

teachings of his instructors, gave, no doubt, his mind a strong bent towards the doctrines of Epicurus. It is probable that the poet returned to his father's farm before the outbreak of the war between Pompey and Caesar, B.C. 49. It is also likely that he remained there till after the battle of Philippi (B.C. 42), and that he employed his time in gaining by observation materials which he afterwards employed in his great didactic poem, the *Georgics*. *Returns home.*

### Acquaintance with Augustus and Maecenas.

Unlike Horace, Vergil sympathized with the party of Caesar. The formation of the Second Triumvirate threw the Roman world into the broils of a civil war. In the division of the provinces, the Gauls (except *Gallia Narbonensis*) fell to Antony. The lands of eighteen cities were given up to reward the legions of the unscrupulous Antony, and among the lands were those of Cremona. The district around this city failing to satisfy the greedy rapacity of the legionaries of the Triumvir, the farms of the neighbouring Mantua were seized, and among the lands confiscated were those of the poet's father. C. Asinius Pollio, the prefect of *Gallia Transpadana*, unable to restrain the lawlessness of the soldiers of Antony, sent Vergil to Rome with a recommendation to Augustus to allow the poet to retain his paternal estate. It is quite probable that congenial tastes and a recognition of the genius of Vergil may have influenced Pollio to take this course. At the close of the same year (41 B.C.), however, war broke out anew between Octavius and L. Antonius. Pollio was deposed from office, and Alfenus Varus appointed in his stead. Another division of lands followed, and the poet is said to have been deprived of his estate the second time.<sup>7</sup> His friends, Gallus, Pollio, and Varus, however, interposed and saved his farm. By them he was introduced to Maecenas, the patron of literary men—afterwards the prime minister of Augustus. This year marks the beginning of the rising fortunes of the poet. With his friend and patron, Pollio, as Consul, Vergil became the honoured member of a literary coterie which graced the table of Maecenas. The intimacy that Vergil enjoyed at court, is shewn by his being one of those who

*Loss of his farm.*

*Regains his farm.*

*A second time loses his farm.*

*B.C. 40. Rising fortunes of Vergil.*

<sup>7</sup> *Eclogues* I and IX.