

All the western part of Asia was now under Roman rule; and, when Pompey came back to Rome, he brought with him more than three million dollars' worth of spoil.

Wealth of all kinds had been pouring into Rome for so many years that it now seemed as if these riches would soon cause the ruin of the people. The rich citizens formed a large class of idlers and pleasure seekers, and they soon became so wicked that they were always doing something wrong.



LXII. THE CONSPIRACY OF CATILINE.

WHILE Pompey was away in the East, a few young Romans, who had nothing else to do, imagined that it would be a fine thing to murder the consuls, abolish all the laws, plunder the treasury, and set fire to the city. They therefore formed a conspiracy, which was headed by Cat'iline, a very wicked man.

The reason why Catiline encouraged the young idlers to such crimes was that he had spent all his own money, had run deeply into debt, and wished to find some way to procure another fortune to squander on his pleasures.



Cicero denouncing Cataline.

Fortunately for Rome, this conspiracy was discovered by the consul Cicero, the most eloquent of all the Roman orators. He revealed the plot to the senate, but Catiline had the boldness to deny all knowledge of it.

Cicero then went on to denounce the traitor in one of those eloquent speeches which are read by all students of the Latin language. Catiline, however, indignantly left the senate hall, and, rushing out of the city, went to join the army of rebels that was awaiting him. But the conspirators who stayed in the city were arrested and put to death by order of Cicero and the senate.

In the meanwhile, an army had been sent out against Catiline, who was defeated and killed, with the greater part of his soldiers. The Romans were so grateful to Cicero for saving them from the threatened destruction that they did him much honor and called him the "Father of his Country."

Shortly after this event, and the celebration of Pompey's new triumph, the old rivalry between him and Crassus was renewed. They were no longer the only important men in Rome, however; for Julius Caesar was gradually coming to have more and more power.

This Julius Caesar was one of the greatest men in Rome. He was clever and cool, and first used his influence to secure the recall of the Romans whom Sulla had banished. As Caesar believed in gentle measures, he had tried to persuade the senate to spare the young men who had plotted with Catiline. But he failed, owing to Cicero's eloquence, and thus first found himself opposed to this able man.

Caesar was fully as ambitious as any of the Romans, and he is reported to have said, "I would rather be the first in a village than the second in Rome!" In the beginning of his career, however, he clearly understood that he must try and make friends, so he offered his services to both Pompey and Crassus.

Little by little Caesar persuaded these two rivals that it was very foolish of them to fight, and finally induced them to be friends. When these three men had thus united their forces, they felt that they held the fortunes of Rome in their hands, and could do as they pleased.

They therefore formed a council of three men, or the Triumvirate, as it is called. Rome, they said, was still to be governed by the same officers as before; but they had so

much influence in Rome that the people and senate did almost everything that the Triumvirate wished.

To seal this alliance, Caesar gave his daughter Ju´li-a in marriage to Pompey. Then, when all was arranged according to his wishes, Caesar asked for and obtained the government of Gaul for five years. To get rid of Cicero, Clo´di-us, a friend of the Triumvirate, revived an old law, whereby any person who had put a Roman citizen to death without trial was made an outlaw. Clodius argued that Cicero had not only caused the death of the young Romans in Catiline’s conspiracy, but had even been present at their execution.

Cicero could not avoid the law, so he fled, and stayed away from Rome for the next sixteen months. This was a great trial to him, and he complained so much that he was finally recalled. The people, who loved him for his eloquence, then received him with many demonstrations of joy.



LXIII. CAESAR’S CONQUESTS.

IN the meanwhile, Caesar had gone to govern Gaul, and was forcing all the different tribes to recognize the authority of Rome. He fought very bravely, and wrote an account of these Gallic wars, which is so simple and interesting that it is given to boys and girls to read as soon as they have studied a little Latin.

Caesar not only subdued all the country of Gaul, which we now know as France, but also conquered the barbarians living in Swit´zer-land and in Bel´gi-um.

Although he was one of the greatest generals who ever lived, he soon saw that he could not complete these conquests before his time as governor would expire. He therefore arranged with his friends, Crassus and Pompey, that he should remain master of Gaul for another term, while they had charge of Spain and Syria.

The senate, which was a mere tool in the hands of these three men, confirmed this division, and Caesar remained in Gaul to finish the work he had begun. But Pompey sent out an officer to take his place in Spain, for he wished to remain in Rome to keep his hold on the people’s affections.

As Crassus liked gold more than anything else, he joyfully hastened off to Syria, where he stole money wherever he could, and even went to Jerusalem, to rob the Tem-