and deliver him to his assassins. After him, a member of the college of tribunes—Helvius Cinna, who was in league with Caesar—rose and arraigned his colleagues. The Senate meekly condemned them to suffer capital punishment. It was then
that Caesar once more intervened to show his magnanimity. To be sure, the criminal conduct of the tribunes deserved the death penalty, but leniency should be shown: let the culprits be dismissed from office and expelled from the Senate—that would suffice. This was done. The discharged tribunes, feeling that they were no longer safe, left the capital.

A third experiment which was more significant than the previous ones and must have appeared to be decisive to its organizers was planned for February 15, the day of the festival of the Lupercalia. After his return from Africa, Caesar, no doubt anticipating his forthcoming deification, had made a donation to the congregation of the Lupercales, or priests of Pan, for the creation of a third college to be added to the two already in existence. It would be known as the college of the Julian Lupercales, was destined to celebrate his cult, and Antony was made its high priest. Thus this festival, too, had become his own. For the occasion Caesar put on the same royal attire he had worn for the Latin festival. He took his place on the golden seat in the centre of the orators' tribune, before which the procession was to pass. This was led by Antony who, braving the rigours of winter, had not hesitated to conform to the tradition and appeared wearing nothing but a girdle. Beside the dictator the body of acting magistrates was assembled, forming a majestic background for him: Lepidus, his master of cavalry, the praetors, the aediles, and many others. While the procession of the Julian priests filed past the tribune, one of them, Licinius, hoisted up by his companions, appeared on a level with the platform and laid at Caesar's feet a crown of laurels interlaced with the white ribbon of the royal diadem. As though the crowd had been waiting for this signal, cheers instantly arose. Then Licinius climbed on to the tribune and placed the crown on Caesar's head.341 He feigned a protest and turned to Lepidus, asking him to come to his assistance. The master of cavalry pretended not to hear. For a few seconds the royal fillet adorned the brow of the dictator. The enterprise seemed to have succeeded. All at once Cassius, who was present at the ceremony in his capacity of praetor, stepped forward and with an abrupt gesture took the crown from Caesar's head and put it on his knees. It only remained for Caesar to push it aside.

At the last moment Antony tried to arrange matters. He ran up with all haste, climbed on to the rostra, seized the crown and put it once more on the head of his master. This time Caesar, visibly upset,
realizing that once again the attempt had failed, tore off the crown himself and tossed it away. That won him the applause of the crowd, but the spectators in the front row—a very select party—vehemently urged him to accept the people’s offering. Antony profited by this to pick up the royal emblem which was lying on the ground, rather tattered after all the handling it had had, and tried to crown Caesar with it again. Cries of Hail, O King! were heard. Indignant protests were mixed with them, however. Caesar succeeded in mastering the situation with style: he ordered that the crown should be carried to the temple of Jupiter, ‘where it would be better placed’, and instructed the clerk of the Public Records to insert that ‘the people having offered him royalty by the hands of the consul, he had refused’.

So it seemed that public manifestations were definitely of no use. Something else had to be contrived. Finally, the Sibylline Books were consulted. The originals had been destroyed by a fire in Sulla’s days and most of them had been replaced by forgeries. It was perfectly simple for a pontifex maximus to find whatever he needed in them, especially when this pontifex maximus was Caesar. At his instigation, the quindecemvirs in charge of them announced that certain passages of the sacred books clearly intimated that the Roman armies could only gain a victory over the Parthians in the war about to begin if they were commanded by a king. Hence the rumour spread in Rome that at the next session of the Senate, which was to take place on March 15, the quindecimvir L. Aurelius Cotta, uncle of the dictator, would make a speech proposing that the title of king should be conferred upon his nephew.
CHAPTER 57

The Plot

CAESAR'S departure was fixed for March 18, and he was actively speeding up the preparations. He was in a hurry to get away from Rome. The five months he had spent there had brought him more disappointment and anxiety than anything else. To be sure, outwardly everything had gone off with brilliant magnificence; he had been loaded with honours, flattered, adored, extolled to the skies. But all the time, in the shadows, he felt the tide of hatred, envy, jealousy and rancour rising towards him. He thought himself to be threatened from all sides. Everywhere he sensed plots. Everywhere invisible hands seemed to him to be preparing his ruin. His own secretary, the slave Philemon, had been bribed by his enemies to poison him. He was caught and immediately put to death. But how many others were still free to bring their schemes to fruition? To satisfy public opinion, which resented the presence of his legion of Spanish bodyguards, he had disbanded it on February 15, the day after the Senate had formally delivered to him their decree appointing him dictator in perpetuity. A private police-guard was responsible for his safety and kept a watch on the activities of those persons who gave any cause for suspicion. The reports which reached him sometimes gave him unpleasant surprises. Even his faithful Antony was said to be suspect. He would not believe it, saying jokingly that a man 'so fat and so well groomed' was incapable of harbouring such dark designs. It was the same with regard to Brutus. When his agents denounced the latter as being involved in a conspiracy against him, he replied as he touched his tired, emaciated body: 'Brutus will surely wait till this old carcass wears out of itself.' His suspicions centred chiefly on Cassius, and he wished to be kept informed of his movements.

Added to this constant state of anxiety was the fact that his health was not good. He realized with consternation that since he had given up his restless camp life and returned to the ordered existence of a city dweller it had constantly deteriorated and his attacks of epilepsy were becoming more and more frequent. He could not
resign himself to the fact that this progressive weakening of his constitution was the inevitable result of advancing years; he imagined, or had been led to believe, that it was simply due to the change in the conditions of his daily routine, that an active out-door life agreed with him better than the sedentary existence of cities, and that by plunging once more into the environment which had become so familiar to him he would free himself of all the troubles which made him suffer physically and morally.

But it seems that Caesar wanted above all to escape from the hot-bed of intrigue which Rome had become. Some fifteen years before, he had particularly enjoyed himself in such an atmosphere, and incidentally it had greatly contributed to his first political successes. Now he found it trying, almost suffocating.

It was claimed (and indeed at one time the rumour circulated persistently in Rome) that once the campaign against the Parthians was over, Caesar was planning to transfer the capital from Rome to Alexandria. Established in the city founded by the great Macedonian conqueror, he would reign over the world from there—after having married Cleopatra and thus laid the foundations for a new dynasty of unparalleled power. This is not impossible, although no specific text can be cited in support of the hypothesis. If such a conception did not take shape in the mind of Caesar, it could easily have done so in that of Cleopatra.

Having lived in Rome for a year and a half, she had managed to attach herself to Caesar by increasingly close ties. Her villa beyond the Tiber had become a regular royal residence, where she reigned as queen and where from morning till night she received the court of the Roman élite: politicians, financiers, men of letters, artists. Cicero in person could be seen waiting for an audience. All these people came there to solicit the graces of the favourite of the Master. Moreover, she knew how to use her influence to good advantage and for the benefit of her compatriots. Thanks to her, they were infiltrating everywhere and occupying lucrative posts in the departments of public administration and finance. Alexandrian merchants, physicians, scholars, and architects invaded the capital, often at the expense of their Italian colleagues, who cursed the queen of Egypt while profiting by her assistance. Heedless of gossip, Cleopatra methodically pursued her goal—to become Caesar's legitimate bride. Calpurnia had shown herself to be incapable of giving him heirs. He consequently needed another wife. Caesar appears to have been
considering this solution, since he had instructed the tribune Helvius Cinna to introduce a bill which, according to Suetonius, would allow him to have 'as many wives as he needed for having children'; in other words, to legalize his bigamy. Thus, while Calpurnia in Rome continued her lonely existence of a barren wife, to which for long years she had become accustomed through Caesar's prolonged absences, her husband would return to the banks of the Nile with his second wife to lay the foundations for his new power. Caesar was fifty-six years old; Cleopatra, twenty-two. At his death, as regent of a formidable empire, she would have the world at her feet.

We have seen how Cassius conducted himself during the attempted coronation on February 15. On learning what the Senate was preparing for March 15—when it was prepared to proclaim Caesar king—he decided to take resolute action. He had his personal reasons for hating Caesar. But in addition he was a Roman, a republican, and a magistrate; he was about to witness the liquidation of the order he represented and which, after six centuries of glorious existence constituting the glory of Rome was, at the will of the dictator, to make room for a new empire, cosmopolitan, monstrous, excluding, it would seem, every national idea. With him, the private citizen and the republican combined in a hatred which was one and indivisible. And from this feeling grew the profound conviction: Caesar must die. Only his death could save Rome from the miserable destiny which awaited it. He approached a few men, whom he thought he could be sure of, and who appeared to share his views. They gave him to understand that he did not possess sufficient authority to assume the direction of such a plot, and they advised him to approach Brutus, who would be eminently suited for this task. His name which evoked the first destroyer of Roman kings, his reputation as a man of honour and a philosopher, his kinship with Cato, the great martyr of the republican cause—all these factors marked him out as leader in this struggle for liberation. Swallowing his resentment towards his brother-in-law, Cassius went to see him. The writer drawn upon by Plutarch has faithfully recorded the conversation which took place between the two men. Brutus for his part was also suffering to see liberty in mortal peril. But to Cassius' question as to what he intended to do on March 15, he merely replied that on that day he would not go to the Senate. This meant that he was contemplating a purely passive protest: a simple abstention. Cassius
pressed him, however: Brutus also was a praetor. As a magistrate he could be forced to attend the fatal session. 'Then', replied Brutus, 'it would be my duty to break my silence and to oppose the motion, and to die rather than see liberty expire.' This solution did not suit Cassius. It was not by dying that they would save the Republic and prevent tyranny. He exhorted Brutus to take action and to fight. His fiery eloquence succeeded in conquering Brutus' feeble resistance. From this moment, having entered upon the path which opened before him, he would no longer hesitate.

The name of Brutus attracted several useful adherents, among others Decimus Brutus, Caesar's intimate friend, in whom the dictator had complete confidence. In all, the number of conspirators seems to have reached sixty, of whom twenty-three were chosen to take charge of the practical execution of the plot.

In the course of the preliminary conferences a plan of action was worked out. Apparently it was unanimously decided to strike Caesar before the assembled Senate. They hoped that in this way the murder 'would not appear to be an ambush', says Appian, 'but an act of devotion for the salvation of the country', and that the senators, witnessing the assassination, would immediately declare themselves to be jointly responsible, 'as had happened at the time of the murder of Romulus, who, king at first, had become a tyrant'.

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THE ROMAN WORLD at the TIME OF CAESAR'S DEATH

Limits of area under direct Roman control in 44 B.C. shown thus:
CHAPTER 58

The Assassination

The Senate was called to assemble on March 15 in a hall set up under the porticoes of the theatre which Pompey had built at the Campus Martius. There were to be gladiator fights that day in the theatre to celebrate the festival of Anna Perenna. That was a very fortunate coincidence. Decimus Brutus, the appointed praetor, had just assembled a strong team which was practising in preparation for the traditional performance under his direction. Therefore, it was possible for him, without causing any suspicion, to bring them armed into the theatre on the pretext that they were taking part in the games. In this way the conspirators could count on a reliable escort which would be able to come to their help immediately if need be. The parts were allotted. Decimus Brutus, who could go freely in and out of the dictator’s house, was to keep in close touch with all that happened there. Trebonius, who had eagerly joined in the conspiracy of which, after all, he had been the unsuccessful precursor, was to prevent Antony, of whom he had recently become the companion at meals and in pleasures, from going near his master and protecting him from the blows of the conspirators. Tillius Cimber, whose brother had been banished by Caesar as a partisan of Pompey, was to go up to him as soon as he appeared, under pretence of soliciting his pardon for the exile. It was he who was to give the signal for the assassination by catching hold of Caesar’s toga as though pleading with him, thus baring his shoulder. The honour of striking the first blow fell to the tribune Casca, an impecunious politician devoted to Cassius. After that everyone was to rush upon the victim, and it was agreed that each of the conspirators should plunge his dagger at least once into the body of the tyrant. (This weapon, easy to conceal under the folds of the toga, had been chosen as the instrument of execution.) As for the great majority of ‘passive’ collaborators scattered throughout the hall, they probably had nothing to do beyond keeping their colleagues in their places while the act of assassination was in progress. Moreover, they hoped that it would all be over so quickly that the audience...
would be faced with the accomplished fact without having time to intervene.

In spite of all efforts to keep the conspiracy secret, it leaked out in the end. We have no information as to how the diviner Spurinna found out about it, but it is known that he tried to warn Caesar. In the sibylline language which by virtue of his office had become habitual to him, he told the dictator that a serious danger was threatening him on the Ides of March. Caesar refused to see anything but the predictions of a soothsayer in these words. He was not in the habit of taking such things seriously and attached no importance to them. On the evening of the 14th—the eve of the day which was to bring him royal dignity—he gathered a few intimate friends together at the house of his master of cavalry, Lepidus. Since the latter was in command of the armed forces, it is possible that they had to discuss certain police measures, intended to muzzle what remained of the opposition in case of trouble at the last moment. In the course of the supper the conversation took a somewhat lugubrious turn: they began to discuss what would be the most agreeable kind of death. Caesar let each of the guests give an opinion, then he settled the question: of all deaths, the most unexpected was the one he would prefer.

After supper he returned home. It was late. He went to bed. The meal caused him a bad night, but eventually he fell asleep. A gust of wind which suddenly made doors and windows fly open woke him up with a start. At his side, Calpurnia was lying in an uneasy sleep, broken with cries and moans. He felt ill, his whole body was numb. At last the dawn came. Scarcely awake, his wife, seized with a frantic terror, implored him not to go out. She was afraid. She had had a terrible dream that Caesar was lying in her arms, assassinated. He must stay at home and put the meeting off to another day. ‘If you do not believe in my dreams,’ she besought him, ‘have the gods consulted and order sacrifices to inquire into the future.’ Caesar looked at her in surprise. Never had he seen his wife, usually so cold, so reserved, and so little given to superstition, in such a state. He allowed himself to be persuaded and called the diviners. They performed, their ritual and declared that the signs were not favourable. He made them repeat the test several times. The answer was always the same. His nerves were on edge, his head was swimming, he was seized with dizziness. His doctor watched him with grave concern. In his opinion, it was better for Caesar not to go out.
Finally Caesar made up his mind. He instructed Antony, who had come to accompany him to the Senate, to postpone the session. Just as Antony was about to leave, Decimus Brutus arrived. On hearing that the assembly was to be put off he became indignant. He reminded Caesar that the senators had come together at his invitation. ‘If now that they are in their seats someone goes to tell them to leave and to come back another day when Calpurnia has more favourable dreams, what will you not cause those who envy your glory to say?’ Would that not provide them with a pretext to accuse him once more of wishing to insult the venerable assembly? And he concluded: ‘If, nevertheless, you think you should avoid this day as unlucky for you, it is fitting that at least you should go in person to the Senate to announce to it yourself that you are postponing the meeting to another date.’ With these words he took Caesar by the hand and led him towards the door. Caesar allowed him to have his way.

Hardly had the litter started when a man came running to the house. It was Artemidorus the Greek. Formerly tutor to Brutus, he had remained one of his familiar friends. At the same time he acted as informer to Caesar, whom, while still a child, he had known in Greece. It was imperative that he should see Caesar—at once. He ran after the litter. He caught it up just as it was stopping in front of the theatre. Caesar alighted and prepared to go up the steps of the portico. Petitioners crowded around him. With a weary gesture he handed their requests over to his officers. Artemidorus held out his own. He insisted that it must be read immediately. Caesar appeared to be impressed by the urgency in his voice. He kept the note in his hand. He had no time to open it; another petitioner was already claiming his attention with a long story. Perhaps he was asking for some favour, because in the end he was seen expressing profuse thanks. Rid of him at last, Caesar walked towards the entrance without having been able to read the note of Artemidorus.

The diviner Spurinna was waiting for him at the door; it was customary for the dictator to take the auspices before crossing the threshold of the Senate. Caesar recognized him. He saluted him ironically: ‘Well, so they have come, the Ides of March!’ The other replied in a low voice: ‘Yes, but they are not yet over.’ Then he applied himself to his task. The first victim was found to have defective entrails. ‘The sign of death,’ Spurinna announced. Caesar shrugged his shoulders: at Munda, just as the battle was about to
begin, they had told him the same thing, and yet... And yet, replied Spurinna, he had been in the greatest danger there. Caesar cut the conversation short. Let other victims be tried! Spurinna obeyed. The result was the same. The test was prolonged. The men around Caesar were getting impatient. They hurried him on, it was time to finish, the soothsayers were abusing his patience, since when had he become so superstitious...

Caesar was ashamed of his weakness. He turned away from Spurinna and his disembowelled fowl. With firm step he made his way into the assembly. It was past eleven o'clock. At his entrance everyone rose. A small group of men came forward to meet him. He hardly had time to take his seat before Tillius Cimber was bowing before him, begging him to recall his brother from exile. Caesar would not listen to him. This was not the moment, they could go into the question some other time. Tillius insisted. The others joined in his entreaties. They seized Caesar's hands, kissed him on the forehead, on the chest. Their fingers passed over his body, furtively, swiftly. No, he was not wearing a breast plate that day, he had no weapon hidden on his person. Caesar had had enough of it. At the end of his patience, he moved to get up. Then Tillius, as though he wanted to make one last attempt to persuade him, caught hold of a corner of his toga. The naked shoulder became visible: the agreed signal. Caesar uttered a cry: 'But this is violence!' Instantly Casca struck him from behind. He missed his mark. The tribune's hand trembled and his dagger passed above the clavicle. Caesar had not lost his presence of mind. He turned and recognized the man who had just raised his hand against him. 'Wretch! What are you doing?' he cried out, at the same time seizing him by the arm and wounding him with the stiletto he used for writing. Then he dashed forward. But Cassius stood in front of him and pierced him full in the face with his dagger. Caesar was blinded by the blood inundating his features. He staggered and did not know which way to turn. Daggers were raised on all sides. 'Like a wild beast beset by hunters', he was driven to the foot of Pompey's statue. At each thrust there was a cry, a savage howl. When Brutus struck him, he was quiet, covered his head with his toga, and collapsed.882

There was silence. Then the tumult began again. The senators, seized with wild panic, rushed out. The conspirators followed them, brandishing their daggers covered with blood. The hall was empty.
THE ASSASSINATION

The defeated general of Pharsalus, fixed in the cold marble of his statue, looked down from his pedestal at the remains of his conqueror, pierced with twenty-three wounds. The hours passed. No one came to disturb their mute colloquy. Towards the end of the day three of Caesar’s slaves arrived. They carried away the body of their master on a bier. One of his arms was hanging down. The hand clasped a note. It was the note from Artemidorus which he had not had time to read. . . .

Forty years had gone by since, on the same day, in the same streets, a graceful youth clothed in an immaculate toga had walked among a joyous crowd of friends and relations to pray the divinity to make his destiny bright and happy. It was the feast day of Anna Perenna, a festival of newborn spring, when men in the depths of the woods sing to the glory of nature’s resurrection.
CHAPTER 59

Posthumous Desertions

While his master was being assassinated inside the Senate, Antony was walking up and down under the porticoes, deep in conversation with Trebonius—the same Trebonius who less than eight months before had invited him to participate in an attempt on Caesar's life. What were these two men talking about? That, we shall never know, but the subject of their conversation must have absorbed Antony's attention completely. So much so that he entirely forgot his duties as consul, which required his presence at the opening of the crucial debate which was to take place that day. It is possible that among other things his companion had suggested to him that it was in his interest to remain outside the assembly hall at this particular time, and that Antony had the wisdom, as formerly at Narbonne, to adopt an attitude of passive complicity. Be that as it may, when he saw the terror-stricken herd of senators rushing out, crying at the top of their voices 'Murder! Stop the assassin!' he understood what it was all about and escaped himself, exchanging his consul's toga for the ragged garments of a slave so that he could pass unnoticed.

The city was in a state of extreme excitation. 'On all sides there were only men in flight to be seen, only cries to be heard', reports Nicolaus of Damascus. 'The streets were full of people running hither and thither', we read in Plutarch. 'Some were going in the direction of the Senate to witness this frightful spectacle, others were on their way back after having seen it.' The panic reached its height when the compact mass of gladiators emerged from the theatre, their swords drawn ready for battle. They were the members of the teams formed by Decimus Brutus. The wild tumult in the neighbourhood of the curia had caused them to think that their master was threatened, and, in accordance with their instructions, they stopped the performance which was in progress and dashed out, brandishing their weapons. The terrified spectators, with the memory of the revolt of Spartacus still fresh in their minds, thinking that they were going to witness another mutiny of gladiators, left their seats
and came to add to the general panic and confusion. Everyone ran home for shelter. On the way they looted the shops.

The evening brought no slackening of the tension. After Antony had securely barricaded himself inside his house, he sent out for news. The information collected from more or less all quarters enabled him to form a picture of the situation. The conspirators, protected by the gladiators and the crowd of proletarians and slaves who had followed them, were occupying the Capitol. Caesar's supporters were hiding in their homes, trembling with fear. He had a visit from Lepidus. The *magister equitum* had been detained in the Forum at the time of the assassination. Notified immediately, he marched with his troops to the Campus Martius. They arrived when everything was over. Then he went to Antony to consult with him as to what was to be done. He said he would be able to storm the Capitol and to wipe out the conspirators at one blow. Antony discouraged him on the pretext that they must first refer the matter to the Senate which he had called for the following morning. Here again, Antony's cautious attitude is puzzling to the historian, and we have to abandon the hope of explaining the highly ambiguous game which the first of Caesar's lieutenants was playing on his own account in the course of this fateful day.

The session was to take place in the temple of Tellus which was near Antony's house. He himself had made this arrangement, not wishing to risk venturing too far from his home. The senators, who had been hastily notified during the night, replied to the call in fairly large numbers. Among them was Cicero, whom the conspirators had kept out of the plot, apparently 'on account of his great age,' but who had been one of the first to hasten to the Capitol, exultant with joy. Anticipating Antony, he had urged Caesar's murderers to call the Senate immediately, and when Brutus pointed out to him that only a consul had the right to do this, he lost his temper, exclaiming that in exceptional cases one must know how to dispense with legal methods, and that Brutus as a praetor was perfectly qualified to proceed with this formality. The inflexible republican, who had just stabbed the man who in his opinion stood for all that was arbitrary and illegal, refused point blank to disregard one of the fundamental laws of the Republic. Cicero was heart-broken. In the meantime he learnt that the Senate was meeting at the suggestion of Antony, whereupon he hurried to the temple of Tellus.

Rarely had there been a session of the Senate that fell so far below
the reputation and the Republican dignity associated with that institution.③③ Hardly twenty-four hours had passed since the murder of Caesar. For most of the senators it had been a tremendous surprise which had thrown them into deepest consternation. They could not get over it. What was going to happen now? What changes were to be expected? Each one of them felt uneasy. They were distrustful of each other, they were afraid of compromising themselves by ill-considered words, or by a premature move. They wondered especially who was the victor when all was said and done. To be sure, the attempt had succeeded—Caesar was dead. But all his lieutenants were still at their posts; it was Antony who had called the Senate, it was Lepidus whose legion was filing across the town. Yet the conspirators were left undisturbed at the Capitol! Why were they not turned out? Were they so powerful as all that, or was there an idea of making one of those secret deals, one of those last-minute bargains in which the Roman politicians excelled? . . .

There were so many questions that the puzzled senators were asking themselves.

Once the meeting opened, the senators had to decide what attitude to adopt towards the assassins of the man whom they had recently proclaimed Father of the Nation and Benefactor of the Republic. The majority seemed to approve of the action of the conspirators. Certain orators praised them and proposed that they should be given rewards. Others, who considered that they did not need any, asked that thanksgivings should be accorded to them, as a token of the nation’s gratitude. Finally it was suggested that it would be enough if they were granted impunity. According to Appian, all these proposals were only a series of clever political manoeuvres intended to see how the land lay. ‘They threw out these artful propositions’, he explains, ‘in order to observe which one the Senate seemed most to favour and then, by gradually limiting themselves, to end by making it more easily acceptable.’

There was one senator, however, who maintained that ‘to honour the assassins would be to cover Caesar with ignominy’. They silenced him by declaring that ‘it was time to cease setting the interests of a dead man above those of the living’. This reply set the tone of the ensuing debates. When a speaker proposed choosing between two alternatives—to proclaim Caesar a tyrant, or to pardon the conspirators without passing any judgment on their victim—those who sided with the conspirators seized on the suggestion and asked
that, to start with, a vote should be taken on the question: ‘Was Caesar a tyrant, or was he not?’

Antony, who up to then had confined himself to the rôle of a silent observer, judged that the moment had come to intervene. Knowing his colleagues through and through, he took particular pains to present the problem to them in its true aspect, the only one which would touch them closely and effectively.

If they declared Caesar to be a tyrant and a usurper they were also obliged to acknowledge that all his acts were essentially illegal and void. With very few exceptions, all those who were listening to him either had held some office by virtue of Caesar’s decision, or they were holding one at this moment, or else they were preparing to hold one in the near future. Were all his honourable colleagues prepared voluntarily to relinquish the appointments and titles granted them by a usurper in violation of the law? ‘That’, he concluded, ‘is the first question which you have to settle. Afterwards I will go on with what I have to say.’ And he sat down again.

Antony had hit the mark. Instantly, the senators were up in arms as one man. According to Appian, ‘they began to shout that they did not want new elections and that they intended, every one of them, to keep what they had’. They would not allow either the titles they had acquired or the distinctions and advantages they had been promised to be disputed. It was in vain that a few well-intentioned members tried to explain that it was only a question of pure formality and that it would be infinitely more honourable to receive a public appointment from a popular assembly than to owe it to the caprice of one man. They would not listen to anything, and the discussion became prolonged and acrimonious.

Outside, a dense crowd was waiting. Now that the uproar had calmed down, the citizens had left their homes at daybreak to gather in the Forum. Numerous groups were forming. People were speaking for and against Caesar. According to Nicolaus of Damascus, some who had flattered him the day before were now saying: ‘The gods be praised! We shall no longer have to pay our court to a tyrant!’ The praetor L. Cornelius Cinna—the brother of Caesar’s first wife, who owed the assassinated dictator numerous favours and only recently had been nominated by him for the post he now held—started publicly abusing the memory of his brother-in-law and threw his magistrate’s toga on to the ground ‘with an air of scorn, as having been given him by a despot’. The majority, however, did not go

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so far, and the general opinion seemed to incline towards some sort of a compromise. There was a desire ‘to see public peace maintained’, which necessarily meant that any proceedings against Caesar’s murderers had to be abandoned. In that respect the people were clearly taking the assassins’ side, but it is quite possible that their attitude was largely due to the powerful stimulus of fear lest the dark days of civil war should return. They were impatiently waiting for the end of the Senate’s deliberations. As there was no sign of it, they sent a deputation to the temple of Tellus with instructions to ask Antony and Lepidus for some enlightenment on the situation.

When these officers were told that the people wanted to speak to them, they went out, leaving the senators to inveigh against each other. On seeing them appear at the top of the temple steps, someone in the crowd shouted, ‘Take care that the same thing does not happen to you!’ With great self-possession Antony opened his tunic a little and, without a word, allowed them to see the cuirass he was wearing. The lesson of Caesar had served its purpose. Then they asked him to let peace prevail in the city—in other words, to defend the cause of the conspirators. He replied evasively that the Senate was just deliberating on the subject, but that it was ‘a difficult matter’. Some urged him to avenge Caesar. These he congratulated on their devotion to the murdered dictator. Then he pointed out to them that he would have been the first to demand it, if his consular office did not impose upon him the duty to consider the ‘interests of the Republic rather than the claims of justice’. He declined, on some pretext or other, to accept the invitation—which for the moment was rather compromising—to address the people in the Forum. Leaving this task to Lepidus, he returned to the Senate, where the discussions were pursuing their course.

They were still turning in a vicious circle. The senators were unanimous in their resolution to defend their prerogatives and advantages by every possible means, but that was all. They could not come to an agreement concerning the fate which should be reserved for Caesar’s assassins. To be sure, they all declared themselves from now on to be delighted that a master had disappeared whom they had feared and for whom they had felt no affection. But they would have been equally pleased to be rid of his murderers. They mistrusted them. They did not know their plans, nor the extent of their ambitions. Would they stop half-way of their own accord? Was it not rather to be feared that they would make an
attempt to seize power and so to replace one dictatorship by another? . . . But, then, Antony did not inspire great confidence either. Would they not merely be working for him and clearing the field for his cupidity by punishing the conspirators or sending them into exile? The senators were hesitant, perplexed, incapable of making a decision.

Cicero suggested a way of getting out of the difficulty by following the example of the Greek cities. Whenever they wanted to put an end to the internal struggles which rent them, he said, they decreed an amnesty; in other words, whatever had been done on both sides was forgiven and forgotten. Thus they could pardon Caesar for having possessed himself of total power, which would automatically validate everything he had accomplished as dictator, and at the same time they could pardon the conspirators for having killed him, which would prevent any proceedings being taken against them and would reinstate them in their rights. This ‘Greek’ solution was contrary to the rectilineal mind of the Roman legislator. For him, an action was either intrinsically good or evil. In the first case it deserved a reward, in the second it called for punishment. A neutral solution was intolerable. All the same, the senators resorted to it because it appeared to be a way 'of sparing the goat as well as the cabbage', in the language of popular wisdom.

Meanwhile Lepidus had returned from the Forum. His colloquy with the people had been brief and without much result. Invited to speak from the rostra, he had begun to lament over the death of a great citizen. However, when they shouted that this death must be avenged, he immediately took refuge behind the same pretext Antony had just used: 'It is not for you or me to discuss this matter by ourselves or to oppose whatever course is adopted.' Having said this, he considered his mission to be accomplished, and prepared to depart. Before allowing him to do so, however, some of the conspirators' partisans came round him and, without beating about the bush, offered to support him as candidate for the office of pontifex maximus, which had become vacant through Caesar's death, if he promised to plead their cause before the Senate. Whereupon Lepidus made this admirable reply: 'I know that it would be to act with impiety and in a manner contrary to the laws, nevertheless I will do as you wish.' Then he took leave of them. On reaching the assembly he communicated his impressions to Antony, representing the great majority of the people as being in sympathy with the conspirators.
Antony concluded from this that all he could do for the moment was to go along with the current and give his support to Cicero's proposal, which seemed to have the approval of his colleagues. He accordingly put forward the motion of the amnesty on his own account, giving it certain touches which made it somewhat wounding to the self-esteem of those who were to benefit by it. 'We must refrain from all commendation the conduct of the conspirators,' he declared for instance, 'but, as a pure indulgence, they ought to be allowed to go unpunished, for the sake of their friends and families, on condition that their friends and families agree that they are thus spared on grounds of mercy.' At the same time he managed to flatter the patres in an ingratiating manner by paying tribute to their disinterested civism of which they had given proof by retaining, 'for the good of the Republic', the offices which Caesar had confided to them. His draft of the motion was unanimously adopted.

The day was drawing to a close when the litter bearing the blood-stained body of Caesar stopped in front of his house. The air was rent with the screams of Calpurnia, who, discarding the cold reserve which she had always affected towards her husband, was now giving way to unrestrained grief. While she was weeping, the physician Antistius bent over the corpse of his dead master and examined his wounds. He counted twenty-three, of which in his opinion only one was mortal. Which one among the murderers had struck with force and accuracy? If we can trust to Plutarch, who maintains that it was the second wound which proved fatal to Caesar, it must have been Cassius, since it is to him that this author attributes the second thrust. But Plutarch says that it was in the chest, whereas we are told that Cassius struck him right in the face. The two accounts do not agree on these points and it becomes difficult to determine the precise details.

No one came to bring words of comfort to Calpurnia. Only her father, the aged Piso, was with her. Late in the evening, however, a messenger from Antony arrived asking Caesar's widow to hand over to him all the funds in the house as well as all documents relating to State affairs. Without making the slightest objection, Calpurnia gave him everything—money and papers. She was in a state of utter prostration. Nothing interested her any more. And yet, in her husband's money-chest there were four thousand talents, which was a considerable sum at the time. That very night everything was taken to Antony's house. Piso must have assisted in the transfer.
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We have the impression that from then on he was in league with the new trustee of Caesar's fortune.

He first showed his hand at the end of the pitiful comedy which had just been enacted in the Senate. As executor of Caesar's will, Piso announced his intention of publishing the last wishes of the deceased. His declaration aroused protests. It was maintained that the inheritance of a tyrant should be confiscated for the use of the State and that he was not entitled to dispose of goods which had been illegally acquired. Piso was called upon to pass over Caesar's will in silence, and, as the old man persisted in his resolution, they threatened to denounce him as being guilty of robbing the nation of its rightful property.

The affair was brought before the Senate on March 17. In the first place the assembly had to deal with the ratification of those acts of Caesar which had not yet been made public and which Antony had just exhibited after 'editing' the documents in his possession as he thought fit. The senators also had to settle the allocation of the provinces for the coming year, a question which directly concerned the two praetors, Brutus and Cassius, who were invited to the meeting. The two tyrannicides came down to the Senate after demanding that the children of Antony and Lepidus should be sent them as hostages.

Finally there was the question of Caesar's obsequies. Piso had made it known that he had decided to give his son-in-law the funeral honours to which he was entitled, at least as pontifex maximus, if in no other capacity. Again there were objections. Some thought that this would involve the risk of stirring up popular feeling which they had succeeded in calming by voting the amnesty. They did not go so far as the conspirators, who demanded that the body of the 'tyrant' should be thrown into the Tiber, but they advised Piso in the interests of public peace to have Caesar buried with all possible discretion. Calpurnia's father refused point blank. He poured forth recriminations and reiterated his firm determination to publish the will of his son-in-law. 'Unless I likewise am to be butchered,' he concluded, quite overwrought.

His speech provoked great tumult. He found supporters among those who had reasons for believing that Caesar had not forgotten them in his will, and who did not want to be deprived of the gifts they were expecting. Those who cherished no such hopes—in particular the relations of the banished Pompeians who had been stripped of all their possessions—persisted in declaring as null and
void a document which disposed of fortunes that had been seized from honest citizens by violence and in defiance of the laws.

Antony strongly supported the claims of Piso. Caesar's will must be made known to the people. It was also necessary that he should be buried in full view of everyone. 'The people might be angered if the funeral were to take place in secret and without any pomp,' he considered.

Cassius, who had quickly guessed what was at the back of Antony's mind, opposed this proposition vehemently. Brutus, however, magnanimously consented. This noble and generous gesture was severely criticized afterwards, and Cicero could never forgive him for it. For the time being, he made those who disagreed keep silence, and the Senate voted a State funeral for Caesar. As for his will, it was agreed that it would be read at the next meeting of the people's assembly.
CHAPTER 60

Apotheosis

Once the date of the funeral had been fixed, probably for March 20 (it was already the 17th, and the 19th was a holiday), Antony, in conjunction with Piso, undertook to organize it. He considered that it ought to be an imposing ceremony calculated to make a deep impression on public opinion and to change its orientation completely. After the first moment of fear and confusion the people were not particularly moved by Caesar's death. They seemed to accommodate themselves rapidly to the new state of affairs, and showed neither surprise nor indignation at the wholesale and precipitate conversions they witnessed. The dictator's statues, which had been so recently erected, were removed from the public squares and there was scarcely a protest when they were sent to be melted down. Only the veterans, who feared that the death of their commander-in-chief might mean the loss of the privileges and rewards he had granted them, expressed their sorrow and appeared to disapprove of what the conspirators had done. But clever agents were already at work among them, reassuring them and holding out even more alluring promises for the future. More than one legionary, ready to forget the long years of glory and hardship which bound him to Caesar, allowed himself to be convinced. In the Senate, the remainder of Pompey's party, the former partisans of Caesar and the 'tyrannicides' seemed likely to reach an understanding based on a recognition of the status quo and a revival of the Republican institutions 'put to sleep' by the dictator. What was to become of Antony? He saw quite clearly that the new political coalition would leave him no hope of playing a predominant part. He would have to be content to take a back seat, to efface himself behind Brutus and Cassius, to make way for Cicero, or perhaps for Trebonius. This, Antony could not accept. The place left by Caesar was rightfully his. Of that he was inwardly convinced, and he intended to set to work by every possible means to prevent it from being taken from him. Although by nature impulsive and headstrong, he had great self-control and could adapt himself to circumstances. We have
seen him act with considerable circumspection and prudence during the meetings of the 16th and 17th. He appeared to be yielding. In reality, he had only stepped back a little in order to strike more surely.

To start with, there was the will. Piso, who in the meantime had removed it from the hands of the great Vestalis, hastened to communicate its contents to him. After reading it, Antony was quite sure of the effect it would produce on the Roman people. Personally he did not attach much importance to the fact that Octavius was nominated as principal heir. This ‘puny young man’ seemed to him to be easy to handle. But it was here written that Caesar bequeathed to the Republic the magnificent pleasure gardens which he possessed beyond the Tiber, and, above all, that he left to each citizen (this no doubt applied to the 150,000 who received State subsidies) the sum of three hundred sesterces. To be sure, this was not a fortune. It was more or less equivalent to the gratuities he was accustomed to give his soldiers after a victorious battle. The moral significance of this gesture, however, would be enormous: such a thing had never been known before, and no one was expecting it. The reading of the will was to come immediately before the funeral, and this ‘prelude’ would serve Antony’s purpose admirably by putting the crowds who were preparing for the ceremony into a state of complete receptivity.

The comitia assembled early. They were first told of the result of the Senate’s deliberations and the measures which had been voted with regard to the conspirators. Cicero, whom we come across more or less everywhere during these eventful days, did not miss this chance to deliver a long speech in which he praised the amnesty, due to his own initiative, while exhorting his fellow citizens to maintain peace and concord. After this, Antony wanted to test the temper of the assembly and rose to speak. He was instantly interrupted and told that he would not be allowed to say anything until he had shaken hands with Brutus and his companions. This was clear and definite. Antony understood and complied. Then, passing on to action, he made the announcement that the assembly was to hear Caesar’s will. The clamour died down and a public herald began the reading.

As soon as they heard the passage where, among his indirect heirs, Caesar named Decimus Brutus—one of the men who had done most to bring about his death—there was a wave of hostile murmuring.
According to Appian, it was supposed to express the audience’s disapproval at the spectacle of such black ingratitude in return for such magnanimity and generosity. But when they learnt that each one of them was to receive three hundred sestertes, a wild explosion of gratitude towards Caesar and indignation towards the men whose sacrilegious hands had dared to take his life, shook the whole mass of citizens there assembled. It was in this state of extreme excitement that the people left the comitia as soon as the reading of the will was over. They went off towards the Forum, where they were to hear the traditional laudatio which Antony, in his threefold capacity as Caesar’s friend, colleague, and relation (through their womenfolk), had undertaken to deliver in place of Piso, to whom, as there was no male heir, this honour would normally have fallen.

Opposite the orators’ tribune in the Forum a sort of chapel had been erected, a miniature version of the temple of Venus Victrix which Caesar had offered to his goddess after Pharsalus. A platform, surmounted by a dais covered with purple and gold, stood in the middle, ready to receive the funeral couch. Slowly the procession moved forward, conforming with the ancient ritual. The ivory bed on which Caesar rested was carried by the highest magistrates of the Republic, some still in office, some retired. His veteran legionaries followed him in battle array and wearing all their decorations. An immense crowd accompanied them. The entire city was there. The women had brought their children, big and little.

The procession stopped in front of the rostra. The lamentations were redoubled. There was a lugubrious clanging of arms as the soldiers rhythmically beat their shields with their swords. They placed the mortal remains of their chief on the platform. Stretched on his funeral couch, presiding over the immutable company of his ancestors, he was going to assist at the posthumous eulogy which was his due. Once again they were all there, not one was missing from among the eternal shades of the illustrious line of the Julii, faithfully keeping yet another appointment to which their manes had been summoned from beyond the grave.

From the tribune Antony contemplated the ever moving sea of human heads surging at his feet. He was there to render pious homage to a great man who was dead, but his own destiny was also at stake, that too was to be decided on this platform where he was standing as a bold and inspired actor.565

He hit on a magnificent idea for his opening lines. It was not for
him, modest citizen as he was, but for the whole Republic to glorify such a man as Caesar. How could they do it? By allowing those decrees to speak for themselves which the Senate and people, in the enthusiasm caused by his brilliant victories, had voted in his honour. He began to read them, one after the other, slowly, methodically, stressing the words. After every sentence he stopped and, his face drawn with grief, gazed long with an expression of bitter sadness at the mutilated body which lay before him. The audience listened, shattered, dismayed in an instant. But now his voice gained volume and took on extraordinarily moving accents: he was coming to those vows by which all the citizens had bound themselves to watch over the person of Caesar (which was declared to be sacred and inviolable), and to defend him with all their might, consigning to the powers of Hades those who did not fly to help him should danger threaten his life. Emphasizing each word, he repeated the terms of the oath, one by one, as though he wished that they should be for ever engraved on the memory of his hearers. May those who do not fly to his help be consigned to the powers of Hades! 'At these words,' writes Appian, 'he raised his voice still more and, stretching out his arms towards the Capitol, he cried: "As for me, O Jupiter, protector of Rome, and ye other gods—yea, I am ready to avenge Caesar, to obey my oaths, to be faithful to the promises I have made. But since those who are the arbiters of Rome's destiny in the same way as I am, have thought that the public good demanded the measures which have been taken, I offer prayers that this good may result."' This was an open attack on the Senate. At any rate, that is what those of its members who were present took it to be, and they protested loudly. Seeing that he had gone too far, Antony immediately beat a retreat and retracted with great skill. 'Since it has been decreed,' he said in substance, 'that the murder of Caesar should not be regarded as a crime, but as the work of some evil genius, let us fix our attention on the future rather than on the past, for fear of relapsing into our old factions and losing those good citizens who still remain among us.' Then, letting it be understood that his speech was over, he invited those present to accompany Caesar's mortal remains to the Campus Martius, where a funeral pyre was waiting beside his daughter's tomb. This said, Antony started to go down the steps of the tribune, with a bearing of grave recollection.

On reaching the last step he suddenly stopped, drew himself up to his full height, and, completely transfigured, sprang at one leap

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up the steps of the platform and prostrated himself before Caesar's body. Then getting up again he began to speak, possessed by a sudden inspiration. It was a disconnected effusion, interspersed with curses and groans, and it was difficult to follow what he was saying. But his words touched the people all the more deeply by their passionate incoherence. The whole crowd thrilled in unison at these cries, sobs and tears. It became completely intoxicated with the names of the conquered cities, the victorious battles, the subjugated nations which Antony kept flinging to it at the top of his voice from the funeral dais. The people's ears were filled with reiterated reminders of the glory of Caesar, the goodness of Caesar, the generosity of Caesar, the clemency of Caesar. His name floated above the corpse like a continuous inexhaustible lament. The general emotion was at its height. That was not enough for Antony. With a swift gesture he uncovered Caesar's body, riddled with wounds, and shook out the blood-stained toga which fluttered in rags from the bier. At this sight the crowd broke into profuse lamentations. That was still not enough for Antony. He had to stir the people to a paroxysm of sorrow and passion. Music and singing would bring this about.

Accordingly, the melancholy chanting of carefully chosen funeral hymns was now heard rising towards the mutilated body. Cleverly arranged passages recalled the black ingratitude of the assassins, and a man's voice full of sorrowful emotion rose from time to time, dominating the whole and intoning:

*Were they to be saved in order to become my murderers!*

or again:

*To how great a number of my enemies have I done good for the sake of their names!*

An unendurable anguish weighed upon the quivering crowd. Their nerves were strained to breaking-point. By now they should be ready for anything, and here was a vision of horror to strike them savagely. From his bier Caesar arose, and once upright, began to turn round slowly, exposing to their terrified gaze his fearfully livid face and his twenty-three wounds still bleeding. It was a wax model which Antony had had constructed in the greatest secrecy and which was made to move automatically by means of a special mechanism hidden behind the bed.

They could bear no more! Seized with a sort of collective frenzy
the crowd hurled itself towards the platform and tried to possess themselves of Caesar’s body. Why? Perhaps they did not even know it themselves. A great many voices were asking that he should have a funeral pyre in front of Jupiter’s temple at the Capitol. Others wished that he should be burned on the very spot where he had succumbed to the blows of the assassins, and that the building which had sheltered such an abominable crime should be destroyed with him in one tremendous conflagration. Others, again, called down the anger of the people upon his murderers. In the middle of all this tumult, two men, two of Caesar’s old legionaries, with lighted candles in their hands, managed to slip through to the funeral bed and set fire to it. Thus the question was settled there and then: the body of Caesar was to be burned on the spot. They improvised a funeral pyre with whatever came to hand. The tribune was broken into splinters. Its wood went to feed the rising flames. The crowd demolished the platforms of the judges, they dispersed through the Forum searching for boards, seats, tables. They laid hold of the stalls of the merchants. Everything was heaped up round the dais, which had become an immense mass of fire. On all sides the people crowded in a state of wild ecstasy. The women threw into the flames their jewels and the sacred amulets taken from the necks of their children; the soldiers, their weapons, their crowns, and their decorations; the musicians, the beautiful garments with which they had been specially clothed for the ceremony. The fire increased, it spread, it rose towards heaven, bearing thither as an oblation the body of Caesar now transmuted into pure, ardent flame.

The pyre burned all night. All night the people piously watched beside it. At dawn it was over. The last sparks were extinguished and the crowd slowly dispersed. Some men were to be seen wandering among the charred ruins and the heaps of ashes. They found a few bones, which they carried away with reverent care. It was all that remained on earth of Caesar, descendant of gods and kings, conqueror of the world and supreme master of the Roman Republic.
APPENDICES

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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(translated by Roy Walker)
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PART THREE

THE CIVIL WAR

37 The Beginning of the Conflict

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- CAESAR, B.C.C., I, 4, 5; 6, 2; 9, 2; 32, 3;
- SUETONIUS, 26–28;
- PLUTARCH, Caes., 28–30, 34 (treachery of Labienus);
- Pomp., 55–59; comp. Ages.-Pomp., 3;
- Cat. min., 49;
- CICERO, ad Att., III, 18, 1 (return from exile);
- V, 2, 3; 6, 1; II, 2;
- VI, 2, 6; 3, 4; 9, 5; VII, 3, 4; 4, 3; 7, 5–6; 13a, 2;
- VIII, 3, 3; II, 7; 16, 1; ad fam., I, 9, 9; II, 17, 4;
- IV, 3, 1; VII, 3, 12;
- VIII, I, 2; 2, 2; 4, 4; 5, 3; 8, 9; 9, 2; 9, 5;
- 10, 4;
- Tusc., I, 86;
- APPIAN, II, 23, 87; 24, 92; 25, 96; 26, 98; 27, 102;
- 27, 105–106; 28, 111; 29, 115;
- 30, 116; 31, 123; 32, 124;
- DION CASSIUS, XL, 50, 4;
- 56, 1–2;
- 58, 3; 59, 3; 60, 4; 61;
- 62, 3; 64, 4; 65, 3–4;
- 66, 1–2;
- XII, 6, 3;
- LIVY, per. 107–109;
- VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 48, 4;
- FLORUS, I, 13, 16;
- VALERIUS MAXIMUS, IX, 1, 6;
- OROSIUS, VI, 15, 2;
- JUVENAL, X, 283.

For reference: Rice Holmes, The Chronology of Events from the Recall of Two of Caesar’s Legions to the Departure of Curio from Rome (in the 2nd volume of The Roman Republic, by the same author, pp. 323–327; useful for dates); Adcock, From the Conference of Lucca to the Rubicon (Cambr. Anc. H. IX, chap. XV), and Cobban, Senate and Provinces 78–49 (Cambridge, 1935).

215. The preliminaries to the break between the Republican party and Caesar have been traced in masterly fashion by Ed. Meyer (op. cit., pp. 240–257).

216. The estimate of the debts of the young Curio: Valerius Maximus, IX, 1, 6. Velleius Paterculus passed the following opinion on this personage: `Of distinguished origin, audacious, as lavish with his own wealth as with the wealth and honour of others, Curio united genius with perservity, and his eloquence was an added danger to the country’ (II, 48). Plutarch asserts that ‘by reason of his great beauty Antony was from his early youth desired by Curio’ (2).

217. The buying-off of Paullus is corroborated by Appian (II, 26, 101) and Plutarch (Caes., 29).

218. The figures of the voting are given by Appian, II, 30, 119.


38 *Alea Jacta Est*

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., I, I, 1-2, 2-6; SUETONIUS, 29-31; PLUTARCH, Caes., 30-32, Pomp., 59-60, Ant., 5; Cat. min., 51; CICERO, ad fam., XVI, II, 2, Phil., II, 51; APPIAN, II, 32, 125-127 and 129; DION CASSIUS, XII, I, 1-2 and 2, 1-2; LIVY, per. 109; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 49, 4; FLORUS, II, 13, 15; EUTROPIUS, VI, 19, 2; ZONARAS, X, 7; LUCAN, I, 183 et seq.

221. The condition of conquered Gaul: for the state of the country and the depredations of Caesar and his technical collaborators, cf. B.G., VI, 35, 8; VII, 11, 9; VIII, 4, 1; B.G., I, 15, 2; Suetonius, 26 and 54; Plutarch, Caes., 17, 20, 21, 29, Pomp., 51; Cicero, ad Att., IV, 17, 7, VII, 7, 6; pro C. Rabir. [242]
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Post., 41; Appian, II, 26, 101; Dion Cassius, XL, 60, 3; Eutropius, VI, 14; Pliny, XXXVI, 48 and 103; Catullus, 29 and 57; Silus Italicus, X, 34.


223. The senatus-consultum of January 7, 49: Caesar, B.C., I, 5; cf. the commentary on this document by Becker in Philologus, 1851, pp. 757–759.


227. The date: one hesitates between the 11th and the 12th (of the pre-Julian calendar). The arguments of Carcopino on behalf of the 12th (op. cit., p. 858, note) seem to me completely convincing. Transposed to the Julian calendar, it corresponds to December 17, 50 (Carcopino, loc. cit.). The date of the 11th is conceded by Meyer (op. cit., p. 290).

39 The Flight before Caesar

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., I, 14, 1–3; SUETONIUS, 33; PLUTARCH, Caes., 33; CICERO, ad Att., IX, 10, 4; ad fam., XVI, 12, 2; APPIAN, II, 37, 148; LUCAN, I, 299.


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229. The question has been asked: Did the two tribunes go to Ravenna or to Ariminum to rejoin Caesar? It appears from a statement by Plutarch that Antony and Q. Cassius journeyed from Rome to Ravenna, and once the Rubicon had been crossed, accompanied him to Ariminum. Rice Holmes does not hold this view: he considers that their meeting did not take place until after the crossing of the Rubicon (cf. his note, *Did Caesar meet the tribunes Antony and Cassius before or after he crossed the Rubicon?*, in the third volume of *The Roman Republic*, pp. 334–337).


**40 Pompey’s Retreat**

*Sources:* CAESAR, B.C., I, 9; 10, 3; 23, 5; 24, 5; 25, 1–2; 26, 2–5; 27–28; PLUTARCH, Caes., 35; Pomp., 62; Cat. min., 53; CICERO, ad Att., VII, 14, 1; 16, 2; 17, 2; 18, 2; VIII, 14, 1; IX, 1, 1; 3, 2; 6, 3; 7a, 2; 13, 8; 13a, 1; 14, 1; 15, 6; APPIAN, II, 38, 152; 40, 159; DION CASSIUS, XII, 5, 2–4; 12, 1–3; LIVY, per. 109; FLORUS, II, 13–20; OROSIUS, VI, 15, 4; ZONARAS, X, 8; LUCAN, II, 650 et seq.


231. On January 23 (or 24), Cicero wrote to Atticus: ‘I have seen L. Caesar... he is no man but an abject broomstick.... It seems to me that Caesar wanted to make fools of us in entrusting him with so important a mission’ (*ad Att.*, VII, 13a, 2). Kurt von Fritz, a professor at Columbia University, published in 1941 in *Trans. and Proc.* (pp. 125–156) an essay on *The Mission of L. Caesar and L. Roscius in January 49 B.C.*, in which he asserts that Caesar certainly had no intention of abiding by the conditions which he proposed through his emissaries to the opposing faction, but that he merely wished, by their moderation, to influence public opinion in his favour and to sow confusion in the ranks of the Pompeians. It would thus be his opponents who would be held to blame for having rejected these terms. And he ends with these suggestive lines: ‘This is not written in order to detract from Caesar’s glory. There can be no doubt that as a military, political, and legislative genius he far surpassed all his contemporaries. But his greatness also had its destructive side... Mommsen’s fulminations against Pompey and the rotten aristocracy may be excused, and even command respect, as the expression of a man who was not only an eminent scholar, but also passionately took sides in the political struggle of his own time and fought its battles
over again in the field of ancient history. But if such invectives as his are repeated by others with a claim to be the expression of superior political and historical wisdom they are but empty presumptions and should be rejected.'

232. Labienus: Augusti, Tito Labieno nella guerra gallica e nella guerra civile (Naples, 1938). Cf. Cicero, ad Att., VII, 11, 12, and 13. If we are to accept Cicero's word on this point, C. Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, had also left Rome 'declaring himself in opposition to his criminal son-in-law' (ad fam., XIV, 14). However, he will soon be seen working actively on Caesar's behalf.


234. The siege of Corfinium has been treated with a wealth of detail by Veith in his essay Corfinium (Klio, 1913, vol. XIII).

41 Caesar Goes to Rome

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., I, 29 and 30–32; PLUTARCH, Caes., 35–36; Ant., 6; Pomp., 63; CICERO, ad Att., IX, 15, 1 and 18, 1 (the whole of Book IX is relevant here); X, 1, 2–4; ad fam., IV, 1, 1; APPIAN, II, 40–41; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 9 and 15–17; XLIII, 21, 3; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 50, 2; OROSIUS, VI, 15, 5; LUCAN, III.

235. Caesar's letter to Cicero has been reproduced in its entirety by the latter in one of his letters to Atticus (IX, 16, 2).

236. On March 14 Cicero wrote to Atticus: 'Here, rumour has it . . . that Caesar will be at Formia on the 11th of the kalends of April. I should very much like to have this Minerva out of Homer beside me, in the guise of Mentor. I would say to him, "Mentor, how should we approach him, and how should we greet him?" A thornier question has never been argued. . . .' (IX, 8, 2).

237. For the meeting between Caesar and Cicero, cf. ad Att., IX, 18.

238. Caesar's army. We read in the second letter addressed to him by Sallust: 'A crowd of men, thoroughly sunken in disgrace and debauch, rushed wholesale to join your faction, and openly threatened peaceful citizens with death, with robbery, and in short with every mishap that can enter the minds of the base.'

239. For the session of April 1: cf. Dion Cassius, XLI, 9 and 15; Cicero, ad Att., IX, 17, 1; X, 1, 2; Lucan, III, 104.


[245]
42 The Siege of Marseilles

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., I, 34, 4 and 56-58; II, 1-16 and 22; SuetONIUS, 34; PLUTARCH, Caes., 36; Ant., 6; CICERO, ad Att., X, 8a; Phil., VIII, 18; XIII, 32; APPIANI, II, 41-42; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 18-19 and 25; LIVY, per. 110; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 50, 2; FLORUS, II, 13, 23 and 24; EUTROPIUS, VI, 20, 2; STRABO, IV, 1, 5; OROSIUS, VI, 15, 6-7; ZONARAS, X, 8; LUCAN, I, 475-486; III, 298.


242. According to Suetonius, upon leaving Rome Caesar is believed to have declared to his friends 'that he was going to fight against an army without a general, and when that was done he would turn to attacking a general without an army' (34). The date of his departure: we hesitate between the 6th (Drumm-Groebel, op. cit., vol. III, p. 402) and the 7th (Strofel, op. cit., vol. I, p. 253).

243. For the activities of Domitius, cf. B.C., I, 34 and 36, 1, and Suet., Ner., 2.

244. The Fifteen of Marseilles. Beloch attributes to this town 5000 inhabitants (with the colonies). Cf. his Griech. Geschichte, III, p. 308. Marseilles was governed by a council of 600 members nominated for life. From these a committee of fifteen composed the executive, with three presidents at its head. One of these was vested with an authority superior to that of his colleagues. As regards the people, actually they were shorn of all political rights (Cic., de rep., I, 43).

245. The Albici. Strabo mentions them. But according to Desjardins (Geographie de la Gaule, vol. II, p. 87), these are not the same.

246. Caesar hands over the command to Trebonius: B.C., I, 36, 4.

43 The War in Spain

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., I, 34-87; II, 17-21; SuetONIUS, 34 and 75; PLUTARCH, Caes., 36; Pomp., 65; CICERO, ad fam., IX, 13, 1; APPIANI, II, 42-43; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 19-24; LIVY, per., 110; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 50, 3-4; FLORUS, II, 13, 23 and 28-29; EUTROPIUS, VI, 20, 2; OROSIUS, VI, 15, 6-7; LUCAN, III, 298; IV, 17 et seq.
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248. Suétone places the incident of the fraternisation, and the reprisals of Afranius and Petreius, before Ilerda (75).

44 The Mutiny of Placentia

Sources: SUETONIUS, 69; APPIAN, II, 47, 191–195; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 26–35; LUCAN, V, 237 et seq.


250. Caesar appointed dictator: cf. Caesar, B.C., II, 21, 5; Plutarch, Caes., 37; Dion Cassius, XLI, 36, 1; XLIII, 1, 1; Appian, II, 48, 196; Zonaras, X, 8. According to Appian, he was not nominated by the people until after his arrival in Rome; according to Plutarch and Zonaras, he was appointed by the praetor ex senatus consulto. Carcopino has endeavoured with a great deal of skill to reconcile these two testimonies (op. cit., p. 891, n. 111).


252. Suetonius writes: ‘He dismissed the whole of the Ninth Legion in disgrace... and it took a great deal of beseeching to persuade him that it should be reconstituted, and he did so only after the guilty had been punished.’

45 Caesar’s First Dictatorship

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., III, 1 and 2; SUETONIUS, 41–42; PLUTARCH, Caes., 37; Pomp., 65; APPIAN, II, 48, 196–199; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 36–38 and 39, 1; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 43, 4; FLORUS, II, 13, 36.

253. Caesar's reforms. To what degree was he prompted by suggestions contained in the letters of Sallust addressed to him, and whose authenticity, formerly debated, now appears to be definitively established (cf. infra in the Bibliographical Survey the section headed 'Caesar and Sallust')? The question deserves to be asked. The hypothesis was advanced (notably by Carcopino, op. cit., p. 982) that these texts, as well as many others of a similar nature, were manufactured upon the initiative of Caesar himself, for the express purpose of 'stimulating precisely the counsels which he wanted to receive' (as Carcopino puts it). This is not impossible, although here, once again, we remain in the domain of hypothesis. We nevertheless observe that, though this be conceded, these 'letters to Caesar' reflect in large measure the programme of action he had set forth in the political and economic sphere. Plainly this adds tremendously to their interest. In any case, let us examine the advice which Sallust gives his illustrious correspondent: 'The greatest good you can obtain for the country, its citizens, for yourself, and for our posterity, in a word for the whole human race, would be to overthrow, or at least undermine as far as possible, the love of money; otherwise, there is no way to regulate private or public affairs... Begin therefore by destroying the power of money' (I, 7). After that, the authority of the Senate must be restored. This is to be brought about by two methods: increasing the number of its members and introducing the vote by secret ballot (I, 11). Also, he must above all eradicate, with the least possible delay, the troubles arising from party strife, and so restore unity and peace within the Republic. 'You will have secured this goal,' writes Sallust, 'if you put a stop to this frenzy of extravagance and peculation, not by reviving ancient institutions which the corruption of manners has long since thrown into ridicule, but by arranging that each person's expenditure shall be limited to his income' (II, 5). There follow other recommendations: 'It is your duty to see that the people, who are corrupted by largesses and the distributions of grain, should have occupations which relieve them of the leisure to foment the ills of the state... You must further guarantee the security of Italy and the provinces... Prevent, furthermore, military service from being, as it still is, unjustly or unfairly apportioned... See that the grain which has hitherto been the reward of the idle shall be distributed to the veterans' (II, 7). In conclusion, let us take note of the following reflection: 'Wise men only wage war to secure peace. Unless you secure ours, what does it signify whether you have been victor or vanquished?... Therefore, in the name of the gods, take the Republic in hand... for either you alone can remedy our ills, or it is useless for anybody to try' (II, 6).


Relations with Cisalpine Gaul. The lex Rubria initiated by Caesar and carried through by the tribune Rubrius, belongs to this epoch. It set up for the municipalities of the Cisalpine territory, which hitherto comprised a distinct province, a judicial machinery linked with that of Rome. According
to the fragments which have survived to our day, this law stipulates that the municipal magistrates shall be empowered to send for decision by a jury all cases in which the sum involved shall not exceed 15,000 sesterces (10,000, according to an alternative version). Cases in which the total at issue in the litigation exceeded this sum, as well as criminal actions, were to remain outside their jurisdiction. Their function was to be limited to the preliminary examination of the cases, after which they were bound to send the parties before the Roman praetor. This is what Carcopino calls ‘strengthening inside Cisalpine Gaul... the bonds of the self-governing communities with the mother country’ (op. cit., p. 988). It might also be remarked that this procedure is rather like giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

255. This stay in Rome is placed by Stoffel (op. cit., vol. II, p. 426) between the 2nd and 13th of December, 49 (according to the Julian calendar: October 28–November 8).

46 The War in Greece

Sources: CAESAR, B.C., II, 6–8; III, 3–5, 10–19, 23–30, 41–72, 75–99; SUETONIUS, 30, 35, 58, 68, 75; PLUTARCH, Caes., 37–46; Pomp., 64–73; Ant., 7; apopht. Caesar, 9; de fortuna Rom., 6; CICERO, pro Lig., 10; pro Defot., 33 et seq.; APPIAN II, 49, 200–204; 52–56; 58, 239; 59, 243–245; 60–82; DION CASSIUS, XLI, 44–63; LIVY, per. xxi; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 51–52; FLORUS, II, 13, 3 and 37–51; PLINY, VII, 94; SENECA, de ira, II, 23, 4; EUTROPIUS, VI, 20, 4; FRONTINUS, II, 3, 22; IV, 7, 32; POLYAENUS, VIII, 23, 14 and 25, 29; OROSIUS, VI, 15 and 22–27; LUCAN, V, 403, 500, 520 and from VI, 314 to VII, 872; ZONARAS, X, 8–9.


256. The date of Caesar’s arrival at Brundisium: December 22, 49 (October 17, according to the Julian calendar).

257. Caesar himself gives the text of his speech in B.C., III, 6.

258. For the ‘revenge’ of Bibulus, cf. B.C., III, 8.

259. This terse rejoinder is recorded by Florus. Valerius Maximus does not give either phrase (IX, 8, 2). Cf. Maury, Examen des motifs pour lesquels César
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260. The bread which Caesar's soldiers were forced to eat (Suet., 68) : Pliny, XIX, 144. Cf. Heuzev, Opérations militaires de Jules César ... , p. 79.


262. Eutropius' comment : 'Defeated and put to rout, [Caesar] nevertheless escaped because when night fell Pompey had no further inclination to pursue' (VI, 16). For the battle and the topography of the places : cf. Veith, Der Feldzug von Dyrrachium zwischen Caesar und Pompeius (Vienna, 1920) ; Schober, Zur Topographie von Dyrrachium (Jahreshefte des österr. Arch. Inst. in Wien, 1926, vol. XXIII), and infra the bibliographical references of the note relating to p. 403.

263. Caesar's speech is summarized in B.C., III, 73.


266. Horus writes (IV, 2) : 'There have been passed down two orders which [Caesar] uttered as he rode by on his horse, one of them cruel but adroit and calculated to win the victory : "Soldier, strike at the face" (Miles, faciem feri), the other aimed at winning popularity for himself : "Spare the [Roman] civilians" (Parce civibus).'


268. Caesar had found Pompey's correspondence in his tent. He threw it into the fire without perusing it. He dealt likewise, after Thapsus, with the papers of Scipio Metellus. Cf. Dion Cassius, XLIII, 13, 2 and XLIV, 47, 5 ; Pliny, VII, 94. According to Asinius Pollio, upon seeing his adversaries totally beaten at the battle of Pharsalus, he is supposed to have said, word for word : 'They asked for it : after feats so great as mine I, Caius Caesar, would have been censured if I had not called upon my soldiers for succour' (ap. Suet., 30).
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270. The end of Crastinus: Florus, IV, 2.

47 After the Victory

Sources:
CAESAR, B.C., III, 91–106; SUETONIUS, 63; PLUTARCHE, Caes., 48; CICERO, ad fam., XV, 15, 2; [ANON.], B.A., 13, 5 and 15, 1; APPIAN, II, 88, 370 and XII, 464; DION CASSIUS, XLII, 6, 2.

For reference: Judeich, Caesar im Orient, pp. 52–66.


272. The surrender of the fleet of Cassius (whom Appian wrongly identified with Caesar’s future assassin) is mentioned by Dion Cassius, Appian, and Suetonius.—Visit to the ruins of Troy: Strabo, XIII, 1, 27.


48 The War of Alexandria

Sources:
CAESAR, B.C., III, 106–112; the anonymous volume De bello Alexandrino attributed to Hirtius [?]; SUETONIUS, 54, 64; PLUTARCHE, Caes., 48–49; APPIAN, II, 89, 376; 90, 377; 150, 628; DION CASSIUS, XLII, 36–44; LIVY, per. 112; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 54, 1; FLORUS, II, 13, 59–60; EUTROPIUS, VI, 22; FRONTINUS, I, 1, 5; OROSIUS, VI, 15, 34 and 16, 1–2; ZONARAS, X, 10; LUCAN, X, pass.


274. Caesar beholding Pompey’s head: cf. Dion Cassius, XLII, 8; Valerius Maximus, V, 1, 10; Eutropius, VI, 21, 3; Livy, per. 112; Orosius, VI, 15, 29; Zonaras, X, 10; Lucan, IX, 1035 et seq.

275. It was not until after the Ides of March that Theodotus was put to death by Brutus, who managed to seize him during his passage to Cyzicus (cf. Plutarch, Pomp., 112 and Brut., 41). Appian attributes this murder to Cassius (II, 89, 370). Carcopino follows his version (op. cit., p. 909, n. 101); I prefer that of Plutarch who largely uses first-hand evidence for his Life of Brutus.


278. According to Suetonius this was ‘one of the most difficult of wars...inside the walls of an enemy amply supplied and very industrious, while [Caesar] was short of everything and had made no preparations’ (35).

279. The burning of the library. According to Aulus Gellius (VII, 17, 3) and Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII, 16, 3) the total number of volumes which it comprised amounted to 700,000. Therefore about 300,000 may have been saved. Cf. Seneca, de tranq. an., IX, 5; Isidor, etym., VI, 3, 5. Modern works: Judeich, Der Brand der grossen Bibliothek (in Caesar im Orient, by the same author, pp. 82-84); Furlani, Sull’incendio della biblioteca Alessandrina (Aeg. 1924, vol. V, pp. 205-212); Staquet, César à Alexandrie. L’incendie de la bibliothèque (Nova et vetera, 1928, vol. XII, pp. 157-177).


282. Suetonius assures us (52) that Caesar ‘would have traversed the whole of Egypt and reached Ethiopia if his army had not refused to follow him’. Cf. App., II, 90, 379.


49. Veni, Vidi, Vici

Sources: [ANON.] de bello Alexandrinio, 65-78; SUETONIUS, 35; PLUTARCH, Caes., 50; APPIAN, II, 91, 384; Mithr., 120-121; DION CASSIUS, XLII, 45-49; LIVY, per. 113; [AUR. VICT.], de vir. ill., 78; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 55, 2; FLORUS, II, 13, 63; FRONTINUS, II, 2, 3; EUTROPIUS, VI, 22, 3; OROSIUS, VI, 16, 3; ZONARAS, X, 70.

284. Caesar’s indifference to his food: Suet., 53, cf. Montaigne, Essais, II, 33. He accommodated himself easily to whatever bed presented itself; we read in Suetonius (72): ‘Upon observing that his travel companion, Caius Oppius, suddenly fell ill in the heart of a forest, he gave up the one and only hut which they had come upon, and himself lay down between the earth and the stars.’ The mention of the ‘presents’ which he had himself given is found in Dion Cassius, XLII, 50, 2 and 5; Cicero, Phil., II, 62, 67-68, 71 and 73; Plutarch, Ant., 10. Regarding the ‘banquets, let us again turn to Suetonius: ‘In the provinces he was continually giving feasts, with two distinct tables, one for his officers and the Greeks, the other for the Romans and the notables of the country’ (48).
285. Bogud, king of Mauretania, example of an accommodating husband: to him, as to his wife Eunoë, whose lover he was, Caesar ‘made a multitude of princely gifts’ (Suet., 52). But if he acknowledged no limits to his own desires, he revealed himself as rather severe towards others and, so Suetonius tells us, ‘punished by death, without anyone having lodged a complaint, one of his most intimate freedmen, who had seduced the wife of a Roman knight’ (48).


288. Stay in Tarsus. There, among others who were seeking pardon and honours, his future assassin, Cassius, was awaiting him. If we are to believe Cicero on this point (Phil., II, 11, 26), he intended to assassinate Caesar, but this retrospective charge deserves little belief. Be that as it may, at the request of his brother-in-law Brutus, Cassius gained the pardon and forswore, at least outwardly, his Pompeian convictions. Cf. Plut., Brut., 6; Dion Cassius, XLII, 13, 5.


293. Veni, vidi, vici. In our day it has been successfully demonstrated that Caesar was not the inventor of this famous aphorism which has become associated with his name. He may have been inspired by a passage from Democritus, in which it is already found in this form. Cf. Reid, ‘Caesar’s ‘Thrasonical Brag’ (Philol. Quart., 1924, p. 237); Deutsch, Veni, vidi, vici (id., 1925, pp. 151-156); Guilmot, Caesar’s Thrasonical Boast (id., 1925, p. 157),

50 Second Stay in Rome

Sources: SUETONIUS, 70; PLUTARCH, Caes., 51; APPIAN, II, 92-94; DION CASSIUS, XLII, 30-35; LIVY, per. 113; POLYAENUS, VIII, 23, 15; FRONTEMUS, I, 9, 4.

294. Caesar refrains from forwarding to Rome an account of his victory at Pharsalus: cf. Dion Cassius, XLII, 18, 1 and Plutarch, 56.

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297. The mutiny of the legionaries is related by Appian and by Dion Cassius. Their accounts complement each other admirably.


51 The War in Africa

Sources: The volume De bello Africano; SUETONIUS, 35 and 59; PLUTARCH, Caes., 52; APPIAN, II, 95, 397; DION, CASSIUS, XII, 56–58; CICERO, de divin., II, 52; VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, II, 55, 1; FLORUS, II, 13, 64; EUTROPIUS, VI, 23, 1; FRONTINUS, I, 12, 2; OROSIUS, VI, 16, 3; ZONARAS, X, 10.


299. Before embarking, Caesar, to conform with tradition, wanted to consult fate. ‘Although the victim escaped at the very moment when he was about to sacrifice it,’ writes Suetonius, ‘he did not put off his expedition’ (59).

300. Caesar took into account, no doubt for the purpose of honouring his soldiers, the prophecies according to which success and victory in Africa were by fate associated with the name of the Scipios. Pompey’s forces were commanded by a Scipio. Caesar therefore summoned, and kept in his camp for the whole duration of the campaign, a member of this family who had gone adrift and fallen into abject misfortune (Suet., 39).

301. Rabirius Postumus. For this curious personality, one of the most blatant speculators of his day, see the essay of H. Dessau in Hermes, 1911.

302. The battle of Ruspina. The account in the De bel. Afr. should be
supplemented by Appian, II, 95, 399 and Dion Cassius, XLIII, 2, 1-2.—Date of the battle: January 4, 46.

303. The author of De bello Africano continues to be anonymous. Attempts have been made to attribute it successively to Oppius, Hirtius, Asinius Pollio, and to Sallust. None of these suggestions have been confirmed by modern scholarship. Cf. the introduction by Bouvier in his recent edition of Bell. Afr. (Collection des Universités de France, 1949).

304. That is where the enemy is! Valerius Maximus has a variant: Where are you going? There is where the battle is! (III, 2, 19).

305. Caesar addressing his soldiers: Suet., 66.


307. The battle of Thapsus. Date: April 6, 46. Cf. bell. Afr., 79-86; Suetonius, 35; Plutarch, Caes., 53, Cat. min., 58; Appian, II, 96-97; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 7; Livy, per. 114; Velleius Paterculus, II, 55, 1; Florus, II, 13, 66; Eutropius, VI, 23, 2; [Aur. Vict.], de vir. ill., 78; Orosius, VI, 16, 3; Zonaras, X, 10. For reference: Langhammer, Die Schlacht bei Thapsus (Klio, 1921, vol. XVII, pp. 102-104).

308. The young L. Caesar, according to Suetonius, ‘not satisfied with having savagely wiped out Caesar’s freedmen by sword and by fire, ordered the animals he had purchased for a public spectacle to be butchered en masse.’


52 Triumphs

Sources: SUETONIUS, 37, 49, 51, 52; APPIAN, II, 101-102; DION CASSIUS, XLIII, 20-23; PLINY, XIX, 144.


312. The execution of Vercingétorix. Ihne claims (he is alone in this) that Vercingétorix was not handed over to the executioner (Röm. Gesh., vol. VII, p. 523, n. 1), because no ancient historian except Dion Cassius makes mention of his execution.

313. In the Repertoire des reliefs grecs et romains, by S. Reinach (Paris, 1909), there are some reproductions of placards (vol. I, p. 275), pictures of captives
led in the procession (vol. II, p. 288), and of the spoils taken from the
conquered peoples (vol. III, p. 289). The *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et
romaines*, by Darenberg and Saglio, reproduces in vol. V (fig. 7091) a silver
vase, discovered at Boscoreale, showing a representation of the victor in his
chariot.

The triumphs of Caesar inspired the famous work of Mantegna, *I Trionfi
di Cesare*, executed at Mantua between 1487 and 1492 and comprising nine
large panels which can be seen to-day in the Royal Gallery of Hampton
Court (cf. Ernest Law, *Mantegna's Triumph of Julius Caesar and The Royal
Gallery of Hampton Court...* with descriptive, biographical, and critical notes,
London, 1898).

314. The verses sung by the legionaries: cf. Nadal, *Sur l'origine de la liberté
qu'avaient les soldats romains de chanter goguettes à ceux qui triomphaient*, Paris,
CV, p. 640).

315. Gratuiites granted to the army: cf. Suetonius, 38; Appian, II, 102;
Dion Cassius, XLIII, 21 (the punishment of the malcontents is described by
Dion Cassius, XLIII, 24, 3). The payment of rents: same sources, plus Dion
Cassius, XLIII, 51, 1-2.

316. Games and popular entertainments: Suetonius, 39; Plutarch, *Caes.*, 55;
Appian, II, 102, 421 and 424; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 22-24; Cicero,
ad fam., XII, 18, 2; Livy, *per. 115*; Velleius Paterculus, II, 56, 1; Pliny,
VIII, 20, 53, 69, 182; IX, 177; XIV, 97; XIX, 23; XXXVI, 102; Varro,
III, 17, 3; Macrobius, III, 15, 10.

53 After the Festivities

317. Exclusion of the 170,000: Suetonius, 41; Appian, II, 102, 42; Dion
Cassius, XLIII, 21, 4 and 25, 2; Livy, *per. 115*; Zonaras, X, 10. The details
given by Plutarch (*Caes.*, 55) concerning the census which was carried out
are fantastic. Groebel, in *Pauly-Wissowa*, vol. X, col. 246, names the figure of
150,000 excluded persons. He is in error. It was indeed 170,000 (cf. Suetonius,
loc. cit.).

318. The suppression of the colleges. Suetonius (42) writes: 'He ordered
the dissolution of all societies except those which had existed from the earliest
times.'

319. The new senators: Suetonius, 41, 72, 76, 80; Cicero, *ad fam.*, XIII,
5, 2; *de divin.*, II, 23; Dion Cassius, XLII, 47, 3; Tacitus, *ann.*, XI, 25;
Seneca, *controv.*, VII, 3; Macrobius, II, 3, 10; VII, 3, 8.—Suetonius quotes
(80) the verse which was 'sung everywhere' at this period:

*After his triumph over the Gauls,*

*Caesar admitted them to the curia.*

*The Gauls have abandoned their native clouts*;

*To adorn themselves with the laticlave.*

The same author asserts (78) that the following bill was posted on the
walls of Rome: 'Greetings to you all! Let no one presume to show the
way to the curia to a new senator.' This injunction was aimed at the foreigners who had recently been named senators and who were not sufficiently familiar with the streets of the capital. The banker Rabirius Postumus became a senator on this occasion. The reader will find interest in the chapter devoted to the new senators by R. Syme in his authoritative book, *The Roman Revolution* (pp. 78–96).


322. The *lex somptuaria*: Suetonius, 43; Cicero, *ad Att.*, XIII, 7, 1; *ad fam.*, VII, 26, 2; *IX*, 15, 5 and 26, 4; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 25, 2.


54 The Last Battle

Sources: *de bell. Alex.*, XLVIII–LXIV; *Bell. Hist.*, I–XLII; *Suetonius*, 56; Appian, II, 103, 426–429 and *Iber.*, 1; *Dion Cassius*, XLIII, 29–34; *Cicero*, *ad fam.*, VI, 18, 2; *Velleius Paterculus*, II, 54, 2 and 55, 2; *Strabo*, III, 4, 9; *Orosius*, VI, 16, 6.


324. Q. Cassius. Valerius Maximus wrote these lines of him: 'When he was in Spain he ordered the arrest of M. Silius and A. Calpurnius, who had come armed with daggers to assassinate him, and he restored their liberty to them, to the one for five million sestertii, to the other for six millions. Do you not consider that a man like that, for twice the amount, would also have proffered his own throat?' (IX, 4, 2).


Notes and References

Part Four

Divus Julius

55 At the Summit of Power

Sources: Suétone, 37, 76, 78, 83; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 46–47, XLIV, 7–8; Macrobius, II, 7 and 11; Valerius Maximus, IX, 15, 1; Vellevius Paterculus, II, 56, 2.

327. Caesar's health. Suétone puts forward this curious explanation: 'Some of his relatives had the impression that he no longer cared to live and looked with indifference upon his declining health; it was, in their view, for this reason that he spurned the religious auguries and the admonitions of his friends' (86). But in that case how shall we explain the grandiose schemes which he was nourishing precisely at this period?

328. The Aquila incident is recorded by Suétone (78).

329. Labeius: the account of Macrobius, II, 7, 3, should be supplemented by Cic., ad fam., XII, 18, 2.

330. For the festival of the Palilia, cf. Dion Cassius, XLIII, 42, 3. The fifty days of thanksgiving bestowed upon Caesar: cf. Drumann-Groebe, op. cit., vol. III, p. 580. On this topic the aged Drumann has written: 'Through Caesar the Romans ceased to be republicans; they became slaves by their own choice. He wished merely to tie their hands and they assumed the chains themselves.'

331. The statue at the temple of Quirinus: Dion Cassius, XLIII, 45, 2–3; Suétone, 76; Cicero, ad Att., XII, 45 and 48; XIII, 28, 3. Cicero's witticism occurs in Att., XII, 45, 2.

332. The honours conferred on Caesar. Statues: at Tralles (Lydia), at the end of the campaign in Gaul, even at this early stage, he had his statue placed in the temple of Victory (Valerius Maximus, I, 6, 12). The person of Caesar pronounced inviolable and sacrosanct: Appian, II, 106, 442; 134, 561; 138, 576; Dion Cassius, XLIV, 5, 3, and L, 1. The vow of the senators to protect him against all plots: Suétone, 84 and 86; Appian, II, 124, 520 and 145, 604. Deification: Suétone, 76; Plutarch, Caes., 57; Cicero, Phil., II, 110; Appian, II, 106, 442; Dion Cassius, XLIV, 6, 2; Florus, II, 13, 91. The right to wear the purple toga of the Roman kings, at first on holidays only: Appian, II, 106, 442; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 43, 1; later, at all times and places: Plutarch, Caes., 61, Ant., 12; Cicero, de divin., I, 119; Phil., II, 85; Dion Cassius, XLIV, 4, 2; 6, 1; II, 2; 49, 4; Nicolaus Damascenus, 21; Valerius Maximus, I, 6, 13; Pliny, XI, 186; Zonaras, X, 12. The right to appear everywhere wearing a laurel crown: Suétone, [258]
56 The March Towards the Throne

Sources: Suetonius, 78-79; Nicolaus Damascenus, 21; Dion Cassius, XLIV, 10-15; Velleius Paterculus, II, 56.


333. Mamurra. Cf. Cicero, ad Att., XIII, 52. Münzer takes the view (P.-W., XXVII, 967) that the passage in Cicero: 'Tum audivit de Mamurra, vultum non mutavit, does not enable us to assert that he is there referring to the tidings of the favourite's death. In point of fact the word is not mentioned, but in any event the reference must have been to some very grieveous circumstance which had befallen Mamurra since Cicero appears to have been impressed by the lack of emotion exhibited by Caesar on that occasion.

Vol II—9* [259]
The relations of Caesar with Mamurra had provided Catullus with the subject of two poems (29 and 57) which have remained famous. The poet had known Mamurra well, and had specific reasons for not finding him a kindred spirit (Mamurra had ‘rustled’ his mistress). As to Caesar, he was a friend of Catullus’ father, a wealthy citizen of Verona. It was in his home that Caesar used to stay when passing through that town, and the young Catullus was admitted to his immediate circle. These lines had been composed on the morrow of the campaign in Brittany, and are here submitted to the reader’s notice.

Who can see and who can bear,
Unless he be shameless, a glutton and a gamester,
That Mamurra gluts what wealth was once
In long-haired Gaul and farthest Britain.
You, Romulus, the debauchee, (i) can you see and let it pass?
Shall this presumer, loaded with profit,
Amble like some white dove or Adonis
Through all men’s beds?
You, Romulus, the debauchee, will you see and let this pass?
You, too, are shameless, a glutton and gamester.
And was that the reason, my fine general,
That you went to the furthest isle of the west,
That that ravaged Mentula of yours (ii)
Should take its fill two or three hundred times?...
Was that the reason, father and son-in-law [Caesar and Pompey]
That you have utterly overthrown
The wealthiest of cities?

They get on very well together, these worthless cads,
The pervert Mamurra and Caesar.
We need not be surprised: like stains belong to each,
One’s are of Rome, the other’s a Formian brand,
Whose imprint stays and will not be erased.
Sharing the same vice, this pair of twins,
Sharing a bed, both clever lads at love,
Neither exceeds the other in his greedy lusts,
Rivals for the company of girls.
They get on very well indeed, this couple of worthless cads. (iii)

(i) It is in this manner that the poet designates Caesar.
(ii) This sobriquet, which in good Latin simply signifies vital organ, is here used to describe Caesar’s ‘lover’.
(iii) I have endeavoured in this translation, devoid of all literary pretension and strictly ‘technical,’ to follow the text as closely as possible.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

Suetonius informs us of Caesar's reaction: 'Valerius Catullus, with his lines on Mamurra, inflicted a disgrace on him which Caesar took no pains to hide; yet, when the poet apologized, he welcomed him to his table and throughout never broke off hospitable relations with his father' (73).

334. Cassius. We read in Eutropius VI, 15: 'The remains of the army [of Crassus] were saved by the quaestor C. Cassius, who by his great courage restored a hopeless situation with so much vigour that upon his return he defeated the Persians again and again.'

335. The public works planned by Caesar: cf. Plutarch, Caes., 58; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 2, 50; XLIV, 5, 1; Cicero, ad Att., XIII, 334, 1; 20, 1; 35, 1; Phil., V, 7. Suetonius gives the list of them (144) which incidentally need not be regarded as exhaustive:

'To build a temple to Mars, the largest in the world;
To build an immense theatre set against the Tarpeian rock;
To drain the Pontine Marshes [undertaken by Mussolini].
To build a road running from the Adriatic to the Tiber over the ridge of the Apennines;
To carve a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth.'

For the reform of the Roman calendar by Caesar, cf. the excellent study of Carcopino, who deals specifically with this question (op. cit., pp. 1030-1033) —Cf. Pliny, XVIII, 211, 234, 237; Macrobius, I, 14, 16, 29, 39; Suetonius, 40; Plutarch, Caes., 59; Dion Cassius, XL, 62, 1; Cicero, de leg., II, 29.
Lex Julia municipalis. Proposed by Caesar in 45 (Cicero, ad fam., VI, 18, 2). It has been partly preserved on two bronze tablets discovered on the site of ancient Heraclea in 1732. Caesar lays down therein a principle of civic organization as valid for the capital as for the Italian municipalities and the foreign cities. It remained in force up to the Empire era. His chief object was to free the towns juris romani from their subordination to the city of Rome. They gained a civic constitution which granted them a popular assembly, a senate, and magistrates elected by the people. The keeping of the registers of the census hitherto centralized in Rome was localized. Each town was to prepare its own and send it to Rome. They also gained their own right of jurisdiction. This was a bold initiative on Caesar's part which opened the way to a broad autonomy of the towns and which was undoubtedly destined to attach them more rigidly to him personally. Cf. Legras, La table latine d'Heracleé (Paris 1907) and A. von Premerstein, Die Tafel von Heraclea und die Acta Caesarian (Zeitschr. der Savigny-Stift, Roman. Abt., 1922, XLIII).

336. The oath imposed on officials: Appian II, 106, 442.—All Caesar's orders must be carried out: Dion Cassius, XLIV, 6, 1.

337. The magistrates nominated by Caesar. Suetonius writes: 'He promoted men of the lowest condition to even the most important offices and when he was reproached with this, he declared publicly that ... if robbers and assassins had lent him their assistance to protect his honour, he would
have shown a like recognition of even such people as they' (72).—The candidates put forward under Caesar’s patronage: ‘He would nominate his candidates,’ Suetonius avers (41), ‘by means of circulars addressed to the tribes and bearing this simple formula: “The dictator Caesar to such-and-such a tribe. I recommend such-and-such persons to you, in order that they may hold their offices by your votes.”’


340. Valerius Maximus relates that Caesar intervened between the tribune Caesetius Flavus and his father, ordering the old man to break with his son ‘because, in his capacity as tribune of the plebs, he had detracted from Caesar’s popularity by accusing him of aspiring to the throne.’ By way of compensation Caesar promised the elder Caesetius to confer the favour of splendid promotions upon his other two sons. The old man had the courage to make the following reply to the dictator: ‘Caesar, I would rather that you took away all my children before you would see me dishonour and drive away one of them myself’ (V, 7, 2).

341. The crown offered to Caesar. Cf. Hohl, Das Angebot des Diadem an Cásar (Klio, 1941, pp. 92-117), which subjects the historic evidence, particularly the account by Nicolaus Damascenus, to severe criticism, rather too dogmatically.

342. For the origin of the Sybilline Books and for the quindecemvirs put in charge of their keeping, cf. the anecdote related by Aulus Gellius, I, 19.

57. The Plot


343. For the abortive plot of Philomen, cf. Suetonius, 74.—Caesar as perpetual dictator: Suetonius, 76; Plutarch, 57; Cicero, Phil., II, 87; Dion
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Cassius, XLIV, 8, 4; XLVI, 17, 3; Appian, II, 106, 442; Livy, per. 116; [Aur. Vict.] de vir. ill., 78, 10; Florus, II, 13, 91; Zonaras, X, 10.

344. According to Suetonius (79), Caesar 'was considering a departure to Alexandria or Troy, taking with him the treasures of the empire, after impoverishing Italy by means of taxes and confiding the administration of Rome to his friends'.

345. Cleopatra in Rome: Appian, II, 102, 424; Dion Cassius, XLIII, 27, 3; LI, 22, 3; Cicero, ad Att., XV, 15, 2 ('queen of Rome').

346. Cleopatra's son: Suetonius, 52; Cicero, ad Att., XIV, 20, 2. Carcopino does not accept Caesar's paternity (La royauté de César, in Points de vue..., pp. 140–145). Here we have a delicate question, and one which is not easy to decide, even when the 'case' is not removed by a space of twenty centuries. But such evidence as emerges from the ancient texts hardly militates in favour of his thesis, the chief merit of which is its novelty and originality.

347. The law proposed by Helvius Cinna: Suetonius, 52.

58 The Assassination

Sources: Suetonius, 80–82; Plutarch, Caes., 63–66; Brut., 14–17; Nicolaus Damascenus, 24; Appian, II, 115–117; Dion Cassius, XLIV, 17–19; Livy, per. 116; Velleius Paterculus, II, 57; Florus, II, 13, 95; Cicero, de divin., II, 23; Valerius Maximus, I, 7, 2; IV, 5, 6; [Aur. Vict.], de vir. ill., 78, 10; 83, 5; Eutropius, VI, 25; Orosius, VI, 17, 1; Zonaras, X, 11.

For reference: Meyer, op. cit., pp. 533–542 and Walter, op. cit., pp. 118–132. Caesar's assassination has provided the theme for a considerable number of treatises, among which I single out the following: Nault, La mort d'Ambiorixène, vengée par celle de Jules César assassiné par Brutus (Lyon, 1682); Dennis, Jul. Caesar Acquitted and his Murderers Condemned (London, 1722); Hill, An Enquiry into the Merit of Assassination: With a view to the Character of Caesar and his Designs on the Roman Republic (London, 1738); Tonkens, De iure civium contra tyrannos et iniustas Jul. Caesaris caede (Groningen, 1778); Grötzer, Über Cäsars Ermordung und Ciceros Ansicht von derselben (Zürich, 1820); Fröhlich, De rebus indie a Caesaris occiso usque ad senatorum liberalibus habitum gestis (Berlin, 1802); Mekes, Zur Ermordung Caesars (Berlin, Philol. Wochenschr., 1917, pp. 315–230); Marsh, The Roman Aristocracy and the Death of Caesar (Class. Journ., 1925, vol. XX, pp. 451–464); Hall, Nicolaus Damascenus, Life of Augustus (Baltimore, 1923).

348. It emerges from a passage of Valerius Maximus (I, 6, 13) that previously, on the fifteenth of February, upon the occasion of the festival of the Lupercalia, [263]
Spurinna had warned Caesar of the danger which was threatening him: 'Upon that day when, clad in a purple mantle, you [Caesar] took your seat upon a golden throne, before presenting yourself to the impatient gaze of your fellow-citizens, you paid homage—in order not to appear to disdain the extraordinary honours which the Senate was so eagerly heaping upon you—to the gods into whose company you were soon to pass. But in a magnificent ox which you sacrificed as a victim, you found no heart—a prodigy which, according to the interpretation of the augur, Spurinna, threatened your life and thought, because both life and thought have their seat in the heart.' Another text of the same author confirms the date of the fifteenth of February: '[Spurinna] had warned Caesar to be on his guard, by indicating that the thirty days that would ensue, the last of which would fall upon the Ides of March, were marked by Fate.' (VIII, 11, 2). But in the account given by Valerius Maximus Spurinna's meeting with Caesar on March 15 did not take place before the entrance to the curia. 'Upon the morning of that day,' writes this historian, 'since a courtesy call had brought them both to the residence of Domitius Calvinus, Caesar remarked to Spurinna, "Well, are you aware that to-day we have reached the Ides of March?" — "Well, then," replied Spurinna, "are you aware that they are not yet over?"' (id.). This passage, which entirely contradicts the established tradition, rests upon a piece of evidence whose origins have remained unknown and which is not found in any other source.

349. Caesar's remark, uttered during the supper at the home of Lepidus, is quoted by Plutarch. Suetonius provides a different setting for it: 'One day, having read in Xenophon that Cyrus, in the course of his last illness, made certain arrangements with regard to his obsequies, he had expressed his revulsion for so lingering a death and desired an end both sudden and swift.' (87). But he is aware, and tells, of the supper with Lepidus (id.). And this is what matters to us here.

350. The last night. We may call to mind this passage from Suetonius: 'Toward the end of his days [Caesar] was a prey to sudden fainting spells and even to nightmares which interrupted his slumber' (45). Among the sinister prophecies which were dated back, after the event, to the eve of Caesar's death, Suetonius quotes one whose authenticity, if we may believe him, was guaranteed by Balbus, his intimate associate: the colonists sent to Capua by reason of the Julian law were demolishing some tombs of great antiquity for the purpose of building country houses; they had discovered in the sepulchre where Capys, the founder of Capua, was said to have been buried, a bronze tablet which bore the following inscription in Greek: 'When the remains of Capys shall be discovered, a scion of Julius shall die at the hands of his intimates and Italy will soon atone for his death by terrible catastrophes.' (81).

351. Valerius Maximus already knows the story of Calpurnia's dream and her entreaties (I, 7, 2). For the significance which the ancients attributed to dreams, cf. Hopfner, Traumdeutung (P.-W., 2nd series, vol. VI, col. 2233-2245).

352. Caesar's last gesture. Valerius Maximus writes: 'The pain of his twenty-three wounds could not destroy Caesar's regard for the laws of
decency. In fact he pulled down the flaps of his toga with his two hands in order that he might die with the lower part of his body covered' (IV, 5, 6). It stands to reason that he must have done the contrary, because Tillius, taking hold of one of the flaps of his toga, had uncovered his shoulder, and the fabric, as it slipped down, would have bared his chest.—The famous utterance, Tu quoque, Brute, seems to have been subsequently invented, although only a short time after the event. Suetonius knows of it, but he relates it with reservations: 'According to some people, Caesar allegedly cried out in Greek: "You too, my son!"' Dion Cassius seems even less affirmative: 'The number of his assailants prevented him from doing or saying anything; wrapped in the folds of his toga, he let the blows pierce his body. /This is the most authentic version; nevertheless there are those who have added that upon seeing Brutus, who dealt him a heavy blow, he exclaimed: "You too, my son!"' (XLIV, 19, 5).

59 Posthumous Desertions


For reference: Becht, Register über die Zeit von Cäsars Ermordung bis zum Umschwung der Politik des Antonius (Freiberg i/ Br., 1911) and my own Brutus, pp. 133–154.

353. For the session of the Senate, cf. the essay of Sternkopf in Hermes, XLVII, pp. 347–349.

354. The diagnosis of Antistius: Suet, 82.

60 Apotheosis

Sources: SUETONIUS, 84–85; PLUTARCH, Caes., 68–69, Brut., 20; APPIAN, II, 143, 148; DION CASSIUS, XLIV, 35–50.


356. The troubles persisted during the morrow and the succeeding days. On the pretext of avenging Caesar and of punishing his murderers, who were in hiding, people plundered the residences of wealthy citizens suspected of harbouring them. Antony published an edict which forbade all but the soldiers to carry arms. This measure soon became a dead letter. Among those fishing in troubled waters a certain Amatius, who passed himself off as a grandson (or nephew) of Marius and who claimed by virtue of this circumstance to be a relative of Caesar, appears to have been particularly active. He built an altar on the site of the funeral pyre where his cousin's mortal remains had been burned, and solemnly vowed to have Brutus and Cassius executed. Antony forestalled him from carrying out his plan by arresting him and
NOTES AND REFERENCES

putting him to death without formal trial. The altar was destroyed. Afterwards, a marble column was erected in the Forum with the inscription, ‘To the Father of the Country,’ and it became the custom to settle private disputes at the foot of this column with an oath in Caesar’s name (Suet., 85).

The foreign colonies went individually into mourning, ‘especially the Jews,’ Suetonius writes, ‘who went so far as to assemble for several nights on end near his tomb [he means, properly speaking, on the spot where Caesar’s body had been committed to the flames]’ (84). Plutarch relates that in the course of the night which followed the assassination, a huge comet had sped across the sky; it was seen again for six nights running (Caes., 87). Suetonius places this phenomenon during the first games which Augustus celebrated in honour of his adoptive father. ‘People believed,’ he adds, ‘that it was Caesar’s soul entering the heavens; that is the reason he is portrayed with a star above his head’ (88, cf. Aug., 10). In fact, this star is to be seen upon the coins of the time bearing the effigy of Caesar. Cf. Scott, _The Sidus Julium and the Apotheosis of Caesar_ (Class. Philol., 1941, vol. XXXVI, pp. 257–272).

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IN CN. CORNELIUM DOLABELLAM  [Cf. Suet., 4; Aulus Gellius, IV, 16, 8.]

PRO BITHYNIS  [Cf. Aulus Gellius, V, 13, 6.]

ORATIO, QUÁ PLAUTIAM ROGATIONEM SUASIT  [Cf. Aulus Gellius, XIII, 13, 5.]

LAUDATIONES JULIAE AMITAE ET CORNELIAE UXORIS  [Suet., 6]

IN MEMMIUM ET L. DOMITIUM PRAETORES  [Suet., 73; Schol. Bob. pro Sest.,

p. 89. Vatin., p. 116 H.]

PRO DECIO SAMNITE  [Tac., dial., 21.]

Miscellaneous Writings

ANTICATO

[Two works, edited in the camp before Munda. Cf. Plut., Caes., 54; Cic., ad Att., XIII, 50–51; Tac., ann., IV, 34; Juv., VI, 338.]

DE ANALOGIA

[Two volumes. Written while Caesar was returning from Cisalpine Gaul to rejoin his army. Cf. Aulus Gellius, XIX, 8, 3; Cic., Brut., LXXII, 253, LXXV, 261; Pliny, VII, 117.]

OEDIPUS

[Tragedy. No traces have survived. Suppressed by Augustus.]

LAUDES HERCULIS

[Eulogy on Hercules. No traces have survived. Suppressed by Augustus.]

ITER

[Poem on travelling. Composed while Caesar was on his way to Spain to battle against the sons of Pompey.]

EPIGRAMMATA

[We are indebted to Suetonius for preserving a fragment of this collection, which he reproduced in his P. Terentii ... Vita.]

DE ASTRIS

[Treatise on astronomy, mentioned by Macrobius, I, xvi, 39. Pliny names this work among the sources of his book XVIII, in which he makes repeated reference to it. Cf. Schol. in Lucan., io, 185. For reference: Mommsen, Röm. Chronologie, p. 78 (Berlin, 1851) and Huschke, Das alte röm. Jahr und seine Tage, p. 116 (Breslau, 1869).]

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DICTA COLLECTENEA

[Apophthegms. Cf. Cic., ad fam., IX, 16, 4.]

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[Surviving texts: Cic., ad Att., IX, 6a; 7c; 13a; 16, 2; X, 8b. A fragment of Caesar's letters in Greek

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was discovered at Mitylene by Cichorius, Sitzungsber. d. Berliner Ak. f. Wissensch., 1889, p. 960.]

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[The date of the composition of this work is disputed. There are two contradictory theories: (1) that it was edited in its entirety in the spring of 51, and published shortly thereafter; (2) that it was edited progressively and parallel to the course of events, and published in three parts (at the close of 57, close of 55, close of 52). In my opinion the first seems to be more likely (certain passages, in particular I, 28, 5, VII, 9, 6, IV, 21, 7, VII, 6, 1, support this view); the second, endorsed by Halkin, is adopted by Carcopino. The first seven books were written by Caesar. The eighth, and last, is attributed to his lieutenant, Hirtius.]

DE BELLO CIVILI

[Composed by Caesar, and published, after his death, by Hirtius. It is known that the books De bello Alexandrino, De bello Africo and De bello Hispaniensi were not edited by Caesar, but by some of his collaborators who have remained anonymous. These volumes, together with De bello Gallico and De bello civili, form what is known as the Corpus Caesarianum.]

II

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