

were rendezvoused beneath the banners of Cinna, thirty legions, amounting to, at least, one hundred and fifty thousand men.

Cinna despatched a messenger immediately to Marius, in Africa, inviting his return. The exile, rejoicing at this unexpected turn of fortune, landed in Tuscany with a few followers. Assuming the garb and aspect of extreme poverty, he appealed to the compassion of the people, who were deeply affected by the contrast between his present penury, and the splendor with which he formerly had been invested. He soon had an army of six thousand men, with whom he formed a junction with Cinna. The senate sent an army to meet the foe. A battle was fought, attended with immense slaughter, but with no decisive results. The battle took place almost beneath the walls of the city. Marius now with his cavalry swept the country around Rome, encountering no opposition, and cutting off all supplies from the capital.

The army of the aristocratic party, under the command of Octavius, and an illustrious young general, Metellus, was entrenched, in very considerable force, on the hill of Alba. But they did not dare to risk a decisive battle, for they had not full confidence in the fidelity of their soldiers; and a defeat would place Rome, with all its proud inhabitants, entirely at the mercy of their foes. Cinna, by proclaiming freedom to the slaves, found his forces rapidly increasing, while desertions were continually taking place from the army of the senate. Rome was now so strictly blockaded that the inhabitants began to feel the pressure of famine, and they clamored for the cessation of the hopeless struggle.

The senate, humiliated, were constrained to send to Cinna to treat for peace. Cinna, seated in his consular chair, proudly received the deputies, exacting from the senate the acknowledgment that he was legitimately consul, and demanding unconditional surrender. Marius stood by his chair, still ostentatiously dressed in the mean garb of exile, while his eyes

flashed with passion and with menace. Cinna triumphantly entered the walls of Rome, and infamously sent a band of soldiers to murder Octavius, his colleague. The deed was mercilessly performed, and the head of Octavius was suspended over the rostra, a bloody trophy of Cinna's triumph. The wheel of revolution had again turned. The aristocratic party were in the dust, helpless and hopeless. The popular leaders now strode through the streets, looking in vain for an acknowledged foe.

Marius proudly refused to enter the city until his sentence of exile was regularly repealed. But impatient of the delay, which the mockery of a vote required, after a few tribes had cast their ballots, he took possession of one of the gates of the city, and entered the town at the head of a band, zealously devoted to him, consisting principally of peasants and fugitive slaves. Then his emissaries immediately commenced the work of murder. There seems to have been no forgiveness or pity in the bosom of the democratic Marius. Those nobles who had displeased him were eagerly marked as his victims. They were hunted out through all concealments, and in cold blood butchered. Some, to escape the dagger of the assassin, fell upon their own swords. Some were slain openly in the streets, and it is said that Marius gratified himself with the sight of their agony.

A scene of universal license and anarchy ensued. Slaves murdered their masters, plundered their dwellings, and perpetrated every conceivable outrage upon their families. The wife and children of Sylla, concealed by their friends, very narrowly escaped the general slaughter. Never before had Rome endured such misery. In this massacre, Lucius Julius Cæsar, and his brother Caius, both perished, and their gory heads were exposed over the rostra. Marius, when seated at the supper table, was informed that the place of retreat of Antonius, whom he had long been seeking, was discovered. He immediately arose from the table to enjoy the gratification



of seeing him killed. But, dissuaded by his friends, he resumed his seat, ordering his soldiers to bring him the head of his foe. Crassus, after seeing his son murdered, killed himself. Merula, who had been chosen consul by the senate in the place of Cinna, preferring to die by his own hands, opened his veins, and as his blood flowed upon the altar of Jupiter, he invoked the vengeance of God upon his murderers. Catulus, who had voted for the proscription of Marius, finding that there could be no escape from the executioner, suffocated himself by the fumes of burning charcoal.

Cinna and Marius now declared themselves to be consuls for the ensuing year, and, like most demagogues, proved themselves utterly traitorous to the rights of the people. The enormities of Marius, with his servile bands, at length excited the indignation of the populace. Cinna was disgusted with the atrocities of his colleague, and finding himself utterly unable to check them, he one night secretly assembled a body of troops, and attacking the band of Marius in their quarters, put them all to the sword. Marius was precluded from revenge by a sudden attack of disease, which put an end to his life, in the seventieth year of his age. In the delirium of his dying hour, he imagined himself at the head of his legions, hurling them against the ranks of Mithridates. With vehement gestures, and loud shouts which were heard far into the streets, he issued his commands. Though the light of revealed religion had never dawned upon his mind, no one can doubt his responsibility at God's bar for his manifold crimes.

Cicero relates that at the funeral of Marius, a furious man, named Fimbria, made an attempt upon the life of Scævola, one of the most virtuous men of those times. The victim escaped with but a flesh wound. Fimbria, exasperated, declared that he would bring Scævola to trial before the people. Being asked what charge he would bring against one whose character was so pure, he replied, "I shall accuse him of not

having given my dagger a more hearty welcome." Such was the condition of Rome at this time.

Marius being dead, Cinna remained absolute sovereign, with no one to dispute his power. The massacres had now ceased, and to restore the usual forms of the constitution, Flaccus was chosen colleague consul with Cinna. The condition of Rome under this democratic sway much resembled that subsequently witnessed in Paris during the Reign of Terror. Many of the nobles left Italy, and sought refuge in the camp of Sylla, in Greece; while others fled trembling, from the dangers of the city to their country seats. Cicero describes the three years which succeeded the victory of Cinna as a period in which the republic enjoyed neither dignity nor laws.

Cicero was at this time at Rome, devoting himself to the study of eloquence and philosophy, and laying up those stores of wisdom and knowledge which enabled him subsequently to fulfill so brilliant a career. A curious sort of bankrupt law was passed by the democratic government, by which a debtor was allowed to liquidate all claims against him by paying one fourth of the amount. The provinces accepted, without opposition, the government established in the metropolis. But Sylla, at the head of his army in Greece, was breathing threats of vengeance. Openly he declared his intention, so soon as he should finish the war with Mithridates, to return to Rome, and punish with the utmost severity Cinna and his supporters. Sylla soon reconquered all Greece, and crossing over to Asia Minor, prosecuted the war with such vigor that Mithridates was glad to accept terms of peace.

Cinna began now to manifest alarm, and apprehensive of the return of Sylla with a victorious army, commenced endeavors to conciliate the rich, whose heads he had so long been crushing with his heel. It was evident that the wheel of fortune was about to experience another revolution. Cinna was not a man to fall without a struggle. He raised an army to crush Sylla; but public opinion, even in the army



turned against him. The soldiers rose in a mutiny and Cinna, in his endeavors to quell it, was slain. Sylla soon landed in Italy, with forty thousand men. This was a small force, with which to meet the two hundred thousand whom the popular party had raised to oppose him, but they were veteran soldiers, flushed with victory, and the whole aristocratic party was ready to join them.

Sylla landed at Brundisium, where he encountered no opposition. Immediately commencing his march upon Rome, he advanced through Calabria and Apulia. The two armies met near Capua, and the whole consular army in a body went over to the aristocratic Sylla, leaving their commander Scipio, alone with his son, in his tent; a memorable instance of popular fickleness and caprice. With new vigor Sylla pressed on toward Rome, wantonly ravaging the country through which he passed. The nobility were on all sides flocking to his camp; and Carbo, who had been the consular colleague of Cinna, to check this spirit, caused a decree to be passed, that all who united with Sylla, should be declared to be public enemies.

And now Cn. Pompeius, or as he is generally called, Pompey the Great, first makes his appearance upon this stage of wild adventure. He was the son of a late proconsul of that name, and he lived at Picenum, in circumstances of moderate wealth. The family was popular in the region of their residence. The sympathies of Pompey were strongly with Sylla, and he warmly espoused the aristocratic side, in this stern strife. With the energy which rendered his subsequent life so illustrious, he raised an army of three legions, amounting to about seventeen thousand men, and with the necessary supplies marched to join Sylla. He was then but twenty-three years of age, and had never filled any public office. Sylla appreciated the extraordinary energy of one so young, and received him with the most flattering marks of distinction. By this time, however, the campaign weather of summer had passed away and all the belligerents retired to winter quarters.

Carbo, who was now consul, secured the election, as his colleague, of the younger Marius, the nephew and adopted son of the renowned demagogue of that name. Though Marius was but twenty-seven years of age, he was already renowned for his profligacy. The winter was long and severe, and it was not until late in the spring that military operations were resumed. Soon a division of the consular army, under Marius, encountered Sylla, at Sacriportum, near the city of Præneste. Their defeat was entire. Marius having lost twenty thousand slain, and eight thousand prisoners, with difficulty escaped. In the tumult of the rout, it was not safe to open the gates of Præneste, and Marius was drawn up into the city by ropes thrown down to him from the top of the wall.

Marius had fixed on Præneste as the great rendezvous of his army, and the point from which he would sally forth in all his operations. The town, built on the side of a hill, but twenty miles from Rome, was almost impregnable in its fortifications. The battlements of Præneste were distinctly visible from the eternal city. Marius, during the winter, had added greatly to the strength of the place, having robbed the temples of Rome, that he might convert the treasure into money to pay his soldiers. As Sylla advanced with his veteran legions, Marius, conscious that the aristocratic party in the capital would, at the first opportunity, rise to welcome and join him, sent a summons for the senate to assemble in the Curia Hostilia. Unconscious of the premeditated treachery the nobles obeyed the summons. Marius then closed the avenues by armed men, and designated those whom he wished to be massacred. Three illustrious senators were struck down in the senate house. One was killed in attempting to escape. Quintus Mucius Scævola, who was then Pontifex Maximus, the same who had been attacked by the fanatic Fimbria, a man of spotless character, yet renowned for his heroism, seeing a party advancing to murder him, fled to the temple of



Vesta. He was pursued and cut down, with sacrilegious hands, drenching the altar with his blood.

The most prominent of the aristocratic party being thus slain, Marius and Carbo hoped to retain their supremacy. But the terrible defeat of Sacriportum blighted all these anticipations. Marius was now blocked up in Præneste, and the road was open for Sylla to Rome. The gates of the city were thrown open to him, and he rode triumphantly into the streets, greeted by the acclamations of those who but a few months before had denounced him as a rebel and an outlaw.

The wheel of fortune had indeed revolved again. Sylla organized his government, replenished his military chests with the proceeds of the confiscated estates of the popular party, and leaving a portion of his army to conduct the siege of Præneste, with another portion hastened to Tuscany to confront Carbo, who was strongly entrenched there. Victory seemed every where to light upon his banners. Desertion thinned the ranks of Carbo, and treachery surrendered whole divisions of his army to the foe. Verres, whose infamy Cicero has embalmed in the amber of his eloquence, abandoned his general, and purchased the pardon of Sylla, by the treasure of money and military stores which he surrendered to his hands. Carbo, thus deserted, fled, and taking a boat with a few followers, escaped to Africa.

The triumph of the aristocratical party now seemed complete, and yet at this last moment one of those sudden turns of fortune, which often baffle all the calculations of human wisdom, came nigh to wrest the victory from their hands. The Italian allies, who had thus far looked quietly on, well pleased to see Roman slaughter Roman, were alarmed at the decisive victory which the nobles were gaining, for they knew full well that the triumph of the aristocratic party would toll the knell of their rights. They immediately combined and hastened to the relief of Præneste. The wrecks of Carbo's army rushed to their standards. The popular party all over

Italy were animated to new courage, and sprang to arms. Sagaciously and secretly they resolved to make a bold strike for Rome, which, not having the slightest apprehension of such an attack, was quite defenseless.

Breaking up suddenly, in a dark night, from before the walls of Præneste, the dawn of the morning found them in military array within a mile of the gates of Rome, marching energetically toward the Colline gate. Rome was in consternation. All the young men of the city formed into a body of cavalry, sallied from the walls to hold the foe in check till aid could arrive from Præneste. But they were routed and driven back with great slaughter. In the midst of the confusion and carnage, the peal of trumpets was heard, and the gleam of banners was seen in the distance, and nearly a thousand helmed and veteran horsemen, from Sylla's legions, came thundering upon the plain. Behind them Sylla himself followed, leading his infantry, panting, with their almost superhuman exertions, and upon the full run. It was indeed a wild scene of turmoil, clamor and blood, upon which the unclouded sun looked down that morning, so different from the quietude upon which its evening rays had fallen, when no sound disturbed the song of the bird and the chirp of the insect, and the fields slumbered in solitude.

The Italian chieftains rode along their ranks shouting, "Victory is ours. This is the last day of the Roman empire. The wolves who have so long ravished Italy shall now be destroyed, and their den demolished." But God had not so decided.