CHAPTER XXXVII

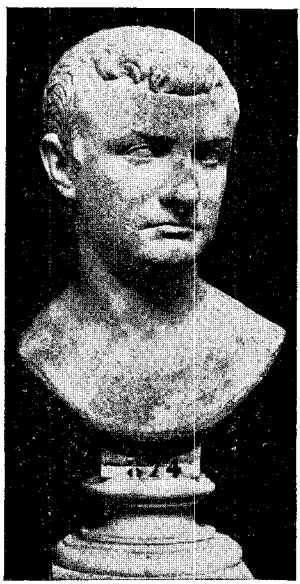
THE REVOLUTION: (II) THE MILITARY POWER IN CONFLICT WITH THE REPUBLIC

79–31 B.C.

I. Pompey, Cicero, and Caesar

79–44 B.C.

472. Pompey (to 70 B.C.). — Sulla was the first to enforce his will upon the state by means of the army. After his time the political power fell more and more into the hands of the generals.

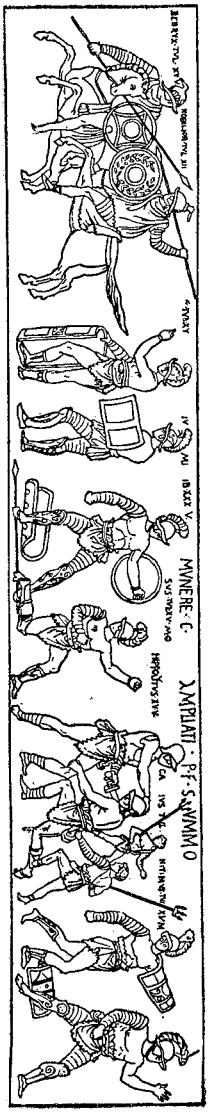


"Pompey the Great"
(National Museum, Naples)

Among the rising officers of the army Gnaeus Pom'pey was most fitted to be the heir of Sulla's policy. While still a young man he had joined in the civil war upon the democrats, and had shown himself so able an officer that Sulla hailed him as "the Great." After the death of his patron, Pompey proved himself still further a champion of the nobility by helping put down a democratic rebellion against the government. A good general was now needed in Spain, and the senate, according to Sulla's arrangements, should have sent thither as proconsul a man who had already been consul. But as it could find no able person with this qualification, it gave the proconsulship to Pompey, who had not filled even the office of quaestor.

Ser-to'ri-us, a democratic leader, had gone as governor to Spain in the time of the civil war. Regarding Sulla as a usurper, he claimed to represent the true government of Rome. He was perhaps the first Roman to sympathize thoroughly with the governed, to make their interests his chief care, to give them the genuine benefits of Latin civilization. With the small forces at his command he routed the Roman armies sent against him, including that of Pompey. Not till Sertorius was murdered by one of his own generals did Pompey succeed in putting an end to the war (76 B.C.).

473. The War with Spartacus (73–71 B.C.). — Not long after the close of the war in Spain Rome had a great danger to meet at home. The new enemy was Spar'ta-cus, a gladiator. Gladiators were persons who fought with swords or other weapons for the amusement of the people. Exhibitions of the kind originated in Etruria in connection with funeral festivals, and Rome had introduced them from that country. At first they were given rarely and by private persons only; but before the time of Pompey it had become customary for the magistrates to entertain the voters with this brutal and debasing sport. At Capua was a school in which slaves were trained as gladiators. A Thracian by birth and a brave, intelligent soldier, Spartacus had been taken prisoner, sold as a slave, and sent to the training school. With a few of his comrades he struck down the guards and



COMBATS OF GLADIATORS
(Pompeian relief; British Museum)

made his escape to Mount Vesuvius. Slaves, criminals, and discontented persons of every class flocked to his side till he had under command an army of more than a hundred thousand men. For two years he defeated Roman armies led by praetors and consuls. Then the praetor Marcus Licinius Cras'sus, with eight legions, defeated and killed him and dispersed his army. At the last moment Crassus was slightly aided by Pompey, who had just returned from Spain.

474. **Pompey as Consul** (70 B.C.); **as Commander against the Pirates** (67 B.C.). — These two generals were eager for the consulship; and as the senate hesitated on the ground that Pompey had not yet been quaestor or praetor, they turned for support to the people, promising them the repeal of Sulla's laws. Elected consuls in 70 B.C., they restored the power of the tribunes and took from the senate the authority Sulla had given it. Thus the aristocratic government, after standing but ten years, was overthrown by the man its founder had styled "the Great." This was a victory, not so much of the democracy as of the army; for the tribunes when restored began to attach themselves to the service of the great military leaders.

For some years pirates had been swarming over the whole Mediterranean Sea. They seized cities, captured Roman nobles, whom they held for ransom, and by cutting off the grain supply they threatened Rome with famine. As the senate seemed powerless to check the evil, Ga-bin'i-us, a tribune, proposed to give Pompey for three years absolute command of the Mediterranean, together with a strip of its coast, fifty miles wide, as far as the Roman empire extended. He was to have a vast number of ships and men and a large sum of money. Though the senate opposed the law because it gave so much power to one man, the people carried it with enthusiasm. Within forty days after his armament was ready, Pompey cleared the sea of pirates. He destroyed their hive in Cilicia and made of that country a Roman province.

475. **The Second and Third Wars with Mithridates** (83–82, 74–63 B.C.). — After Sulla had made peace with Mithridates,[1] 84 B.C., his successor to the command in the East provoked the king of

[1] § 469.

Pontus to a second war. Peace was soon restored by order of Sulla.

While Rome was fighting Sertorius in Spain, Mithridates made ready for a new war. He allied himself with the powerful king of Armenia, and won to his support the barbarian tribes along the northern coast of the Black Sea. In 74 B.C., the king of Bithynia died, leaving his realm as a legacy to Rome. It was at once made a province. This event provoked the king of Pontus to war, as he himself coveted that territory. Mithridates commanded a powerful fleet and army, but opposed to him was the consul Lucius Lucul'lus, a remarkably skilful general, at the head of five legions. Lucullus first expelled the enemy's forces from the provinces of Asia and Bithynia, and then invaded Pontus. With little fighting he drove Mithridates from his kingdom. The fugitive took refuge with his son-in-law Ti-gra'nes, king of Armenia.

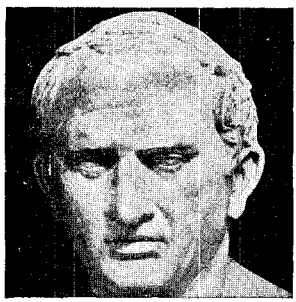
With a few troops Lucullus marched boldly into Armenia and defeated a greatly superior force of Tigranes. He might have conquered the kingdom; but his troops mutinied and compelled him to retreat. Mithridates returned to Pontus, and Lucullus lost nearly all the territory he had gained (66 B.C.).

476. Pompey in the East (66–62 B.C.); **End of the Third War with Mithridates.** — Had the Romans supported Lucullus, he would doubtless soon have overthrown Mithridates. But many thought Pompey the only man able to conquer this great enemy. The tribune Manilius, accordingly, carried a law which gave the command in the East to Pompey in addition to the power he already had. He easily drove the king from Pontus, the most of which he joined to the new province of Bithynia. Mithridates was afterward killed, at his own request, by a Gallic mercenary.

Pompey then invaded Armenia and received the submission of Tigranes. The latter had conquered Syria and other neighboring countries, but was now obliged to give up everything outside his native kingdom. In 64 B.C. Pompey entered Syria and made a province of it. This was the end of the Seleucid Empire. As the Jews were unwilling to submit, he besieged Jerusalem, and after three months took it while the inhabitants were keeping the Sabbath. In the temple he intruded within the "Holy of Holies," a

shrine which none but the high priest could enter. But he left the temple unpillaged, and in other ways he respected the native religion. Jerusalem retained its self-government under a high priest who was friendly to Rome.

Pompey attended conscientiously to the organization of the East. The new provinces thus far mentioned were Cilicia, Bithynia, and Syria. Crete, too, became a province. A few small kingdoms remained in and about Asia Minor; their rulers, though allies in name, were really vassals of Rome. With the great Parthian empire beyond the Euphrates he made a treaty of friendship. These arrangements were all admirable. With her dependent allies and her provinces, Rome now occupied the entire circuit of the Mediterranean.



CICERO
(Vatican Museum, Rome)

477. The Conspiracy of Catiline (63 B.C.).—In the absence of Pompey important events were taking place at Rome. Cic'e-ro became consul in 63 B.C. Though he was from a municipium [1] and a man of moderate means, his brilliant oratory and administrative ability won for him the highest offices at Rome. In his consulship a conspiracy, which for some time had been forming on a vast scale, threatened to destroy the government. The leader, Lucius Cat'i-line, was a man of high birth and of splendid talents, but vicious and depraved. He drew to himself the most desperate men in Italy, including all who wished a renewal of civil war and massacres, as well as debtors, gamblers, and assassins. While the head of the conspiracy was at Rome, its members extended throughout the peninsula. When these anarchists had their plans well laid for killing the magistrates and the nobles and for seizing the government, the vigilant consul discovered their plot and denounced Catiline before the senate. The arch-conspirator fled to the army he had been preparing in Etruria, where he was soon afterward

[1] § 405. Though the members of municipia were Roman citizens, the inhabitants of the capital usually looked upon them as inferior.

defeated and killed. Cicero arrested a few of Catiline's chief associates who remained in the city. They were condemned by the senate, and the consul put them to death.[1]

His success in saving the state made Cicero for a time the most eminent man in Rome. The people saluted him Father of his Country; and though he was a "new man,"[2] the senators recognized him as their leader. He was strongly attached to the republican form of government. But the forces opposed to him were overwhelming. Such in fact had become the condition of public affairs that the statesman, however grand, appears strangely dwarfed and out of place; for the age of generals had come; they were the only strong men and managed the politicians as their puppets. It was in vain, therefore, that Cicero hoped to make Pompey a defender of the republican constitution.

478. The First Triumvirate — Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus (60 B.C.). — All were anxiously awaiting the return of Pompey from the East. While both nobles and democrats claimed him, some feared he might overthrow the government and make himself dictator by means of his army, as Sulla had done. But his belief that his influence alone would bring him all the honor and power he needed led him to disband his army and come to Rome as a private citizen. He was bitterly disappointed. The senate, which had always distrusted him, hesitated to sanction his arrangements in the East. The great general found himself as helpless in politics as Marius had been.

It happened, however, that two eminent politicians needed his aid. One was Crassus, whose great wealth gave him influence. The other was Gaius Ju'li-us Cae'sar. This young man, though a patrician, was leader of the democratic party. He, as well as Crassus, desired a military command like that which Pompey had held. Seeing Pompey cast off by the senate, they came to him with a proposal that they three should act together for their common interests. This union of the three men, though unofficial, is called

[1] Cicero had received from the senate absolute power to deal with the conspirators (§ 459, n. 2), but preferred to make the senate responsible for their punishment. The popular party, however, denied the right of the senate to act as a court in such a case, and asserted accordingly that Cicero had put these men to death without a trial.

[2] § 392.

the First Tri-um'vi-rate. Pompey contributed to it his military fame, Crassus the influence of his wealth, and Caesar his popularity and his commanding intelligence. According to agreement, Caesar received the consulship in 59 B.C., and in return secured from the people the ratification of Pompey's Eastern arrangements. As the tool of the triumvirs, or at least under their protection, the tribune Clo'di-us carried a decree for the banishment of Cicero on the ground that in his consulship he had put citizens to death without a trial.[1] The people soon recalled him, however, and restored him to honor.

479. Caesar Proconsul of Gaul (58–50 B.C.). — At the close of his term Caesar as proconsul received for five years the government of Cisalpine Gaul, Narbonensis, and Illyricum. He now held the kind of position for which he had long been striving; it would give him an army through which he might make himself the greatest power in the state. Before the end of his period of government the triumvirs renewed their alliance. Caesar was to have five more years of command in Gaul; Pompey and Crassus were to be consuls in 55 B.C. and afterward to take charge of some of the best provinces in the empire. In this way these men divided among them the Roman world.

480. The Condition of Gaul. — Mention has been made of the Roman province of Narbonensis on the southern coast of Gaul and of the free Gauls north of the province.[2] Gaul was a great fertile country, which supported a dense population. Most of their civilization they got from the Greek city of Massilia[3] on the coast. Though inferior to the Romans in culture, they made their living chiefly by farming, and they had many strongly fortified towns. The principal divisions were the Aq-ui-ta'ni-ans in the south, an Iberian[4] people with a slight mixture of Celts, the purer Celts in the centre, and in the north the Belgians, who were Celts mixed with Germans.. The Aquitanians were the most civilized, the Bel'gi-ans the most barbarous and warlike. Each of these three groups comprised several independent tribes.

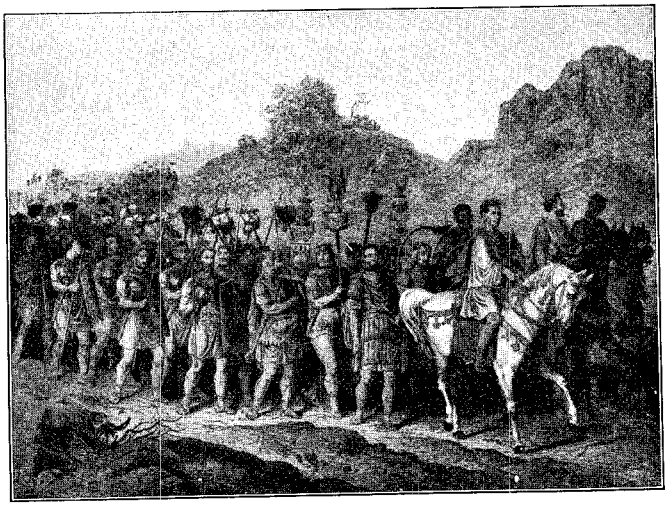
[1] § 477, n. 1.

[2] § 462.

[3] § 130. The Greek form of the name is Massalia, the Latin form Massilia, and the modern form Marseilles.

[4] Of the same race as the natives of Spain (ancient name, Iberia).

East of the Rhine were the barbarous, half-nomadic Germans. A crisis in Rome's relation with these Northern peoples was now at hand, like that with which Marius had successfully grappled. A powerful German tribe under the chieftain A-ri-o-vis'tus had crossed the Rhine and had seized some lands of the Gauls. This movement was but the beginning of a German migration, which if unchecked would have thrown Gaul into commotion, and might



ROMAN SOLDIERS MARCHING
(From Schreiber, *Atlas of Classical Antiquities*)

have brought both German and Celtic hordes into Narbonensis, and even into Italy. A more direct menace to Rome came from the Hel-ve'ti-ans, a great Celtic tribe of the Alps, who were abandoning their home in the mountains for the broader and more fertile lands of southern Gaul.

481. **The Conquest of Gaul** (58–50 B.C.).—Caesar, who at this time had had little experience in command, thus found himself confronted by enormous difficulties and dangers. But the ease with which he overcame everything in his way marked him at once as a great master of the art of war. With wonderful rapidity he

gathered his widely scattered forces, enrolled new legions, and inspired his raw recruits with the courage and devotion of veterans. He immediately defeated the Helvetians with great slaughter, and drove the remnant of their host back to their former home. In the same summer he won a great victory over the Germans, and compelled them to recross the Rhine. In the following year, as the Belgians threatened to give him trouble, he resolved to subdue them. In the invasion of their country he met little opposition till he came to the Ner'vi-i, the most warlike and the most powerful of the Belgic tribes. These people would have nothing of Roman traders in wine and other luxuries, for they wished to keep their strength intact and their martial fire alive. While Caesar was approaching they fell upon him so fiercely that he could neither form his line nor give orders. Each soldier was left to his own judgment. But the cool courage of the legionaries and the heroism of the commander won the desperate fight. Few Nervii survived. As a result of the campaign all northern Gaul submitted. Next year he attacked the Ven'e-ti, who occupied a strip of the western coast. A maritime people, they built their towns on headlands protected on all sides by tide-waters too shallow for Roman ships. They themselves put to sea in clumsy flat-bottomed boats with leathern sails. Caesar made little progress against them till his small, light fleet met their bulky navy in the open sea. A happy thought occurred to the Romans. With scythes fastened to long poles they cut the enemy's tackle so as to disable his ships. Victory was then easy; the Veneti with their allies submitted.

In the remaining years of his command Caesar drove back another horde of Germans; to check their inroads he twice invaded their country. As the Britons, who were largely Celtic, came to the aid of their kinsmen in Gaul, Caesar found it necessary to attack them in their own home in order to make them stop sending aid to his enemies. Crossing the Channel in 55 B.C., he landed in Britain. He found no difficulty in defeating an army of natives; but with his small force he could accomplish nothing more. Next year he landed with a larger army, marched into the interior, and received the submission of several tribes. But the country was poor and the booty scant. The Britons gave hostages and promised

tribute. With these results Caesar quit the island. His two invasions did nothing more than prepare the way for the future conquest of Britain.

Several more years were needed for completing the conquest of Gaul. It was necessary, too, to crush fierce rebellions among the new subjects; not till 50 B.C. was the work of pacification completed.

482. Organization and Romanization of Gaul. — Although Caesar's conquest spread desolation and death over the entire country, in the end his just and humane settlement of affairs attached the subjects loyally to him. All Gaul, at first under one governor, was divided by Augustus into four provinces. The three new provinces were Aquitania in the south, Lug-du-nen'sis (Lyons) in the centre, and Bel'gi-ca in the north. The Gauls retained a large degree of self-government and many of their national institutions. The more warlike spirits enlisted in the Roman armies, the rest of the population devoted itself to cattle-breeding and agriculture. Gold and silver mines were opened. Few Roman colonies were planted in the new provinces; but swarms of Italians went there for trade. The natives opened schools, in which the Latin language and literature were studied with great zeal and success. In course of time better Latin came to be spoken in Gaul than in Rome. The process of Romanization was aided by the chain of military settlements established along the Rhine for the defence of the frontier against the Germans. Naturally civilization took its deepest hold along this line and in the south of the country.

Gaul was a great source of strength to Rome in soldiers, in food supplies, and in taxes. It helped protect the Rhine frontier from the barbarous Germans. The conquest began a new policy — the opening up of northwestern and central Europe to Roman civilization.

483. The End of Crassus (53 B.C.); **Pompey and Caesar clash.** — Meanwhile Crassus took command in Syria, his province. He was defeated and killed by the Parthians, whom he had needlessly provoked to war. Pompey, instead of going to his provinces in Spain and Africa as the law directed, remained near Rome to help the

senate preserve order. The nobles now looked to him for protection from the mighty governor of Gaul, who represented the people.

These two leaders ceased to be friends. Then, in 49 B.C., the senate ordered Caesar to lay down his command on pain of being declared a public enemy. When the tribunes, Mark Antony and Quintus Cassius, vetoed this decree, they were harshly treated, and fled thereupon to Caesar's camp. The mistreatment of the tribunes gave him a pretext for bringing his army to Rome to protect the sacred office.[1]

484. Second Civil War (49–45 B.C.). — The story is told that at the Rubicon, which separated his province from Italy, Caesar hesitated while he discussed with his friends the consequences of crossing, like an invader, into Italy and of thus making himself an enemy to his country; then exclaiming, "The die is cast!" he hurried over the river, and with a trumpet summoned his troops to follow. Although the anecdote may not be true, the crossing of the Rubicon was a crisis in the life of Caesar and in the history of his country; for by bringing his army into Italy in violation of the law, he began a war upon the republic.

Pompey, with the consuls and many senators, retired to the East, where he expected his great influence to bring him abundance of supporters and of resources for war. Caesar immediately secured control of Italy and Spain. His gentleness to opponents and his moderation in relieving distressed debtors and in protecting property won the hearts of all quiet citizens, and made even many followers of Pompey suspect that they had taken the wrong side. After setting up a government at Rome, Caesar crossed to Greece and met his rival at Phar-sa'lus, in Thessaly. Although in appearance Pompey championed the senate, the real question at issue was which of the two commanders should rule the Roman world. Pompey's army outnumbered the enemy; but the mental resources of Caesar, together with the superior manliness of the troops from western Europe, won the day. Pompey fled to Egypt; and when Caesar reached Alexandria in pursuit, a would-be friend brought him the head of his murdered rival. It was no welcome gift to the noble victor.

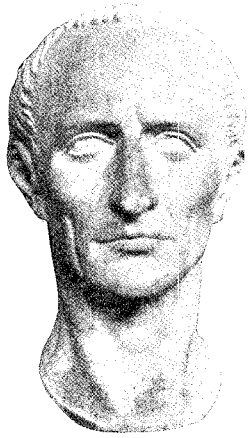
[1] § 382.

In Egypt King Ptolemy had deposed his sister Cle-o-pa'tra. But Caesar, siding with the charming queen, established her as sole monarch. Then while passing through Syria and Asia Minor he settled the affairs of the provinces, and in one battle crushed Phar'-na-ces, son and successor of Mithridates, thus putting an end to a dangerous enemy. After the victory he sent to Rome this brief despatch, "*Veni, vidi, vici*" (I came, I saw, I conquered). Another year he defeated the senatorial army at Thap'sus in Africa. One of the aristocratic commanders in that region was Cato, — honest, loyal, and stubborn, yet narrow-minded as had been his great-grandfather, the famous censor.[1] In despair of the republic he killed himself. Soon afterward the victory at Mun'da in Spain destroyed the last opposition to Caesar (45 B.C.).

485. **The Condition of the Roman World.** — In the time of Caesar the Roman empire extended from the Euphrates River to the Atlantic, and included all the countries which bordered on the Mediterranean. It consisted of a multitude of states, whose condition ranged from complete subjection upward through every grade of dependent alliance. Within this territory were many nationalities and languages, and many varieties and degrees of civilization. It was but a loose group of states, held together in peace by no common interests or sympathies, but only by the superior power of Rome. We speak of it as an empire, but it had no thorough organization like the empires of the present day. The governing state was a republic. Because of its position as the head of an empire, we call it an imperial republic. In fact, though not in theory, the chief element of the republican government was the senate. It had created the empire, and was now attempting to protect and rule it. The history of the century preceding Caesar's victory over Pompey, however, proves that the senate had failed to protect the empire from foreign enemies and to suppress rebellions, still more to satisfy the needs of the subjects. In fact, notwithstanding many good intentions of the senate as a whole and of individual members, its government was essentially an organized system of robbery and oppression. As a result the empire already showed symptoms of decay. The problem

[1] § 449.

of the reformer should have been to give the Roman world a better organization, to protect it better from foreign and domestic enemies, to redress wrongs, and finally to create institutions through which all the inhabitants could take part in the central government as well as in that of their own communities. It is necessary now to inquire what Caesar accomplished in these directions.



JULIUS CAESAR

(Now believed to be a modern study, though a very successful one; British Museum)

486. Caesar's Government and Reforms (49–44 B.C.). — He held at one and the same time the offices of consul and dictator, granted him for long periods and finally for life. As pontifex maximus he was head of the state religion. These offices made him king in all but name. He received, too, for life the title Im-pe-ra'tor ("general"), from which the word emperor is derived. Evidently Caesar wished to make his power hereditary; and as he had no nearer heirs, he adopted as a son his grandnephew Octavius, a youth of remarkable talent.

Caesar allowed the assemblies little power, and made the senate a mere advisory council. Sulla had doubled the number of senators; Caesar increased it to nine hundred by admitting not only knights, but also many inferior citizens, and even some half-barbarous Gauls. Probably he wished in time to make it represent the whole empire.

In the provinces the evils of aristocratic rule, described in an earlier chapter,[1] were now at their height. By abolishing the system of leasing the direct taxes, Caesar prevented the capitalists from plundering the subject countries. He appointed able, honest governors, and held them strictly to account. The officers whom he appointed to command the legions, under the governor, and the revenue officials, who were his own servants and freedmen,[2] saw that his will should everywhere be enforced. The "estates of the Roman people," as the provinces had been called, were to be culti-

[1] Ch xxxv § 444. [2] § 519.

vated and improved, no longer pillaged. He gave citizenship to the Gauls, and it was his wish that as rapidly as possible all the provincials should become Romans. At the same time he greatly improved the condition of Rome and Italy.

487. Caesar's Death (44 B.C.). — The nobles were envious of Caesar, and longed to regain the privilege of misruling the world. While they forced upon him honors such as belonged only to the gods, they began to plot his murder. Chief among the conspirators were the "lean and hungry" Cassius, and Marcus Brutus, a scholar and strong republican, but unpractical. All together there were about sixty in the plot. Pretending to urge a petition of one of their number, they gathered about him in the senate and assailed him with daggers. He fell, stabbed with twenty-three wounds. The senate dispersed. Mark An'to-ny, Caesar's colleague in the consulship, delivered the funeral oration and read the will, which, by its generosity to the citizens, stirred them against the murderers.

488. Estimate of Caesar. — With the possible exception of Hannibal, Caesar was the most brilliant military genius the world had thus far produced. He was, too, a master of simple prose, an orator of great clearness and force, and an incessant builder of useful public works. His character was many-sided, his capacity boundless. He was mild to the conquered; and when political enemies had laid down their arms, they found him a friend and benefactor. In the brief intervals of peace between his campaigns he displayed a statesmanship equal to his ability in the field. The most grievous wrongs he righted; and by taking measures to secure the responsibility of the provincial governors, he doubtless believed that he had provided for the future welfare of his subjects. The inhabitants of the empire were thus made happier by his rule. The continuance of his policy, however, required a strong executive perpetually in office. Had his plan of establishing an absolute monarchy succeeded, it would have been but a partial solution of the problem of reform. For the evils of absolute rule we have only to look to the Oriental nations, and to the Roman empire itself, when three centuries after Caesar the government came to have that character. Neither Caesar nor any other Roman statesman seems to have entertained the idea of creating institutions by means of

which the inhabitants of the empire, dispensing with paternal despotism, could safeguard their own interests. The grant of citizenship to the provincials and the admission of representatives of the provinces to the senate would have been a great benefit; yet even a measure of this kind might not have prevented the ultimate decline of the empire.

What Caesar would have accomplished, had he lived, cannot be known. His murder was a great political mistake, as it plunged the world again into desolating war. In this struggle the question at issue was not as to the form of government to be adopted; it was what general should succeed to the power of Caesar.[1]

II. The Struggle for the Succession

44–31 B.C.

489. Beginning of the Third Civil War (44 B.C.); **Caesar's Heir.** — Fearing the enraged populace, the chief conspirators, or "liberators," as they called themselves, fled from Rome. Cicero, who approved the murder, though he had no hand in it, sailed for Greece, but was driven back by a storm. Thereupon he returned to Rome to take the lead of the senate against the consul Mark Antony, who was acting the tyrant. In the next few months Cicero delivered against him a series of powerful speeches, known as the *Philippics* from their resemblance to the orations of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon.[2] But eloquence had ceased to be a force in the world. Henceforth issues were to be decided by armies.

Octavianus

(At about 16 years of age. The bust is modern. Vatican Museum, Rome)

Octavius was pursuing his studies in Illyricum when news came of his great-uncle's death. He sailed at once for Italy,

[1] On the character of Caesar, see Botsford, *Story of Rome*, ch. viii.

[2] § 307.

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