

From the Departure of the Jews From Babylon to Fadus the Roman Procurator

by Flavius Josephus

The sermon recounts the tyranny of Caius and the conspiracies led by Cherea to restore justice in Rome.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:10, Proverbs 21:15, Proverbs 24:24, Proverbs 28:12, Proverbs 29:2, Proverbs 29:27, Proverbs 31:8, Ecclesiastes 3:8, Ecclesiastes 8:11-12

Topics: "Roman History", "Biblical Context"

Description

Josephus recounts the tumultuous period following the assassination of Emperor Caius, where the senators deliberated on restoring democracy while the soldiers favored preserving the monarchy. Cherea, a key conspirator, played a crucial role in orchestrating Caius's downfall, leading to the restoration of liberty in Rome. The senators praised Cherea's bravery and honored him for his role in freeing the city from tyranny. Despite some dissent, Cherea ordered the execution of Caius's wife and daughter to prevent any remnants of the tyrant's family from causing further harm to the city.

Transcript

BOOK XIX.

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF THREE YEARS AND A HALF.

FROM THE DEPARTURE OUT OF BABYLON TO FADUS, THE ROMAN PROCURATOR.

CHAPTER 1.

HOW CAIUS (1) WAS SLAIN BY CHEREA.

1. NOW this Caius (2) did not demonstrate his madness in offering injuries only to the Jews at Jerusalem, or to those that dwelt in the neighborhood; but suffered it to extend itself through all the earth and sea, so far as was in subjection to the Romans, and filled it with ten thousand mischiefs; so many indeed in number as no former history relates. But Rome itself felt the most dismal effects of what he did, while he deemed that not to be any way more honorable than the rest of the cities; but he pulled and hauled its other citizens, but especially the senate, and particularly the nobility, and such as had been dignified by illustrious ancestors; he also had ten thousand devices against such of the equestrian order, as it was styled, who were esteemed by the citizens equal in dignity and wealth with the senators, because out of

them the senators were themselves chosen; these he treated after all ignominious manner, and removed them out of his way, while they were at once slain, and their wealth plundered, because he slew men generally in order to seize on their riches.

He also asserted his own divinity, and insisted on greater honors to be paid him by his subjects than are due to mankind. He also frequented that temple of Jupiter which they style the Capitol, which is with them the most holy of all their temples, and had boldness enough to call himself the brother of Jupiter. And other pranks he did like a madman; as when he laid a bridge from the city Dicearchia, which belongs to Campania, to Misenum, another city upon the sea-side, from one promontory to another, of the length of thirty furlongs, as measured over the sea.

And this was done because he esteemed it to be a most tedious thing to row over it in a small ship, and thought withal that it became him to make that bridge, since he was lord of the sea, and might oblige it to give marks of obedience as well as the earth; so he enclosed the whole bay within his bridge, and drove his chariot over it; and thought that, as he was a god, it was fit for him to travel over such roads as this was. Nor did he abstain from the plunder of any of the Grecian temples, and gave order that all the engravings and sculptures, and the rest of the ornaments of the statues and donations therein dedicated, should be brought to him, saying that the best things ought to be set no where but in the best place, and that the city of Rome was that best place.

He also adorned his own house and his gardens with the curiosities brought from those temples, together with the houses he lay at when he traveled all over Italy; whence he did not scruple to give a command that the statue of Jupiter Olympius, so called because he was honored at the Olympian games by the Greeks, which was the work of Phidias the Athenian, should be brought to Rome. Yet did not he compass his end, because the architects told Memmius Regulus, who was commanded to remove that statue of Jupiter, that the workmanship was such as would be spoiled, and would not bear the removal.

It was also reported that Memmius, both on that account, and on account of some such mighty prodigies as are of an incredible nature, put off the taking it down, and wrote to Caius those accounts, as his apology for not having done what his epistle required of him; and that when he was thence in danger of perishing, he was saved by Caius being dead himself, before he had put him to death.

2. Nay, Caius's madness came to this height, that when he had a daughter born, he carried her into the capitol, and put her upon the knees of the statue, and said that the child was common to him and to Jupiter, and determined that she had two fathers, but which of these fathers were the greatest he left undetermined; and yet mankind bore him in such his pranks. He also gave leave to slaves to accuse their masters of any crimes whatsoever they pleased; for all such accusations were terrible, because they were in great part made to please him, and at his suggestion, insomuch that Pollux, Claudius's slave, had the boldness to lay an accusation against Claudius himself; and Caius was not ashamed to be present at his trial of life and death, to hear that trial of his own uncle, in hopes of being able to take him off, although he did not succeed to his mind. But when he had filled the whole habitable world which he governed with false accusations and miseries, and had occasioned the greatest insults of slaves against their masters, who indeed in a great measure ruled them, there were many secret plots now laid against him; some in anger, and in order for men to revenge themselves, on account of the miseries they had already undergone from him; and others made attempts upon him, in order to take him off before they should fall into such great miseries, while his death came very fortunately for the preservation of the laws of all men, and had a great influence upon the public welfare; and this happened most happily for our nation in

particular, which had almost utterly perished if he had not been suddenly slain. And I confess I have a mind to give a full account of this matter particularly, because it will afford great assurance of the power of God, and great comfort to those that are under afflictions, and wise caution to those who think their happiness will never end, nor bring them at length to the most lasting miseries, if they do not conduct their lives by the principles of virtue.

3. Now there were three several conspiracies made in order to take off Caius, and each of these three were conducted by excellent persons. Emilius Regulus, born at Corduba in Spain, got some men together, and was desirous to take Caius off, either by them or by himself. Another conspiracy there was laid by them, under the conduct of Cherea Cassius, the tribune [of the Pretorian band]. Minucianus Annins was also one of great consequence among those that were prepared to oppose his tyranny. Now the several occasions of these men's several hatred and conspiracy against Caius were these: Regulus had indignation and hatred against all injustice, for he had a mind naturally angry, and bold, and free, which made him not conceal his counsels; so he communicated them to many of his friends, and to others who seemed to him persons of activity and vigor: Minucianus entered into this conspiracy, because of the injustice done to Lepidus his particular friend, and one of the best character of all the citizens, whom Caius had slain, as also because he was afraid of himself, since Caius's wrath tended to the slaughter of all alike: and for Cherea, he came in, because he thought it a deed worthy of a free ingenuous man to kill Caius, and was ashamed of the reproaches he lay under from Caius, as though he were a coward; as also because he was himself in danger every day from his friendship with him, and the observance he paid him. These men proposed this attempt to all the rest that were concerned, who saw the injuries that were offered them, and were desirous that Caius's slaughter might succeed by their mutual assistance of one another, and they might themselves escape being killed by the taking off Caius; that perhaps they should gain their point; and that it would be a happy thing, if they should gain it, to approve themselves to so many excellent persons, as earnestly wished to be partakers with them in their design for the delivery of the city and of the government, even at the hazard of their own lives. But still Cherea was the most zealous of them all, both out of a desire of getting himself the greatest name, and also by reason of his access to Caius's presence with less danger, because he was tribune, and could therefore the more easily kill him.

4. Now at this time came on the horse-races [Circensian games]; the view of which games was eagerly desired by the people of Rome, for they come with great alacrity into the hippodrome [circus] at such times, and petition their emperors, in great multitudes, for what they stand in need of; who usually did not think fit to deny them their requests, but readily and gratefully granted them. Accordingly, they most importunately desired that Caius would now ease them in their tributes, and abate somewhat of the rigor of their taxes imposed upon them; but he would not hear their petition; and when their clamors increased, he sent soldiers some one way and some another, and gave order that they should lay hold on those that made the clamors, and without any more ado bring them out, and put them to death. These were Caius's commands, and those who were commanded executed the same; and the number of those who were slain on this occasion was very great. Now the people saw this, and bore it so far, that they left off clamoring, because they saw with their own eyes that this petition to be relieved, as to the payment of their money, brought immediate death upon them. These things made Cherea more resolute to go on with his plot, in order to put an end to this barbarity of Caius against men. He then at several times thought to fall upon Caius, even as he was feasting; yet did he restrain himself by some considerations; not that he had any doubt on him about killing him, but as watching for a proper season, that the attempt might not be frustrated, but that he might give the blow so as might certainly gain his purpose.

5. Cherea had been in the army a long time, yet was he not pleased with conversing so much with Caius. But Caius had set him to require the tributes, and other dues, which, when not paid in due time, were forfeited to Caesar's treasury; and he had made some delays in requiring them, because those burdens had been doubled, and had rather indulged his own mild disposition than performed Caius's command; nay, indeed, he provoked Caius to anger by his sparing men, and pitying the hard fortunes of those from whom he demanded the taxes; and Caius upbraided him with his sloth and effeminacy in being so long about collecting the taxes.

And indeed he did not only affront him in other respects, but when he gave him the watchword of the day, to whom it was to be given by his place, he gave him feminine words, and those of a nature very reproachful; and these watchwords he gave out, as having been initiated in the secrets of certain mysteries, which he had been himself the author of. Now although he had sometimes put on women's clothes, and had been wrapt in some embroidered garments to them belonging, and done a great many other things, in order to make the company mistake him for a woman; yet did he, by way of reproach, object the like womanish behavior to Cherea.

But when Cherea received the watchword from him, he had indignation at it, but had greater indignation at the delivery of it to others, as being laughed at by those that received it; insomuch that his fellow tribunes made him the subject of their drollery; for they would foretell that he would bring them some of his usual watchwords when he was about to take the watchword from Caesar, and would thereby make him ridiculous; on which accounts he took the courage of assuming certain partners to him, as having just reasons for his indignation against Caius.

Now there was one Pompedius, a senator, and one who had gone through almost all posts in the government, but otherwise an Epicurean, and for that reason loved to lead an inactive life. Now Timidius, an enemy of his, had informed Caius that he had used indecent reproaches against him, and he made use of Quintilia for a witness to them; a woman she was much beloved by many that frequented the theater, and particularly by Pompedius, on account of her great beauty. Now this woman thought it a horrible thing to attest to an accusation that touched the life of her lover, which was also a lie.

Timidius, however, wanted to have her brought to the torture. Caius was irritated at this reproach upon him, and commanded Cherea, without any delay, to torture Quintilia, as he used to employ Cherea in such bloody matters, and those that required the torture, because he thought he would do it the more barbarously, in order to avoid that imputation of effeminacy which he had laid upon him. But Quintilia, when she was brought to the rack, trod upon the foot of one of her associates, and let him know that he might be of good courage, and not be afraid of the consequence of her tortures, for that she would bear them with magnanimity.

Cherea tortured this woman after a cruel manner; unwillingly indeed, but because he could not help it. He then brought her, without being in the least moved at what she had suffered, into the presence of Caius, and that in such a state as was sad to behold; and Caius, being somewhat affected with the sight of Quintilia, who had her body miserably disordered by the pains she had undergone, freed both her and Pompedius of the crime laid to their charge. He also gave her money to make her an honorable amends, and comfort her for that maiming of her body which she had suffered, and for her glorious patience under such insufferable torments.

6. This matter sorely grieved Cherea, as having been the cause, as far as he could, or the instrument, of those miseries to men, which seemed worthy of consolation to Caius himself; on which account he said to Clement and to Papinius, (of whom Clement was general of the army, and Papinius was a tribune,) "To be sure, O Clement, we have no way failed in our guarding the emperor; for as to those that have made conspiracies against his government, some have been slain by our care and pains, and some have been by us tortured, and this to such a degree, that he hath himself pitied them. How great then is our virtue in submitting to conduct his armies!" Clement held his peace, but showed the shame he was under in obeying Caius's orders, both by his eyes and his blushing countenance, while he thought it by no means right to accuse the emperor in express words, lest their own safety should be endangered thereby. Upon which Cherea took courage, and spake to him without fear of the dangers that were before him, and discoursed largely of the sore calamities under which the city and the government then labored, and said, "We may indeed pretend in words that Caius is the person unto whom the cause of such miseries ought to be imputed; but, in the opinion of such as are able to judge uprightly, it is I, O Clement! and this Papinius, and before us thou thyself, who bring these tortures upon the Romans, and upon all mankind. It is not done by our being subservient to the commands of Caius, but it is done by our own consent; for whereas it is in our power to put an end to the life of this man, who hath so terribly injured the citizens and his subjects, we are his guard in mischief, and his executioners instead of his soldiers, and are the instruments of his cruelty. We bear these weapons, not for our liberty, not for the Roman government, but only for his preservation, who hath enslaved both their bodies and their minds; and we are every day polluted with the blood that we shed, and the torments we inflict upon others; and this we do, till somebody becomes Caius's instrument in bringing the like miseries upon ourselves. Nor does he thus employ us because he hath a kindness for us, but rather because he hath a suspicion of us, as also because when abundance more have been killed, (for Caius will set no bounds to his wrath, since he aims to do all, not out of regard to justice, but to his own pleasure,) we shall also ourselves be exposed to his cruelty; whereas we ought to be the means of confirming the security and liberty of all, and at the same time to resolve to free ourselves from dangers.

7. Hereupon Clement openly commended Cherea's intentions, but bid him hold his tongue; for that in case his words should get out among many, and such things should be spread abroad as were fit to be concealed, the plot would come to be discovered before it was executed, and they should be brought to punishment; but that they should leave all to futurity, and the hope which thence arose, that some fortunate event would come to their assistance; that, as for himself, his age would not permit him to make any attempt in that case. "However, although perhaps I could suggest what may be safer than what thou, Cherea, hast contrived and said, yet trow is it possible for any one to suggest what is more for thy reputation?" So Clement went his way home, with deep reflections on what he had heard, and what he had himself said. Cherea also was under a concern, and went quickly to Cornelius Sabinus, who was himself one of the tribunes, and whom he otherwise knew to be a worthy man, and a lover of liberty, and on that account very uneasy at the present management of public affairs, he being desirous to come immediately to the execution of what had been determined, and thinking it right for him to propose it to the other, and afraid lest Clement should discover them, and besides looking upon delays and puttings off to be the next to desisting from the enterprise.

8. But as all was agreeable to Sabinus, who had himself, equally without Cherea, the same design, but had been silent for want of a person to whom he could safely communicate that design; so having now met with one, who not only promised to conceal what he heard, but who had already opened his mind to him, he was much more encouraged, and desired of Cherea that no delay might be made therein.

Accordingly they went to Minucianus, who was as virtuous a man, and as zealous to do glorious actions, as themselves, and suspected by Caius on occasion of the slaughter of Lepidus; for Minucianus and Lepidus were intimate friends, and both in fear of the dangers that they were under; for Caius was terrible to all the great men, as appearing ready to act a mad part towards each of them in particular, and towards all of: them in general; and these men were afraid of one another, while they were yet uneasy at the posture of affairs, but avoided to declare their mind and their hatred against Caius to one another, out of fear of the dangers they might be in thereby, although they perceived by other means their mutual hatred against Caius, and on that account were not averse to a mutual kindness one towards another.

9. When Minuetanus and Cherea had met together, and saluted one another, (as they had been used on former conversations to give the upper hand to Minucianus, both on account of his eminent dignity, for he was the noblest of all the citizens, and highly commended by all men, especially when he made speeches to them,) Minuetanus began first, and asked Cherea, What was the watchword he had received that day from Caius; for the affront which was offered Cherea, in giving the watchwords, was famous over the city. But Cherea made no delay so long as to reply to that question, out of the joy he had that Minueianus would have such confidence in him as to discourse with him. "But do thou," said he, "give me the watchword of liberty. And I return thee my thanks that thou hast so greatly encouraged me to exert myself after an extraordinary manner; nor do I stand in need of many words to encourage me, since both thou and I are of the same mind, and partakers of the same resolutions, and this before we have conferred together. I have indeed but one sword girt on, but this one will serve us both. Come on, therefore, let us set about the work. Do thou go first, if thou hast a mind, and bid me follow thee; or else I will go first, and thou shalt assist me, and we will assist one another, and trust one another. Nor is there a necessity for even one sword to such as have a mind disposed to such works, by which mind the sword uses to be successful. I am zealous about this action, nor am I solicitous what I may myself undergo; for I can not at leisure to consider the dangers that may come upon myself, so deeply am I troubled at the slavery our once free country is now under, and at the contempt cast upon our excellent laws, and at the destruction which hangs over all men, by the means of Caius. I wish that I may be judged by thee, and that thou mayst esteem me worthy of credit in these matters, seeing we are both of the same opinion, and there is herein no difference between us."

10. When Minucianus saw the vehemency with which Cherea delivered himself, he gladly embraced him, and encouraged him in his bold attempt, commending him, and embracing him; so he let him go with his good wishes; and some affirm that he thereby confirmed Minucianus in the prosecution of what had been agreed among them; for as Cherea entered into the court, the report runs, that a voice came from among the multitude to encourage him, which bid him finish what he was about, and take the opportunity that Providence afforded; and that Cherea at first suspected that some one of the conspirators had betrayed him, and he was caught, but at length perceived that it was by way of exhortation.

Whether somebody (3) that was conscious of what he was about, gave a signal for his encouragement, or whether it was God himself, who looks upon the actions of men, that encouraged him to go on boldly in his design, is uncertain. The plot was now communicated to a great many, and they were all in their armor; some of the conspirators being senators, and some of the equestrian order, and as many of the soldiery as were made acquainted with it; for there was not one of them who would not reckon it a part of his happiness to kill Caius; and on that account they were all very zealous in the affair, by what means soever any one could come at it, that he might not be behindhand in these virtuous designs, but might be ready with all his alacrity or power, both by words and actions, to complete this slaughter of a tyrant.

And besides these, Callistus also, who was a freed-man of Caius, and was the only man that had arrived at the greatest degree of power under him, - such a power, indeed, as was in a manner equal to the power of the tyrant himself, by the dread that all men had of him, and by the great riches he had acquired; for he took bribes most plenteously, and committed injuries without bounds, and was more extravagant in the use of his power in unjust proceedings than any other. He also knew the disposition of Caius to be implacable, and never to be turned from what he had resolved on.

He had withal many other reasons why he thought himself in danger, and the vastness of his wealth was not one of the least of them; on which account he privately ingratiated himself with Claudius, and transferred his courtship to him, out of this hope, that in case, upon the removal of Caius, the government should come to him, his interest in such changes should lay a foundation for his preserving his dignity under him, since he laid in beforehand a stock of merit, and did Claudius good offices in his promotion.

He had also the boldness to pretend that he had been persuaded to make away with Claudius, by poisoning him, but had still invented ten thousand excuses for delaying to do it. But it seems probable to me that Callistus only counterfeited this, in order to ingratiate himself with Claudius; for if Caius had been in earnest resolved to take off Claudius, he would not have admitted of Callistus's excuses; nor would Callistus, if he had been enjoined to do such an act as was desired by Caius, have put it off; nor if he had disobeyed those injunctions of his master, had he escaped immediate punishment; while Claudius was preserved from the madness of Caius by a certain Divine providence, and Callistus pretended to such a piece of merit as he no way deserved.

11. However, the execution of Cherea's designs was put off from day to day, by the sloth of many therein concerned; for as to Cherea himself, he would not willingly make any delay in that execution, thinking every time a fit time for it; for frequent opportunities offered themselves; as when Caius went up to the capitol to sacrifice for his daughter, or when he stood upon his royal palace, and threw gold and silver pieces of money among the people, he might be pushed down headlong, because the top of the palace, that looks towards the market-place, was very high; and also when he celebrated the mysteries, which he had appointed at that time; for he was then no way secluded from the people, but solicitous to do every thing carefully and decently, and was free from all suspicion that he should be then assaulted by any body; and although the gods should afford him no divine assistance to enable him to take away his life, yet had he strength himself sufficient to despatch Caius, even without a sword. Thus was Chorea angry at his fellow conspirators, for fear they should suffer a proper opportunity to pass by; and they were themselves sensible that he had just cause to be angry at them, and that his eagerness was for their advantage; yet did they desire he would have a little longer patience, lest, upon any disappointment they might meet with, they should put the city into disorder, and an inquisition should be made after the conspiracy, and should render the courage of those that were to attack Caius without success, while he would then secure himself more carefully than ever against them; that it would therefore be the best to set about the work when the shows were exhibited in the palace. These shows were acted in honor of that Caesar (4) who first of all changed the popular government, and transferred it to himself; galleries being fixed before the palace, where the Romans that were patricians became spectators, together with their children and their wives, and Caesar himself was to be also a spectator; and they reckoned, among those many ten thousands who would there be crowded into a narrow compass, they should have a favorable opportunity to make their attempt upon him as he came in, because his guards that should protect him, if any of them should have a mind to do it, would not here be able to give him any assistance.

12. Cherea consented to this delay; and when the shows were exhibited, it was resolved to do the work the first day. But fortune, which allowed a further delay to his slaughter, was too hard for their foregoing resolution; and as three days of the regular times for these shows were now over, they had much ado to get the business done on the last day. Then Cherea called the conspirators together, and spake thus to them: "So much time passed away without effort is a reproach to us, as delaying to go through such a virtuous design as we are engaged in; but more fatal will this delay prove if we be discovered, and the design be frustrated; for Caius will then become more cruel in his unjust proceedings. Do we not see how long we deprive all our friends of their liberty, and give Caius leave still to tyrannize over them? while we ought to have procured them security for the future, and, by laying a foundation for the happiness of others, gain to ourselves great admiration and honor for all time to come." Now while the conspirators had nothing tolerable to say by way of contradiction, and yet did not quite relish what they were doing, but stood silent and astonished, he said further, "O my brave comrades! why do we make such delays? Do not you see that this is the last day of these shows, and that Caius is about to go to sea? for he is preparing to sail to Alexandria, in order to see Egypt. Is it therefore for your honor to let a man go out of your hands who is a reproach to mankind, and to permit him to go, after a pompous manner, triumphing both at land and sea? Shall not we be justly ashamed of ourselves, if we give leave to some Egyptian or other, who shall think his injuries insufferable to free-men, to kill him? As for myself, I will no longer bear your stow proceedings, but will expose myself to the dangers of the enterprise this very day, and bear cheerfully whatsoever shall be the consequence of the attempt; nor, let them be ever so great, will I put them off any longer: for, to a wise and courageous man, what can be more miserable than that, while I am alive, any one else should kill Caius, and deprive me of the honor of so virtuous an action?"

13. When Cherea had spoken thus, he zealously set about the work, and inspired courage into the rest to go on with it, and they were all eager to fall to it without further delay. So he was at the palace in the morning, with his equestrian sword girt on him; for it was the custom that the tribunes should ask for the watchword with their swords on, and this was the day on which Cherea was, by custom, to receive the watchword; and the multitude were already come to the palace, to be soon enough for seeing the shows, and that in great crowds, and one tumultuously crushing another, while Caius was delighted with this eagerness of the multitude; for which reason there was no order observed in the seating men, nor was any peculiar place appointed for the senators, or for the equestrian order; but they sat at random, men and women together, and free-men were mixed with the slaves.

So Caius came out in a solemn manner, and offered sacrifice to Augustus Caesar, in whose honor indeed these shows were celebrated. Now it happened, upon the fall of a certain priest, that the garment of Asprenas, a senator, was filled with blood, which made Caius laugh, although this was an evident omen to Asprenas, for he was slain at the same time with Caius. It is also related that Caius was that day, contrary to his usual custom, so very affable and good-natured in his conversation, that every one of those that were present were astonished at it.

After the sacrifice was over, Caius betook himself to see the shows, and sat down for that purpose, as did also the principal of his friends sit near him. Now the parts of the theater were so fastened together, as it used to be every year, in the manner following: It had two doors, the one door led to the open air, the other was for going into, or going out of, the cloisters, that those within the theater might not be thereby disturbed; but out of one gallery there went an inward passage, parted into partitions also, which led into another gallery, to give room to the combatants and to the musicians to go out as occasion served.

When the multitude were set down, and Cherea, with the other tribunes, were set down also, and the right corner of the theater was allotted to Caesar, one Vatinius, a senator, commander of the praetorian band, asked of Cluvius, one that sat by him, and was of consular dignity also, whether he had heard any thing of news, or not? but took care that nobody should hear what he said; and when Cluvius replied, that he had heard no news, "Know then," said Vatinius, "that the game of the slaughter of tyrants is to be played this day."

But Cluvius replied "O brave comrade hold thy peace, lest some other of the Achaians hear thy tale." And as there was abundance of autumnal fruit thrown among the spectators, and a great number of birds, that were of great value to such as possessed them, on account of their rareness, Caius was pleased with the birds fighting for the fruits, and with the violence wherewith the spectators seized upon them: and here he perceived two prodigies that happened there; for an actor was introduced, by whom a leader of robbers was crucified, and the pantomime brought in a play called Cinyras, wherein he himself was to be slain, as well as his daughter Myrrha, and wherein a great deal of fictitious blood was shed, both about him that was crucified, and also about Cinyras.

It was also confessed that this was the same day wherein Pausanias, a friend of Philip, the son of Amyntas, who was king of Macedonia, slew him, as he was entering into the theater. And now Caius was in doubt whether he should tarry to the end of the shows, because it was the last day, or whether he should not go first to the bath, and to dinner, and then return and sit down as before. Hereupon Minucianus, who sat over Caius, and was afraid that the opportunity should fail them, got up, because he saw Cherea was already gone out, and made haste out, to confirm him in his resolution; but Caius took hold of his garment, in an obliging way, and said to him, "O brave man! whither art thou going?"

Whereupon, out of reverence to Caesar, as it seemed, he sat down again; but his fear prevailed over him, and in a little time he got up again, and then Caius did no way oppose his going out, as thinking that he went out to perform some necessities of nature. And Asprenas, who was one of the confederates, persuaded Caius to go out to the bath, and to dinner, and then to come in again, as desirous that what had been resolved on might be brought to a conclusion immediately.

14. So Cherea's associates placed themselves in order, as the time would permit them, and they were obliged to labor hard, that the place which was appointed them should not be left by them; but they had an indignation at the tediousness of the delays, and that what they were about should be put off any longer, for it was already about the ninth (5) hour of the day; and Cherea, upon Caius's tarrying so long, had a great mind to go in, and fall upon him in his seat, although he foresaw that this could not be done without much bloodshed, both of the senators, and of those of the equestrian order that were present; and although he knew this must happen, yet had he a great mind to do so, as thinking it a right thing to procure security and freedom to all, at the expense of such as might perish at the same time.

And as they were just going back into the entrance to the theater, word was brought them that Caius was arisen, whereby a tumult was made; hereupon the conspirators thrust away the crowd, under pretense as if Caius was angry at them, but in reality as desirous to have a quiet place, that should have none in it to defend him, while they set about Caius's slaughter. Now Claudius, his uncle, was gone out before, and Marcus Vinicius his sister's husband, as also Valellus of Asia; whom though they had had such a mind to put out of their places, the reverence to their dignity hindered them so to do; then followed Caius, with Paulus Arruntius: and because Caius was now gotten within the palace, he left the direct road, along which those his servants stood that were in waiting, and by which road Claudius had gone out before,

Caius turned aside into a private narrow passage, in order to go to the place for bathing, as also in order to take a view of the boys that came out of Asia, who were sent thence, partly to sing hymns in these mysteries which were now celebrated, and partly to dance in the Pyrrhic way of dancing upon the theatres.

So Cherea met him, and asked him for the watchword; upon Caius's giving him one of his ridiculous words, he immediately reproached him, and drew his sword, and gave him a terrible stroke with it, yet was not this stroke mortal. And although there be those that say it was so contrived on purpose by Chorea, that Caius should not be killed at one blow, but should be punished more severely by a multitude of wounds; yet does this story appear to me incredible, because the fear men are under in such actions does not allow them to use their reason.

And if Cherea was of that mind, I esteem him the greatest of all fools, in pleasing himself in his spite against Caius, rather than immediately procuring safety to himself and to his confederates from the dangers they were in, because there might many things still happen for helping Caius's escape, if he had not already given up the ghost; for certainly Cherea would have regard, not so much to the punishment of Caius, as to the affliction himself and his friends were in, while it was in his power, after such success, to keep silent, and to escape the wrath of Caius's defenders, and not to leave it to uncertainty whether he should gain the end he aimed at or not, and after an unreasonable manner to act as if he had a mind to ruin himself, and lose the opportunity that lay before him.

But every body may guess as he please about this matter. However, Caius was staggered with the pain that the blow gave him; for the stroke of the sword falling in the middle, between the shoulder and the neck, was hindered by the first bone of the breast from proceeding any further. Nor did he either cry out, (in such astonishment was he,) nor did he call out for any of his friends; whether it were that he had no confidence in them, or that his mind was otherwise disordered, but he groaned under the pain he endured, and presently went forward and fled; when Cornelius Sabinus, who was already prepared in his mind so to do, thrust him down upon his knee, where many of them stood round about him, and struck him with their swords; and they cried out, and encouraged one another all at once to strike him again; but all agree that Aquila gave him the finishing stroke, which directly killed him.

But one may justly ascribe this act to Cherea; for although many concurred in the act itself, yet was he the first contriver of it, and began long before all the rest to prepare for it, and was the first man that boldly spake of it to the rest; and upon their admission of what he said about it, he got the dispersed conspirators together; he prepared every thing after a prudent manner, and by suggesting good advice, showed himself far superior to the rest, and made obliging speeches to them, insomuch that he even compelled them all to go on, who otherwise had not courage enough for that purpose; and when opportunity served to use his sword in hand, he appeared first of all ready so to do, and gave the first blow in this virtuous slaughter; he also brought Caius easily into the power of the rest, and almost killed him himself, insomuch that it is but just to ascribe all that the rest did to the advice, and bravery, and labors of the hands of Cherea.

15. Thus did Caius come to his end, and lay dead, by the many wounds which had been given him. Now Cherea and his associates, upon Caius's slaughter, saw that it was impossible for them to save themselves, if they should all go the same way, partly on account of the astonishment they were under; for it was no small danger they had incurred by killing an emperor, who was honored and loved by the madness of the people, especially when the soldiers were likely to make a bloody inquiry after his murderers.

The passages also were narrow wherein the work was done, which were also crowded with a great multitude of Caius's attendants, and of such of the soldiers as were of the emperor's guard that day; whence it was that they went by other ways, and came to the house of Germanicus, the father of Caius, whom they had now killed (which house adjoined to the palace; for while the edifice was one, it was built in its several parts by those particular persons who had been emperors, and those parts bare the names of those that built them or the name of him who had begun to build its parts).

So they got away from the insults of the multitude, and then were for the present out of danger, that is, so long as the misfortune which had overtaken the emperor was not known. The Germans were the first who perceived that Caius was slain. These Germans were Caius's guard, and carried the name of the country whence they were chosen, and composed the Celtic legion. The men of that country are naturally passionate, which is commonly the temper of some other of the barbarous nations also, as being not used to consider much about what they do; they are of robust bodies and fall upon their enemies as soon as ever they are attacked by them; and which way soever they go, they perform great exploits.

When, therefore, these German guards understood that Caius was slain, they were very sorry for it, because they did not use their reason in judging about public affairs, but measured all by the advantages themselves received, Caius being beloved by them because of the money he gave them, by which he had purchased their kindness to him; so they drew their swords, and Sabinus led them on. He was one of the tribunes, not by the means of the virtuous actions of his pro genitors, for he had been a gladiator, but he had obtained that post in the army by his having a robust body.

So these Germans marched along the houses in quest of Caesar's murderers, and cut Asprenas to pieces, because he was the first man they fell upon, and whose garment it was that the blood of the sacrifices stained, as I have said already, and which foretold that this his meeting the soldiers would not be for his good. Then did Norbanus meet them, who was one of the principal nobility of and could show many generals of armies among his ancestors; but they paid no regard to his dignity; yet was he of such great strength, that he wrested the sword of the first of those that assaulted him out of his hands, and appeared plainly not to be willing to die without a struggle for his life, until he was surrounded by a great number of assailants, and died by the multitude of the wounds which they gave him.

The third man was Anteius, a senator, and a few others with him. He did not meet with these Germans by chance, as the rest did before, but came to show his hatred to Caius, and because he loved to see Caius lie dead with his own eyes, and took a pleasure in that sight; for Caius had banished Anteius's father, who was of the same name with himself, and being not satisfied with that, he sent out his soldiers, and slew him; so he was come to rejoice at the sight of him, now he was dead.

But as the house was now all in a tumult, when he was aiming to hide himself, he could not escape that accurate search which the Germans made, while they barbarously slew those that were guilty, and those that were not guilty, and this equally also. And thus were these [three] persons slain.

16. But when the rumor that Caius was slain reached the theater, they were astonished at it, and could not believe it; even some that entertained his destruction with great pleasure, and were more desirous of its happening than almost any other faction that could come to them, were under such a fear, that they could not believe it. There were also those who greatly distrusted it, because they were unwilling that any such thing should come to Caius, nor could believe it, though it were ever so true, because they thought no man could possibly so much power as to kill Caius.

These were the women, and the children, and the slaves, and some of the soldiery. This last sort had taken his pay, and in a manner tyrannized with him, and had abused the best of the citizens, in being subservient to his unjust commands, in order to gain honors and advantages to themselves; but for the women and the youth, they had been inveigled with shows, and the fighting of the gladiators, and certain distributions of flesh-meat among them, which things them pretense were designed for the pleasing of multitude, but in reality to satiate the barbarous cruelty and madness of Caius.

The slaves also were sorry, because they were by Caius allowed to accuse and to despise their masters, and they could have recourse to his assistance when they had unjustly affronted them; for he was very easy in believing them against their masters, even when they the city, accused them falsely; and if they would discover what money their masters had, they might soon obtain both riches and liberty, as the rewards of their accusations, because the reward of these informers was the eighth (6) part of the criminal's substance.

As to the nobles, although the report appeared credible to some of them, either because they knew of the plot beforehand, or because they wished it might be true; however, they concealed not only the joy they had at the relation of it, but that they had heard any thing at all about it. These last acted so out of the fear they had, that if the report proved false, they should be punished, for having so soon let men know their minds. But those that knew Caius was dead, because they were partners with the conspirators, they concealed all still more cautiously, as not knowing one another's minds; and fearing lest they should speak of it to some of those to whom the continuance of tyranny was advantageous; and if Caius should prove to be alive, they might be informed against, and punished.

And another report went about, that although Caius had been wounded indeed, yet was not he dead, but alive still, and under the physician's hands. Nor was any one looked upon by another as faithful enough to be trusted, and to whom any one would open his mind; for he was either a friend to Caius, and therefore suspected to favor his tyranny, or he was one that hated him, who therefore might be suspected to deserve the less credit, because of his ill-will to him. Nay, it was said by some (and this indeed it was that deprived the nobility of their hopes, and made them sad) that Caius was in a condition to despise the dangers he had been in, and took no care of healing his wounds, but was gotten away into the market-place, and, bloody as he was, was making an harangue to the people.

And these were the conjectural reports of those that were so unreasonable as to endeavor to raise tumults, which they turned different ways, according to the opinions of the bearers. Yet did they not leave their seats, for fear of being accused, if they should go out before the rest; for they should not be sentenced according to the real intention with which they went out, but according to the supposals of the accusers and of the judges.

17. But now a multitude of Germans had surrounded the theater with their swords drawn: all the spectators looked for nothing but death, and at every one coming in a fear seized upon them, as if they were to be cut in pieces immediately; and in great distress they were, as neither having courage enough to go out of the theater, nor believing themselves safe from dangers if they tarried there. And when the Germans came upon them, the cry was so great, that the theater rang again with the entreaties of the spectators to the soldiers, pleading that they were entirely ignorant of every thing that related to such seditious contrivances, and that if there were any sedition raised, they knew nothing of it; they therefore begged that they would spare them, and not punish those that had not the least hand in such bold crimes as belonged to other persons, while they neglected to search after such as had really done whatsoever it

be that hath been done. Thus did these people appeal to God, and deplore their infelicity with shedding of tears, and beating their faces, and said every thing that the most imminent danger and the utmost concern for their lives could dictate to them. This brake the fury of the soldiers, and made them repent of what they minded to do to the spectators, which would have been the greatest instance of cruelty. And so it appeared to even these savages, when they had once fixed the heads of those that were slain with Asprenas upon the altar; at which sight the spectators were sorely afflicted, both upon the consideration of the dignity of the persons, and out of a commiseration of their sufferings; nay, indeed, they were almost in as great disorder at the prospect of the danger themselves were in, seeing it was still uncertain whether they should entirely escape the like calamity. Whence it was that such as thoroughly and justly hated Caius could yet no way enjoy the pleasure of his death, because they were themselves in jeopardy of perishing together with him; nor had they hitherto any firm assurance of surviving.

18. There was at this time one Euaristus Arruntius, a public crier in the market, and therefore of a strong and audible voice, who vied in wealth with the richest of the Romans, and was able to do what he pleased in the city, both then and afterward. This man put himself into the most mournful habit he could, although he had a greater hatred against Caius than any one else; his fear and his wise contrivance to gain his safety taught him so to do, and prevailed over his present pleasure; so he put on such a mournful dress as he would have done had he lost his dearest friends in the world; this man came into the theater, and informed them of the death of Caius, and by this means put an end to that state of ignorance the men had been in. Arruntius also went round about the pillars, and called out to the Germans, as did the tribunes with him, bidding them put up their swords, and telling them that Caius was dead. And this proclamation it was plainly which saved those that were collected together in the theater, and all the rest who any way met the Germans; for while they had hopes that Caius had still any breath in him, they abstained from no sort of mischief; and such an abundant kindness they still had for Caius, that they would willingly have prevented the plot against him, and procured his escape from so sad a misfortune, at the expense of their own lives. But they now left off the warm zeal they had to punish his enemies, now they were fully satisfied that Caius was dead, because it was now in vain for them to show their zeal and kindness to him, when he who should reward them was perished. They were also afraid that they should be punished by the senate, if they should go on in doing such injuries; that is, in case the authority of the supreme governor should revert to them. And thus at length a stop was put, though not without difficulty, to that rage which possessed the Germans on account of Caius's death.

19. But Cherea was so much afraid for Minucianus, lest he should light upon the Germans now they were in their fury, that he went and spoke to every one of the soldiers, and prayed them to take care of his preservation, and made himself great inquiry about him, lest he should have been slain. And for Clement, he let Minucianus go when he was brought to him, and, with many other of the senators, affirmed the action was right, and commended the virtue of those that contrived it, and had courage enough to execute it; and said that "tyrants do indeed please themselves and look big for a while, upon having the power to act unjustly; but do not however go happily out of the world, because they are hated by the virtuous; and that Caius, together with all his unhappiness, was become a conspirator against himself, before these other men who attacked him did so; and by becoming intolerable, in setting aside the wise provision the laws had made, taught his dearest friends to treat him as an enemy; insomuch that although in common discourse these conspirators were those that slew Caius, yet that, in reality, he lies now dead as perishing by his own self."

20. Now by this time the people in the theatre were arisen from their seats, and those that were within made a very great disturbance; the cause of which was this, that the spectators were too hasty in getting away. There was also one Aleyon, a physician, who hurried away, as if to cure those that were wounded, and under that pretense he sent those that were with him to fetch what things were necessary for the healing of those wounded persons, but in reality to get them clear of the present dangers they were in. Now the senate, during this interval, had met, and the people also assembled together in the accustomed form, and were both employed in searching after the murderers of Caius. The people did it very zealously, but the senate in appearance only; for there was present Valerius of Asia, one that had been consul; this man went to the people, as they were in disorder, and very uneasy that they could not yet discover who they were that had murdered the emperor; he was then earnestly asked by them all who it was that had done it. He replied, "I wish I had been the man." The consuls (7) also published an edict, wherein they accused Caius, and gave order to the people then got together, and to the soldiers, to go home; and gave the people hopes of the abatement of the oppressions they lay under; and promised the soldiers, if they lay quiet as they used to do, and would not go abroad to do mischief unjustly, that they would bestow rewards upon them; for there was reason to fear lest the city might suffer harm by their wild and ungovernable behavior, if they should once betake themselves to spoil the citizens, or plunder the temples. And now the whole multitude of the senators were assembled together, and especially those that had conspired to take away the life of Caius, who put on at this time an air of great assurance, and appeared with great magnanimity, as if the administration of the public affairs were already devolved upon them.

CHAPTER 2.

HOW THE SENATORS DETERMINED TO RESTORE THE DEMOCRACY; BUT THE SOLDIERS WERE FOR PRESERVING THE MONARCHY, CONCERNING THE SLAUGHTER OF CAIUS'S WIFE AND DAUGHTER. A CHARACTER OF CAIUS'S MORALS.

1. WHEN the public affairs were in this posture, Claudius was on the sudden hurried away out of his house; for the soldiers had a meeting together; and when they had debated about what was to be done, they saw that a democracy was incapable of managing such a vast weight of public affairs; and that if it should be set up, it would not be for their advantage; and in case any one of those already in the government should obtain the supreme power, it would in all respects be to their grief, if they were not assisting to him in this advancement; that it would therefore be right for them, while the public affairs were unsettled, to choose Claudius emperor, who was uncle to the deceased Caius, and of a superior dignity and worth to every one of those that were assembled together in the senate, both on account of the virtues of his ancestors, and of the learning he had acquired in his education; and who, if once settled in the empire, would reward them according to their deserts, and bestow largesses upon them. These were their consultations, and they executed the same immediately. Claudius was therefore seized upon suddenly by the soldiery. But Cneas Sentins Saturninns, although he understood that Claudius was seized, and that he intended to claim the government, unwillingly indeed in appearance, but in reality by his own free consent, stood up in the senate, and, without being dismayed, made an exhortatory oration to them, and such a one indeed as was fit for men of freedom and generosity, and spake thus:

2. "Although it be a thing incredible, O Romans! because of the great length of time, that so unexpected an event hath happened, yet are we now in possession of liberty. How long indeed this will last is uncertain, and lies at the disposal of the gods, whose grant it is; yet such it is as is sufficient to make us rejoice, and be happy for the present, although we may soon be deprived of it; for one hour is sufficient to those that

are exercised in virtue, wherein we may live with a mind accountable only to ourselves, in our own country, now free, and governed by such laws as this country once flourished under.

As for myself, I cannot remember our former time of liberty, as being born after it was gone; but I am beyond measure filled with joy at the thoughts of our present freedom. I also esteem those that were born and bred up in that our former liberty happy men, and that those men are worthy of no less esteem than the gods themselves who have given us a taste of it in this age; and I heartily wish that this quiet enjoyment of it, which we have at present, might continue to all ages.

However, this single day may suffice for our youth, as well as for us that are in years. It will seem an age to our old men, if they might die during its happy duration: it may also be for the instruction of the younger sort, what kind of virtue those men, from whose loins we are derived, were exercised in. As for ourselves, our business is, during the space of time, to live virtuously, than which nothing can be more to our advantage; which course of virtue it is alone that can preserve our liberty; for as to our ancient state, I have heard of it by the relations of others; but as to our later state, during my lifetime, I have known it by experience, and learned thereby what mischiefs tyrannies have brought upon this commonwealth, discouraging all virtue, and depriving persons of magnanimity of their liberty, and proving the teachers of flattery and slavish fear, because it leaves the public administration not to be governed by wise laws, but by the humor of those that govern.

For since Julius Caesar took it into his head to dissolve our democracy, and, by overbearing the regular system of our laws, to bring disorders into our administration, and to get above right and justice, and to be a slave to his own inclinations, there is no kind of misery but what hath tended to the subversion of this city; while all those that have succeeded him have striven one with another to overthrow the ancient laws of their country, and have left it destitute of such citizens as were of generous principles, because they thought it tended to their safety to have vicious men to converse withal, and not only to break the spirits of those that were best esteemed for their virtue, but to resolve upon their utter destruction.

Of all which emperors, who have been many in number, and who laid upon us insufferable hardships during the times of their government, this Caius, who hath been slain today, hath brought more terrible calamities upon us than did all the rest, not only by exercising his ungoverned rage upon his fellow citizens, but also upon his kindred and friends, and alike upon all others, and by inflicting still greater miseries upon them, as punishments, which they never deserved, he being equally furious against men and against the gods.

For tyrants are not content to gain their sweet pleasure, and this by acting injuriously, and in the vexation they bring both upon men's estates and their wives; but they look upon that to be their principal advantage, when they can utterly overthrow the entire families of their enemies; while all lovers of liberty are the enemies of tyranny. Nor can those that patiently endure what miseries they bring on them gain their friendship; for as they are conscious of the abundant mischiefs they have brought on these men, and how magnanimously they have borne their hard fortunes, they cannot but be sensible what evils they have done, and thence only depend on security from what they are suspicious of, if it may be in their power to take them quite out of the world.

Since, then, we are now gotten clear of such great misfortunes, and are only accountable to one another, (which form of government affords us the best assurance of our present concord, and promises us the best security from evil designs, and will be most for our own glory in settling the city in good order,) you

ought, every one of you in particular, to make provision for his own, and in general for the public utility: or, on the contrary, they may declare their dissent to such things as have been proposed, and this without any hazard of danger to come upon them, because they have now no lord set over them, who, without fear of punishment, could do mischief to the city, and had an uncontrollable power to take off those that freely declared their opinions.

Nor has any thing so much contributed to this increase of tyranny of late as sloth, and a timorous forbearance of contradicting the emperor's will; while men had an over-great inclination to the sweetness of peace, and had learned to live like slaves; and as many of us as either heard of intolerable calamities that happened at a distance from us, or saw the miseries that were near us, out of the dread of dying virtuously, endured a death joined with the utmost infamy. We ought, then, in the first place, to decree the greatest honors we are able to those that have taken off the tyrant, especially to Cherea Cassius; for this one man, with the assistance of the gods, hath, by his counsel and by his actions, been the procurer of our liberty.

Nor ought we to forget him now we have recovered our liberty, who, under the foregoing tyranny, took counsel beforehand, and beforehand hazarded himself for our liberties; but ought to decree him proper honors, and thereby freely declare that he from the beginning acted with our approbation. And certainly it is a very excellent thing, and what becomes free-men, to requite their benefactors, as this man hath been a benefactor to us all, though not at all like Cassius and Brutus, who slew Caius Julius [Caesar]; for those men laid the foundations of sedition and civil wars in our city; but this man, together with his slaughter of the tyrant, hath set our city free from all those sad miseries which arose from the tyranny." (8)

3. And this was the purport of Sentius's oration, (9) which was received with pleasure by the senators, and by as many of the equestrian order as were present. And now one Trebellius Maximus rose up hastily, and took off Sentius's finger a ring, which had a stone, with the image of Caius engraven upon it, and which, in his zeal in speaking, and his earnestness in doing what he was about, as it was supposed, he had forgotten to take off himself. This sculpture was broken immediately. But as it was now far in the night, Cherea demanded of the consuls the watchword, who gave him this word, Liberty. These facts were the subjects of admiration to themselves, and almost incredible; for it was a hundred years since the democracy had been laid aside, when this giving the watchword returned to the consuls; for before the city was subject to tyrants, they were the commanders of the soldiers. But when Cherea had received that watchword, he delivered it to those who were on the senate's side, which were four regiments, who esteemed the government without emperors to be preferable to tyranny. So these went away with their tribunes. The people also now departed very joyful, full of hope and of courage, as having recovered their former democracy, and were no longer under an emperor; and Cherea was in very great esteem with them.

4. And now Cherea was very uneasy that Caius's daughter and wife were still alive, and that all his family did not perish with him, since whosoever was left of them must be left for the ruin of the city and of the laws. Moreover, in order to finish this matter with the utmost zeal, and in order to satisfy his hatred of Caius, he sent Julius Lupus, one of the tribunes, to kill Caius's wife and daughter. They proposed this office to Lupus as to a kinsman of Clement, that he might be so far a partaker of this murder of the tyrant, and might rejoice in the virtue of having assisted his fellow citizens, and that he might appear to have been a partaker with those that were first in their designs against him. Yet did this action appear to some of the conspirators to be too cruel, as to this using such severity to a woman, because Caius did more indulge his own ill-nature than use her advice in all that he did; from which ill-nature it was that the city was in so

desperate a condition with the miseries that were brought on it, and the flower of the city was destroyed. But others accused her of giving her consent to these things; nay, they ascribed all that Caius had done to her as the cause of it, and said she had given a potion to Caius, which had made him obnoxious to her, and had tied him down to love her by such evil methods; insomuch that she, having rendered him distracted, was become the author of all the mischiefs that had befallen the Romans, and that habitable world which was subject to them. So that at length it was determined that she must die; nor could those of the contrary opinion at all prevail to have her saved; and Lupus was sent accordingly. Nor was there any delay made in executing what he went about, but he was subservient to those that sent him on the first opportunity, as desirous to be no way blameable in what might be done for the advantage of the people. So when he was come into the palace, he found Cesonia, who was Caius's wife, lying by her husband's dead body, which also lay down on the ground, and destitute of all such things as the law allows to the dead, and all over herself besmeared with the blood of her husband's wounds, and bewailing the great affliction she was under, her daughter lying by her also; and nothing else was heard in these her circumstances but her complaint of Caius, as if he had not regarded what she had often told him of beforehand; which words of hers were taken in a different sense even at that time, and are now esteemed equally ambiguous by those that hear of them, and are still interpreted according to the different inclinations of people. Now some said that the words denoted that she had advised him to leave off his mad behavior and his barbarous cruelty to the citizens, and to govern the public with moderation and virtue, lest he should perish by the same way, upon their using him as he had used them. But some said, that as certain words had passed concern

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