

himself in rhetoric. On his way thither he was captured by pirates. On paying his ransom of fifty talents (\$50,000), he laughingly promised to come back and crucify his captors, a promise which he soon fulfilled.

### A Rising Politician

On returning to Rome he devoted himself to politics and secured promotion through the usual grades of office. He was Military Tribune in 78 B.C., Quaestor (paymaster of the forces) in Spain in 68 B.C., and Curule Aedile (commissioner of public buildings, police, and games) in 65 B.C. In the latter office he roused great enthusiasm among the people by his lavish expenditure of money upon games and buildings, but plunged himself into enormous debt.

He spared no pains to advance himself politically; was elected Pontifex Maximus (high priest) in 63 B.C., and became Praetor (presiding judge in the law courts and magistrate next in rank to the Consuls) in 63 B.C.

In 68 B.C. his wife Cornelia died, and the following year he married Pompeia, granddaughter of Sulla and cousin of Pompey the Great. After serving as Praetor he went to Spain for a year as Propraetor and returned with enough money to pay his debts.

### Triumvir

By a "political deal" he became **Consul in 59 B.C.** Caesar formed what has been called a **Triumvirate** (or coalition of three influential men) with Pompey, the military idol of Rome and leader of the *Optimates* or aristocratic faction, and Crassus, the wealthy representative of the commercial middle class. In virtue of the agreement thus