

ments in his march; no murmurs even seem to have been raised. He advanced to the gates of the capital and encamped his troops in the Campus Martius, uttering no other menace than the presence of such an army silently indicated. He was everywhere recognized as the Nephew of his Uncle, and that armed him with almost invincible power.

Almost without opposition he was elected consul, and the plebeian's heel fell crushing upon the patrician's head. We should have more sympathy for the patricians in their downfall, had they not enjoyed long ages of ascendancy, during which the plebeians had writhed beneath the trappings of patrician feet. This oblivion of the ties of brotherhood—this attempt of one class of men to live at the expense of another—this irrepressible conflict, in which the patrician has endeavored to crowd his brother plebeian into the dust, has been through all ages the fruitful source of human woe. And this conflict will continue bitterly to the end, until the ties of fraternity shall be recognized, and until the principle of our own declaration of independence is enthroned in all hearts—that all men are created equal, and are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Octavius Cæsar commenced his consular reign vigorously. He first expunged the decree that Antony and his friends were public enemies. He then sent a wave of terror to the remotest bounds of the Roman empire, by a law which enacted that all implicated in the assassination of Cæsar, wherever they could be found, should be arrested and brought to trial. M. Agrippa appeared as the accuser of the conspirators, whose names were well known. As they did not appear to respond to the charge, they were all convicted of treason, and doomed to perpetual exile from Rome, by a bill of attainder, which in the usual style prohibited them the use of fire and water, within a certain distance from the metropolis.

CHAPTER XIV.

OCTAVIUS CÆSAR.

FROM 42 B. C. TO 32 B. C.

FATE OF DECIMUS BRUTUS.—MASSACRES IN ROME.—DEATH OF CICERO.—ANECDOTES.—THE TRIUMVIRATE.—WAR IN MACEDONIA.—RUIN OF THE PATRICIAN CAUSE.—SUICIDE OF CASSIUS AND BRUTUS.—TRIUMPH OF THE TRIUMVIRATE.—OPPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE AND DISCONTENT IN ROME.—PROFLIGACY OF OCTAVIUS CÆSAR.—DOWNFALL OF LEPIDUS.—DRUSILLA.—DIVORCE OF ANTONY'S WIFE.—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.—WAR BETWEEN OCTAVIUS AND ANTONY.—MUSTERING OF THE FORCES.—ANTONY AND HIS BRIDAL PARAMOUR.

DECIMUS BRUTUS, abandoned by his soldiers who deserted in battalions to Antony, attempted to escape to Greece, in the disguise of a Gaul. But he was arrested, and, at the command of Antony, beheaded. Though the assassin of Cæsar deserved no better fate, there was no virtue in Antony, which authorized him to be executor of such vengeance. Octavius, now invested with the consular dignity, and at the head of a victorious army, opened a friendly correspondence with Antony and Lepidus, in which they agreed to bury all past differences, and to coöperate in the furtherance of the common cause. Antony had reconducted his troops back to Mutina, and the three chieftains held an interview on one of the numerous marshy islands, which then existed between the Apennines and the Po. They constituted themselves a triumvirate to administer the affairs of the empire, supported by their united armies; they divided among themselves the powers within their grasp, and made arrangements for the punishment of their adversaries. The three returned to Rome, followed by their troops, and, without difficulty, secured the appointment of the triumvirate by the legal

tribunals. A list of the proscribed was then made out and published, with a proclamation which said:

“Whilst we are hastening to attack our enemies abroad, we can not with safety leave so many other enemies behind us in Rome; nor can we delay to take precautions against our domestic foes, lest the dangers with which we are threatened from abroad, become too formidable to be overcome.”

Rome was appalled at the appearance of the names of one hundred and thirty senators, with a still larger number of the equestrian order, on these proscription lists. All persons were warned, by the severest penalties, against harboring the proscribed in any way, while rewards were offered to any one who would bring their heads to the triumvirs; and it was also stated that there should be no record kept of the payment of this money, that no stain might be left on the memory of those who should receive it. In nothing, perhaps, is the awful corruption of those times more conspicuous, than in the eagerness with which sons sought the promised reward by betraying their fathers to death.

The name of Marcus Tullius Cicero was, of course, found on this proscription list. Cicero, apprehensive of danger, had fled from Rome, and in disguise was hastening to the coast, that he might embark for Macedonia, where he could seek shelter beneath the power of Junius Brutus and Cassius. He obtained a vessel, and even commenced his voyage. But a storm so delayed his progress, and caused him to suffer so much from sea-sickness, that he returned to the Italian coast, and, with unwonted heroism, said, “I will die in that country which I have so often saved.”

Cicero had now attained his sixty-third year. Quietly he returned to his villa, at Formiæ. His slaves, devotedly attached to their master, saw some soldiers approaching, and knowing full well their object, almost forced him into a litter that they might convey him to the shore and place him on board a ship. The soldiers overtook them while still on

Cicero's grounds. He commanded the slaves to make no resistance, but to set down the litter. Calmly he stretched his head out, with his neck bare, to be dissevered by the sword. The deed was immediately performed, and the gory head remained in the hands of his murderers. They also cut off his hands, saying that they were the instruments with which he had written his Philippics, and they carried both head and hands, and exposed them at the rostra where Cicero had uttered strains of eloquence which still vibrate through the world. Rome crowded to witness the shameful spectacle, and both plebeian and patrician wept over his cruel fate. Whatever judgment may be pronounced upon the weakness of Cicero, he was, beyond all question, one of the purest and best of the men of those dark and dissolute days.

It is urged in defense of Cicero's apparent timidity and vacillation, that he regarded with equal disapprobation the selfish and unprincipled members of both factions—the aristocratic and the democratic. Neither party, it is said, was worthy of the support of any intelligent and honest patriot. There was, however, this undeniable difference: the patricians were struggling to deprive the plebeians of an equal share in political privileges; while the plebeians were contending for equal rights for all. In this conflict, which seems to have agitated the world for countless ages, there is not much room for doubt where the sympathies of an honest man should be. Still every historian feels disposed to deal tenderly with the reputation of Rome's most distinguished philosopher and orator. The intellectual world owes him a debt of gratitude, which should fall as a mantle to veil his frailties.

The annals of those days were filled with records of the tragical deaths of some, and the wonderful escapes of others, of the proscribed. Many of these anecdotes aid one very much in obtaining a conception of the state of society at that time. Vetulio, one of the proscribed, assumed the rank and state of a pretor, a Roman magistrate of very high station, at

the head of the judiciary. He disguised his slaves as lictors, officers in retinue, who bore the insignia of power before men of illustrious political position. Charioted in splendor, he thus commenced a journey from Rome to Naples. Travelers whom he met moved aside, overawed, from his way. The doors of inns were eagerly thrown open. Carriages and horses were impressed as by governmental power. At the sea shore, in the name of the government, he seized vessels for himself and his attendants, and effected his escape to Sicily, where he threw himself under the protection of Sextus Pompey, then in power there.

Antius Restio, another of the proscribed, escaped from his house by night. His slaves, elated at their master's doom, commenced pillaging his property. One alone followed his master; and strange to relate, that one had been cruelly branded in the face by his master, and had been loaded with chains, from which his insurgent fellow-servants had released him. This slave, with a spirit of forgiveness which Christianity itself might envy, followed his master, concealed him by the way-side, constructed a funeral pile, and then, with inhumanity of which even paganism should be ashamed, murdered an innocent traveler who was passing by, and placed him upon the pile. While thus employed the soldiers came up. He informed them that he had slain his master, and was preparing to burn his body, and pointed to his branded cheek and his limbs galled by the chains, as an excuse for the revenge thus satiated. The unsuspecting soldiers cut off the head of the murdered man, and received for it the proffered reward. Suspicion being thus lulled, the slave succeeded in conveying his master safe to Sicily. It is difficult to exaggerate the horrors attending the execution of these proscriptions. They found but a counterpart during the reign of terror in France. In the one case as in the other, all these woes were consequent upon the strife between aristocratic usurpation and popular equality. The recognition of man's

fraternity; the adoption of merit as the passport to office, without regard to the distinctions of rank, would have saved Rome all this expenditure of blood and misery.

All the machinery of confiscations, forced loans, and burdensome taxes was called into requisition to aid the triumvirs in prosecuting the civil war in which they were now engaged. The soldiers, conscious of their power, rioted in robberies and plunderings, and were guilty of every atrocity which human passion could incite. Bands of slaves, liberated by the flight or death of their masters, and with no badge of color to indicate their servile condition, assumed the disguise of soldiers, and sought the redress of their past wrongs by the sorest vengeance. It seems that the triumvirs did what they could to repress these disorders. Were the leaders of the popular party ever so patriotic and unselfish, the only choice before them was to submit to the haughtiness and the outrages of patrician supremacy, or to fight the battles of popular rights with every weapon they could grasp. This disposition of those in power not to respect, but to trample upon the rights of those beneath them, is utterly infamous, and through all past time has deluged the world in crime and woe. The only alternative for the slave, is patiently to bow his neck to the yoke and his back to the stripe, or to assert his manhood through the dreadful energies of conflagration and blood.

Macedonia and Sicily were still under the sway of the patrician party, and many of the aristocracy from all parts of Italy, flocked to the banners which were there unfurled. Sextus Pompey, with a fleet and an army, had taken possession of the island of Sicily, and there, safe from immediate assault, had established his head-quarters. He dispatched his ships to cruise along the coast of Italy, to encourage the friends of patrician sway to persist in opposition to the established government, and to receive on board any who either sought protection or wished to join his camp.

Though the triumvirs at Rome were in the undisputed

possession of power, the old forms of government were retained, the offices being filled by men in favor of plebeian rights. By the usual forms of election, Lepidus and Plancus were chosen consuls. Lepidus remained at Rome to administer, with his colleague, the home government. Antony and Octavius Cæsar prepared for an expedition to the East, to attack Brutus and Cassius, who were rallying the forces of rebellion there. Notwithstanding the most earnest entreaties of Cicero, that Brutus would hasten to Rome to aid the nobles with his army within the walls of the capital, Brutus, more sagacious than Cicero with regard to the strength of the plebeian cause, declining this appeal, crossed over to Asia, and effected a junction with Cassius at Smyrna.

Octavius and Antony speedily dispatched an army, under able generals, across the Adriatic to Macedonia, and took possession of that rich and powerful province. Traversing the whole kingdom unopposed, from the Adriatic to the Ægean sea, a distance of nearly three hundred miles, Saxa and Norbanus, in command of this force, established themselves in a very formidable position, on the great plain of Strymon, near Philippi, at the opening of some mountain defiles, through which they supposed that Brutus and Cassius must necessarily pass, should they attempt to return from Asia and regain Macedonia.

The patrician generals were soon on the march with a force vastly superior to that of their plebeian foes. A Thracian chief guided them, through forests and swamps, by unfrequented paths, across the mountains, and suddenly their trumpet blasts were heard and their banners gleamed in the rear of the intrenchments of Saxa and Norbanus. The patricians threw up formidable intrenchments, and having a vast superiority of land forces, and with their fleet in entire command of all the neighboring seas, they hoped soon to starve their foes into submission without risking a battle. Octavius and Antony, hearing of the peril of the army, hasted to its

aid with large reënforcements, from Brundisium; and, notwithstanding the most energetic endeavors of Sextus Pompey to cut them off with his fleet, they effected a landing in Macedonia, and soon joined their friends at Philippi.

The material forces now, on either side, were nearly equal; but the moral forces were so unequal as to render the victory of the Triumvirs almost certain. The soldiers of Brutus and Cassius were fighting for their masters; the soldiers of Octavius were fighting, as they believed, for themselves, their own rights, their own political equality with the wealthy and the high-born. After a few days of cautious maneuvering the charge was sounded, and horseman and footman rushed into the battle.

Cassius led the left wing of the patrician army, Brutus the right. The field was soon so enveloped in dust, that neither victors nor vanquished could tell what was transpiring around them. Antony rushed upon Cassius, trampled down his cohorts, and sweeping every thing before him, broke through the intrenchments, and seized the camp of his foe. The unhappy assassin of Cæsar, accompanied by an officer and a single freedman, fled to a neighboring hill, and immediately dispatched one of his staff to ascertain the fate of the division led by Brutus.

Anxiously, from the hill-side, he watched his progress. In the extreme distance he soon saw him meet a body of cavalry, and a faint shout reached his ear. The horsemen, with his messenger in their midst, now commenced a rapid advance toward the spot where he stood. Cassius, inferring that his officer was a prisoner, and that his captors were approaching but to cut him down, yielded himself to the folly and the cowardice of suicide. Presenting his sword to his freedman he ordered him to plunge it into his heart. The order was obeyed, and Cassius fell dead to the ground. A moment after, the cavalry came galloping up the hill to announce to Cassius that Brutus had been signally successful, and to call upon him

to rally his broken bands in the rear of the victorious ranks. Had Cassius lived, the whole issue of the campaign might, perhaps, have been changed.

Brutus was thus deserted to struggle alone against the tide of adverse fortune. Though he had maintained his ground and repelled the assaults of the enemy, there was but little in prospect to encourage him. His soldiers had fought through the influence of military discipline, and not inspired by goodwill. Desertions began to thin his ranks. Octavius, though but partially victorious, was elated by the result of the battle, and all his troops were eager for another fight. Brutus, conscious that he was growing weaker by every hour's delay, gathered such reënforcements as he could speedily command, and again led out his legions in order of battle.

Octavius was ready for the strife. Fiercely for a few hours the battle raged, and then the patrician troops began to give ground. First they slowly retired, then rapidly retreated, then fled, a rabble rout, in utter confusion and dismay. Brutus, cut off from his flying troops, escaped to a ravine in the mountains, gloomy with overhanging cliffs and forests. Several of his friends accompanied him in utter despair. The sun had now set, and the gloom of night enveloped them. Brutus sat down upon a rock, and, for a moment, gazed in silence from the glen through the foliage and the cliffs to the stars beaming brightly. Sadly he conversed with his friends, in such strains as would naturally fall from the lips of a reflective man whose whole earthly interests were wrecked, and who had no confidence in immortality. The Christian can look beyond time's narrow horizon for the redress of all wrongs, but Brutus, in death, could see nothing but a leap in the dark.

"Oh unhappy virtue!" said he, "I have worshiped thee as a real good; but thou art a vain, empty name, and the slave of fortune."

Again he quoted a verse from the *Medea* of Euripides:

"O Jupiter, forget not to punish the author of all this misery."

Thus the melancholy hours of the night wore away. A friend was dispatched to see if he could ascertain any tidings from the camp. But he did not return, and Brutus rightly inferred that he had perished by the hands of the enemy. The morning was beginning to dawn, when their retreat would no longer be safe.

"It is time for us to go hence," some one said.

"Yes," Brutus replied; "we must indeed go hence; but it must be with our hands and not with our feet."

He also had decided upon suicide. Shaking hands with all his friends, in a final adieu, and thanking them for their faithful adherence to his cause, he said:

"I weep for my country, but not for myself. I am happier than my conquerors; for I shall leave behind me a name, which no success or power can confer upon them."

Then, to save his friends the anguish of witnessing his death, with two attendants, he retired for a short distance out of their sight. To one of them he gave his sword, and, placing his heart against the glittering point, he threw himself upon it with such force that he instantly fell dead to the ground. Thus perished Brutus—the noble assassin, the heroic self-murderer, in whose character were singularly blended far more of the virtues than of the vices of paganism. Brutus died at the early age of forty-three.

The leaders of the aristocratic party were now nearly all destroyed; and the power of the triumvirs was effectually established. But the soldiers were to be rewarded, and their expectations were high. The military chest was empty, and could only be replenished by confiscation and plunder. Antony was accordingly sent to Asia to reorganize that country, and to raise contributions, by those extortions with which all Roman generals, of every party, were so familiar. Octavius returned to Italy to superintend the important matters demanding attention there.

Octavius, suffering severely from ill health, commenced

slowly his journey to Rome. But the triumph of the plebeians had by no means secured the liberties of the people. They soon found that the rapacity of a victorious army could be as oppressive as the extortions of a rich nobility. The people were despoiled of their property and their lands, that these gifts might be lavished upon the troops. This caused so much exasperation that there were frequent and bloody conflicts between the soldiers and the citizens; houses were plundered and destroyed, and anarchy, even in the city of Rome, became so great, that the shops were closed and the magistrates resigned their offices in despair.

Lucius Antony, a brother of Marc, raised the banner of revolt against this merciless spoliation. The people rushed eagerly to his standards. Patrician and plebeian alike combined for mutual protection against the extortion of a rapacious soldiery. Octavius himself would gladly have repressed these disorders, but he was indebted to his soldiers for his supremacy, and a quarrel with them would leave him entirely powerless. The army was conscious that its leader must obey its behests, and, unscrupulously and unopposed, they rioted in violence and oppression.

But Octavius soon had cause for alarm, in seeing that a truly national party, composed of men of all parties, was rapidly forming around Lucius Antony. Octavius had professed to be the leader of the democracy, but now the democracy itself was organizing against him. Undisciplined citizens, however, could make but a feeble stand against the veteran legions of Octavius. L. Antony was soon overwhelmed. But anxious still to court popular favor, and to retain the position of a friend of the people, Octavius pardoned the plebeians engaged in the revolt, and wreaked his vengeance on the patricians alone. Lucius Antony, in deference to Marc, the colleague of Octavius in the triumvirate, was pardoned, but nearly all the citizens of distinction, who were taken captive, were remorselessly put to death. Three

hundred of the prisoners, most of them of the highest rank, were sacrificed, on the Ides of March, on an altar erected in honor of Julius Cæsar. The city of Penesia, where the insurgents had made a stand, was plundered, and then burnt to the ground, and the magistrates were all put to death. Octavius Cæsar was then but twenty-three years of age.

From the defeat of the army of Lucius Antony, and from the executions which ensued, a young man, of the highest patrician rank, and whose family subsequently became renowned in history, escaped to Sicily. His name was Tiberius Claudius Nero. His wife, Drusilla, soon after was married to Octavius Cæsar, and his little son, then but two years old, in half a century from that time, as Tiberius Cæsar, became emperor of Rome. Such is history, and such is life. The impoverished fugitive to-day, is the monarch to-morrow—and the monarch throws aside his diadem to perish, an exile in distant lands.

This brief contest, thus terminated, rendered all further opposition to Octavius hopeless. The whole power of the empire was now in the hands of a mercenary standing army, and that army dominated its chief. Sextus Pompey was still in power in Sicily, at the head of a numerous and well-disciplined army, and his fleet was in supremacy so entire, that nearly all the ports of Italy were blockaded by it, and even Rome itself was thus reduced to great distress. Some considerable jealousy had now sprung up between Octavius and Marc Antony, as to which should be the greater. The one was Cæsar's nephew—the other his oldest associate, and his favorite general. Octavius, very wisely, was disposed to compromise, that he might avert the threatened breach of friendship. Fulvia, the wife of M. Antony, having recently died, Octavius gave him his sister Octavia in marriage, and agreed that all the provinces of the Roman empire, eastward of the Ionian gulf, should be under the exclusive dominion of Antony, while Octavius Cæsar should be supreme over the