

supported only by the factious and ambitious spirit of the tribunes themselves. In this state of public opinion, the fate of Drusus, who was stabbed by an unknown hand while sitting in his tribunal, excited neither alarm nor regret.

But the allies in Italy were exasperated by the opposition to their claims, and by the murder of their champion. The principal states entered into a secret league for arming in support of their pretensions, while a formal embassy was sent, in their joint name, to demand from the senate and people of Rome what they represented as a matter of right and justice. The senate, apprized of all their preparations, sent a peremptory refusal, and ordered several legions to take the field against them, nominally headed by the consuls, but, in reality under the command of Marius, Sylla, Pompey, and Crassus, all at that time men of the highest military reputation. But even under these able generals, the success of the allies in many severe conflicts was such, that the senate thought it prudent to listen to terms, and to allow the privilege of citizenship to the inhabitants of such of the states as should lay down their arms and return to submission and allegiance. These concessions dissolved the league, and the new citizens found, after all, that their coveted privileges were of very little consequence. The senate and censors formed them into eight new tribes, who in the Comitia were to give their votes last, which reduced their influence to a mere trifle.

This war between Rome and her allies, thence termed the Social war, was an easy preparative for that which followed between her own citizens. To excite a civil war was, in the present situation of things, a matter of no great difficulty. It was only necessary that there should be two rivals in the path of ambition equally able and equally intrepid; and such men were Marius and Sylla. The former, we have seen, had raised himself from obscurity by the mere force of talents. Sylla was of an illustrious family; he had all the talents of his rival, and yet more unbounded ambition; his manners were engaging; he had acquired immense wealth, and he knew how to employ it with great judgment in rendering himself popular. His distinguished military conduct in the Social war increased the public favor; and he was elected consul, with the charge of prosecuting a war in Asia against Mithridates, king of Pontus.

This prince had given the Romans the highest provocation. By the seizure of Bithynia and Cappadocia, he had encroached on the tributary states of the republic; he had seized a large part of Greece—and, by his fleet in the Ægean Sea, had taken several ships belonging to the Romans. He had likewise authorized a general massacre, in one day, of every Roman citizen in the lesser Asia. No sooner, however, had Sylla taken the field, than the intrigues of his rival Marius, and of Sulpitius, a tribune of the people who had devoted himself to the interest of Marius, pro-

cured his recall while still within the limits of Italy. He learned at the same time that some of his kindred had been murdered at Rome by the party of his enemies, and suspected that a similar fate was intended for himself. It was necessary, therefore, to form a bold and decisive resolution. His army, warmly attached to their leader, had received the order for his recall with high indignation. In an animated speech to his troops he reminded them of the honors they had won under his command, and exposed in strong terms the malicious and sanguinary designs of his rival, and the danger which such proceedings threatened to the commonwealth itself. He found the army disposed to implicit obedience to his commands, and he boldly proposed to lead them on to Rome. "Let us go," said they, with one voice; "lead us on to avenge the cause of oppressed liberty." Sylla accordingly led them on, and they entered Rome sword in hand. Marius and Sulpitius fled with precipitation from the city. Sylla restrained his army from committing any outrage, and then, with great deliberation and without a shadow of opposition, proceeded to annul all the laws and ordinances which had passed during the administration of his rival. The senate, at his instigation, then pronounced a decree which proscribed Marius and Sulpitius as enemies of their country, whom all persons were required to pursue and put to death. The consequence was, that the head of Sulpitius was soon after sent to Rome. Marius, alone, and a fugitive, was taken in the marshes of Minturna, where he had sought concealment by plunging himself up to the chin in water. He was suffered to escape, and got over into Africa; where being still persecuted, and required by the Roman governor to depart from the province, "Go (said he to the messenger) and tell thy master that thou hast seen Marius sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage." Plutarch, who relates this anecdote, says that Marius meant by it to claim the compassion of the Roman prætor, by drawing this comparison between his own lot and that of the fallen Carthage; both striking examples of the instability of fortune. Marius then retired with his son to a small island on the African coast, where he soon after received intelligence that a strong party had been formed at Rome in his favor, where Cinna, one of his firmest friends and partisans, had been elected to the consulate.

One of the first measures of the new consul was to impeach Sylla before the assembly of the people. It was a law of the state, that any man, invested with a military command, might frustrate any charge brought against him by going on service. Sylla therefore defeated the purpose of his enemies by repairing immediately to his army, and commencing the campaign against Mithridates.

His partisans at Rome, in the meantime, took advantage of a series of violent and illegal proceedings of Cinna, to procure his deposition from office, and his expulsion from the city. Marius, returning to Italy at this juncture, found means to levy a consid-

erable army, and joining his forces to those of Cinna, they laid siege to Rome, at that time reduced to great distress by famine. In this situation, the senate capitulated with these traitors in arms, repealed the attainder of Marius, and restored Cinna to his consular function. They entered the city triumphantly at the head of the army, and immediately gave orders for a general massacre of all those citizens whom they regarded as their enemies. The scene was horrible beyond all description. The heads of the senators, streaming with blood, were stuck up before the *rostra*; "a dumb senate, (says an ancient writer,) but which yet cried aloud to Heaven for vengeance." At the succeeding election of magistrates, Marius and Cinna proclaimed themselves consuls without the formality of a vote of the people; but the mind of Marius, ever the prey of turbulent passions, which he sought to allay by intemperate drinking, fell a victim to their joint efforts, and he died, as is said, in a fit of debauch.

Sylla in the meantime, with the army, had contributed to the glory of the republic by putting an end to the war with Mithridates. This very prince had conceived the proud design of wresting all Asia, together with Greece, from the dominion of the Romans; but the loss of two great battles at Charonea and Orchomenos put an end to his prospects of ambition, and forced him to conclude a humiliating peace. "Sylla," says Velleius Paternulus, "deserved censure for many things; but one thing was meritorious—he left his private interest neglected till he had finished his war against the enemies of Rome." His own revenge was his real object; and a dreadful revenge it was.

On returning to Rome, he found the consuls Carbo and Norbanus (for Cinna was now dead) with above 200,000 men in arms to oppose him: but he was beloved by the soldiers, and he had address enough to seduce a whole consular army, with Cethegus, Verres, and the young Pompey, to join themselves to his party. With this powerful reinforcement he entirely defeated the consuls, and prepared now to act a part apparently contrary to every former indication of his nature. There cannot be a doubt that murder is a contagious disease; that with the first shedding of blood the nature is infuriated, and the wretch once imbrued in it rushes on with enthusiasm to the most atrocious cruelties. Sylla had now caught the contagion. He ordered 6000 men to be massacred in cold blood, who, on promise of their lives, had laid down their arms. His proscriptions were dreadful beyond all example. Every day produced a new catalogue of those who were doomed to destruction; he declared that he would not spare an enemy whom he had in Italy. The punishment did not stop at the supposed offenders: their family and posterity to the third generation were declared infamous, and incapable of enjoying any office in the state; a proof that tyrannic cruelty is blind to consequences and suspects not how short-lived, from the very nature of things,

its empire must necessarily be. It was amidst these horrid scenes that the abandoned Catiline first gratified that profligate and savage disposition which afterwards aimed at the general destruction of the state.

Sylla was now without a rival in authority, and absolute master of the government, which, therefore, properly speaking, was no longer a republic; yet he chose to recur to the popular authority in order to establish himself in power, and he was nominated in the Comitia, *dictator for an unlimited space of time*.

He was now secure, and seemed to turn his thoughts to the restoration of order and tranquillity in the state. He restored the senate to its judicial power, of which, for a considerable time, it had been deprived. He published severe laws against murder and oppression; he regulated the election to the high offices of prætor, quæstor, and tribune; prohibiting, with regard to the last, that any tribunes of the people should be chosen unless from the body of the senators, and enacting that their election to that function should preclude for ever their attaining to a higher dignity. This regulation effectually prevented that once enviable office from being any longer an object of ambition.

Having made these prudent and salutary reforms, Sylla took another step which excited universal surprise:—he resigned the dictatorship. The man who had destroyed above a hundred thousand of his fellow citizens—who, in the course of his proscriptions, had put to death about ninety senators and above 2600 Roman knights—had courage to resign the absolute authority he had acquired, to become a private citizen, and to offer to give an account to the public of his conduct. But he had gained partisans to his interest more powerful, if not so numerous as his enemies. The senate were his friends; because, by his late regulations, he had restored to that body a great part of its ancient dignity; and had ever stood forth the supporter of their order against Marius, who was the champion of the people. The patricians saw, with pleasure, that they were once more considered as the superior rank in the state. In these respects, Sylla professed himself the friend of the ancient constitution of his country; and as such, in spite of all his atrocities, he has been regarded by the most enlightened historians. He, therefore, had a powerful party who approved of his political conduct; and above all, he was the idol of the army, who had all along profited by his measures and gained by his indulgence; he had given freedom to ten thousand slaves, and had gratified by rewards all his partisans. These were his guardians, and enabled him to walk with the security of an innocent man in that city which he had deluged with blood. Sylla, however, did not long survive his change of state. Pleasure and debauchery brought on him a loathsome disease, of which he died. He was certainly a man of great strength of mind, and had some of the qualities of an heroic character; but he lived in evil times, when it was impossible at once to be great and to be virtuous.

On the death of Sylla, the civil war began anew. Lepidus, the consul, aspiring at similar dominion, but a man of no abilities, levied a large army, and, on the pretence of restoring the forfeited estates to those whom Sylla had driven into banishment by his proscriptions, openly proclaimed his purpose of annulling all the late political regulations. The senate justly took the alarm; Catulus and Pompey were invested with authority to provide for the safety of the republic, and immediately taking the field with a superior force, Lepidus sustained two defeats, and took shelter in Sardinia, where he died.

It was now that Pompey began to distinguish himself. He had already, with no other command than as the general of an army, attained to the reputation of possessing great talents by his victories over the Marian party in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Sertorius was the head of that party in Spain, where his civil and military abilities had gained him the highest popularity. Metellus and Pompey confessed their inability to subdue this formidable partisan in the field, by meanly setting a prize upon his head. This policy was successful; it drew off Perpenna from his interest, who had hitherto supported his cause. The traitor invited his friend to a banquet, and a hired assassin stabbed him amidst the tumult of festivity. The party of Sertorius was undone by the death of its leader; and Pompey, returning to Rome, had the honors of a triumph.

Mithridates, king of Pontus, was earnestly bent upon recovering those possessions in Asia of which the Romans had deprived him. Lucullus, a very able general, was entrusted with the conduct of the war against him. He defeated Mithridates in two engagements, and recovered Bithynia. Meantime Mithridates had sent a fleet to Italy to support the rebellion of Spartacus, who was carrying on war against the republic at the head of forty thousand slaves, and had defeated an army commanded by two prætors, and another headed by both the consuls. This rebellion Pompey had the credit of subduing; although, in fact, the victory which cost Spartacus his life was achieved by Crassus, before Pompey's arrival. In the following year, Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, and the latter, by his splendid festivals and shows, acquired with the people a high measure of popularity. Lucullus had now compelled Mithridates to retreat to Armenia, and the kingdom of Pontus submitted to the Roman arms.

Lucullus now marched against Mithridates and Tigranes, and had the honor of signally defeating their united forces; but it was his misfortune or his blame to become unpopular with his army, and in the next engagement the Pontic king gained an important victory. The consequence was, that his enemies at Rome accused him of protracting the war from motives of interest. Pompey, who secretly wished to supplant him in his command, procured some of his friends, among whom were Julius Cæsar and

Cicero, to propose that he should supersede Lucullus, and a decree was obtained to that effect. When the intelligence was brought to Pompey he feigned the utmost surprise. The rival generals came to an interview in Galatia, which passed in mutual reproaches. "It is your policy," said Lucullus, "to triumph over an enemy whom another has already subdued, and thus to gather laurels which you have not won."—"And you," said Pompey, "covet victory solely for the sake of plunder, and ravage countries only to fill your coffers." Both reproaches had some foundation in truth. Pompey prosecuted the war against Mithridates, and soon compelled his ally Tigranes into terms of unconditional submission. In the following campaign he put an end to the dominion of Mithridates. One of that prince's concubines treacherously surrendered to the Roman general a capital fortress of the kingdom; and Mithridates soon after, seeing his fortunes desperate, had recourse to a voluntary death. Pontus and Syria were then reduced to the condition of provinces of the Roman empire.

On the return of Lucullus to Rome, his acknowledged services procured him the honor of a triumph; and he passed the remainder of his life in luxurious retirement. Fond at the same time of study, and of the conversation of the most ingenious and polite men of his time, he spent whole days with them in his library and gardens, which were open to all the learned men of Rome and Greece.* If any thing can be said to vindicate that excess to which he carried the luxury of the table, it is that his higher morals were irreproachable; and voluptuary as he was, he had yet a higher pleasure in acts of humanity and beneficence.

While Pompey was thus employed in Asia, a most dangerous conspiracy threatened the entire destruction of Rome. Lucius Sergius Catilina, we have already observed, had been one of the ministers of the cruelties of Sylla. He was a youth of a noble family, but with a character stained with every manner of crime. While Sylla was dictator, he had risen to considerable honors: he had been quæstor, and had held a command in Africa as prætor; but his vices disgraced these splendid employments, and the wealth which he acquired by rapine and extortion he consumed in the most infamous debaucheries. Foiled in his design of obtaining the consulate for himself and his friend Piso, he first determined to wreak his vengeance on the more successful candidates, Cotta and Torquatus; and this his first conspiracy, which was to begin by the murder of these magistrates and all their partisans among the senate, appears to have failed of success more from the want of concerted measures in the conspirators themselves, than from the vigilance of the sovereign power of the state. The disappoint-

* See Plutarch in Vit. Lucul. who details at considerable length the luxurious life of this celebrated Roman.