

**LIFE OF JULIUS
CAESAR,
PP. 147-254**

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Life of Julius Caesar, pp. 147-254 by H. G. Liddell

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H. G. LIDDELL

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JULIUS CÆSAR.

By H. G. LIDDELL,
Author of "A History of Rome," Etc.

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THE LIFE OF JULIUS CÆSAR.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE CONSULSHIP OF POMPEY AND CRASSUS
TO THE RETURN OF POMPEY FROM THE EAST
—CÆSAR—CICERO—CATILINE. (69-61 B.C.)

C. JULIUS CÆSAR was born of an old patrician family in the year 100 B.C. He was therefore six years younger than Pompey and Cicero. His father, C. Cæsar, did not live to reach the consulship. His uncle Sextus held that high dignity in 91 B.C., just before the outbreak of the Social War. That L. Cæsar who held command in the first year of that war (90 B.C.), and was author of the famous Julian law for enfranchising the Allies, was a more distant kinsman, who adhered to the aristocratical party and fell a victim in the Marian massacre. But the connection on which the young patrician most prided himself was the marriage of his aunt Julia with the famous C. Marius; and at the early age of seventeen he declared his adhesion to the popular party by espousing Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, who was at that time absolute master of Rome.* On the return of Sylla, he boldly refused to repudiate this wife, and only saved his life by skulking in the Apennines. But at length his aristocratic friends induced the dictator to pardon him.

* Yet he had already been married before to Cornelia, a rich heiress. He divorced her to marry Cornelia.

Sylla gave way against his own judgment, and told the nobles to whom he bequeathed authority to "beware of that dissolute boy."* His first military service was performed under the prætor L. Minucius Thermus, who was left by Sylla to take Mitylene; and in the siege of that place he won a civic crown for saving the life of a Roman citizen. On the death of Sylla he returned to Rome, and, after the custom of ambitious young Romans, though he was but in his twenty-third year, he indicted Cn. Dolabella, a partisan of Sylla, for extortion in his province of Macedonia. The senatorial jury acquitted Dolabella as a matter of course; but the credit gained by the young orator was great; and he went to Rhodes to study rhetoric under Molo, in whose school Cicero had lately been taking lessons. It was on his way to Rhodes that he fell into the hands of Cilician pirates. Redeemed by a heavy ransom, he collected some ships at Miletus, attacked his captors, took the greater part of them prisoners, and crucified them at Pergamus, according to a threat which he had often made while he had been their prisoner. About the year 74 B.C. he heard that he had been chosen as one of the pontifices, to succeed his uncle C. Aurelius Cotta, and he instantly returned to Rome, where he remained for some years, leading apparently a life of pleasure, taking little outward part in politics, but yet, by his winning manners and open-handed generosity, laying in a large store of popularity. Many writers attribute to him a secret agency in most of the events of the time. The early attachment which he showed to the Marian party, and his bold defiance of Sylla's orders, prove that he was quite willing and able to act against the senatorial oligarchy whenever opportunity might offer. But we have no positive evidence on the matter, further than that it was his uncle C. Cotta who in 75 B.C. proposed to restore to the tri-

* Dio C. xliii. 43, etc.

bunes some portion of the dignity they had lost by the Syllan legislation, and that it was another uncle, L. Cotta, who was author of the celebrated law (70 B.C.) for reorganizing the juries.

After his consulship, as we have seen, Pompey had remained for two years in dignified ease at Rome, envied by Crassus, and reposing on the popularity he had won. In 67 B.C. he left the city to take the command against the pirates. In that year Cæsar, being now in his thirty-third year, was elected quæstor, and signalized his year of office by an elaborate panegyric over the body of his aunt Julia, the widow of Marius. His wife Cornelia died in the same year, and gave occasion to another funeral harangue. In both of these speeches the political illusions were evident; and he ventured to have the bust of Marius carried in procession among his family images for the first time since the terrible dictatorship of Sylla. In 65 B.C. he was elected curule ædile, and increased his popularity by exhibiting three hundred and twenty pairs of gladiators, and conducting all the games on a scale of unusual magnificence. The expense of these exhibitions was in great measure borne by his colleague M. Bibulus, who naively complained that Cæsar had all the credit of the shows—"just as the temple of the Dioscuri, though belonging both to Castor and Pollux, bore the name of Castor only." But he did not confine himself to winning applause by theatrical spectacles. As curator of the Appian Way he expended a large sum from his own resources. The Cimbrian trophies of Marius had been thrown down by Sylla, and no public remembrance existed of the services rendered to Rome by her greatest soldier. The popular ædile ordered the images and trophies, with suitable inscriptions, to be secretly restored; and in one night he contrived to have them set up upon the Capitol, so that at daybreak men

were astonished by the unaccustomed sight. Old soldiers who had served with Marius shed tears. All the party opposed to Sylla and the senate took heart at this boldness, and recognized their chief. So important was the matter deemed, that it was brought before the senate, and Catulus accused Cæsar of openly assaulting the constitution. But nothing was done or could be done to check his movements. In all things he kept cautiously within the law.

The year of his ædileship was marked by the appearance of a man destined to an infamous notoriety—L. Sergius Catilina familiar to all under the name of Catiline.

For some time after the death of Sylla, the weariness and desire of repose which always follows violent revolutionary movements had disposed all ranks of society to acquiesce in the senatorial rule established by the dictator. But more than one class of men soon found themselves ill at ease, and the elements of trouble again began to move freely. All the families proscribed by Sylla, remembering their sometime wealth and consequence, cherished the thoughts that by a new revolution they might recover what they had lost; and the enthusiasm displayed when by the happy temerity of Cæsar the trophies of Marius were restored, revealed to the senate both the number and the increasing boldness of their political enemies. But besides these avowed enemies there was a vast number of persons, formerly attached to Sylla, who shared the discontent of the Marian party. The dictator paid the services of his instruments, but he left all real power in the hands of a few great families. His own creatures were allowed to amass money, but remained without political power. Pompey and Crassus, who rose independently of him, and almost in despite of his will, belonged to families so distinguished that in any state of things they might have reached the consulate. But the upstarts who enjoyed a transient great-

ness while Sylla was dictator found themselves rapidly reduced to obscurity. With the recklessness of men who had become suddenly rich, they had for the most part squandered their fortunes. Neither money nor power was theirs. These men were for the most part soldiers, and ready for any violence which might restore their wealth and their importance. They only wanted chiefs. These chiefs they found among the spendthrift and profligate members of noble families, who like themselves had enjoyed the license of the revolutionary times now gone by, and like themselves were excluded from the councils of the respectable though narrow-minded men who composed the senate and administered the government. These were the young nobles, effeminate and debauched, reckless of blood, of whom Cicero often speaks with horror.

Of these adventurers Catiline was by far the most remarkable. He belonged to an old patrician gens, and had distinguished himself both by valor and cruelty in the late civil war. He is said to have murdered his own brother, and to have secured impunity by getting the name of his victim placed on the proscribed lists. A beautiful and profligate lady, by name Aurelia Orestilla, refused his proffered hand because he had a grown-up son by a former marriage; and this son speedily ceased to live. Notwithstanding these and other crimes, real or imputed, the personal qualities of Catiline gave him great ascendancy over the people at large, and especially over the young nobles, who lacked money, and who were jealous of the few great families that now, as before the times of the Gracchi, had absorbed all political power. His strength and activity were such, that, notwithstanding his debaucheries, he was superior to the soldiers at their own exercises, and could encounter skilled gladiators with their own weapons. His manners were open and genial, and he was never known