

down by daggers in the hands of his countrymen. Some of them envied him; the greatest of them loved him; they all feared his ambition.

It is not possible here even to sketch the long and bitter struggle at Rome between the nobles and the common people for the control of the government. Nor will space permit us to dwell on the process by which the stern Roman virtues, ennobling both private and public life, grew weak as time went on. "Luxury's contagion weak and vile" did its work. The nobles came to think more of plundering rich provinces than of making those provinces strong in loyalty to Rome. The "virtuous populace" that had stood, "a wall of fire," for the defence of their country in time of peril, was pauperised by the encroachments of rich landowners, by the spread of slavery displacing free labour, and by the doles of those in power, who would buy their support. Crowding to the city they became a fickle and dangerous rabble whose votes in the assemblies, with their sovereign powers of legislation, became the counters of designing men. While both classes were becoming more and more unfit for their part in government, the task of government was becoming much more complicated and more difficult. Through conquest the Roman sway, once extending over part of Italy, was nearly world-wide, as the world was known to them. Asiatics, Africans, and Europeans; races which had developed ancient civilisations by the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Ægean Sea; ruder races beyond the Alps and the Pyrenees filled with the vigour and fire of youth; these furnished grave problems of government. To govern wisely such a realm with its varied peoples, separated so far in situation, in racial temper, and aspirations, was a stupendous task. It would have been such for the constitutional government which, at its best, had governed Italy, or rather part of Italy. The Roman realm was now an empire, and things had reached a point when the empire must have an emperor or fall to pieces. The republic of the past had become impossible. The hour brought forth the man.

Julius Cæsar was a man of great intellectual gifts. He was an able writer and an orator of great power. He had shown tact and ability in government. He was a great soldier.