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SERTORIUS

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by Plutarch

translated by John Dryden

SERTORIUS

IT is no great wonder if in long process of time, while fortune takes her course hither and thither, numerous coincidences should spontaneously occur. If the number and variety of subjects to be wrought upon be infinite, it is all the more easy for fortune, with such an abundance of material, to effect this similarity of results. Or if, on the other hand, events are limited to the combinations of some finite number, then of necessity the same must often recur, and in the same sequence. There are people who take a pleasure in making collections of all such fortuitous occurrences that they have heard or read of, as look like works of a rational power and design; they observe, for example, that two eminent persons whose names were Attis, the one a Syrian, the other of Arcadia, were both slain by a wild boar; that of two whose names were Actaeon, the one was torn in pieces by his dogs, the other by his lovers; that of two famous Scipios, the one overthrew the Carthaginians in war, the other totally ruined and destroyed them; the city of Troy was the first time taken by Hercules for the horses promised him by Laomedon, the second time by Agamemnon, by means of the celebrated great wooden horse, and the third time by Charidemus, by occasion of a horse falling down at the gate, which hindered the Trojans, so that they could not shut them soon enough; and of two cities which take their names from the most agreeable odoriferous plants, Ios and Smyrna, the one from a violet, the other from myrrh, the poet Homer is reported to have been born in the one and to have died in the other. And so to these instances let us further add, that the most warlike commanders, and most remarkable for exploits of skilful stratagem, have had but one eye; as Philip, Antigonus, Hannibal, and Sertorius, whose life and actions we describe at present; of whom, indeed, we might truly say, that he was more continent than Philip, more faithful to his friends than Antigonus, and more merciful to his enemies than Hannibal; and that for prudence and judgment he gave place to none of them, but in fortune was inferior to them all. Yet though he had continually in her a far more difficult adversary to contend against than his open enemies, he nevertheless maintained his ground, with the military skill of Metellus, the boldness of Pompey, the success of Sylla, and the power of the Roman people, all to be encountered by one who was a banished man and a stranger at the head of a body of barbarians. Among Greek commanders, Eumenes of Cardia may be best compared with him; they were both of them men born for command, for warfare, and for stratagem; both banished from their countries, and holding command over strangers; both had fortune for their adversary, in their last days so harshly so, that they were both betrayed and murdered by those who served them, and with whom they had formerly overcome their enemies.

Quintus Sertorius was of a noble family, born in the city of Nursia, in the country of the Sabines; his father died when he was young, and he was carefully and decently educated by his mother, whose name was Rhea, and whom he appears to have extremely loved and honoured. He paid some attention to the study of oratory and pleading in his youth, and acquired some reputation and influence in Rome by his eloquence;

but the splendour of his actions in arms, and his successful achievements in the wars, drew off his ambition in that direction.

At his first beginning, he served under Caepio, when the Cimbri and Teutones invaded Gaul; where the Romans fighting unsuccessfully, and being put to flight, he was wounded in many parts of his body, and lost his horse, yet, nevertheless, swam across the river Rhone in his armour, with his breastplate and shield, bearing himself up against the violence of the current; so strong and so well inured to hardship was his body.

The second time that the Cimbri and Teutones came down with some hundreds of thousands, threatening death and destruction to all, when it was no small piece of service for a Roman soldier to keep his ranks and obey his commander, Sertorius undertook, while Marius led the army, to spy out the enemy's camp. Procuring a Celtic dress, and acquainting himself with the ordinary expressions of their language requisite for common intercourse, he threw himself in amongst the barbarians; where having carefully seen with his own eyes, or having been fully informed by persons upon the place of all their most important concerns, he returned to Marius, from whose hands he received the rewards of valour; and afterwards giving frequent proof both of conduct and courage in all the following war, he was advanced to places of honour and trust under his general. After the wars with the Cimbri and Teutones, he was sent into Spain, having the command of a thousand men under Didius, the Roman general, and wintered in the country of the Celtiberians, in the city of Castulo, where the soldiers enjoying great plenty, and growing insolent and continually drinking, the inhabitants despised them and sent for aid by night to the Gyrisoenians, their near neighbours, who fell upon the Romans in their lodgings and slew a great number of them. Sertorius, with a few of his soldiers, made his way out, and rallying together the rest who escaped, he marched round about the walls, and finding the gate open, by which the Gyrisoenians had made their secret entrance, he gave not them the same opportunity, but placing a guard at the gate, and seizing upon all quarters of the city, he slew all who were of age to bear arms, and then ordering his soldiers to lay aside their weapons and put off their own clothes, and put on the accoutrements of the barbarians, he commanded them to follow him to the city from whence the men came who had made this night attack upon the Romans. And thus deceiving the Gyrisoenians with the sight of their own armour, he found the gates of their city open, and took a great number prisoners, who came out thinking to meet their friends and fellow-citizens come home from a successful expedition. Most of them were thus slain by the Romans at their own gates, and the rest within yielded up themselves and were sold for slaves.

This action made Sertorius highly renowned throughout all Spain, and as soon as he returned to Rome he was appointed quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul, at a very seasonable moment for his country, the Marsian war being on the point of breaking out. Sertorius was ordered to raise soldiers and provide arms, which he performed with a diligence and alacrity, so contrasting with the feebleness and slothfulness of other officers of his age, that he got the repute of a man whose life would be one of action. Nor did he relinquish the part of a soldier, now that he had arrived at the dignity of a commander, but performed wonders with his own hands, and never sparing himself, but exposing his body freely in all conflicts, he lost one of his eyes. This he always esteemed an honour to him; observing that others do not continually carry about with them the marks and testimonies of their valour, but must often lay aside their chains of gold, their spears and crowns; whereas his ensigns of honour, and the manifestations of his courage, always remained with him, and those

who beheld his misfortune must at the same time recognize his merits. The people also paid him the respect he deserved, and when he came into the theatre, received him with plaudits and joyful acclamations, an honour rarely bestowed even on persons of advanced standing and established reputation. Yet, notwithstanding this popularity, when he stood to be tribune of the people, he was disappointed, and lost the place, being opposed by the party of Sylla, which seems to have been the principal cause of his subsequent enmity to Sylla.

After that Marius was overcome by Sylla and fled into Africa, and Sylla had left Italy to go to the wars against Mithridates, and of the two consuls Octavius and Cinna, Octavius remained steadfast to the policy of Sylla, but Cinna, desirous of a new revolution, attempted to recall the lost interest of Marius, Sertorius joined Cinna's party, more particularly as he saw that Octavius was not very capable, and was also suspicious of any one that was a friend to Marius. When a great battle was fought between the two consuls in the forum, Octavius overcame, and Cinna and Sertorius, having lost not less than ten thousand men, left the city, and gaining over most part of the troops who were dispersed about and remained still in many parts of Italy, they in a short time mustered up a force against Octavius sufficient to give him battle again, and Marius, also, now coming by sea out of Africa, proffered himself to serve under Cinna, as a private soldier under his consul and commander.

Most were for the immediate reception of Marius, but Sertorius openly declared against it, whether he thought that Cinna would not now pay as much attention to himself, when a man of higher military repute was present, or feared that the violence of Marius would bring all things to confusion, by his boundless wrath and vengeance after victory. He insisted upon it with Cinna that they were already victorious, that there remained little to be done, and that if they admitted Marius, he would deprive them of the glory and advantage of the war, as there was no man less easy to deal with, or less to be trusted in, as a partner in power. Cinna answered, that Sertorius rightly judged the affair, but that he himself was at a loss, and ashamed, and knew not how to reject him, after he had sent for him to share in his fortunes. To which Sertorius immediately replied, that he had thought that Marius came into Italy of his own accord, and therefore had deliberated as to what might be most expedient, but that Cinna ought not so much as to have questioned whether he should accept him whom he had already invited, but should have honourably received and employed him, for his word once passed left no room for debate. Thus Marius being sent for by Cinna, and their forces being divided into three parts, under Cinna, Marius, and Sertorius, the war was brought to a successful conclusion; but those about Cinna and Marius committing all manner of insolence and cruelty, made the Romans think the evils of war a golden time in comparison. On the contrary, it is reported of Sertorius that he never slew any man in his anger to satisfy his own private revenge, nor ever insulted over any one whom he had overcome, but was much offended with Marius, and often privately entreated Cinna to use his power more moderately. And in the end, when the slaves whom Marius had freed at his landing to increase his army, being made not only his fellow-soldiers in the war, but also now his guard in his usurpation, enriched and powerful by his favour, either by the command or permission of Marius, or by their own lawless violence, committed all sorts of crimes, killed their masters, ravished their masters' wives and abused their children, their conduct appeared so intolerable to Sertorius that he slew the whole body of them, four thousand in number, commanding his soldiers to shoot them down with their javelins, as they lay encamped together.

Afterwards when Marius died, and Cinna shortly after was slain, when the younger Marius made himself consul against Sertorius's wishes and contrary to law, when Carbo, Norbanus, and Scipio fought unsuccessfully against Sylla, now advancing to Rome, when much was lost by the cowardice and remissness of the commanders, but more by the treachery of their party, when with the want of prudence in the chief leaders, all went so ill that his presence could do no good, in the end when Sylla had placed his camp near to Scipio, and by pretending friendship, and putting him in hopes of a peace, corrupted his army, and Scipio could not be made sensible of this, although often forewarned of it by Sertorius- at last he utterly despaired of Rome, and hasted into Spain, that by taking possession there beforehand, he might secure a refuge to his friends from their misfortunes at home. Having bad weather in his journey, and travelling through mountainous countries, and the inhabitants stopping the way, and demanding a toll and money for passage, those who were with him were out of all patience at the indignity and shame it would be for a proconsul of Rome to pay tribute to a crew of wretched barbarians. But he little regarded their censure, and slighting that which had only the appearance of an indecency, told them he must buy time, the most precious of all things to those who go upon great enterprises; and pacifying the barbarous people with money, he hastened his journey, and took possession of Spain, a country flourishing and populous, abounding with young men fit to bear arms; but on account of the insolence and covetousness of the governors from time to time sent thither from Rome they had generally an aversion to Roman supremacy. He, however, soon gained the affection of their nobles by intercourse with them, and the good opinion of the people by remitting their taxes. But that which won him most popularity was his exempting them from finding lodgings for the soldiers, when he commanded his army to take up their winter quarters outside the cities, and to pitch their camp in the suburbs; and when he himself, first of all, caused his own tent to be raised without the walls. Yet not being willing to rely totally upon the good inclination of the inhabitants he armed all the Romans who lived in those countries that were of military age, and undertook the building of ships and the making of all sorts of warlike engines, by which means he kept the cities in due obedience, showing himself gentle in all peaceful business, and at the same time formidable to his enemies by his great preparations for war.

As soon as he was informed that Sylla had made himself master of Rome, and that the party which sided with Marius and Carbo was going to destruction, he expected that some commander with a considerable army would speedily come against him, and therefore sent away Julius Salinator immediately, with six thousand men fully armed, to fortify and defend the passes of the Pyrenees. And Caius Annus not long after being sent out by Sylla, finding Julius unassailable, sat down short at the foot of the mountains in perplexity. But a certain Calpurnius, surnamed Lanarius, having treacherously slain Julius, and his soldiers then forsaking the heights of the Pyrenees, Caius Annus advanced with large numbers and drove before him all who endeavoured to hinder his march. Sertorius, also, not being strong enough to give him battle, retreated with three thousand men into New Carthage, where he took shipping, and crossed the seas into Africa. And coming near the coast of Mauritania, his men went on shore to water, and straggling about negligently, the natives fell upon them and slew a great number. This new misfortune forced him to sail back again into Spain, whence he was also repulsed, and, some Cilician private ships joining with him, they made for the island of Pityussa, where they landed and overpowered the garrison placed

there by Annius, who, however, came not long after with a great fleet of ships and five thousand soldiers. And Sertorius made ready to fight him by sea, although his ships were not built for strength, but for lightness and swift sailing; but a violent west wind raised such a sea that many of them were run aground and shipwrecked, and he himself, with a few vessels, being kept from putting further out to sea by the fury of the weather, and from landing by the power of his enemies, were tossed about painfully for ten days together, amidst the boisterous and adverse waves.

He escaped with difficulty, and after the wind ceased, ran for certain desert islands scattered in those seas, affording no water, and after passing a night there, making out to sea again, he went through the straits of Cadiz, and sailing outward, keeping the Spanish shore on his right hand, landed a little above the mouth of the river Baetis, where it falls into the Atlantic Sea, and gives the name to that part of Spain. Here he met with seamen recently arrived from the Atlantic islands, two in number, divided from one another only by a narrow channel, and distant from the coast of Africa ten thousand furlongs. These are called the Islands of the Blest; rain falls there seldom, and in moderate showers, but for the most part they have gentle breezes, bringing along with them soft dews, which render the soil not only rich for ploughing and planting, but so abundantly fruitful that it produces spontaneously an abundance of delicate fruits, sufficient to feed the inhabitants, who may here enjoy all things without trouble or labour. The seasons of the year are temperate, and the transitions from one to another so moderate that the air is almost always serene and pleasant. The rough northerly and easterly winds which blow from the coasts of Europe and Africa, dissipated in the vast open space, utterly lose their force before they reach the islands. The soft western and southerly winds which breathe upon them sometimes produce gentle sprinkling showers, which they convey along with them from the sea, but more usually bring days of moist, bright weather, cooling and gently fertilizing the soil, so that the firm belief prevails, even among the barbarians, that this is the seat of the blessed and that these are the Elysian Fields celebrated by Homer.

When Sertorius heard this account, he was seized with a wonderful passion for these islands, and had an extreme desire to go and live there in peace and quietness, and safe from oppression and unending wars; but his inclinations being perceived by the Cilician pirates, who desired not peace nor quiet, but riches and spoils, they immediately forsook him and sailed away into Africa to assist Ascalis, the son of Iphtha, and to help to restore him to his kingdom of Mauritania. Their sudden departure noways discouraged Sertorius; he presently resolved to assist the enemies of Ascalis, and by this new adventure trusted to keep his soldiers together. who from this might conceive new hopes, and a prospect of a new scene of action. His arrival in Mauritania being very acceptable to the Moors, he lost no time, but immediately giving battle to Ascalis, beat him out of the field and besieged him; and Paccianus being sent by Sylla, with a powerful supply, to raise the siege, Sertorius slew him in the field, gained over all his forces, and took the city of Tingis, into which Ascalis and his brothers were fled for refuge. The Africans tell that Antaeus was buried in this city, and Sertorius had the grave opened, doubting the story because of the prodigious size, and finding there his body, in effect, it is said, full sixty cubits long, he was infinitely astonished, offered sacrifice, and heaped up the tomb again, gave his confirmation to the story, and added new honours to the memory of Antaeus. The Africans tell that after the death of Antaeus, his wife Tinga lived with Hercules, and had a son by him

called Sophax, who was king of these countries, and gave his mother's name to this city, whose son, also, was Diodorus, a great conqueror, who brought the greatest part of the Libyan tribes under his subjection, with an army of Greeks, raised out of the colonies of the Olbians and Myceneans placed here by Hercules. Thus much I may mention for the sake of King Juba, of all monarchs the greatest student of history whose ancestors are said to have sprung from Diodorus and Sophax.

When Sertorius had made himself absolute master of the whole country, he acted with great fairness to those who had confided in him, and who yielded to his mercy; he restored to them their property, cities, and government, accepting only of such acknowledgments as they themselves freely offered. And whilst he considered which way next to turn his arms, the Lusitanians sent ambassadors to desire him to be their general; for being terrified with the Roman power, and finding the necessity of having a commander of great authority and experience in war, being also sufficiently assured of his worth and valour by those who had formerly known him, they were desirous to commit themselves especially to his care. And in fact Sertorius is said to have been of a temper unassailable either by fear or pleasure, in adversity and dangers undaunted, and noways puffed up with prosperity. In straightforward fighting, no commander in his time was more bold and daring, and in whatever was to be performed in war by stratagem, secrecy, or surprise, if any strong place was to be secured, any pass to be gained speedily, for deceiving and overreaching an enemy, there was no man equal to him in subtlety and skill. In bestowing rewards and conferring honours upon those who had performed good service in the wars, he was bountiful and magnificent, and was no less sparing and moderate in inflicting punishment. It is true that that piece of harshness and cruelty which he executed in the latter part of his days upon the Spanish hostages seems to argue that his clemency was not natural to him, but only worn as a dress, and employed upon calculation, as his occasion or necessity required. As to my own opinion, I am persuaded that pure virtue, established by reason and judgment, can never be totally perverted or changed into its opposite, by any misfortune whatever. Yet I think it at the same time possible that virtuous inclinations and natural good qualities may, when unworthily oppressed by calamities, show, with change of fortune, some change and alteration of their temper; and thus I conceive it happened to Sertorius, who, when prosperity failed him, became exasperated by his disasters against those who had done him wrong.

The Lusitanians having sent for Sertorius, he left Africa, and being made general with absolute authority, he put all in order amongst them, and brought the neighbouring parts of Spain under subjection. Most of the tribes voluntarily submitted themselves, won by the fame of his clemency and of his courage, and, to some extent, also, he availed himself of cunning artifices of his own devising to impose upon them and gain influence over them. Amongst which, certainly, that of the hind was not the least. Spanus, a countryman who lived in those parts, meeting by chance a hind that had recently calved, flying from the hunters, let the dam go, and pursuing the fawn, took it, being wonderfully pleased with the rarity of the colour, which was all milk-white. As at that time Sertorius was living in the neighbourhood, and accepted gladly any presents of fruit, fowl, or venison that the country afforded, and rewarded liberally those who presented them, the countryman brought him his young hind, which he took and was well pleased with at the first sight; but when in time he had made it so tame and gentle that it would come when he called, and follow him wheresoever he went, and could endure the noise and tumult of the

camp, knowing well that uncivilized people are naturally prone to superstition, by little and little he raised it into something preternatural, saying that it was given him by the goddess Diana, and that it revealed to him many secrets. He added, also, further contrivances. If he had received at any time private intelligence that the enemies had made an incursion into any part of the districts under his command, or had solicited any city to revolt, he pretended that the hind had informed him of it in his sleep, and charged him to keep his forces in readiness. Or if again he had noticed that any of the commanders under him had got a victory, he would hide the messengers and bring forth the hind crowned with flowers, for joy of the good news that was to come, and would encourage them to rejoice and sacrifice to the gods for the good account they should soon receive of their prosperous success.

By such practices, he brought them to be more tractable and obedient in all things; for now they thought themselves no longer to be led by a stranger, but rather conducted by a god, and the more so, as the facts themselves seemed to bear witness to it, his power, contrary to all expectation or probability, continually increasing. For with two thousand six hundred men, whom for honour's sake he called Romans, combined with seven hundred Africans, who landed with him when he first entered Lusitania, together with four thousand targeteers and seven hundred horse of the Lusitanians themselves, he made war against four Roman generals, who commanded a hundred and twenty thousand foot, six thousand horse, two thousand archers and slingers, and had cities innumerable in their power; whereas at the first he had not above twenty cities in all. From this weak and slender beginning, he raised himself to the command of large nations of men, and the possession of numerous cities; and of the Roman commanders who were sent against him, he overthrew Cotta in a sea-fight, in the channel near the town of Mellaria; he routed Fufidius, the governor of Baetica, with the loss of two thousand Romans, near the banks of the river Baetis; Lucius Domitius, proconsul of the other province of Spain, was overthrown by one of his lieutenants; Thoranius, another commander sent against him by Metellus with a great force, was slain, and Metellus, one of the greatest and most approved Roman generals then living, by a series of defeats, was reduced to such extremities, that Lucius Manlius came to his assistance out of Gallia Narbonensis, and Pompey the Great was sent from Rome itself in all haste with considerable forces. Nor did Metellus know which way to turn himself, in a war with such a bold and ready commander, who was continually molesting him, and yet could not be brought to a set battle, but by the swiftness and dexterity of his Spanish soldiery was enabled to shift and adapt himself to any change of circumstances. Metellus had had experience in battles fought by regular legions of soldiers, fully armed and drawn up in due order into a heavy standing phalanx, admirably trained for encountering and overpowering an enemy who came to close combat, hand to hand, but entirely unfit for climbing among the hills, and competing incessantly with the swift attacks and retreats of a set of fleet mountaineers, or to endure hunger and thirst and live exposed like them to the wind and weather, without fire or covering.

Besides, being now in years, and having been formerly engaged in many fights and dangerous conflicts, he had grown inclined to a more remiss, easy, and luxurious life, and was the less able to contend with Sertorius who was in the prime of his strength and vigour, and had a body wonderfully fitted for war, being strong, active, and temperate, continually accustomed to endure hard labour, to take long, tedious journeys, to pass many nights together without sleep, to eat little, and to be satisfied with very coarse fare, and who was never

stained with the least excess in wine, even when he was most at leisure. What leisure time he allowed himself he spent in hunting and riding about, and so made himself thoroughly acquainted with every passage for escape when he would fly, and for overtaking and intercepting a pursuit, and gained a perfect knowledge of where he could and where he could not go. Insomuch that Metellus suffered all the inconveniences of defeat, although he earnestly desired to fight, and Sertorius, though he refused the field, reaped all the advantages of a conqueror. For he hindered them from foraging, and cut them off from water; if they advanced, he was nowhere to be found; if they stayed in any place and encamped, he continually molested and alarmed them; if they besieged any town, he presently appeared and besieged them again, and put them to extremities for want of necessaries. Thus he so wearied out the Roman army that when Sertorius challenged Metellus to fight singly with him, they commended it, and cried out it was a fair offer, a Roman to fight against a Roman, and a general against a general; and when Metellus refused the challenge, they reproached him. Metellus derided and contemned this, and rightly so; for, as Theophrastus observes, a general should die like a general, and not like a skirmisher. But perceiving that the town of the Langobritae, which gave great assistance to Sertorius, might easily be taken for want of water, as there was but one well within the walls, and the besieger would be master of the springs and fountains in the suburbs, he advanced against the place, expecting to carry it in two days' time, there being no more water, and gave command to his soldiers to take five days' provision only. Sertorius, however, resolving to send speedy relief, ordered two thousand skins to be filled with water, naming a considerable sum of money for the carriage of every skin; and many Spaniards and Moors undertaking the work, he chose out those who were the strongest and swiftest of foot, and sent them through the mountains, with order that when they had delivered the water, they should convey away privately all those who would be least serviceable in the siege, that there might be water sufficient for the defendants. As soon as Metellus understood this, he was disturbed, as he had already consumed most part of the necessary provisions for his army, but he sent out Aquinus with six thousand soldiers to fetch in fresh supplies. But Sertorius having notice of it, laid an ambush for him, and having sent out beforehand three thousand men to take post in a thickly wooded water-course, with these he attacked the rear of Aquinus in his return, while he himself, charging him in the front, destroyed part of his army, and took the rest prisoners, Aquinus only escaping, after the loss of both his horse and his armour. And Metellus, being forced shamefully to raise the siege, withdrew amidst the laughter and contempt of the Spaniards; while Sertorius became yet more the object of their esteem and admiration.

He was also highly honoured for his introducing discipline and good order amongst them, for he altered their furious savage manner of fighting, and brought them to make use of the Roman armour, taught them to keep their ranks, and observe signals and watchwards; and out of a confused number of thieves and robbers he constituted a regular, well-disciplined army. He bestowed silver and gold upon them liberally to gild and adorn their helmets, he had their shields worked with various figures and designs, he brought them into the mode of wearing flowered and embroidered cloaks and coats, and by supplying money for these purposes, and joining with them in all improvements, he won the hearts of all. That, however, which delighted them most was the care that he took of their children. He sent for all the boys of noblest parentage out of all their tribes, and placed them in the great city of Osca, where he appointed masters to instruct them in the

Grecian and Roman learning. that when they came to be men, they might, as he professed, be fitted to share with him in authority, and in conducting the government, although under this pretext he really made them hostages. However, their fathers were wonderfully pleased to see their children going daily to the schools in good order, handsomely dressed in gowns edged with purple, and that Sertorius paid for their lessons, examined them often, distributed rewards to the most deserving, and gave them the golden bosses to hang about their necks, which the Romans called bullae.

There being a custom in Spain that when a commander was slain in battle, those who attended his person fought it out till they all died with him, which the inhabitants of those countries called an offering, or libation, there were few commanders that had any considerable guard or number of attendants; but Sertorius was followed by many thousands who offered themselves, and vowed to spend their blood with his. And it is told that when his army was defeated near a city in Spain, and the enemy pressed hard upon them, the Spaniards, with no care for themselves, but being totally solicitous to save Sertorius, took him upon their shoulders and passed him from one to another, till they carried him into the city, and only when they had thus placed their general in safety, provided afterwards each man for his own security.

Nor were the Spaniards alone ambitious to serve him, but the Roman soldiers, also, that came out of Italy, were impatient to be under his command; and when Perpenna Vento, who was of the same faction with Sertorius, came into Spain with a quantity of money and a large number of troops, and designed to make war against Metellus on his own account, his own soldiers opposed it, and talked continually of Sertorius, much to the mortification of Perpenna, who was puffed up with the grandeur of his family and his riches. And when they afterwards received tidings that Pompey was passing the Pyrenees, they took up their arms laid hold on their ensigns, called upon Perpenna to lead them to Sertorius, and threatened him that if he refused they would go without him and place themselves under a commander who was able to defend himself and those that served him. And so Perpenna was obliged to yield to their desires, and joining Sertorius, added to his army three-and-fifty cohorts.

When now all the cities on this side of the river Ebro also united their forces together under his command, his army grew great, for they flocked together and flowed in upon him from all quarters. But when they continually cried out to attack the enemy, and were impatient of delay, their inexperienced, disorderly rashness caused Sertorius much trouble, who at first strove to restrain them with reason and good counsel; but when he perceived them refractory and unseasonably violent, he gave way to their impetuous desires, and permitted them to engage with the enemy, in such sort that they might, being repulsed, yet not totally routed become more obedient to his commands for the future. Which happening as he had anticipated, he soon rescued them, and brought them safe into his camp. After a few days, being willing to encourage them again, when he had called all his army together, he caused two horses to be brought into the field, one old, feeble, lean animal the other a lusty, strong horse, with a remarkably thick and long tail. Near the lean one he placed a tall, strong man, and near the strong young horse a weak, despicable-looking fellow; and at a sign given, the strong man took hold of the weak horse's tail with both his hands, and drew it to him with his whole force, as if he would pull it off; the other, the weak man, in the meantime, set to work to pluck off hair by hair from the great horse's tail. When the strong man had given trouble enough to himself in vain, and sufficient diversion to the company, and had abandoned his attempt, whilst the

weak, pitiful fellow in a short time and with little pains had left not a hair on the great horse's tail, Sertorius rose up and spoke to his army. "You see, fellow-soldiers, that perseverance is more prevailing than violence, and that many things which cannot be overcome when they are together, yield themselves up when taken little by little. Assiduity and persistence are irresistible, and in time overthrow and destroy the greatest powers whatever. Time being the favourable friend and assistant of those who use their judgment to await his occasions, and the destructive enemy of those who are unreasonably urging and pressing forward." With a frequent use of such words and such devices, he soothed the fierceness of the barbarous people, and taught them to attend and watch for their opportunities.

Of all his remarkable exploits, none raised greater admiration than that which he put in practice against the Characitanians. These are a people beyond the river Tagus, who inhabit neither cities nor towns, but live in a vast high hill, within the deep dens and caves of the rocks, the mouths of which open all towards the north. The country below is of a soil resembling a light clay, so loose as easily to break into powder, and is not firm enough to bear any one that treads upon it, and if you touch it in the least it flies about like ashes or unslacked lime. In any danger of war, these people descended into their caves, and carrying in their booty and prey along with them, stayed quietly within, secure from every attack. And when Sertorius, leaving Metellus some distance off, had placed his camp near this hill, they slighted and despised him, imagining that he retired into these parts, being overthrown by the Romans. And whether out of anger or resentment, or out of his unwillingness to be thought to fly from his enemies, early in the morning he rode up to view the situation of the place. But finding there was no way to come at it, as he rode about, threatening them in vain and disconcerted, he took notice that the wind raised the dust and carried it up towards the caves of the Characitanians, the mouths of which, as I said before, opened towards the north; and the northern wind, which some call Caecias, prevailing most in those parts, coming up out of moist plains or mountains covered with snow, at this particular time, in the heat of summer, being further supplied and increased by the melting of the ice in the northern regions, blew a delightful fresh gale, cooling and refreshing the Characitanians and their cattle all the day long. Sertorius, considering well all circumstances in which either the information of the inhabitants or his own experience had instructed him, commanded his soldiers to shovel up a great quantity of this light, dusty earth, to heap it up together, and make a mound of it over against the hill in which those barbarous people resided, who, imagining that all this preparation was for raising a mound to get at them, only mocked and laughed at it. However, he continued the work till the evening, and brought his soldiers back into their camp.

The next morning a gentle breeze at first arose, and moved the lightest parts of the earth and dispersed it about as the chaff before the wind; but when the sun coming to be higher, the strong northerly wind had covered the hills with the dust, the soldiers came and turned this mound of earth over and over, and broke the hard clods in pieces, whilst others on horseback rode through it backward and forward, and raised a cloud of dust into the air: there with the wind the whole of it was carried away and blown into the dwellings of the Characitanians, all lying open to the north. And there being no other vent or breathing-place than that through which the Caecias rushed in upon them, it quickly blinded their eyes and filled their lungs, and all but choked them, whilst they strove to draw in the rough air mingled with dust and powdered earth. Nor were they able,

with all they could do, to hold out above two days, but yielding up themselves on the third, adding, by their defeat, not so much of the power of Sertorius, as to his renown, in proving that he was able to conquer places by art, which were impregnable by the force of arms.

So long as he had to do with Metellus, he was thought to owe his successes to his opponent's age and slow temper, which were ill suited for coping with the daring and activity of one who commanded a light army more like a band of robbers than regular soldiers. But when Pompey also passed over the Pyrenees, and Sertorius pitched his camp near him, and offered and himself accepted every occasion by which military skill could be put to the proof, and in this contest of dexterity was found to have the better, both in baffling his enemy's designs and in counter-scheming himself, the fame of him now spread even to Rome itself, as the most expert commander of his time. For the renown of Pompey was not small, who had already won much honour by his achievements in the wars of Sylla, from whom he received the title of Magnus, and was called Pompey the Great; and who had risen to the honour of a triumph before the beard had grown on his face. And many cities which were under Sertorius were on the very eve of revolting and going over to Pompey, when they were deterred from it by that great action, amongst others, which he performed near the city of Lauron, contrary to the expectation of all.

For Sertorius had laid siege to Lauron, and Pompey came with his whole army to relieve it; and there being a hill near this city very advantageously situated, they both made haste to take it. Sertorius was beforehand, and took possession of it first, and Pompey, having drawn down his forces, was not sorry that it had thus happened, imagining that he had hereby enclosed his enemy between his own army and the city, and sent in a messenger to the citizens of Lauron, to bid them be of good courage, and to come upon their walls, where they might see their besieger besieged. Sertorius, perceiving their intentions, smiled, and said he would now teach Sylla's scholar, for so he called Pompey in derision, that it was the part of a general to look as well behind him as before him, and at the same time showed them six thousand soldiers, whom he had left in his former camp, from whence he marched out to take the hill, where, if Pompey should assault him, they might fall upon his rear. Pompey discovered this too late and not daring to give battle, for fear of being encompassed, and yet being ashamed to desert his friends and confederates in their extreme danger, was thus forced to sit still, and see them ruined before his face. For the besieged despaired of relief, and delivered up themselves to Sertorius, who spared their lives and granted them their liberty, but burnt their city, not out of anger or cruelty, for of all commanders that ever were Sertorius seemed least of all to have indulged these passions, but only for the greater shame and confusion of the admirers of Pompey, and that it might be reported amongst the Spaniards, that though he had been so close to the fire which burnt down the city of his confederates as actually to feel the heat of it, he still had not dared to make any opposition.

Sertorius, however, sustained many losses; but he always maintained himself and those immediately with him undefeated, and it was by other commanders under him that he suffered; and he was more admired for being able to repair his losses, and for recovering the victory, than the Roman generals against him for gaining these advantages; as at the battle of Sucro against Pompey, and at the battle near Tutia, against him and Metellus together. The battle near the Sucro was fought, it is said, through the impatience of Pompey, lest Metellus should share with him in the victory, Sertorius being also willing to engage Pompey before the arrival of Metellus,

Sertorius delayed the time till the evening, considering that the darkness of the night would be a disadvantage to his enemies, whether flying or pursuing, being strangers, and having no knowledge of the country.

When the fight began, it happened that Sertorius was not placed directly against Pompey, but against Afranius, who had command of the left wing of the Roman army, as he commanded the right wing of his own; but when he understood that his left wing began to give way, and yield to the assault of Pompey, he committed the care of his right wing to other commanders, and made haste to relieve those in distress; and rallying some that were flying, and encouraging others that still kept their ranks, he renewed the fight, and attacked the enemy in their pursuit so effectively as to cause a considerable rout, and brought Pompey into great danger of his life. For after being wounded and losing his horse, he escaped unexpectedly. For the Africans with Sertorius, who took Pompey's horse, set out with gold, and covered with rich trappings, fell out with one another; and upon the dividing of the spoil, gave over the pursuit. Afranius, in the meantime, as soon as Sertorius had left his right wing, to assist the other part of his army, overthrew all that opposed him; and pursuing them to their camp, fell in together with them, and plundered them till it was dark night; knowing nothing of Pompey's overthrow, nor being able to restrain his soldiers from pillaging; when Sertorius, returning with victory, fell upon him and upon his men, who were all in disorder, and slew many of them. And the next morning he came into the field again well armed, and offered battle, but perceiving that Metellus was near, he drew off, and returned to his camp, saying, "If this old woman had not come up, I would have whipped that boy soundly, and sent him to Rome."

He was much concerned that his white hind could nowhere be found; as he was thus destitute of an admirable contrivance to encourage the barbarous people at a time when he most stood in need of it. Some men, however, wandering in the night, chanced to meet her, and knowing her by her colour, took her; to whom Sertorius promised a good reward, if they would tell no one of it; and immediately shut her up. A few days after, he appeared in public with a very cheerful look, and declared to the chief men of the country that the gods had foretold him in a dream that some great good fortune should shortly attend him; and, taking his seat, proceeded to answer the petitions of those who applied themselves to him. The keepers of the hind, who were not far off, now let her loose, and she no sooner espied Sertorius, but she came leaping with great joy to his feet, laid her head upon his knees, and licked his hands, as she formerly used to do. And Sertorius stroking her, and making much of her again, with that tenderness that the tears stood in his eyes, all that were present were immediately filled with wonder and astonishment, and accompanying him to his house with loud shouts for joy, looked upon him as a person above the rank of mortal men, and highly beloved by the gods; and were great courage and hope for the future.

When he had reduced his enemies to the last extremity for want of provision, he was forced to give them battle, in the plains near Saguntum, to hinder them from foraging and plundering the country. Both parties fought gloriously. Memmius, the best commander in Pompey's army, was slain in the heat of the battle. Sertorius overthrew all before him, and with great slaughter of his enemies pressed forward towards Metellus. This old commander, making a resistance beyond what could be expected from one of his years, was wounded with a lance an occurrence which filled all who either saw it or heard of it with shame, to be thought to have left their general in distress, but at the same time to provoke them to revenge and

fury against their enemies; they covered Metellus with their shields, and brought him off in safety, and then valiantly repulsed the Spaniards; and so victory changed sides, and Sertorius, that he might afford a more secure retreat to his army, and that fresh forces might more easily be raised, retired into a strong city in the mountains. And though it was the least of his intention to sustain a long siege, yet he began to repair the walls, and to fortify the gates, thus deluding his enemies, who came and sat down before the town, hoping to take it without much resistance; and meantime gave over the pursuit of the Spaniards, and allowed opportunity for raising new forces for Sertorius, to which purpose he had sent commanders to all their cities, with orders, when they had sufficiently increased their numbers, to send him word of it. This news he no sooner received, but he sallied out and forced his way through his enemies, and easily joined them with the rest of his army. Having received this considerable reinforcement, he set upon the Romans again, and by rapidly assaulting them, by alarming them on all sides, by ensnaring, circumventing, and laying ambushes for them, he cut off all provisions by land, while with his piratical vessels he kept all the coast in awe, and hindered their supplies by sea. He thus forced the Roman generals to dislodge and to separate from one another: Metellus departed into Gaul, and Pompey wintered among the Vaccaeans, in a wretched condition, where, being in extreme want of money, he wrote a letter to the senate, to let them know that if they did not speedily support him, he must draw off his army; for he had already spent his own money in the defence of Italy. To these extremities, the chiefest and the most powerful commanders of the age were reduced by the skill of Sertorius; and it was the common opinion in Rome that he would be in Italy before Pompey.

How far Metellus was terrified and at what rate he esteemed him, he plainly declared, when he offered by proclamation an hundred talents and twenty thousand acres of land to any Roman that should kill him, and leave, if he were banished, to return; attempting villainously to buy his life by treachery, when he despaired of ever being able to overcome him in open war. When once he gained the advantage in a battle against Sertorius, he was so pleased and transported with his good fortune, that he caused himself to be publicly proclaimed imperator; and all the cities which he visited received him with altars and sacrifices; he allowed himself, it is said, to have garlands placed on his head, and accepted sumptuous entertainments, at which he sat drinking in triumphal robes, while images and figures of victory were introduced by the motion of machines, bringing in with them crowns and trophies of gold to present to him, and companies of young men and women danced before him, and sang to him songs of joy and triumph. By all which he rendered himself deservedly ridiculous, for being so excessively delighted and puffed up with the thoughts of having followed one who was retiring of his own accord, and for having once had the better of him whom he used to call Sylla's runaway slave, and his forces, the remnant of the defeated troops of Carbo.

Sertorius, meantime, showed the loftiness of his temper in calling together all the Roman senators who had fled from Rome, and had come and resided with him, and giving them the name of a senate; and out of these he chose praetors and quaestors, and adorned his government with all the Roman laws and institutions. And though he made use of the arms, riches, and cities of the Spaniards, yet he would never, even in word, remit to them the imperial authority, but set Roman officers and commanders over them, intimating his purpose to restore liberty to the Romans, not to raise up the Spaniard's power against them. For he was a sincere lover of his country, and had a great desire to return

home; but in his adverse fortune he showed undaunted courage, and behaved himself towards his enemies in a manner free from all dejection and mean-spiritedness; and when he was in his prosperity, and in the height of his victories, he sent word to Metellus and Pompey that he was ready to lay down his arms and live a private life if he were allowed to return home, declaring that he had rather live as the meanest citizen in Rome than, exiled from it, be supreme commander of all other cities together. And it is thought that his great desire for his country was in no small measure promoted by the tenderness he had for his mother, under whom he was brought up after the death of his father, and upon whom he had placed his entire affection. After that his friends had sent for him into Spain to be their general, as soon as he heard of his mother's death he had almost cast away himself and died for grief; for he lay seven days together continually in his tent, without giving the word, or being seen by the nearest of his friends; and when the chief commanders of the army and persons of the greatest note came about his tent, with great difficulty they prevailed with him at last to come abroad, and speak to his soldiers, and to take upon him the management of affairs, which were in a prosperous condition. And thus, to many men's judgment, he seemed to have been in himself of a mild and compassionate temper, and naturally given to ease and quietness, and to have accepted of the command of military forces contrary to his own inclination, and not being able to live in safety otherwise, to have been driven by his enemies to have recourse to arms, and to espouse the wars as a necessary guard for the defence of his person.

His negotiations with King Mithridates further argue the greatness of his mind. For when Mithridates recovering himself from his overthrow by Sylla, like a strong wrestler that gets up to try another fall, was again endeavouring to re-establish his power in Asia, at this time the great fame of Sertorius was celebrated in all places; and when the merchants who came out of the western parts of Europe, bringing these, as it were, among their other foreign wares, had filled the kingdom of Pontus with their stories of his exploits in war, Mithridates was extremely desirous to send an embassy to him, being also highly encouraged to it by the boastings of his flattering courtiers, who, comparing Mithridates to Pyrrhus, and Sertorius to Hannibal, professed that the Romans would never be able to make any considerable resistance against such great forces, and such admirable commanders, when they should be set upon on both sides at once, on one by the most warlike general, and on the other by the most powerful prince in existence.

Accordingly, Mithridates sends ambassadors into Spain to Sertorius with letters and instructions, and commission to promise ships and money toward the charge of the war, if Sertorius would confirm his pretensions upon Asia, and authorize to possess all that he had surrendered to the Romans in his treaty with Sylla. Sertorius summoned a full council which he called a senate, where, when others joyfully approved of the conditions, and were desirous immediately to accept of his offer, seeing that he desired nothing of them but a name, and an empty title to places not in their power to dispose of, in recompense of which they should be supplied with what they then stood most in need of, Sertorius would by no means agree to it; declaring that he was willing that King Mithridates should exercise all royal power and authority over Bithynia and Cappadocia, countries accustomed to a monarchical government, and not belonging to Rome, but he could never consent that he should seize or detain a province, which, by the justest right and title, was possessed by the Romans, which Mithridates had formerly taken away from them, and had afterwards lost in open war to Fimbria, and quitted upon a

treaty of peace with Sylla. For he looked upon it as his duty to enlarge the Roman possessions by his conquering arms, and not to increase his own power by the diminution of the Roman territories. Since a noble-minded man, though he willingly accepts of victory when it comes with honour, will never so much as endeavour to save his own life upon any dishonourable terms.

When this was related to Mithridates, he was struck with amazement, and said to his intimate friends, "What will Sertorius enjoin us to do when he comes to be seated in the Palatium in Rome, who at present, when he is driven out to the borders of the Atlantic Sea, sets bounds to our kingdoms in the east, and threatens us with war if we attempt the recovery of Asia?" However, they solemnly, upon oath, concluded a league between them, upon these terms: that Mithridates should enjoy the free possessions of Cappadocia and Bithynia, and that Sertorius should send him soldiers and a general for his army, in recompense of which the king was to supply him with three thousand talents and forty ships. Marcus Marius, a Roman senator who had quitted Rome to follow Sertorius, was sent general into Asia, in company with whom, when Mithridates had reduced divers of the Asian cities, Marius made his entrance with rods and axes carried before him, and Mithridates followed in the second place, voluntarily waiting upon him. Some of these cities he set at liberty, and others he freed from taxes, signifying to them that these privileges were granted to them by the favour of Sertorius, and hereby Asia, which had been miserably tormented by the revenue farmers, and oppressed by the insolent pride and covetousness of the soldiers, began to rise again to new hopes and to look forward with joy to the expected change of government.

But in Spain, the senators about Sertorius, and others of the nobility, finding themselves strong enough for their enemies, no sooner laid aside fear, but their minds were possessed by envy and irrational jealousies of Sertorius's power. And chiefly Perpenna, elevated by the thoughts of his noble birth, and carried away with a fond ambition of commanding the army, threw out villainous discourses in private amongst his acquaintance. "What evil genius," he would say, "hurries us perpetually from worse to worse? We who disdained to obey the dictates of Sylla, the ruler of the sea and land, and thus to live at home in peace and quiet, are come hither to our destruction, hoping to enjoy our liberty, and have made ourselves slaves of our own accord; and are become the contemptible guards and attendants of the banished Sertorius, who, that he may expose us the further, gives us a name that renders us ridiculous to all that hear it, and calls us the Senate, when at the same time he makes us undergo as much hard labour, and forces us to be as subject to his haughty commands and insolences, as any Spaniards and Lusitanians." With these mutinous discourses he seduced them; and though the greater number could not be led into open rebellion against Sertorius, fearing his power, they were prevailed with to endeavour to destroy his interest secretly. For by abusing the Lusitanians and Spaniards, by inflicting severe punishments upon them, by raising exorbitant taxes, and by pretending that all this was done by the strict command of Sertorius, they caused great troubles, and made many cities to revolt; and those who were sent to mitigate and heal these differences did rather exasperate them, and increase the number of his enemies, and left them at their return more obstinate and rebellious than they found them. And Sertorius, incensed with all this, now so far forgot his former clemency and goodness as to lay hands on the sons of the Spaniards educated in the city of Osca; and, contrary to all justice, he cruelly put some of them to death, and sold others.

In the meantime, Perpenna, having increased the number of his

conspirators, drew in Manlius, a commander in the army, who, at that time being attached to a youth, to gain his affections the more, discovered the confederacy to him, bidding him neglect others, and be constant to him alone; who, in a few days, was to be a person of great power and authority. But the youth having a greater inclination for Aufidius, disclosed all to him, which much surprised and amazed him. For he was also one of the confederacy, but knew not that Manlius was anyways engaged in it; but when the youth began to name Perpenna, Gracinus, and others, whom he new very well to be sworn conspirators, he was very much terrified and astonished; but made light of it to the youth, and bade him not regard what Manlius said, a vain, boasting fellow. However, he went presently to Perpenna, and giving him notice of the danger they were in, and of the shortness of their time, desired him immediately to put their designs in execution. When all the confederates had consented to it, they provided a messenger who brought feigned letters to Sertorius, in which he had notice of a victory obtained, it said, by one of his lieutenants, and of the great slaughter of his enemies: and as Sertorius, being extremely well pleased, was sacrificing and giving thanks to the gods for his prosperous success, Perpenna invited him, and those with him, who were also of the conspiracy, to an entertainment, and being very importunate, prevailed with him to come. At all suppers and entertainments where Sertorius was present, great order and decency was wont to be observed; for he would not endure to hear or see anything that was rude or unhandsome, but made it the habit of all who kept his company to entertain themselves with quiet and inoffensive amusements. But in the middle of this entertainment, those who sought occasion to quarrel fell into dissolute discourse openly, and making as if they were very drunk, committed many insolences on purpose to provoke him. Sertorius, being offended with their ill-behaviour, or perceiving the state of their minds by their way of speaking and their unusually disrespectful manner changed the posture of his lying, and leaned backward, as one that neither heard nor regarded them. Perpenna now took a cup full of wine, and, as he was drinking, let it fall out of his hand and made a noise, which was the sign agreed upon amongst them; and Antonius, who was next to Sertorius, immediately wounded him with his sword. And whilst Sertorius, upon receiving the wound, turned himself, and strove to get up, Antonius threw himself upon his breast, and held both his hands, so that he died by a number of blows, without being able even to defend himself.

Upon the first news of his death, most of the Spaniards left the conspirators, and sent ambassadors to Pompey and Metellus, and yielded themselves up to them. Perpenna attempted to do something with those that remained, but he made only so much use of Sertorius's arms and preparations for war as to disgrace himself in them, and to let it be evident to all that he understood no more how to command than he knew how to obey; and when he came against Pompey, he was soon overthrown and taken prisoner. Neither did he bear this last affliction with any bravery, but having Sertorius's papers and writings in his hands, he offered to show Pompey letters from persons of consular dignity, and of the highest quality in Rome, written with their own hands, expressly to call Sertorius into Italy, and to let him know what great numbers there were that earnestly desired to alter the present state of affairs, and to introduce another manner of government. Upon this occasion, Pompey behaved not like a youth, or one of a light inconsiderate mind, but as a man of a confirmed, mature, and solid judgment; and so freed Rome from great fears and dangers of change. For he put all Sertorius's writings and letters together and read not one of them, nor suffered

any one else to read them, but burnt them all, and caused Perpenna immediately to be put to death, lest by discovering their names further troubles and revolutions might ensue.

Of the rest of the conspirators with Perpenna, some were taken and slain by the command of Pompey, others fled into Africa, and were set upon by the Moors, and run through with their darts: and in a short time not one of them was left alive, except only Aufidius, the rival of Manlius, who, hiding himself, or not being much inquired after, died an old man, in an obscure village in Spain, in extreme poverty, and hated by all.

THE END