

ROMAN HISTORIANS

HISTORIES by Polybius

BOOK 1 Introduction

Had the praise of History been passed over by former Chroniclers it would perhaps have been incumbent upon me to urge the choice and special study of records of this sort, as the readiest means men can have of correcting their knowledge of the past. But my predecessors have not been sparing in this respect. They have all begun and ended, so to speak, by enlarging on this theme: asserting again and again that the study of History is in the truest sense an education, and a training for political life; and that the most instructive, or rather the only, method of learning to bear with dignity the vicissitudes of fortune is to recall the catastrophes of others. It is evident, therefore, that no one need think it his duty to repeat what has been said by many, and said well. Least of all myself: for the surprising nature of the events which I have undertaken to relate is in itself sufficient to challenge and stimulate the attention of every one, old or young, to the study of my work. Can any one be so indifferent or idle as not to care to know by what means, and under what kind of polity, almost the whole inhabited world was conquered and brought under the dominion of the single city of Rome, and that too within a period of not quite fifty-three years? Or who again can be so completely absorbed in other subjects of contemplation or study, as to think any of them superior in importance to the accurate understanding of an event for which the past affords no precedent.

Now, had the states that were rivals for universal empire been familiarly known to us, no reference perhaps to their previous history would have been necessary, to show the purpose and the forces with which they approached an undertaking of this nature and magnitude. But the fact is that the majority of the Greeks have no knowledge of the previous constitution, power, or achievements either of Rome or Carthage. I therefore concluded that it was necessary to prefix this and the next book to my History. I was anxious that no one, when fairly embarked upon my actual narrative, should feel at a loss, and have to ask what were the designs entertained by the Romans, or the forces and means at their disposal, that they entered upon those undertakings, which did in fact lead to their becoming masters of land and sea everywhere in our part of the world. I wished, on the contrary, that these books of mine, and the prefatory sketch which they contained, might make it clear that the resources they started with justified their original idea, and

sufficiently explained their final success in grasping universal empire and dominion.

There is this analogy between the plan of my History and the marvelous spirit of the age with which I have to deal. Just as Fortune made almost all the affairs of the world incline in one direction, and forced them to converge upon one and the same point; so it is my task as an historian to put before my readers a compendious view of the part played by Fortune in bringing about the general catastrophe.¹ It was this peculiarity which originally challenged my attention, and determined me on undertaking this work. And combined with this was the fact that no writer of our time has undertaken a general history. Had any one done so my ambition in this direction would have been much diminished. But, in point of fact, I notice that by far the greater number of historians concern themselves with isolated wars and the incidents that accompany them: while as to a general and comprehensive scheme of events, their date, origin, and catastrophe, no one as far as I know has undertaken to examine it. I thought it, therefore, distinctly my duty neither to pass by myself, nor allow any one else to pass by, without full study, a characteristic specimen of the dealings of Fortune at once brilliant and instructive in the highest degree. For fruitful as Fortune is in change, and constantly as she is producing dramas in the life of men, yet never assuredly before this did she work such a marvel, or act such a drama, as that which we have witnessed. And of this we cannot obtain a comprehensive view from writers of mere episodes. It would be as absurd to expect to do so as for a man to imagine that he has learnt the shape of the whole world, its entire arrangement and order, because he has visited one after the other the most famous cities in it; or perhaps merely examined them in separate pictures. That would be indeed absurd: and it has always seemed to me that men, who are persuaded that they get a competent view of universal from episodic history, are very like persons who should see the limbs of some body, which had once been living and beautiful, scattered and remote; and should imagine that to be quite as good as actually beholding the activity and beauty of the living creature itself. But if some one could there and then reconstruct the animal once more, in the perfection of its beauty and the charm of its vitality, and could display it to the same people, they would beyond doubt confess that they had been far from conceiving the truth, and had been little better than dreamers. For indeed some idea of a whole may be got from a part, but an accurate knowledge and clear comprehension cannot. Wherefore we must conclude that episodic history contributes exceedingly little to the familiar knowledge and secure grasp of universal history. While it is only by the combination and comparison of the separate parts of the whole,—by observing their likeness and their difference,—that a man can attain his object: can obtain a view at once clear and complete; and thus secure both the profit and the delight of History.

The Romans Build Ships

Great was the joy of the Roman Senate when the news of what had taken place at Agrigentum arrived. Their ideas too were so raised that they no longer confined themselves to their original designs. They were not content with having saved the Mamertines, nor with the advantages gained in the course of the war; but conceived the idea that it was possible to expel the Carthaginians entirely from the island, and that if that were done their own power would receive a great increase: they accordingly engaged in this policy and directed their whole thoughts to this subject. As to their land forces they saw that things were going on as well as they could wish. For the Consuls elected in succession to those who had besieged Agrigentum, Lucius Valerius Flaccus and Titus Otacilius Crassus, appeared to be managing the Sicilian business as well as circumstances admitted. Yet so long as the Carthaginians were in undisturbed command of the sea, the balance of success could not incline decisively in their favour. For instance, in the period which followed, though they were now in possession of Agrigentum, and though consequently many of the inland towns joined the Romans from dread of their land forces, yet a still larger number of seaboard towns held aloof from them in terror of the Carthaginian fleet. Seeing therefore that it was ever more and more the case that the balance of success oscillated from one side to the other from these causes; and, moreover, that while Italy was repeatedly ravaged by the naval force, Libya remained permanently uninjured; they became eager to get upon the sea and meet the Carthaginians there.

It was this branch of the subject that more than anything else induced me to give an account of this war at somewhat greater length than I otherwise should have done. I was unwilling that a first step of this kind should be unknown,— namely how, and when, and why the Romans first started a navy.

It was, then, because they saw that the war they had undertaken lingered to a weary length, that they first thought of getting a fleet built, consisting of a hundred quinqueremes and twenty triremes. But one part of their undertaking caused them much difficulty.

Their shipbuilders were entirely unacquainted with the construction of quinqueremes, because no one in Italy had at that time employed vessels of that description. There could be no more signal proof of the courage, or rather the extraordinary audacity of the Roman enterprise. Not only had they no resources for it of reasonable sufficiency; but without any resources for it at all, and without having ever entertained an idea of naval war,— for it was the first time they had thought of it,—they nevertheless handled the enterprise with such extraordinary audacity, that, without so much as a preliminary trial, they took upon themselves there and then to meet the Carthaginians at sea, on which they had for generations held undisputed supremacy. Proof of what I say, and of their surprising audacity, may be found in this. When they first took in hand to send troops across to Messene

they not only had no decked vessels but no war-ships at all, not so much as a single galley: but they borrowed quinqueremes and triremes from Tarentum and Locri, and even from Elea and Neapolis; and having thus collected a fleet, boldly sent their men across upon it.

It was on this occasion that, the Carthaginians having put to sea in the Strait to attack them, a decked vessel of theirs charged so furiously that it ran aground, and falling into the hands of the Romans served them as a model on which they constructed their whole fleet. And if this had not happened it is clear that they would have been completely hindered from carrying out their design by want of constructive knowledge.

Meanwhile, however, those who were charged with the shipbuilding were busied with the construction of the vessels; while others collected crews and were engaged in teaching them to row on dry land: which they contrived to do in the following manner. They made the men sit on rower's benches on dry land, in the same order as they would sit on the benches in actual vessels: in the midst of them they stationed the Celeustes, and trained them to get back and draw in their hands all together in time, and then to swing forward and throw them out again, and to begin and cease these movements at the word of the Celeustes. By the time these preparations were completed the ships were built. They therefore launched them, and, after a brief preliminary practice of real sea-rowing, started on their coasting voyage along the shore of Italy, in accordance with the Consul's order.

BOOK 3

Hannibal's Oath

When, after his final defeat by the Romans, Hannibal had at last quitted his country and was staying at the court of Antiochus, the warlike attitude of the Aetolian league induced the Romans to send ambassadors to Antiochus, that they might be informed of the king's intentions. These ambassadors found that Antiochus was inclined to the Aetolian alliance, and was eager for war with Rome; they accordingly paid great court to Hannibal with a view of bringing him into suspicion with the king. And in this they entirely succeeded. As time went on the king became ever more and more suspicious of Hannibal, until at length an opportunity occurred for an explanation of the alienation that had been thus secretly growing up between them.

Hannibal then defended himself at great length, but without success, until at last he made the following statement: "When my father was about to go on his Iberian expedition I was nine years old: and as he was offering the sacrifice to Zeus I stood near the altar. The sacrifice successfully performed, my father poured the libation and went through the usual ritual. He then bade all the other worshippers stand a little back, and calling me to him asked me affectionately whether I wished to go

with him on his expedition. Upon my eagerly assenting, and begging with boyish enthusiasm to be allowed to go, he took me by the right hand and led me up to the altar, and bade me lay my hand upon the victim and swear that I would never be friends with Rome. So long, then, Antiochus, as your policy is one of hostility to Rome, you may feel quite secure of having in me a most thoroughgoing supporter. But if ever you make terms or friendship with her, then you need not wait for any slander to make you distrust me and be on your guard against me; for there is nothing in my power that I would not do against her."

Antiochus listened to this story, and being convinced that it was told with genuine feeling and sincerity, gave up all his suspicions, And we, too, must regard this as an unquestionable proof of the animosity of Hamilcar and of the aim of his general policy; which, indeed, is also proved by facts. For he inspired his son-in-law Hasdrubal and his son Hannibal with a bitterness of resentment against Rome which nothing could surpass. Hasdrubal, indeed, was prevented by death from showing the full extent of his purpose; but time gave Hannibal abundant opportunity to manifest the hatred of Rome which he had inherited from his father.

The most important thing, then, for statesmen to observe is the motives of those who lay aside old enmities or form new friendships; and to ascertain when their consent to treaties is a mere concession to the necessities of the hour, and when it is the indication of a real consciousness of defeat. In the former case they must be on their guard against such people lying in wait for an opportunity; while in the latter they may unhesitatingly impose whatever injunctions are necessary, in full reliance on the genuineness of their feelings whether as subjects or friends. So much for the causes of the war. I will now relate the first actions in it.

A General Must Know his Enemy's Character

And in making these calculations Hannibal showed his consummate prudence and strategical ability. For it is mere blind ignorance to believe that there can be anything of more vital importance to a general than the knowledge of his opponent's character and disposition. As in combats between individuals or ranks, he who would conquer must observe carefully how it is possible to attain his object, and what part of his enemy appears unguarded or insufficiently armed,— so must a commander of an army look out for the weak place, not in the body, but in the mind of the leader of the hostile force. For it has often happened before now that, from mere idleness and lack of energy, men have let not only the welfare of the state, but even their private fortunes fall to ruin: some are so addicted to wine that they cannot sleep without bemusing their intellects with drink; and others so infatuated in their pursuit of sensual pleasures, that they have not only been the ruin of their cities and fortunes, but have forfeited life itself with disgrace. In the case of individuals, however, cowardice and sloth bring shame only on themselves; but when it is a commander-in-chief that is concerned, the disaster affects all alike and

is of the most fatal consequence. It not only infects the men under him with an inactivity like his own; but it often brings absolute dangers of the most serious description upon those who trust such a general. For rashness, temerity, and uncalculating impetuosity, as well as foolish ambition and vanity, give an easy victory to the enemy. And are the source of numerous dangers to one's friends: for a man who is the prey of such weaknesses falls the easiest victim to every stratagem, ambush or ruse. The general then who can gain a clear idea of his opponent's weaknesses, and direct his attack on the point where he is most open to it, will very soon be the victor in the campaign. For as a ship, if you deprive it of its steerer, falls with all its crew into the hands of the enemy; so, in the case of an army in war, if you outwit or out-mancœuvre its general, the whole will often fall into your hands.

Nor was Hannibal mistaken in his calculations in regard to Flaminius. For no sooner had he left the neighbourhood of Faesulae, and, advancing a short way beyond the Roman camp, made a raid upon the neighbouring country, than Flaminius became excited, and enraged at the idea that he was despised by the enemy: and as the devastation of the country went on, and he saw from the smoke that rose in every direction that the work of destruction was proceeding, he could not patiently endure the sight. Some of his officers advised that they should not follow the enemy at once nor engage him, but should act on the defensive, in view of his great superiority in cavalry; and especially that they should wait for the other Consul, and not give battle until the two armies were combined. But Flaminius, far from listening to their advice, was indignant at those who offered it; and bade them consider what the people at home would say at the country being laid waste almost up to the walls of Rome itself, while they remained encamped in Etruria on the enemy's rear. Finally, with these words, he set his army in motion, without any settled plan of time or place; but bent only on falling in with the enemy, as though certain victory awaited him. For he had managed to inspire the people with such confident expectations, that the unarmed citizens who followed his camp in hope of booty, bringing chains and fetters and all such gear, were more numerous than the soldiers themselves.

The Disaster at Lake Thrasymene

Meanwhile Hannibal was advancing on his way to Rome through Etruria, keeping the city of Cortona and its hills on his left, and the Thrasymene lake on his right; and as he marched, he burned and wasted the country with a view of rousing the wrath of the enemy and tempting him to come out. And when he saw Flaminius get well within distance, and observed that the ground he then occupied was suited to his purpose, he bent his whole energies on preparing for a general engagement.

The route which he was following led through a low valley enclosed on both sides by long lines of lofty hills. Of its two ends, that in front was blocked by an abrupt and inaccessible hill, and that on the rear by the lake, between which and the foot of the

cliff there is only a very narrow defile leading into this valley. Making his way to the end of the valley along the bank of the lake, Hannibal posted himself with the Spanish and Libyan troops on the hill immediately in front of him as he marched, and pitched a camp on it; but sent his Balearic slingers and light-armed troops by a *détour*, and stationed them in extended order under the cover of the hills to the right of the valley; and by a similar *détour* placed the Gauls and cavalry under the cover of hills to the left, causing them also to extend their line so far as to cover the entrance of the defile running between the cliff and lake into the valley.

Having made these preparations during the night, and having thus enclosed the valley with ambuscades, Hannibal remained quiet. In pursuit of him came Flaminius, in hot haste to close with the enemy. It was late in the evening before he pitched his camp on the border of the lake; and at daybreak next morning, just before the morning watch, he led his front maniples forward along the borders of the lake into the valley with a view of engaging the enemy.

The day was exceedingly misty: and as soon as the greater part of the Roman line was in the valley, and the leading maniples were getting close to him, Hannibal gave the signal for attack; and at the same time sent orders to the troops lying in ambush on the hills to do the same, and thus delivered an assault upon the enemy at every point at once. Flaminius was taken completely by surprise: the mist was so thick, and the enemy were charging down from the upper ground at so many points at once, that not only were the Centurions and Tribunes unable to relieve any part of the line that was in difficulties, but were not even able to get any clear idea of what was going on: for they were attacked simultaneously on front, rear, and both flanks. The result was that most of them were cut down in the order of march, without being able to defend themselves: exactly as though they had been actually given up to slaughter by the folly of their leader. Flaminius himself, in a state of the utmost distress and despair, was attacked and killed by a company of Celts. As many as fifteen thousand Romans fell in the valley, who could neither yield nor defend themselves, being habituated to regard it as their supreme duty not to fly or quit their ranks. But those who were caught in the defile between the lake and the cliff perished in a shameful, or rather a most miserable, manner: for being thrust into the lake, some in their frantic terror endeavoured to swim with their armour on, and presently sank and were drowned; while the greater number, wading as far as they could into the lake, remained there with their heads above water; and when the cavalry rode in after them, and certain death stared them in the face, they raised their hands and begged for quarter, offering to surrender, and using every imaginary appeal for mercy; but were finally despatched by the enemy, or, in some cases, begged the favour of the fatal blow from their friends, or inflicted it on themselves. A number of men, however, amounting perhaps to six thousand, who were in the valley, defeated the enemy immediately in front of them; but though they might have done much to retrieve the fortune of the day, they were unable to go to the relief of their comrades, or get to the rear of their opponents, because they

could not see what was going on. They accordingly pushed on continually to the front, always expecting to find themselves engaged with some of the enemy: until they discovered that, without noticing it, they were issuing upon the higher ground. But when they were on the crest of the hills, the mist broke and they saw clearly the disaster which had befallen them; and being no longer able to do any good, since the enemy was victorious all along the line, and in complete possession of the ground, they closed their ranks and made for a certain Etrurian village. After the battle Maharbal was sent by Hannibal with the Iberians and light-armed troops to besiege the village; and seeing themselves surrounded by a complication of dangers, they laid down their arms and surrendered on condition of their lives being spared. Such was the end of the final engagement between the Romans and Carthaginians in Etruria.

GAIUS SALLUSTIUS CRISPUS [SALLUST]

THE WAR WITH CATILINE

Introduction: Excellence of mind and body compared and explored.

I. It behooves all men who wish to excel the other animals to strive with might and main not to pass through life unheralded, like the beasts, which Nature has fashioned grovelling and slaves to the belly. 2 All our power, on the contrary, lies in both mind and body; we employ the mind to rule, the body rather to serve; the one we have in common with the Gods, the other with the brutes. 3 Therefore I find it becoming, in seeking renown, that we should employ the resources of the intellect rather than those of brute strength, to the end that, since the span of life which we enjoy is short, we may make the memory of our lives as long as possible. 4 For the renown which riches or beauty confer is fleeting and frail; mental excellence is a splendid and lasting possession.

5 Yet for a long time mortal men have discussed the question whether success in arms depends more on strength of body or excellence of mind; 6 for before you begin, deliberation is necessary, when you have deliberated, prompt action. 7 Thus each of these, 1 being incomplete in itself, requires the other's aid.

II. Accordingly in the beginning kings (for that was the first title of sovereignty among men), took different courses, some training their minds and others their bodies. Even at that time men's lives were still free from covetousness; each was quite content with his own possessions. 2 But when Cyrus in Asia and in Greece the Athenians and Lacedaemonians began to subdue cities and nations, to make the lust for dominion a pretext for war, to consider the greatest empire the greatest glory, then at last men learned from perilous enterprises that qualities of mind availed most in war.

3 Now if the mental excellence with which kings and rulers are endowed were as potent in peace as in war, human affairs would run an even and steadier course, and you would not see power passing from hand to hand and everything in turmoil and confusion; 4 for empire is easily retained by the qualities by which it was first won. 5 But when sloth has usurped the place of industry, and lawlessness and insolence have superseded self-restraint and justice, the fortune of princes changes with their character. 6 Thus the sway is always passing to the best man from the hands of his inferior.

7 Success in agriculture, navigation, and architecture depends invariably upon mental excellence. 8 Yet many men, being slaves to appetite and sleep, have passed through life untaught and untrained, like mere wayfarers in these men we see, contrary to Nature's intent, the body a source of pleasure, the soul a burden. For my own part, I consider the lives and deaths of such men as about alike, since no record is made of either. 9 In very truth that man alone lives and makes the most of life, as it seems to me, who devotes himself to some occupation, courting the fame of a glorious deed or a noble career. But amid the wealth of opportunities Nature points out one path to one and another to another.

III. It is glorious to serve one's country by deeds; even to serve her by words is a thing not to be despised; one may become famous in peace as well as in war. Not only those who have acted, but those also who have recorded the acts of others oftentimes receive our approbation. 2 And for myself, although I am well aware that by no means equal repute attends the narrator and the doer of deeds, yet I regard the writing of history as one of the most difficult of tasks: first, because the style and diction must be equal to the deeds recorded; and in the second place, because such criticism as you make of others' shortcomings are thought by most men to be due to malice and envy. Furthermore, when you commemorate the distinguished merit and fame of good men, while every one is quite ready to believe you when you tell of things which he thinks he could easily do himself, everything beyond that he regards as fictitious, if not false.

3 When I myself was a young man, my inclinations at first led me, like many another, into public life, and there I encountered many obstacles; for instead of modesty, incorruptibility and honesty, shamelessness, bribery and rapacity held sway. 4 And although my soul, a stranger to evil ways, recoiled from such faults, yet amid so many vices my youthful weakness was led astray and held captive my ambition; 5 for while I took no part in the evil practices of the others, yet the desire for preferment made me the victim of the same ill-repute and jealousy as they.

IV. Accordingly, when my mind found peace after many troubles and perils and I had determined that I must pass what was left of my life aloof from public affairs, it was not my intention to waste my precious leisure in indolence and sloth, nor yet by turning to farming or the chase, to lead a life devoted to slavish employments.

2 On the contrary, I resolved to return to a cherished purpose from which ill-starred ambition had diverted me, and write a history of the Roman people, selecting such portions as seemed to me worthy of record; and I was confirmed in this resolution by the fact that my mind was free from hope, and fear, and partisanship. 3 I shall therefore write briefly and as truthfully as possible of the conspiracy of Catiline; 4 for I regard that event as worthy of special notice because of the extraordinary nature of the crime and of the danger arising from it. 5 But before beginning my narrative I must say a few words about the man's character.

V. Lucius Catiline, scion of a noble family, had great vigour both of mind and body, but an evil and depraved nature. 2 From youth up he revelled in civil wars, murder, pillage, and political dissension, and amid these he spent his early manhood. 3 His body could endure hunger, cold and want of sleep to an incredible degree; 4 his mind was reckless, cunning, treacherous, capable of any form of pretence or concealment. Covetous of others' possessions, he was prodigal of his own; he was violent in his passions. He possessed a certain amount of eloquence, but little discretion. 5 His disordered mind ever craved the monstrous, incredible, gigantic.

6 After the domination of Lucius Sulla the man had been seized with a mighty desire of getting control of the government, recking little by what manner he should achieve it, provided he made himself supreme. 7 His haughty spirit was goaded more and more every day by poverty and a sense of guilt, both of which he had augmented by the practices of which I have already spoken. 8 He was spurred on, also, by the corruption of the public morals, which were being ruined by two great evils of an opposite character, extravagance and avarice.

9 Since the occasion has arisen to speak of the morals of our country, the nature of my theme seems to suggest that I go farther back and give a brief account of the institutions of our forefathers in peace and in war, how they governed the commonwealth, how great it was when they bequeathed it to us, and how by gradual changes it has ceased to be the noblest and best, and has become the worst and most vicious.

VI. The city of Rome, according to my understanding, was at the outset founded and inhabited by Trojans, who were wandering about in exile under the leadership of Aeneas and had no fixed abode; they were joined by the Aborigines, a rustic folk, without laws or government, free and unrestrained. 2 After these two peoples, different in race, unlike in speech and mode of life, were united within the same walls, they were merged into one with incredible facility, so quickly did harmony change a heterogeneous and roving band into a commonwealth. 3 But when this new community had grown in numbers, civilization, and territory, and was beginning to seem amply rich and amply strong, then, as is usual with mortal affairs, prosperity gave birth to envy. 4 As a result, neighbouring kings and peoples made war upon them, and but few of their friends lent them aid; for the rest were smitten with fear and stood aloof from the danger. 5 But the Romans, putting forth

their whole energy at home and in the field, made all haste, got ready, encouraged one another, went to meet the foe, and defended their liberty, their country, and their parents by arms. Afterwards, when their prowess had averted the danger, they lent aid to their allies and friends, and established friendly relations rather by conferring than by accepting favours.

6 They had a constitution founded upon law, which was in name a monarchy; a chosen few, whose bodies were enfeebled by age but whose minds were fortified with wisdom, took counsel for the welfare of the state. These were called Fathers, by reason either of their age or of the similarity of their duties. 7 Later, when the rule of the kings, which at first had tended to preserve freedom and advance the state, had degenerated into a lawless tyranny, they altered their form of government and appointed two rulers with annual power, thinking that this device would prevent men's minds from growing arrogant through unlimited authority.

VII Now at that time every man began to lift his head higher and to have his talents more in readiness. 2 For kings hold the good in greater suspicion than the wicked, and to them the merit of others is always fraught with danger; 3 still the free state, once liberty was won, waxed incredibly strong and great in a remarkably short time, such was the thirst for glory that had filled men's minds. 4 To begin with, as soon as the young men could endure the hardships of war, they were taught a soldier's duties in camp under a vigorous discipline, and they took more pleasure in handsome arms and war horses than in harlots and revelry. 5 To such men consequently no labour was unfamiliar, no region too rough or too steep, no armed foeman was terrible; valour was all in all. 6 Nay, their hardest struggle for glory was with one another; each man strove to be the first to strike down the foe, to scale a wall, to be seen of all while doing such a deed. This they considered riches, this fair fame and high nobility. It was praise they coveted, but they were lavish of money; their aim was unbounded renown, but only such riches as could be gained honourably. 7 I might name the battlefields on which the Romans with a mere handful of men routed great armies of their adversaries, and the cities fortified by nature which they took by assault, were it not that such a theme could carry me too far from my subject.

VIII. But beyond question Fortune holds sway everywhere. It is she that makes all events famous or obscure according to her caprice rather than in accordance with the truth. 2 The acts of the Athenians, in my judgment, were indeed great and glorious enough, but nevertheless somewhat less important than fame represents them. 3 But because Athens produced writers of exceptional talent, the exploits of the men of Athens are heralded throughout the world as unsurpassed. 4 Thus the merit of those who did the deeds is rated as high as brilliant minds have been able to exalt the deeds themselves by words of praise. 5 But the Roman people never had that advantage, since their ablest men were always most engaged with affairs; their minds were never employed apart from their bodies; the best citizen preferred

action to words, and thought that his own brave deeds should be lauded by others rather than that theirs should be recounted by him.

IX. Accordingly, good morals were cultivated at home and in the field; there was the greatest harmony and little or no avarice; justice and probity prevailed among them, thanks not so much to laws as to nature. 2 Quarrels, discord, and strife were reserved for their enemies; citizen vied with citizen only for the prize of merit. They were lavish in their offerings to the gods, frugal in the home, loyal to their friends. 3 By practising these two qualities, boldness in warfare and justice when peace came, they watched over themselves and their country. 4 In proof of these statements I present this convincing evidence: firstly, in time of war punishment was more often inflicted for attacking the enemy contrary to orders, or for withdrawing too tardily when recalled from the field, than for venturing to abandon the standards or to give ground under stress; 5 and secondly, in time of peace they ruled by kindness rather than fear, and when wronged preferred forgiveness to vengeance.

X. But when our country had grown great through toil and the practice of justice, when great kings had been vanquished in war, savage tribes and mighty peoples subdued by force of arms, when Carthage, the rival of Rome's sway, had perished root and branch, and all seas and lands were open, then Fortune began to grow cruel and to bring confusion into all our affairs. 2 Those who had found it easy to bear hardship and dangers, anxiety and adversity, found leisure and wealth, desirable under other circumstances, a burden and a curse. 3 Hence the lust for money first, then for power, grew upon them; these were, I may say, the root of all evils. 4 For avarice destroyed honour, integrity, and all other noble qualities; taught in their place insolence, cruelty, to neglect the gods, to set a price on everything. 5 Ambition drove many men to become false; to have one thought locked in the breast, another ready on the tongue; to value friendships and enmities not on their merits but by the standard of self-interest, and to show a good front rather than a good heart. 6 At first these vices grew slowly, from time to time they were punished; finally, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the state was changed and a government second to none in equity and excellence became cruel and intolerable.

XI. But at first men's souls were actuated less by avarice than by ambition — a fault, it is true, but not so far removed from virtue; 2 for the noble and the base alike long for glory, honour, and power, but the former mount by the true path, whereas the latter, being destitute of noble qualities, rely upon craft and deception. 3 Avarice implies a desire for money, which no wise man covets; steeped as it were with noxious poisons, it renders the most manly body and soul effeminate; it is ever unbounded and insatiable, nor can either plenty or want make it less. 4 But after Lucius Sulla, having gained control of the state by arms, brought everything to a bad end from a good beginning, all men began to rob and pillage. One coveted a house, another lands; the victors showed neither moderation nor restraint, but

shamefully and cruelly wronged their fellow citizens. 5 Besides all this, Lucius Sulla, in order to secure the loyalty of the army which he led into Asia, had allowed it a luxury and license foreign to the manners of our forefathers; and in the intervals of leisure those charming and voluptuous lands had easily demoralized the warlike spirit of his soldiers. 6 There it was that an army of the Roman people first learned to indulge in women and drink; to admire statues, paintings, and chased vases, to steal them from private houses and public places, to pillage shrines, and to desecrate everything, both sacred and profane. 7 These soldiers, therefore, after they had won the victory, left nothing to the vanquished. In truth, prosperity tries the souls of even the wise; how then should men of depraved character like these make a moderate use of victory?

XII. As soon as riches came to be held in honour, when glory, dominion, and power followed in their train, virtue began to lose its lustre, poverty to be considered a disgrace, blamelessness to be termed malevolence. 2 Therefore as the result of riches, luxury and greed, united with insolence, took possession of our young manhood. They pillaged, squandered; set little value on their own, coveted the goods of others; they disregarded modesty, chastity, everything human and divine; in short, they were utterly thoughtless and reckless.

3 It is worth your while, when you look upon houses and villas reared to the size of cities, to pay a visit to the temples of the gods built by our forefathers, most reverent of men. 4 But they adorned the shrines of the gods with piety, their own homes with glory, while from the vanquished they took naught save the power of doing harm. 5 The men of to-day, on the contrary, basest of creatures, with supreme wickedness are robbing our allies of all that those heroes in the hour of victory had left them; they act as though the one and only way to rule were to wrong.

XIII. Why, pray, should I speak of things which are incredible except to those who have seen them, that a host of private men have leveled mountains and built upon the seas? 2 To such men their riches seem to me to have been but a plaything; for while they might have enjoyed them honourably, they made haste to squander them shamefully. 3 Nay more, the passion which arose for lewdness, gluttony, and the other attendants of luxury was equally strong; men played the woman, women offered their chastity for sale; to gratify their palates they scoured land and sea; they slept before they needed sleep; they did not await the coming of hunger or thirst, of cold or of weariness, but all these things their self-indulgence anticipated. 4 Such were the vices that incited the young men to crime, as soon as they had run through their property. 5 Their minds, habituated to evil practices, could not easily refrain from self-indulgence, and so they abandoned themselves the more recklessly to every means of gain as well as of extravagance.

XIV. In a city so great and so corrupt Catiline found it a very easy matter to surround himself, as by a bodyguard, with troops of criminals and reprobates of every kind. 2 For whatever wanton, glutton, or gamester had wasted his patrimony

in play, feasting, or debauchery; anyone who had contracted an immense debt that he might buy immunity from disgrace or crime; 3 all, furthermore, from every side who had been convicted of murder or sacrilege, or feared prosecution for their crimes; those, too, whom hand and tongue supported by perjury or the blood of their fellow citizens; finally, all who were hounded by disgrace, poverty, or an evil conscience — all these were nearest and dearest to Catiline. 4 And if any guiltless man did chance to become his friend, daily intercourse and the allurements of vice soon made him as bad or almost as bad as the rest. But most of all Catiline sought the intimacy of the young; 5 their minds, still pliable as they were and easily moulded, were without difficulty ensnared by his wiles. 6 For carefully noting the passion which burned in each, according to his time of life, he found harlots for some or bought dogs and horses for others; in fine, he spared neither expense nor his own decency, provided he could make them submissive and loyal to himself. 7 I am aware that some have believed that the young men who frequented Catiline's house set but little store by their chastity; but that report became current rather for other reasons than because anyone had evidence of its truth.

XV. Even in youth Catiline had many shameful intrigues — with a maiden of noble rank, with a priestess of Vesta—and other affairs equally unlawful and impious. 2 At last he was seized with a passion for Aurelia Orestilla, in whom no good man ever commended anything save her beauty; and when she hesitated to marry him because she was afraid of his stepson, then a grown man, it is generally believed that he murdered the young man in order to make an empty house for this criminal marriage. 3 In fact, I think that this was his special motive for hastening his plot; 4 for his guilt-stained soul, at odds with gods and men, could find rest neither waking nor sleeping, so cruelly did conscience ravage his overwrought mind. 5 Hence his pallid complexion, his bloodshot eyes, his gait now fast, now slow; in short, his face and his every glance showed the madman.

XVI. To the young men whom he had ensnared, as I have described, he taught many forms of wickedness. 2 From their number he supplied false witnesses and forgers; he bade them make light of honour, fortune, and dangers; then, when he had sapped their good repute and modesty, he called for still greater crimes. 3 If there was no immediate motive for wrong doing, he nevertheless waylaid and murdered innocent as well as guilty; indeed, he preferred to be needlessly vicious and cruel rather than to allow their hands and spirits to grow weak through lack of practice.

4 Relying upon such friends and accomplices as these, Catiline formed the plan of overthrowing the government, both because his own debt was enormous in all parts of the world and because the greater number of Sulla's veterans, who had squandered their property and now thought with longing of their former pillage and victories, were eager for civil war. There was no army in Italy; Gnaeus Pompeius was waging war in distant parts of the world; Catiline himself had high hopes as a

candidate for the consulship; the senate was anything but alert; all was peaceful and quiet; this was his golden opportunity.

Comparison of the virtues of Cato and Caesar.

LIII. As soon as Cato had taken his seat, all the ex-consuls, as well as a great part of the other senators, praised his proposal and lauded his courage to the skies, while they taxed one another with timorousness. Cato was hailed as great and noble, and a decree of the senate was passed in accordance with his recommendation.

2 For my own part, as I read and heard of the many illustrious deeds of the Roman people at home and abroad, on land and sea, it chanced that I was seized by a strong desire of finding out what quality in particular had been the foundation of so great exploits. 3 I knew that often with a handful of men they had encountered great armies of the enemy; I was aware that with small resources they had waged wars with mighty kings; also that they had often experienced the cruelty of Fortune; that the Romans had been surpassed by the Greeks in eloquence and by the Gauls in warlike glory. 4 After long reflection I became convinced that it had all been accomplished by the eminent merit of a few citizens; that it was due to them that poverty had triumphed over riches, and a few over a multitude. 5 But after the state had become demoralized by extravagance and sloth, it was the commonwealth in its turn that was enabled by its greatness to sustain the shortcomings of its generals and magistrates, and for a long time, as when mothers are exhausted by child-bearing, no one at all was produced at Rome who was great in merit. 6 But within my own memory there have appeared two men of towering merit, though of diverse character, Marcus Cato and Gaius Caesar. As regards these men, since the occasion has presented itself, it is not my intention to pass them by in silence, or fail to give, to the best of my ability, an account of their disposition and character.

LIV. In birth then, in years and in eloquence, they were about equal; in greatness of soul they were evenly matched, and likewise in renown, although the renown of each was different. 2 Caesar was held great because of his benefactions and lavish generosity, Cato for the uprightness of his life. 3 The former became famous for his gentleness and compassion, the austerity of the latter had brought him prestige. Caesar gained glory by giving, helping, and forgiving; Cato by never stooping to bribery.⁸⁴ One was a refuge for the unfortunate, the other a scourge for the wicked. The good nature of the one was applauded, the steadfastness of the other. 4 Finally, Caesar had schooled himself to work hard and sleep little, to devote himself to the welfare of his friends and neglect his own, to refuse nothing which was worth the giving. He longed for great power, an army, a new⁸⁵ war to give scope for his brilliant merit. 5 Cato, on the contrary, cultivated self-control, propriety, but above all austerity. 6 He did not vie with the rich in riches nor in intrigue with the intriguer, but with the active in good works, with the self-restrained in moderation, with the blameless in integrity. He preferred to be, rather than to seem, virtuous;⁸⁶ hence the less he sought fame, the more it pursued him.

GAIUS SALLUSTIUS CRISPUS [SALLUST]
THE JUGURTHINE WAR

Introduction: Reflections on virtue, corruption and fortune.

I. Without reason do mankind complain of their nature, on the ground that it is weak and of short duration and ruled rather by chance than by virtue. 2 For reflection would show on the contrary that nothing is greater or more excellent, and that nature has more often found diligence lacking in men than strength or endurance in itself. 3 But the leader and ruler of man's life is the mind, and when this advances to glory by the path of virtue, it has power and potency in abundance, as well as fame; and it needs not fortune, since fortune can neither give to any man honesty, diligence, and other good qualities, nor can she take them away. 4 But if through the lure of base desires the mind has sunk into sloth and the pleasures of the body, when it has enjoyed ruinous indulgence for a season, when strength, time, and talents have been wasted through indolence, the weakness of human nature is accused, and the guilty shift their own blame to circumstances.

5 But if men had as great regard for honourable enterprises as they have ardour in pursuing what is foreign to their interests, and bound to be unprofitable and often even dangerous, they would control fate rather than be controlled by it, and would attain to that height of greatness where from mortals their glory would make them immortal.

II. For just as mankind is made up of body and soul, so all our acts and pursuits partake of the nature either of the body or of the mind. 2 Therefore notable beauty and great riches, as well as bodily strength and all other gifts of that kind, soon pass away, but the splendid achievements of the intellect, like the soul, are everlasting.

3 In short, the goods of the body and of fortune have an end as well as a beginning, and they all rise and fall, wax and wane; but the mind, incorruptible, eternal, ruler of mankind, animates and controls all things, yet is itself not controlled. 4 Therefore we can marvel the more at the perversity of those who pass their life in riotous living and idleness, given over to the pleasures of the body, but allow the mind, which is better and greater than anything else in man's nature, to grow dull from neglect and inaction; especially when there are so many and so varied intellectual pursuits by which the highest distinction may be won.

III. But among these pursuits, in my opinion, magistracies and military commands, in short all public offices, are least desirable in these times, since honour is not bestowed upon merit, while those who have gained it wrongfully are neither safe nor the more honourable because of it. 2 For to rule one's country or subjects by force, although you both have the power to correct abuses, and do correct them, is nevertheless tyrannical; especially since all attempts at change foreshadow

bloodshed, exile, and other horrors of war. 3 Moreover, to struggle in vain and after wearisome exertion to gain nothing but hatred, is the height of folly, unless haply one is possessed by a dishonourable and pernicious passion for sacrificing one's personal honour and liberty to the power of a few men.

IV. But among intellectual pursuits, the recording of the events of the past is especially serviceable; but of that it becomes me to say nothing, 2 both because many men have already spoken of its value, and in order that no one may suppose that I am led by vanity to eulogize my own favourite occupation. 3 I suppose, too, that since I have resolved to pass my life aloof from public affairs, some will apply to this arduous and useful employment of mine the name of idleness, certainly those who regard courting the people and currying favour by banquets as the height of industriousness. 4 But if such men will only bear in mind in what times I was elected to office, what men of merit were unable to attain the same honour and what sort of men have since come into the senate, they will surely be convinced that it is rather from justifiable motives than from indolence that I have changed my opinion, and that greater profit will accrue to our country from my inactivity than from others' activity.

5 I have often heard that Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio, and other eminent men of our country, were in the habit of declaring that their hearts were set mightily aflame for the pursuit of virtue whenever they gazed upon the masks of their ancestors. 6 Of course they did not mean to imply that the wax or the effigy had any such power over them, but rather that it is the memory of great deeds that kindles in the breasts of noble men this flame that cannot be quelled until they by their own prowess have equalled the fame and glory of their forefathers.

7 But in these degenerate days, on the contrary, who is there that does not vie with his ancestors in riches and extravagance rather than in uprightness and diligence? Even the "new men," who in former times already relied upon worth to outdo the nobles, now make their way to power and distinction by intrigue and open fraud rather than by noble practices; 8 just as if a praetorship, a consulship, or anything else of the kind were distinguished and illustrious in and of itself and were not valued according to the merit of those who live up to it. 9 But in giving expression to my sorrow and indignation at the morals of our country I have spoken too freely and wandered too far from my subject. To this I now return.

V I propose to write of the war which the people of Rome waged with Jugurtha, king of the Numidians: first, because it was long, sanguinary and of varying fortune; and secondly, because then for the first time resistance was offered to the insolence of the nobles — 2 the beginning of a struggle which threw everything, human and divine, into confusion, and rose to such a pitch of frenzy that civil discord ended in war and the devastation of Italy. 3 But before actually beginning such a narrative, let me recall a few earlier events, in order that everything may be placed in a better light for our understanding and may be the more clearly revealed.

4 During the second Punic war, when Hannibal, leader of the Carthaginians, had dealt Italy's power the heaviest blow since the Roman nation attained its full stature, Masinissa, king of Numidia, had become the friend of Publius Scipio, afterwards surnamed Africanus because of his prowess, and performed many illustrious deeds of arms. In return for this, after the defeat of the Carthaginians and the capture of Syphax, whose dominion in Africa was great and extensive, the Roman people gave Masinissa as a free gift all the cities and territories that he had taken in war. 5 Consequently Masinissa was ever our true and loyal friend. But his reign and his life ended together. 6 His son Micipsa then became sole ruler, since his brothers Mastanabal and Gulussa had fallen ill and died. 7 Micipsa begot Adherbal and Hiempsal, and brought up in the palace, in the same manner as his own children, a son of his brother Mastanabal called Jugurtha, whom Masinissa in his will had allowed to remain a commoner because he was the offspring of a concubine.

VI. As soon as Jugurtha grew up, endowed as he was with physical strength, a handsome person, but above all with a vigorous intellect, he did not allow himself to be spoiled by luxury or idleness, but following the custom of that nation, he rode, he hurled the javelin, he contended with his fellows in foot-races; and although he surpassed them all in renown, he nevertheless won the love of all. Besides this, he devoted much time to the chase, he was the first or among the first to strike down the lion and other wild beasts, he distinguished himself greatly, but spoke little of his own exploits.

C. SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS

TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS DRUSUS CAESAR ("The Life of Claudius")

10. Having spent the greater part of his life under these and the like circumstances, he came at last to the empire in the fiftieth year of his age, by a very surprising turn of fortune. Being, as well as the rest, prevented from approaching Gaius by the conspirators, who dispersed the crowd, under the pretext of his desiring to be private, he retired into an apartment called the Hermaeum ; and soon afterwards, terrified by the report of Gaius being slain, he crept into an adjoining balcony, where he hid himself behind the hangings of the door. A common soldier, who happened to pass that way, spying his feet, and desirous to discover who he was, pulled him out; when immediately recognizing him, he threw himself in a great fright at his feet, and saluted him by the title of emperor. He then conducted him to his fellow-soldiers, who were all in a great rage, and irresolute what they should do. They put him into a litter, and as the slaves of the palace had all fled, took their turns in carrying him on their shoulders, and brought him into the camp, sad and trembling; the people who met him lamenting his situation, as if the poor innocent was being carried to execution. Being received within the ramparts, he continued all night with the sentries on guard, recovered somewhat from his fright,

but in no great hopes of the succession. For the consuls, with the senate and civic troops, had possessed themselves of the Forum and Capitol, with the determination to assert the public liberty; and he being sent for likewise, by a tribune of the people, to the senate-house, to give his advice upon the present juncture of affairs, returned answer, " I am under constraint, and cannot possibly come." The day afterwards, the senate being dilatory in their proceedings, and worn out by divisions amongst themselves, while the people who surrounded the senate-house shouted that they would have one master, naming Claudius, he suffered the soldiers assembled under arms to swear allegiance to him, promising them fifteen thousand sesterces a man; he being the first of the Caesars who purchased the submission of the soldiers with money.

11. Having thus established himself in power, his first object was to abolish all remembrance of the two preceding days, in which a revolution in the state had been canvassed. Accordingly, he passed an act of perpetual oblivion and pardon for everything said or done during that time; and this he faithfully observed, with the exception only of putting to death a few tribunes and centurions concerned in the conspiracy against Caius, both as an example, and because he understood that they had also planned his own death. He now turned his thoughts towards paying respect to the memory of his relations. His most solemn and usual oath was, "By Augustus." He prevailed upon the senate to decree divine honours to his grandmother Livia, with a chariot in the Circensian procession drawn by elephants, as had been appointed for Augustus, and public offerings to the shades of his parents. Besides which, he instituted Circensian games for his father, to be celebrated every year, upon his birth day, and, for his mother, a chariot to be drawn through the circus; with the title of Augusta, which had been refused by his grandmother. To the memory of his brother, to which, upon all occasions, he showed a great regard, he gave a Greek comedy, to be exhibited in the public diversions at Naples, and awarded the crown for it, according to the sentence of the judges in that solemnity. Nor did he omit to make honourable and grateful mention of Mark Antony; declaring by a proclamation, "That he the more earnestly insisted upon the observation of his father Drusus's birth-day, because it was like wise that of his grandfather Antony." He completed the marble arch near Pompey's theatre, which had formerly been decreed by the senate in honour of Tiberius, but which had been neglected. And though he canceled all the acts of Gaius, yet he forbade the day of his assassination, notwithstanding it was that of his own accession to the empire, to be reckoned amongst the festivals.

12. But with regard to his own aggrandizement, he was sparing and modest, declining the name of emperor, and refusing all excessive honours. He celebrated the marriage of his daughter and the birth-day of a grandson with great privacy, at home. He recalled none of those who had been banished, without a decree of the senate: and requested of them permission for the prefect and the military tribunes

of the praetorian guards to attend him in the senate-house; and also that they would be pleased to bestow upon his procurators judicial authority in the provinces. He asked of the consuls likewise the privilege of holding fairs upon his private estate. He frequently assisted the magistrates in the trial of causes, as one of their assessors. And when they gave public spectacles, he would rise up with the rest of the spectators, and salute them both by words and gestures. When the tribunes of the people came to him while he was on the tribunal, he excused himself, because, on account of the crowd, he could not hear them unless they stood. In a short time, by this conduct, he wrought himself so much into the favour and affection of the public, that when, upon his going to Ostia, a report was spread in the city that he had been waylaid and slain, the people never ceased cursing the soldiers for traitors, and the senate as parricides, until one or two persons, and presently after several others, were brought by the magistrates upon the rostra, who assured them that he was alive, and not far from the city, on his way home.

13. Conspiracies, however, were formed against him, not only by individuals separately, but by a faction; and at last his government was disturbed with a civil war. A low fellow was found with a poniard about him, near his chamber, at midnight. Two men of the equestrian order were discovered waiting for him in the streets, armed with a pike and a huntsman's dagger; one of them intending to attack him as he came out of the theatre, and the other as he was sacrificing in the temple of Mars. Gallus Asinius and Statilius Corvinus, grandsons of the two orators, Pollio and Messala, formed a conspiracy against him, in which they engaged many of his freedmen and slaves. Furius Camillus Scribonianus, his legate in Dalmatia, broke into rebellion, but was reduced in the space of five days; the legions which he had seduced from their oath of fidelity relinquishing their purpose, upon an alarm occasioned by ill omens. For when orders were given them to march, to meet their new emperor, the eagles could not be decorated, nor the standards pulled out of the ground, whether it was by accident, or a divine interposition.

14. Besides his former consulship, he held the office afterwards four times; the first two successively, but the following, after an interval of four years each; the last for six months, the others for two; and the third, upon his being chosen in the room of a consul who died; which had never been done by any of the emperors before him. Whether he was consul or out of office, he constantly attended the courts for the administration of justice, even upon such days as were solemnly observed as days of rejoicing in his family, or by his friends; and sometimes upon the public festivals of ancient institution. Nor did he always adhere strictly to the letter of the laws, but overruled the rigour or lenity of many of their enactments, according to his sentiments of justice and equity. For where persons lost their suits by insisting upon more than appeared to be their due, before the judges of private causes, he granted them the indulgence of a second trial. And with regard to such as were convicted of any great delinquency, he even exceeded the punishment appointed by law, and condemned them to be exposed to wild beasts.

15. But in hearing and determining causes, he exhibited a strange inconsistency of temper, being at one time circumspect and sagacious, at another inconsiderate and rash, and sometimes frivolous and like one out of his mind. In correcting the roll of judges, he struck off the name of one who, concealing the privilege his children gave him to be excused from serving, had answered to his name, as too eager for the office. Another who was summoned before him in a cause of his own, but alleged that the affair did not properly come under the emperor's cognizance, but that of the ordinary judges, he ordered to plead the cause himself immediately before him, and show in a case of his own, how equitable a judge he would prove in that of other persons. A woman refusing to acknowledge her own son, and there being no clear proof on either side, he obliged her to confess the truth, by ordering her to marry the young man. He was much inclined to determine causes in favour of the parties who appeared, against those who did not, without inquiring whether their absence was occasioned by their own fault or by real necessity. On proclamation of a man's being convicted of forgery, and that he ought to have his hand cut off, he insisted that an executioner should be immediately sent for, with a Spanish sword and a block. A person being prosecuted for falsely assuming the citizenship, and a frivolous dispute arising between the advocates in the cause, whether he ought to make his appearance in the Roman or Grecian dress, to show his impartiality, he commanded him to change his clothes several times according to the character he assumed in the accusation or defense. An anecdote is related of him, and believed to be true, that, in a particular cause he delivered his sentence in writing thus: " I am in favour of those who have spoken the truth." By this he so much forfeited the good opinion of the world, that he was everywhere and openly despised. A person making an excuse for the non-appearance of a witness whom he had sent for from the provinces, declared it was impossible for him to appear, concealing the reason for some time: at last, after several interrogatories were put to him on the subject, he answered, "The man is dead;" to which Claudius replied, " I think that is a sufficient excuse." Another thanking him for suffering a person who was prosecuted to make his defense by counsel, added, " And yet it is no more than what is usual." I have likewise heard some old men say, that the advocates used to abuse his patience so grossly, that they would not only call him back, as he was quitting the tribunal, but would seize him by the hem of his toga, and sometimes catch him by the heels, to make him stay. That such behaviour, however strange, is not incredible, will appear from this anecdote. Some obscure Greek, who was a litigant, had an altercation with him, in which he called out, " You are an old fool." It is certain that a Roman knight, who was prosecuted by unscrupulous enemies on a false charge of obscenity with women, observing that common strumpets were summoned against him and allowed to give evidence, upbraided Claudius in very harsh and severe terms with his folly and cruelty, and threw his style, and some books which he had in his hands, in his face, with such violence as to wound him severely in the cheek.

THE ANNALS

By Tacitus

Written 109 A.C.E.

Translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb

Book XIV

Nero murders Agrippina

Cluvius relates that Agrippina in her eagerness to retain her influence went so far that more than once at midday, when Nero, even at that hour, was flushed with wine and feasting, she presented herself attractively attired to her half intoxicated son and offered him her person, and that when kinsfolk observed wanton kisses and caresses, portending infamy, it was Seneca who sought a female's aid against a woman's fascinations, and hurried in Acte, the freed-girl, who alarmed at her own peril and at Nero's disgrace, told him that the incest was notorious, as his mother boasted of it, and that the soldiers would never endure the rule of an impious sovereign. Fabius Rusticus tells us that it was not Agrippina, but Nero, who lusted for the crime, and that it was frustrated by the adroitness of that same freed-girl. Cluvius's account, however, is also that of all other authors, and popular belief inclines to it, whether it was that Agrippina really conceived such a monstrous wickedness in her heart, or perhaps because the thought of a strange passion seemed comparatively credible in a woman, who in her girlish years had allowed herself to be seduced by Lepidus in the hope of winning power, had stooped with a like ambition to the lust of Pallas, and had trained herself for every infamy by her marriage with her uncle.

Nero accordingly avoided secret interviews with her, and when she withdrew to her gardens or to her estates at Tusculum and Antium, he praised her for courting repose. At last, convinced that she would be too formidable, wherever she might dwell, he resolved to destroy her, merely deliberating whether it was to be accomplished by poison, or by the sword, or by any other violent means. Poison at first seemed best, but, were it to be administered at the imperial table, the result could not be referred to chance after the recent circumstances of the death of Britannicus. Again, to tamper with the servants of a woman who, from her familiarity with crime, was on her guard against treachery, appeared to be extremely difficult, and then, too, she had fortified her constitution by the use of antidotes. How again the dagger and its work were to be kept secret, no one could suggest, and it was feared too that whoever might be chosen to execute such a crime would spurn the order.

An ingenious suggestion was offered by Anicetus, a freedman, commander of the fleet at Misenum, who had been tutor to Nero in boyhood and had a hatred of Agrippina which she reciprocated. He explained that a vessel could be constructed, from which a part might by a contrivance be detached, when out at sea, so as to

plunge her unawares into the water. "Nothing," he said, "allowed of accidents so much as the sea, and should she be overtaken by shipwreck, who would be so unfair as to impute to crime an offence committed by the winds and waves? The emperor would add the honour of a temple and of shrines to the deceased lady, with every other display of filial affection."

Nero liked the device, favoured as it also was by the particular time, for he was celebrating Minerva's five days' festival at Baiae. Thither he enticed his mother by repeated assurances that children ought to bear with the irritability of parents and to soothe their tempers, wishing thus to spread a rumour of reconciliation and to secure Agrippina's acceptance through the feminine credulity, which easily believes what joy. As she approached, he went to the shore to meet her (she was coming from Antium), welcomed her with outstretched hand and embrace, and conducted her to Bauli. This was the name of a country house, washed by a bay of the sea, between the promontory of Misenum and the lake of Baiae. Here was a vessel distinguished from others by its equipment, seemingly meant, among other things, to do honour to his mother; for she had been accustomed to sail in a trireme, with a crew of marines. And now she was invited to a banquet, that night might serve to conceal the crime. It was well known that somebody had been found to betray it, that Agrippina had heard of the plot, and in doubt whether she was to believe it, was conveyed to Baiae in her litter. There some soothing words allayed her fear; she was graciously received, and seated at table above the emperor. Nero prolonged the banquet with various conversation, passing from a youth's playful familiarity to an air of constraint, which seemed to indicate serious thought, and then, after protracted festivity, escorted her on her departure, clinging with kisses to her eyes and bosom, either to crown his hypocrisy or because the last sight of a mother on the even of destruction caused a lingering even in that brutal heart.

A night of brilliant starlight with the calm of a tranquil sea was granted by heaven, seemingly, to convict the crime. The vessel had not gone far, Agrippina having with her two of her intimate attendants, one of whom, Crepereius Gallus, stood near the helm, while Acerronia, reclining at Agrippina's feet as she reposed herself, spoke joyfully of her son's repentance and of the recovery of the mother's influence, when at a given signal the ceiling of the place, which was loaded with a quantity of lead, fell in, and Crepereius was crushed and instantly killed. Agrippina and Acerronia were protected by the projecting sides of the couch, which happened to be too strong to yield under the weight. But this was not followed by the breaking up of the vessel; for all were bewildered, and those too, who were in the plot, were hindered by the unconscious majority. The crew then thought it best to throw the vessel on one side and so sink it, but they could not themselves promptly unite to face the emergency, and others, by counteracting the attempt, gave an opportunity of a gentler fall into the sea. Acerronia, however, thoughtlessly exclaiming that she was Agrippina, and imploring help for the emperor's mother, was despatched with poles and oars, and such naval implements as chance offered. Agrippina was silent and

was thus the less recognized; still, she received a wound in her shoulder. She swam, then met with some small boats which conveyed her to the Lucrine lake, and so entered her house.

There she reflected how for this very purpose she had been invited by a lying letter and treated with conspicuous honour, how also it was near the shore, not from being driven by winds or dashed on rocks, that the vessel had in its upper part collapsed, like a mechanism anything but nautical. She pondered too the death of Acerronia; she looked at her own wound, and saw that her only safeguard against treachery was to ignore it. Then she sent her freedman Agerinus to tell her son how by heaven's favour and his good fortune she had escaped a terrible disaster; that she begged him, alarmed, as he might be, by his mother's peril, to put off the duty of a visit, as for the present she needed repose. Meanwhile, pretending that she felt secure, she applied remedies to her wound, and fomentations to her person. She then ordered search to be made for the will of Acerronia, and her property to be sealed, in this alone throwing off disguise.

Nero, meantime, as he waited for tidings of the consummation of the deed, received information that she had escaped with the injury of a slight wound, after having so far encountered the peril that there could be no question as to its author. Then, paralysed with terror and protesting that she would show herself the next moment eager for vengeance, either arming the slaves or stirring up the soldiery, or hastening to the Senate and the people, to charge him with the wreck, with her wound, and with the destruction of her friends, he asked what resource he had against all this, unless something could be at once devised by Burrus and Seneca. He had instantly summoned both of them, and possibly they were already in the secret. There was a long silence on their part; they feared they might remonstrate in vain, or believed the crisis to be such that Nero must perish, unless Agrippina were at once crushed. Thereupon Seneca was so far the more prompt as to glance back on Burrus, as if to ask him whether the bloody deed must be required of the soldiers. Burrus replied "that the praetorians were attached to the whole family of the Caesars, and remembering Germanicus would not dare a savage deed on his offspring. It was for Anicetus to accomplish his promise."

Anicetus, without a pause, claimed for himself the consummation of the crime. At those words, Nero declared that that day gave him empire, and that a freedman was the author of this mighty boon. "Go," he said, "with all speed and take with you the men readiest to execute your orders." He himself, when he had heard of the arrival of Agrippina's messenger, Agerinus, contrived a theatrical mode of accusation, and, while the man was repeating his message, threw down a sword at his feet, then ordered him to be put in irons, as a detected criminal, so that he might invent a story how his mother had plotted the emperor's destruction and in the shame of discovered guilt had by her own choice sought death.

Meantime, Agrippina's peril being universally known and taken to be an accidental occurrence, everybody, the moment he heard of it, hurried down to the beach. Some climbed projecting piers; some the nearest vessels; others, as far as their stature allowed, went into the sea; some, again, stood with outstretched arms, while the whole shore rung with wailings, with prayers and cries, as different questions were asked and uncertain answers given. A vast multitude streamed to the spot with torches, and as soon as all knew that she was safe, they at once prepared to wish her joy, till the sight of an armed and threatening force scared them away. Anicetus then surrounded the house with a guard, and having burst open the gates, dragged off the slaves who met him, till he came to the door of her chamber, where a few still stood, after the rest had fled in terror at the attack. A small lamp was in the room, and one slave-girl with Agrippina, who grew more and more anxious, as no messenger came from her son, not even Agerinus, while the appearance of the shore was changed, a solitude one moment, then sudden bustle and tokens of the worst catastrophe. As the girl rose to depart, she exclaimed, "Do you too forsake me?" and looking round saw Anicetus, who had with him the captain of the trireme, Herculeius, and Obaritus, a centurion of marines. "If," said she, "you have come to see me, take back word that I have recovered, but if you are here to do a crime, I believe nothing about my son; he has not ordered his mother's murder."

The assassins closed in round her couch, and the captain of the trireme first struck her head violently with a club. Then, as the centurion bared his sword for the fatal deed, presenting her person, she exclaimed, "Smite my womb," and with many wounds she was slain.

So far our accounts agree. That Nero gazed on his mother after her death and praised her beauty, some have related, while others deny it. Her body was burnt that same night on a dining couch, with a mean funeral; nor, as long as Nero was in power, was the earth raised into a mound, or even decently closed. Subsequently, she received from the solicitude of her domestics, a humble sepulchre on the road to Misenum, near the country house of Caesar the Dictator, which from a great height commands a view of the bay beneath. As soon as the funeral pile was lighted, one of her freedmen, surnamed Mnester, ran himself through with a sword, either from love of his mistress or from the fear of destruction.

Many years before Agrippina had anticipated this end for herself and had spurned the thought. For when she consulted the astrologers about Nero, they replied that he would be emperor and kill his mother. "Let him kill her," she said, "provided he is emperor."

But the emperor, when the crime was at last accomplished, realised its portentous guilt. The rest of the night, now silent and stupified, now and still oftener starting up in terror, bereft of reason, he awaited the dawn as if it would bring with it his doom. He was first encouraged to hope by the flattery addressed to him, at the prompting of Burrus, by the centurions and tribunes, who again and again pressed

his hand and congratulated him on his having escaped an unforeseen danger and his mother's daring crime. Then his friends went to the temples, and, an example having once been set, the neighbouring towns of Campania testified their joy with sacrifices and deputations. He himself, with an opposite phase of hypocrisy, seemed sad, and almost angry at his own deliverance, and shed tears over his mother's death. But as the aspects of places change not, as do the looks of men, and as he had ever before his eyes the dreadful sight of that sea with its shores (some too believed that the notes of a funereal trumpet were heard from the surrounding heights, and wailings from the mother's grave), he retired to Neapolis and sent a letter to the Senate, the drift of which was that Agerinus, one of Agrippina's confidential freedmen, had been detected with the dagger of an assassin, and that in the consciousness of having planned the crime she had paid its penalty.

He even revived the charges of a period long past, how she had aimed at a share of empire, and at inducing the praetorian cohorts to swear obedience to a woman, to the disgrace of the Senate and people; how, when she was disappointed, in her fury with the soldiers, the Senate, and the populace, she opposed the usual donative and largess, and organised perilous prosecutions against distinguished citizens. What efforts had it cost him to hinder her from bursting into the Senate-house and giving answers to foreign nations! He glanced too with indirect censure at the days of Claudius, and ascribed all the abominations of that reign to his mother, thus seeking to show that it was the State's good fortune which had destroyed her. For he actually told the story of the shipwreck; but who could be so stupid as to believe that it was accidental, or that a shipwrecked woman had sent one man with a weapon to break through an emperor's guards and fleets? So now it was not Nero, whose brutality was far beyond any remonstrance, but Seneca who was in ill repute, for having written a confession in such a style.

Still there was a marvellous rivalry among the nobles in decreeing thanksgivings at all the shrines, and the celebration with annual games of Minerva's festival, as the day on which the plot had been discovered; also, that a golden image of Minerva with a statue of the emperor by its side should be set up in the Senate-house, and that Agrippina's birthday should be classed among the inauspicious days. Thrasea Paetus, who had been used to pass over previous flatteries in silence or with brief assent, then walked out of the Senate, thereby imperilling himself, without communicating to the other senators any impulse towards freedom.

There occurred too a thick succession of portents, which meant nothing. A woman gave birth to a snake, and another was killed by a thunderbolt in her husband's embrace. Then the sun was suddenly darkened and the fourteen districts of the city were struck by lightning. All this happened quite without any providential design; so much so, that for many subsequent years Nero prolonged his reign and his crimes. Still, to deepen the popular hatred towards his mother, and prove that since her removal, his clemency had increased, he restored to their ancestral homes two distinguished ladies, Junia and Calpurnia, with two ex-praetors, Valerius Capito

and Licinius Gabolus, whom Agrippina had formerly banished. He also allowed the ashes of Lollia Paulina to be brought back and a tomb to be built over them. Iturius and Calvisius, whom he had himself temporarily exiled, he now released from their penalty. Silana indeed had died a natural death at Tarentum, whither she had returned from her distant exile, when the power of Agrippina, to whose enmity she owed her fall, began to totter, or her wrath was at last appeased.