

## CHAPTER IX.

### SYLLA AND CATILINE.

FROM 82 B. C. TO 59 B. C.

BATTLE UNDER THE WALLS.—TRIUMPH OF SYLLA.—CAIUS JULIUS CÆSAR.—DEATH OF MARIUS.—MASSACRE AT PRÆNESTE.—MISSION OF POMPEY.—ABDICATION OF SYLLA.—HIS DEATH.—POLICY OF LEPIDUS.—TRIUMPH OF ARISTOCRACY.—CAIUS JULIUS CÆSAR.—CÆSAR A RANSOMED SLAVE.—HE ESPOUSES THE POPULAR CAUSE.—CHARACTER OF POMPEY.—SPARTACUS AND HIS BAND.—HIS DEFEAT AND DEATH.—THE SLAVE TRADE.—ILLUSTRATIVE ANECDOTE.—POMPEY CRUSHES THE PIRATES.—THE CONSPIRACY OF CATILINE.

THE battle beneath the walls of Rome was as fierce as fury and despair could make it. Throughout the whole day it raged with unintermitted ferocity, until darkness enveloped the gory field. The combatants, utterly exhausted, threw themselves upon the sod and slept side by side, neither party knowing which, upon the whole, had suffered most in the fight. But the light of the morning revealed more fully the issue of the battle. The field was covered with the dead bodies of the allies, and, in confusion, the broken bands of the survivors commenced a retreat. Sylla, gathering recruits from Præneste, pursued them with merciless slaughter, and then, returning in triumph, entered the gates of Rome, where he perpetrated deeds of cruelty and blood which have consigned his memory to eternal infamy. The detail of his enormities would alike weary, disgust, and shock the reader. Human nature presents itself in its most pitiable aspect in all these scenes.

A division of the routed army of the Italians, three thousand in number, sent to Sylla imploring mercy. He promised to spare them if they would aid him in executing vengeance

on their associates. Infamously they accepted the terms, and fell upon their former companions, aiding the soldiers of Sylla in cutting them to pieces. They were all then, with other prisoners, amounting to eight thousand, put to the sword. The infamy of Sylla is not mitigated by the infamy of those who received the doom of treachery, having perpetrated its deeds.

While this massacre was transpiring, Sylla summoned the senate, and addressed them with the utmost heartlessness, even when the shrieks of his victims were resounding through the streets. Observing that the senators appeared horror-stricken, he sternly commanded them not to trouble themselves with what was passing elsewhere, but to attend to his words. The same chastisement, with aggravated vengeance, was now meted out to the popular party, which they, in the hour of their triumph, had visited upon their foes. Every day witnessed its hecatomb of victims. Each morning Sylla issued his proscription list, containing the names of those his soldiers were immediately to butcher. All laws were trampled under foot, and Sylla, an inexorable tyrant, as the advocate of the nobles of Rome, exercised a despotism which in mercilessness has never been surpassed.

These horrible scenes of cold-blooded murder were not confined to Rome alone, but extended all over Italy. Sylla seemed resolved to destroy every man who could be suspected even of advocating popular rights. M. Cato, then a mere boy, was roused to the utmost indignation by the spectacle of these crimes.

There was one young man, the renown of whose name subsequently filled the world, who narrowly escaped the sword of Sylla. It was Caius Julius Cæsar. He was then quite young, and had married the daughter of Cinna. The elder Marius was also his uncle, having married his father's sister. Caius Julius Cæsar was thus intimately connected with the popular party. The eagle scrutiny of Sylla had

searched him out, and he was commanded to repudiate his wife. Refusing to comply, he fled from Rome. Soldiers were sent in pursuit of him to bring his head to Sylla, but by the entreaties of some friends, the tyrant consented to spare his life. And though tradition says that he affirmed, "in Cæsar there are many Mariuses," it is not probable that he was at all conscious of the energetic spirit he had spared, to place its broad and deep impress upon the world.

The garrison at Præneste was soon compelled to surrender. Marius was beheaded, and his bleeding head was presented a welcome trophy to Sylla. He ordered it to be exposed in the forum. Thinking that now all his foes were vanquished, and that his power was invincible, and his elevation beyond all peril of fall, he assumed the surname of Felix, or The Fortunate. Immediately upon the surrender of Præneste, Sylla hastened to the place to enjoy the executions he had ordered. Twelve thousand men were given up to massacre. The women and children were turned into the fields, houseless and foodless, and the town was abandoned to plunder. Sylla enjoyed this so much, and his soldiers were so pleased with the wealth they gained, that the same course was pursued with seven other large cities. All the inhabitants who were not massacred, were sold for slaves. The entire nation of the Samnites were almost entirely extirpated by the proscriptions of Sylla.

Without any shadow of legitimate power, Sylla thus filled Italy, through all its provinces, with blood and ruin. Carbo, from Africa, fled to Sicily, hoping to rally a party there to make a stand against a tyrant who had been even more tyrannical and cruel than himself. Pompey was dispatched across the straits to meet him. His energy was successful, and Carbo was driven from the island. He was pursued, taken prisoner, and brought into the presence of Pompey at Lilybæum. Pompey, regardless of the consular dignity of his captive, ordered him to immediate execution. The republic was thus

left without a consul; and a successful general, supported by his army, was at the head of the state. Sylla, instead of proceeding to the election of consuls, caused himself to be appointed by the senate, dictator, for an unlimited period, until tranquillity and security should be restored to the affairs of the commonwealth. No one dared to offer a word of resistance.

But again clouds of darkness and war began to gather in distant lands. Mithridates was reassembling his forces, Africa was agitated and roused with the desire to drive out the Romans; and in Spain, the spirit of revolt had sprung up and spread with great rapidity and success. The power of the dictator, undisputed in Italy, could not overawe these distant realms. The popular cause in Italy, was apparently annihilated, and the commonwealth lay bleeding and gasping at the feet of its conqueror. The great object of Sylla, in all his measures, was to strengthen the aristocratic party, and to crush democratic freedom. The senate had been a legislative body. Sylla transferred to it judicial power. Some of the laws, which, with untiring industry, he enacted were salutary in their operation.

Pompey passed over to Africa, and by the energies of fire and sword, in one year quelled all insubordination there. He returned to Rome plumed with victory, and enjoyed the luxury of a triumph. Sylla now caused himself and one of his obsequious partisans, Q. Metellus Pius, to be chosen consuls. With great sagacity he established his authority and consolidated his party; and then, with all the reins of power collected in his hands, to be placed at will in the hands of his creatures, he nominally renounced his office of dictator. This abdication of Sylla, so renowned in history, seems to have been anything but a noble act. It is true he had accomplished his ends. The popular party was apparently annihilated, and the aristocracy were in the entire ascendancy. His partisans were all enriched by the sale of confiscated estates; his sol-

diers were extravagantly rewarded by grants of land, and he had retained for himself more than regal wealth and luxury. He was still the acknowledged head of his party, and renouncing only its toils, and empty title, still retained in reality both sovereign dignity and power.

Sylla, retiring from the labors of office, surrendered himself to the utmost excesses of sensual and voluptuous indulgence. His associates were generally only those who had talents and attractions to gild the vices of which they boasted. His leisure hours he devoted to the composition of his own memoirs, bringing down the narrative until within a few days of his death. But little more than a year elapsed, after his abdication, ere he was attacked by a loathsome disease, the effect of his vices, and died, devoured by vermin, in a state of the most absolute and unmitigated misery. His funeral was attended with much parade in the Campus Martius, and, at his own request, his body was burned. The nobility of Rome, and especially the ladies, vied with each other in their endeavors to confer honor upon the memory of him who had so effectually reestablished aristocratic usurpation in the eternal city. His life signally illustrates the truth that literary and intellectual eminence of the highest order may be combined with the lowest and most brutal profligacy. It is only that "wisdom," the beginning of which is "the fear of the Lord," which is the unerring guide to virtue.

Immediately upon the death of Sylla, the popular party, weak as it was, made an attempt to rally and to obtain a repeal of some of the most obnoxious laws of the aristocratic dictator. The two consuls at this time were Lepidus and Catulus. From some unknown influence, perhaps conscientiousness, Lepidus manifested some sympathy for the popular cause, and openly denounced several of the most oppressive measures introduced by Sylla. Growing more and more bold, as friends increased, he became the leader of those who were

now faintly hoping for a counter-revolution. The broken bands of the Italian allies were summoned to their aid. The two consuls, taking opposite sides, were arrayed in bitter hostility against each other, and Rome was again threatened with civil war.

The aristocratic senate, jealous of the increasing power of Lepidus, at the close of his consulship allowed him to take command, as proconsul, of the distant province of Cisalpine Gaul, thinking that he would be thus removed to a safe distance from Rome. Here Lepidus found himself at the head of a strong army; adventurers from Rome and its vicinity hastened to his camp, and soon he commenced a menacing march towards the capital. An army was sent to meet him. He was utterly defeated, and retiring in dejection to Sardinia, there soon died. One of his officers, who shared in this defeat, was Brutus, father of the one who has attained world-wide celebrity as the assassin of Cæsar. This elder Brutus was taken prisoner of war and put to death.

The popular movement was thus effectually quelled, and aristocracy was more firmly established than ever. But the conflict could never cease. So long as one portion of the community is resolved to trample upon the rights of another, there must be an undying struggle. And this irrepressible conflict must burst out into bloody war, whenever the oppressed see any chance to smite their oppressors. The recognition of man's fraternity, and the admission of equal rights for all, would have saved this world unnumbered woes. This cruel strife, which commenced with Cain and Abel, has continued to the present day. In this conflict America has had her Washington, France her Napoleon, and Rome her Caius Julius Cæsar, each, under different institutions, and with varying success, was the champion of popular rights.

The family of Cæsar was ancient and illustrious. Caius, the one to whom the name chiefly owes its renown, was the son of Lucius Julius Cæsar, a noble of pretorian rank, and of

Aurelia Cotta, a lady also of illustrious lineage. He was born about one hundred years before the birth of Christ. As we have before mentioned, he married, in early life, the daughter of Cinna, and very narrowly escaped the proscription of Sylla. He first drew his sword in Asia Minor, in the war against Mithridates. After this he, from time to time, studied, probably in company with Cicero, at Rhodes, under the instruction of Apollonius Molo. On one of his excursions he was taken prisoner by some Greek pirates, and was ransomed by the payment of a sum amounting to nearly sixty thousand dollars. The energetic young man immediately raised a small naval force, and, on his own responsibility, pursued the pirates, sank several of their ships, and capturing others, returned with them, and a large number of prisoners, to his own land. He then demanded of the authorities permission to execute them. But finding that the government, influenced by avarice, was rather inclined to sell them as slaves, Cæsar, without waiting for a reply to his application, caused them all to be put to death.

He early manifested hostility to the tyrant Sylla, and even ventured, in the height of the despot's power, to bring a charge of corruption against one of his officers. Though unsuccessful in his suit, as was to have been expected, the boldness of the act gave him distinction as the foe of the aristocracy, and the friend of popular freedom. Upon the death of his wife Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, he pronounced an eulogy upon her character, which, for its polished diction and glowing eloquence, excited great admiration. We have before mentioned that his father's sister married Marius. At her death, though Marius had been denounced as a traitor, he ordered that his image, in accordance with the Roman custom, should be borne in the procession at her funeral. The nobles were enraged, but the populace were delighted, justly regarding this as the pledge of his devotion to their cause, and the image of Marius was greeted with enthusiastic acclaim.

It is recorded that at this time he was a man of profligate

habits; indeed the whole Roman world, with but rare exceptions, appears to have been in the condition of pollution and infamy, which Paul has so graphically described in his epistle to the Romans. We can see but little difference in that respect between aristocrat and democrat—between Marius and Sylla. They were struggling against each other for the supremacy, and each was equally unprincipled in the hour of triumph.

Pompey was at this time, as the agent of the aristocratic party, quelling an insurrection in Spain, and having, with his characteristic energy, accomplished his purpose, he was permitted to enjoy the luxury of a triumph; and was also additionally rewarded with a seat in the consular chair. As Pompey had maintained his army exclusively from the spoils of war, Spain was left in a state of utter destitution. Pompey, in his passage to Gaul, had punished the Gauls with merciless severity for espousing the cause of Lepidus, against the aristocracy at Rome; and this vast province also was thus now desolate and impoverished.

A curious incident, highly characteristic of the times, merits notice. About seventy gladiators, prisoners of war, were in training at Capua, for the bloody gladiatorial shows at Rome. They, in a body, broke away from their keepers, and encountering on the road some wagons with arms and supplies, seized them, and retreating to the heights of Mt. Vesuvius, strongly intrenched themselves there. Spartacus was the chosen leader of this band. Every day their numbers increased by the accession of fugitive slaves, and the impoverished and restless populace of Rome. Spartacus soon had a band so numerous and well disciplined, that he marched from behind his ramparts, and plundering the cities of Campania, endeavored to effect a retreat to the distant Alps. A Roman army was sent to attack him. He turned upon his foes with the bound of a lion, and crushed them to the dust. Another army was sent. It encountered the same fate. Proudly he now

strode on, unopposed, toward the defiles of Cisalpine Gaul. But here he found a third army, which he also promptly assailed and demolished.

Intoxicated by these successes, and at the head of an army rapidly increasing in numbers, Spartacus dreamed that he was able to cope with all the powers of Rome, and to conquer even the eternal city. Wheeling around his battalions, notwithstanding their remonstrances, he began to retrace his steps. Soon he was compelled to retire to winter quarters, maintaining his soldiers by the plunder of the surrounding country. The senate was now thoroughly aroused. A powerful army was organized during the winter. In the early spring Spartacus was attacked, cut off from his retreat to the north, and driven, with his broken bands to the south of Italy. Here he attempted to construct rafts to float his followers over to Sicily, hoping to rouse the slaves to join his standards. But Crassus, who led the Roman force, vigorously pursued him, and Spartacus was blockaded on a small promontory near Rhegium. Finding escape by sea hopeless, in a dark and stormy night he crept unobserved, with his diminished columns, through the enemy's line, and directed his retreat toward the fastnesses of the Lucanian mountains. Crassus vigorously pursued. A desperate battle took place, and the army of Spartacus was cut to pieces, he himself perishing with the slain. The cruel victor lined the road from Capua to Rome, with the crucified bodies of the prisoners, who were thus left to perish in the lingering agonies of that most terrible of deaths.

At this period the whole Mediterranean Sea swarmed with pirates, who, emerging from caves and creeping cautiously around headlands, baffled all the naval power of Rome. The slave trade was then in vigor, which has never been surpassed, though it was almost exclusively confined to the Caucasian race. The pirates of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, at the foot of the Mt. Taurus range, ravaged all shores, and

supplied abundantly, and on the most reasonable terms, the great slaveholders of Italy with men, women, and children. By night they would make an assault upon some sequestered hamlet, strike down all who resisted, fire the dwellings, and convey the residue to the great slave market at Delos, in the Ægean Sea, where purchasers flocked from all parts of the Roman empire, asking no questions, for conscience sake, respecting the manner in which the slaves had been obtained. How they defended the institution we have not been informed. *They* did not know that Noah, in his cups, had said, "Cursed be Ham;" and as Jesus Christ had not yet appeared, they could not blasphemously pervert His words to support this system of demoniac atrocity. Probably, in unblushing honesty of infamy, they simply exclaimed, "Might makes right."

These wretched slaves, packed in the holds of pirate ships constructed for rapidity of sailing, were often persons of fortune, distinction, and education. Caius Julius Cæsar had been thus captured, and was a slave, who, not being able to run away, purchased his freedom, paying for it sixty thousand dollars. These pirates were as ready to steal money as men, and property of every kind was seized by them without scruple. Rome was too deeply interested in the slave trade to act with determination against those who supplied the mart, and hence for ages the shores of the Mediterranean, in the prosecution of this traffic, blazed with conflagrations and were crimsoned with blood.

These pirates were so numerous and formidable that they often made descents from their ships and attacked fortified towns. About the year 70 B. C., one Heracleo, with four piratic ships, captured and burnt several Roman ships sent to oppose him, and after ravaging the coasts of Sicily at his pleasure, entered, in triumph and defiance, the harbor of Syracuse. Descents were frequently made upon the coasts of Italy. The brother of M. Antony was once sent in com-

mand of an expedition against them. During his absence the pirates landed by night at Misenum, seized the children of Antony, and carried them off as slaves. The distracted father rescued his children from bondage only by paying an enormous ransom. At one time these slave-trading pirates even entered the Tiber, and captured a Roman fleet within twenty miles of the capital. History gives us the names of four hundred cities which had been captured by these slavers. The condition of humanity then must have been miserable indeed. Pirates ravaged the seas, and Roman governors, still more remorseless, ravaged the land.

The triumph of Sylla had greatly aggravated the excesses of the governing power. The laws were almost entirely inoperative against any amount of extortion and corruption. One incident will show how powerless were the weak against the strong. Verres, as questor, was sent on a mission to the king of Bithynia. Passing through Lampsacus, in Greece, he was informed that a gentleman there had a daughter of very rare beauty. He determined to take her for himself, and sent one of his vile and obsequious attendants, in furtherance of his plans, to lodge with Philodamus for the night. He was entertained with great hospitality, and at his request several of his companions were invited to sup with him. When heated with wine they demanded that the beautiful daughter should be brought forward and exhibited to them, intending to seize her. According to the Grecian customs nothing could be more indecent and insulting than such an exposure. The father indignantly refused. His Roman guests, aided by their slaves, endeavored to accomplish their purpose by violence. The father, assisted by his son, fought valiantly to protect his daughter. In the fray one of the Romans was killed and several of the slaves were wounded. The people in the neighborhood rallied and protected the family. But the father and son were both condemned and

beheaded. Cicero records this enormity, with others even more atrocious, against Verres.

When Pompey appeared in Rome, as a successful general, seeking the consulship, the people welcomed him, hoping that they might secure him as their leader. He made them flattering promises, was elected by acclaim, and repealed, as one of his first measures, the most obnoxious of Sylla's laws, and restored the tribuneship—the popular branch of the government. By this act he secured great popularity. At the close of the year, as his consulship terminated, he declined accepting any other office, and remained in Rome a private citizen, opulent and generally revered.

The outrages of the piratic slave stealers had now become intolerable, and Gabinius, one of the tribunes, proposed that the war with the pirates, should be intrusted to one person for three years; that his power should extend to every part of the empire, with dictatorial authority to raise men and money; and that Pompey should be intrusted with this extraordinary command. Gabinius was a partisan of Pompey, and was acting under his guidance. The people eagerly advocated this measure. The nobles were alarmed, for it had now become evident that he was courting popular favor. The senate began to threaten Gabinius, and the mob to threaten the senate. The decree, after a severe struggle, was carried, and Pompey passed the whole winter in most energetic preparations to commence, in the early spring, his war upon the pirates. With a large fleet, almost before the storms of winter had ceased, he scoured the coasts of Sicily and of Africa, and thence sailed for Sardinia, leaving at all these places ships to guard important points, and detachments of troops upon the shore. So vigorously did he proceed, that but six weeks were employed in this enterprise.

The pirates, thus driven from their haunts in those regions of the Mediterranean, gradually drew back toward Cilicia, where they were intrenched in almost sufficient power to bid