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OF  
Caesar's Commentaries

ON THE

GALLIC WAR

LITERALLY TRANSLATED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
EDWARD BROOKS, JR.

PHILADELPHIA: 1896  
DAVID McKAY, PUBLISHER,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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Calus Julius Cæsar, the author of "The Commentaries," as this work is frequently called, was born July 12th, 100 B. C. Sprung from a family which for many years held high offices in the state, he, at an early age, gave evidence of those qualities of character which in later years made him the most eminent man of his time and gained for him the title of "the greatest man of antiquity."

Connected by birth with Marius he was naturally an adherent of that party which was opposed to the aristocratic form of government of the dictator Sulla. To this fact, and to the indignities which he suffered at the hands of the patricians, may be attributed his firm and settled purpose to overthrow the aristocracy, a purpose notably conspicuous throughout his life.

Entering into active life at a time when a strong national individuality and unity of character and purpose had won for Rome, not only the supremacy of Italy but of the entire world, he by his genius and foresight

maintained for her the proud position she occupied, and postponed for a long time the evil day of her fall.

At the very outset of his career, Cæsar displayed that courage and firmness which so distinguished him in his later years. When scarcely more than thirty years old he was ordered by Sulla to divorce himself from his wife, who was connected with the Marian faction. This he refused to do, although by this refusal he lost his priesthood and his fortune, and was compelled to leave Rome to avoid the further consequences of the dictator's anger.

Having by his diplomacy obtained a fleet from the King of Bithynia, he began the task of extirpating the pirates who infested the Mediterranean Sea, but the completion of this work was reserved for his great enemy and rival Pompeius. An incident which happened to him about this time is indicative of his boldness and energy. Taken captive by the pirates, he sent his companions to obtain a ransom for him. While in the hands of his captors he ingratiated himself in their favor, and in apparent jest would frequently promise that when once set free he would return and crucify them. He kept his word, for immediately after his release

he armed some vessels belonging to a neighboring port and returning to the anchorage where he had left them, found and captured the pirates and turned them over to the civil authorities.

In 74 B. C. Cæsar returned to Rome and was elected to the offices of pontiff and military tribune. In the first of these offices he was much occupied with religious and social affairs, and the charge of the Calendar with its complicated system of feast days was also committed to his care.

In 65 B. C. Cæsar held the office of ædile, in which position it was his duty to look after the public buildings of Rome and exercise a supervision over the national games of the people. In this work he was associated with Bibulus, a wealthy Roman, who supplied most of the money, while Cæsar directed how it should be spent. So well did he conduct himself in this office that his improvements in public works and the magnificence of his national games were remembered, even in times when Rome was satiated with prodigal expenditures.

In 63 B. C. Cæsar was elected Pontifex Maximus. As Pontifex Maximus he was at the head of the state religion, and his election to this important office, when only

thirty-seven years of age, is a significant indication of his ability and great popularity.

In 61 B. C. Cæsar, as pro-praetor, assumed his first important military command in the province of Spain, where he displayed that genius for war which has entitled him to rank among the greatest generals of the world. In the management of his province he so conducted himself that he was voted a "triumph" by the senate.

Upon his return to Rome in 60 B. C., he formed an alliance with Pompeius and Crassus, which is commonly known as the first triumvirate. The object of this union was to form a strong and united front against those who wished to maintain a form of government hurtful to the people. He was elected to the consulship in 59 B. C., and while in office obtained for himself the province of Transalpine Gaul, Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, with the command of six legions.

During the next nine years Cæsar was occupied with the subjugation of the Gauls and the Germans. He also twice crossed the British Channel and invaded the land of the Britons. It is with this period of his life that Cæsar's Commentaries have largely to deal.

During Cæsar's absence from Rome the

bands which held together the triumvirate had gradually become loosened. Cæsar's wonderful successes in his provinces, while they had obtained for him great popularity among the people, had, for this very reason, excited the jealousy of Pompeius. Julia, Cæsar's daughter, whom Pompeius had married, died in 54 B. C., and a double alliance of a similar nature was rejected by Pompeius. It had been arranged by the triumvirs that Cæsar should be consul in 48 B. C. There was some question as to when Cæsar's command in Gaul should come to an end. The senate decided that he should give up his command about the middle of November, 49 B. C. Cæsar, distrustful of Pompeius, did not wish to do this unless Pompeius should, at the same time, give up his command. This was agreed to by the Pompeian party, and the senate decided that the two great leaders should disarm simultaneously. Marcellus, one of the consuls, refused to accept this decision, and all propositions for compromise being rejected, Cæsar was peremptorily ordered to resign his command January 1st, 49 B. C.

This was the turning point in Cæsar's life. To give up his army was to place himself in the power of the leaders of that party to