CHAPTER XXXVI

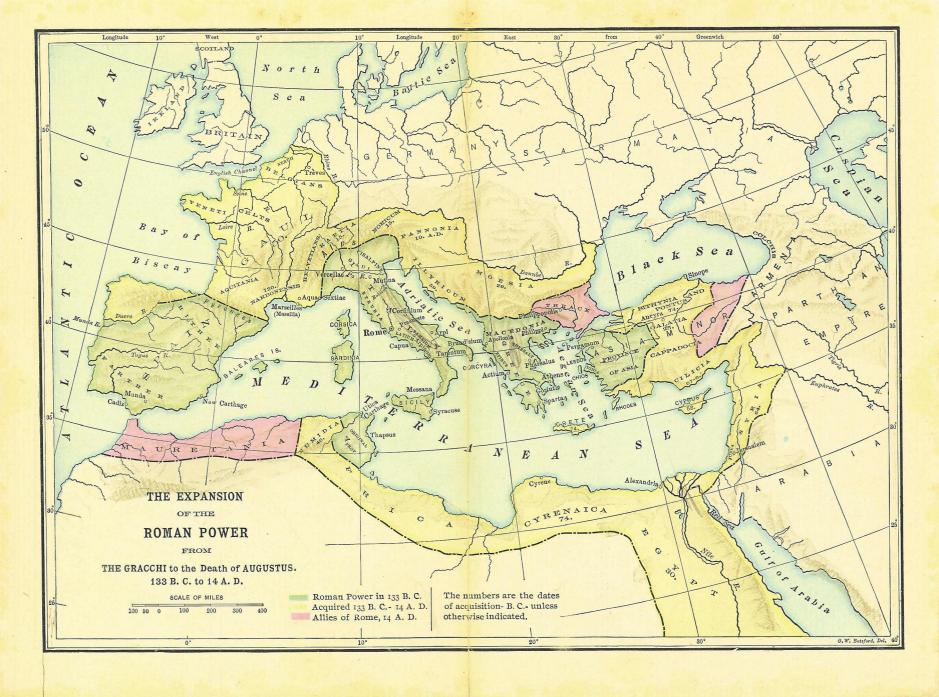
THE REVOLUTION: (I) FROM PLUTOCRACY TO MILITARY RULE

133-79 B.C.

I. The Reforms of the Gracchi

133-121 В.С.

- 452. The Gracchi. A reform of the evils described in the preceding chapter was attempted by the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Though plebeian, they belonged to the highest nobility.¹ Their father had filled all the great offices; Cornelia, the mother, was daughter of the Scipio who conquered Hannibal. Their education, as well as their birth and connections, fitted them for a splendid career. The gifted mother taught them eloquence; Greek tutors instructed them in the philosophy and the political ideas of Hellas. Both married into noble families. When as young men they served in military and provincial offices, the allies, the dependents, and even the enemies of Rome respected and loved them for the kindness of their forefathers and for their own high character; for they had inherited a generous sympathy with the peasants, the provincials, and even the slaves.
- 453. The Condition of the Lower Classes. Tiberius, who was nine years older than his brother, saw how miserable was the condition of the lower classes. As explained in the preceding chapter, a few families enjoyed nearly all the wealth of the world, including the use of the state lands,² whereas the masses were homeless. We have a quotation from a speech of Tiberius which describes their condition: "The wild beasts of Italy have their dens and holes and hiding-places, while the men who fight and die in defence of Italy enjoy indeed the air and light, but nothing more. Houseless and without a spot of ground to rest upon, they wander about with their



erty, declared his bill a scheme of robbery. When accordingly he brought it before the assembly, they induced Octavius, a tribune, to yeto it, and thus they prevented it from passing.

With the advice of Tiberius, the assembly deposed the obstinate The agrarian measure then passed without opposition. It was so well carried out that after four years the census roll showed an increase of nearly eighty thousand citizens fit for military service. To stop the decline of the population and to add so many useful citizens was the work of a great patriot and statesman.

455. The Legality of the Acts of Tiberius. -- The deposition of Octavius requires further examination. As no magistrate had ever been deposed before, this act involved a sweeping departure from long-established custom. Nearly all the powers acquired by the assemblies during the republic, however, had been won in a similar way. In other words, an assembly gained a new function, not through a law, but merely by assuming that function and continuing to exercise it. Constitutionally the government was a democracy and the assembly was supreme. If it wished to introduce the custom of deposing magistrates, it had the right. since the tribunate of Flaminius, 232 B.C., it had allowed the senate to take the lead in everything. When, therefore, under Tiberius Gracchus it attempted to resume its supremacy, the senators naturally declared its conduct unconstitutional. They were unwilling to admit in practice what they had long accepted in theory. Not many years afterward, however, we find the senate accepting the new principle that a magistrate could be put out of office.2 Soon after the enactment of the agrarian law Tiberius offered himself for reëlection to the tribunate—another departure from custom. The same considerations as to legality apply to this act. His continuance in office seemed to himself and his friends to be necessary for the enforcement of the agrarian law and for the institution of other reforms.

 $^{^2\,\}S\,$ 468. For a further consideration of this question, the advanced pupil and the instructor may consult Greenidge, History of Rome, i. 125-127; Botsford, Roman Assemblies, 367 f.

456. The Death of Tiberius Gracchus (133 B.C.). — On election day his peasant supporters were busy with their harvests; and when the voting began, a crowd of senators and other opponents of the reformer dispersed the assembly. Two of the tribunes, turning traitor, killed Tiberius with clubs. Three hundred of his followers were murdered along with him, and their bodies were thrown into the Tiber. Many times during the previous history of the republic the assembly had committed acts of which the senate had heartily disapproved. Its policy had been to resist by all constitutional means the adoption of such a measure, to yield when legal means of opposition failed, and then when the excitement of the moment had passed away, to annul the measure quietly. In the present case this course was advised by Scaevola, who as a jurist was most competent to point out the constitutional procedure. But his moderation did not satisfy the senators. The men who had voted the destruction of Corinth and Carthage, and had followed a policy of treachery and cruelty in the treatment of foreign enemies, naturally resorted to mob violence for putting down a political foe. This was the first time blood was shed in a political struggle at Rome, and the leaders of the mob were senators. Added to all the other causes of popular discontent, it provoked a revolution, which was to last a hundred years. The aim of the revolutionary party, opposed to the nobles, was to substitute the assembly for the senate, democracy for oligarchy, in fact as well as in theory. Contrary to expectations, the revolution was to end in the overthrow of the republic.

457. The Democratic Outlook. — Some time after the murder of Tiberius, Scipio Aemilianus, the destroyer of Carthage, put a stop to the distributions of land, and brought reform to a standstill.

Though depressed for a time, the democratic leaders soon regained courage. One of them proposed to give the Italians ¹ the citizenship in order to have them as supporters of the land law. This effer the Italians would gladly have accepted, had not the senate put a stop to the measure. Another leader passed a law permitting the people to reëlect a tribune in case of a lack of candidates. More important still, Gaius Gracchus was coming to the

¹ These were the allies whose political relation to Rome is described in § 406, and who suffered greatly through the growth of the empire; § 445.

front. When the people heard him defending a friend in the law court, they were wild with delight; for they saw that other orators were mere children compared with him, and they felt that his magnificent talents were to be used in their behalf. For a time he avoided politics, but his fate called him to finish a brother's work; he dreamed that Tiberius appeared to him one night and said, "Why hesitate, Gaius? It is your destiny, as mine, to live and die for the people."

.458. Gaius Gracchus Tribune (123, 122 B.C.). — He was candidate for the tribuneship for the year 123 B.C. Though the nobles opposed him, all Italy gathered to his support; on election day the people overflowed the Campus Martius 1 and shouted their wishes from the housetops. When his year of office had expired, they

elected him to a second term.

As his brother had failed through reliance on the peasants, who could rarely leave their work for politics, one of his first objects was to secure a faithful body of supporters such as might always be on hand. For this purpose he passed a law providing for the monthly distribution of public grain among the citizens at half the market price. As the political centre of the world, Rome had become populous. Furthermore, the ruin of agriculture throughout Italy had driven thousands of poor people into the city, where they could find little work; for Rome had few industries, but depended on imports from the provinces. The problem of living was difficult for the masses, even in times of prosperity; and recently various misfortunes had so diminished the grain supply that relief from the government seemed the only resource against impending famine. In his corn (frumentarian) law Gaius introduced no new principle; for the senate had often supplied the populace with cheap or free grain, and each noble supported a throng of clients. He merely detached the people from their several patrons and enlisted them in the support of his reforms. Thus he organized the army of the revolution, which even the strongest emperors could not disband. His system wrought mischief in draining the treasury and in encouraging idleness; the completion of his great reforms, however, would probably have corrected the evil.

¹ See map, p. 457.

459. Other Reforms of Gaius. - Gaius then applied himself to the economic improvement of the empire. Renewing his brother's agrarian law, he planned to distribute the remaining public lands among the poor. He adopted, too, the policy of establishing commercial and manufacturing colonies at Tarentum, Capua, and other places along the Italian coasts, to restore to Italy the prosperity which Roman capitalism had destroyed. Passing beyond Italy, he attempted to plant a colony near the site of Carthage. idea of colonizing the provinces with Roman citizens was altogether new. Every colony of the kind became a centre from which the Latin language and civilization extended to the natives. In the course of centuries this process led to the grant of Roman citizenship to the provincials. For the immediate future the whole colonial policy of Gaius, so far as carried out, meant the restoration of commercial and industrial prosperity to Italy and the empire, and the dispersion of the Roman poor among the rural districts and the small towns, where they could find an opportunity to earn a living.

Shortly before the tribunate of Gaius, courts began to be established for the trial of special classes of crimes. One was for the trial of cases of extortion committed by officials in Italy and the provinces; another was for the trial of murder. These courts consisted of a praetor as judge and a large jury of senators. In cases of extortion the accused officials were senators, and were therefore generally acquitted, whether guilty or not, by the jury. To put an end to this abuse Gaius had a law passed which required that the jurors should be knights. Through these courts the knights exercised authority over the senate itself. In a few years they, too, began to abuse their power, and became perhaps even more corrupt than the senate had been. This measure of Gaius, therefore, did not prove as beneficial as he had hoped.

Gaius built roads³ in Italy, and erected granaries, in which was to be stored the public grain for sale to the people at a reduced rate. He attended personally to all these undertakings. His house be-

^{1 § 444.} 2 § 446. Those only were eligible who had public horses and voted in the eighteen equestrian centuries of the comitia centuriata.

came the bureau of administration for the empire. "The people looked with amazement at the man himself, seeing him attended by crowds of building-contractors, artisans, ambassadors, magistrates, soldiers, and learned men, to all of whom he was easy of access. While he maintained his dignity, he was affable to all, and adapted his behavior to every individual." Thus he showed himself an efficient administrator as well as a great orator and reformer.

Lastly Gaius proposed to give the full Roman citizenship to the Latins, and the Latin rights to the Italians. The inhabitants of Rome, who wanted all the privileges of citizenship for their exclusive enjoyment, would have nothing to do with this measure. Angered by the proposal, they turned against him and defeated him in his candidacy for a third time as tribune. When the senate tried to prevent him from planting a colony at Carthage, both parties resorted to violence. The consul O-pim'i-us, armed by the senate with absolute power,² overthrew the popular party, and killed Gracchus with three thousand of his supporters. Some of these men, with Gaius, perished by mob violence; others were condemned and put to death by Opimius without trial.

460. Estimate of the Gracchi. — Tiberius Gracchus proposed and carried one great measure of reform. The aim of Gaius was the regeneration of society. He wished to equalize the Italians as nearly as possible with the Romans, and to found agricultural colonies in Italy and the provinces in order to provide all the needy with homes and with the means of earning an honest living. In his commercial colonies he wished to reëstablish the sources of economic life which Rome had destroyed. All his other measures were means to these ends. His reforms, if completed, would have drawn the poor away from Rome, made the corn laws unnecessary, limited slavery, and rendered Italy prosperous.

To bring about these reforms he wished to make of the tribunate

¹ Plutarch, Gaius Gracchus, 6.

In the Second Funic War the dictatorship had fallen into disuse, to be revived some time after the Gracchi by Sulla. Meanwhile the senate found a new way of proclaiming martial law; by passing the resolution, "Let the consuls (and other magistrates) see that the state suffer no harm," it conferred upon the magistrates a power equal to that of dictator. Opimius was the first to receive this absolute authority from the senate; Cicero also held it in the conspiracy of Catiline; § 477.

a ministry, like the office of general at Athens in the time of Pericles.¹ The ministers should name the candidates for the higher offices, and, with the advice of the senate, should supervise personally the whole administration of the empire. In brief, the tribunes were to become the head of the government. They were to have vast power, which was to continue from year to year so long as the people in their tribal assembly willed. The failure of the Gracchi is due to the fact that the citizens on whom they relied for support were too ignorant and selfish to uphold a broad, statesmanlike policy. They were ready to vote cheap grain and other advantages to themselves, but turned against Gaius when they found him attempting also to benefit others.

Unappreciated and betrayed, the two brothers became in death the saints and martyrs of the popular party. "The people, though humbled and depressed for a time, soon showed how deeply they felt the loss of the Gracchi. For they had statues of the two brothers made and set up in public places, and the spots on which they fell were declared sacred ground, to which the people brought all the first fruits of the seasons, and offered sacrifices there and worshipped just as at the temples of the gods." They were right in enshrining the sons of Cornelia as the noblest characters the history of their country had brought to light.

II. THE RESTORED SUPREMACY OF THE SENATE

461. Gaius Marius; the Jugurthine War (111–105 B.C.). — The death of Gaius Gracchus restored the misrule of the senate. For the safety and happiness of the empire it was necessary that this corrupt nobility be permanently overthrown and a juster, abler government set up in its place. Although Gaius saw clearly what should be done, no political party would support his reforms. The work of establishing in the army a solid foundation for the new government remained to his successor, Gaius Ma'ri-us.

This man was born among the hills of Latium in a family of moderate circumstances. As a boy he learned not only to work

1 § 225. ² Plutarch, Gaius Gracchus, 18.

hard, but to be sober and obedient. At an early age he entered the army. As a military officer, tribune of the plebs, and afterward propraetor of Farther Spain, he showed himself honest and able. On his return from Spain he married Julia, of the patrician family of the Caesars. Soon afterward he found employment for his military genius in Numidia.

Ju-gur'tha, grandson of Masinissa, after killing the rightful heirs, had himself usurped the throne of Numidia. Though the senate intervened, he bought off its embassies one after another. When Rome made war upon him, he bribed the first commander to withdraw from Africa; and by corrupting the officers of the second, he compelled the surrender of the army and sent it under the voke. Meanwhile he had visited Rome to justify his conduct before the senate. While he was there he brought about the murder of a man who might have contested his right to the Numidian throne. After the murder he could no longer remain in Rome. While departing he is said to have exclaimed, "A city for sale and doomed to speedy ruin, if only a purchaser appears!" Such was the state of affairs when Metellus, a man of energy, took command (100 B.C.). With him went Marius as lieutenant. With the help of Marius, he reduced the dissolute soldiers to order. Then he occupied a whole year in a vain attempt to conquer Jugurtha by force or to take him captive by stratagem (108 B.C.). The next year Metellus defeated him; but he soon gathered new forces, and seemed stronger than ever. Then Marius, elected consul, superseded Metellus in the command. He rapidly besieged and captured one stronghold of the enemy after another, and defeated Jugurtha twice in battle. Finally Lucius Cor-ne'li-us Sulla, a young aristocrat who was quaestor under him, captured Jugurtha by treachery. After gracing the triumph of Marius, the African king died in prison. With diminished territory, Numidia remained a dependent kingdom. The war, with the events which preceded it, showed clearly the incompetence and the moral degradation of the senate.

462. The War with the Cimbri and the Teutones (113–101 B.C.).

— The Romans had acquired a strip of territory along the southern coast of Gaul, and had made a province of it under the name Nar-bo-

nen'sis (about 121 B.C.). North of this province lived the Celts, a warlike people who were divided into many independent tribes. At that time the Celts inhabited not only Gaul, but also a narrow territory north of the Alps from Gaul across southern Germany to the valley of the Danube.

About the time the Jugurthine War began, the Cimbri, a German tribe, invaded the Celtic territory north of the Alps. When the consul Carbo with an army hastened to defend some Celtic allies of Rome in that region, he was defeated by the invaders, and barely escaped with his army (113 B.C.). Two years later the Cimbri crossed the Rhine, made war upon the native tribes of Gaul, and threatened Narbonensis. With them were now associated the Teutones. According to some authorities, the latter were Germans; according to others they were Celts. When the Romans came to the rescue, these barbarians overthrew four more consular armies in succession. They threatened to invade Italy, but a delay of three years gave the Romans time to prepare. Reëlected consul year after year, Marius busied himself with reorganizing and training the army. When at length the Teutones were ready to cross the Alps into Italy, he met them at Aq'uae Sex'ti-ae in southern Gaul, and annihilated their great host (102 B.C.). In like manner he and his colleague Catulus in the following year slaughtered the Cimbri at Ver-cel'lae, in northern Italy, after they had succeeded in crossing the Alps.

The army which gained these great victories had a new character. Before the time of Marius it was a militia; the men who waged Rome's wars had lands and families at home, and thought of themselves as citizens. But this middle class of citizens had died out in the economic decline of Italy, and the attempt of the Gracchi to restore it had been undone by the nobles. To save the state from invasion Marius found it necessary, therefore, to make up his army chiefly of men who owned no property. What had been illegal and exceptional he thus converted into a custom. By keeping his men long in the service and under careful training, he made them professional soldiers. Such persons placed all their hopes in their commander, and were ready to follow him in every undertaking, even against the government. Although Marius was

himself loyal, later generals used the army to overthrow the republic. These considerations make it clear that the policy of the Gracchi had in reality been conservative; by restoring the middle class they would have saved the republic. But the undoing of their reforms made necessary the creation of a soldier class which lacked the loyalty of the citizens and which willingly aided the establishment of a military government in place of the republic.

- 463. The Rule of the Nobility. The nobles, who sat in the senate and held all the higher offices, had resorted to violence and bloodshed for stopping the reform movement of the Gracchi. After the murder of Gaius, they proceeded to undo the good work he had accomplished through the founding of colonies and the distribution of lands. They repealed his law for the colonization of Carthage, and then the agrarian law; and they made it possible for the wealthy, by purchase or by force, to gather up into their hands the small farms held by the peasants under the agrarian law. The distribution of cheap grain, however, which Gaius had introduced as a temporary expedient, they continued, and they used it as a means of maintaining themselves in power. The respect in which the senate had once been held was now nearly gone; it could keep its position as head of the state in no other way than by catering to the mob. In the Jugurthine war the nobles had shown themselves worthless and corrupt; afterward the rise of a man from the common people had alone saved the country from barbarian invasion. While outwardly the supremacy of the nobles seemed to be fully restored, a revolutionary undercurrent, in Rome and among the Latins and Italians, was rapidly gaining volume; in time it was to overwhelm the senate and the republic itself.
- 464. Marius, Saturninus, and Glaucia (100 B.C.). In his sixth consulship (100 B.C.) Marius allied himself with Sat-ur-ni'nus, a tribune, and Glau'ci-a, a praetor, to pass a law for planting colonies of his veterans in the provinces. These two men, though violent in their methods, were aiming to carry out the reforms of the Gracchi; they represented the peasants in opposition to the city rabble, which now supported the senate. With their armed followers Saturninus and Glaucia forced the measure through the assembly of tribes. Soon afterward another riot broke out between the rabble and the

peasants. Then the senators and the knights called upon Marius as chief magistrate to put down the sedition. Reluctantly he armed some of his forces to defend the constitution against Saturninus and Glaucia, his former associates. After some time they surrendered; and though their enemies demanded their death, "he placed them in the senate-house with the intention of treating them in a more legal manner. The mob considered this a mere pretext. It tore the tiles off the roof and stoned them to death, including a quaestor, a tribune, and a praetor, who were still wearing their insignia of office." ¹

In casting his lot with the nobles, who were his enemies, rather than with his friends, the reformers, Marius made a grave mistake. Far better would it have been for the Roman world had he seized the opportunity to make himself master of the state and to use his military power, if necessary, in carrying out the most needful reforms. But lacking political wisdom, he failed to grasp the situation. In fact, too great success was undermining his hardy peasant character. He missed his destiny; and the fate of Rome passed into other hands.

465. Drusus (91 B.C.). — The senate now found itself surrounded by enemies; the knights, the mob, and the peasants were all openly or secretly hostile. At the same time the oppressed Italians were on the point of rebellion. These conditions led some of the more liberal aristocrats to think of winning the support of the Italians by granting them the citizenship. The leader of this movement, Marcus Livius Dru'sus, a young man of great wealth and illustrious family, became a tribune of the plebs in 91 B.C. His proposal for the enfranchisement of the Italians passed the assembly, but was annulled by the senate; and soon afterward Drusus was murdered. A law was then passed which threatened with prosecution any one who dared aid the Italians in acquiring the citizenship.

466. The Social War (90–88 B.C.). — The death of Drusus and the passing of this act deprived the Italians of their last hope of obtaining their rights by peaceable means. It was not that they wished to vote at Rome; for most of them lived too far away for the exercise of that function. But they needed the protection

¹ Appian, Civil Wars, i. 32.

which citizenship gave; their soldiers desired humane treatment at the hands of the commanders; in the affairs of peace they asked for the same rights of property and of trade which the Romans had always enjoyed; but most of all, they desired Roman officials and private citizens to cease insulting, scourging, and killing them for amusement or spite. So much citizenship would have meant to them

Accordingly, in 90 B.C., the allies, chiefly those of Sabellian race, revolted, and founded a new state. As their capital they selected Cor-fin'i-um. In the main they patterned their government after that of Rome; they gave the citizenship to all who took part with them in the war for freedom; and they aimed to annex the whole of Italy. The struggle which now began between Rome and her allies (so'ci-i) 1 is called the Social War. As the opposing forces were divided into several small armies, the military operations were intricate. Though fighting against great odds, the Italians were so successful the first year that, near its close, Rome felt compelled to make sure of those who were still faithful by giving them the citizenship. Soon afterward the same reward was extended to those who would return to their allegiance. These concessions not only prevented the revolt from extending, but so weakened it that, in another year, the Romans broke the strength of the allies.

In addition to local self-government in their own towns (municipia) 2 the Italians now possessed the Roman citizenship. At last the whole Italian nation south of the Rubicon River was organized in one great state. But the new citizens were degraded by being enrolled in eight new tribes, which voted after the old thirty-five. Dissatisfied with their condition, the Italians still looked upon the senate and the city rabble as their oppressors, and they were ready therefore to welcome the strong man who as absolute master should make these enemies his footstool. Hence the idea of monarchy

grew apace.

467. Marius and Sulla. — Accordingly politics took a new turn; the questions of the future were, who was to be the man of power, and how much authority was he to snatch from the senate. first conflict came between the veteran Marius, and Sulla, his quaestor of the Jugurthine war. The latter, patrician though poor, was endowed with a remarkable talent for war, diplomacy, and politics. "His eyes were an uncommonly pure and piercing blue, which the color of his face rendered still more terrible, as it was spotted with rough, red blotches interspersed with white, . . . a mulberry besprinkled with meal." Success as a general in the Social War brought him the consulship in 88 B.C.

In this year it was necessary for Rome to send an army against Mith-ri-da'tes,2 the powerful king of Pontus, who was threatening Rome's possessions in the East. Ordinarily so important a command was given by the senate to a consul, who, after the expiration of the year, continued in duty under the title of proconsul. case the conduct of the war was intrusted to Sulla as consul. of the assembly, however, gave the command to Marius. In a conflict of this kind the assembly, embodying the sovereignty of the people, had the superior constitutional right. But Sulla led his army to Rome, and settled the question with the sword. This was the first time the army appeared in escaped to Africa. politics — a critical moment in the history of the republic. to bear in mind that the revolution begun by the Gracchi still went on; its leaders, however, were no longer tribunes, but generals. After restoring the authority of the senate and giving it complete power over the tribunes, Sulla proceeded with his army to the war against Mithridates.

III. The Overthrow and Restoration of Senatorial Rule $$87\text{-}79\ \text{B.c.}$

468. The Revolution of Marius (87 B.C.); the Rule of Cinna (87-84 B.C.). — No sooner had Sulla left Italy than an armed conflict broke out between the consuls, Octavius and Cinna, over the enrolment of the Italians in the old tribes. In this struggle ten thousand men lost their lives. Octavius, leader of the aristocracy, drove Cinna, champion of the Italians, from the city. The senate deposed the popular leader from the consulship. But Cinna quickly gathered an army of Italians, recalled Marius from banishment, and following

the example of Sulla, marched against Rome. Marius returned from an exile which had been to him a series of adventures and of hairbreadth escapes.¹ In his old age, the greatness of his character had changed to rabid fury against the aristocrats. "Filthy and long-haired, he marched through the towns, presenting a pitiable appearance, descanting on his battles, on his victories over the Cimbri, and his six consulships,"² and with grim determination promised the Italians their rights. The two revolutionary leaders entered the city with their bands of Italians, foreigners, and runaway slaves. They killed Octavius and all the eminent aristocrats; for five days they hunted down their opponents, massacred them, and plundered their property. They gave the Italians their rights. Marius received his seventh consulship, but died soon afterward.

While condemning the bloody policy of Marius, we should not forget that the nobles, by murdering the followers of the Gracchi, by opposing every peaceful attempt at reform, and by their greed and tyranny, brought this terrible punishment upon themselves.

The revolution, here described, again overthrew the senate, and placed the democratic party at the head of the government. Its leader, Cinna, reëlected to the consulship year after year, continued in power till 84 B.C. In all this time he attempted no reform, but showed himself as incompetent as the nobles had been. Finally, while preparing to oppose the return of Sulla from Asia, he was killed by some of his soldiers in a mutiny.

469. The First Mithridatic War (88–84 B.C.). — At the close of the Asiatic War in 189 B.C., as has been explained above,³ Rome established a protectorate over Asia Minor. Among the small kingdoms coming thus into dependent alliance with Rome was Pontus, a country on the south shore of the Black Sea. About the time when the senate began to have trouble with Jugurtha, the throne of Pontus came to be filled by a young man who was to prove a dangerous enemy to Rome. This was Mithridates VI, often styled the Great. He was a man of gigantic strength, attractive personality, and brilliant genius. A genuine Oriental polished by Greek education, he remained, in spite of many heroic traits, cunning, unscrupu-

² Appian, Civil Wars, i. 67.

¹ Some of his adventures are related in Botsford, Story of Rome, p. 177 f.

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