

CHAPTER XXVII

I COULD never have thought it possible that I would miss Livia when she died. When I was a child I used secretly, night after night, to pray to the Infernal Gods to carry her off. And now I would have offered the richest sacrifices I could find—unblemished white bulls and desert antelopes and ibises and flamingoes by the dozen—to have had her back again. For it was clear that it had long been only the fear of his mother that had kept Tiberius within bounds. A few days after her death he struck at Agrippina and Nero. Agrippina had by now recovered from her illness. He did not charge them with treason. He wrote to the Senate complaining of Nero's gross sexual depravity and of Agrippina's "haughty bearing and mischief-making tongue", and suggested that severe steps should be taken for keeping both of them in order.

When the letter was read in the Senate nobody said a word for a long time. Everyone was wondering on just how much popular support Germanicus's family could count now that Tiberius was preparing to victimize them; and whether it would not be safer to go against Tiberius than against the populace. At last a friend of Sejanus's rose to suggest that the Emperor's wishes should be respected and that some decree or other should be passed against the two persons mentioned. There was a senator who acted as official recorder of the Senate's transactions, and what he said carried great weight. He had hitherto voted without question whatever had been suggested in any letter of Tiberius's, and Sejanus had reported that he could always be counted upon to do what he was told. Yet it was this Recorder who rose

to oppose the motion. He said that the question of Nero's morals and Agrippina's bearing should not be raised at present. It was his opinion that the Emperor had been misinformed and had written hastily, and that in his own interest therefore, as well as that of Nero and Agrippina, no decree should be passed until he had been allowed time to reconsider such grave charges against his near relatives. The news of the letter had meanwhile spread all over the City, though all transactions in the Senate were supposed to be secret until officially published by the Emperor's orders, and huge crowds gathered around the Senate House making demonstrations in favour of Agrippina and Nero, and crying out, "Long Live Tiberius! The letter is forged! Long Live Tiberius! It's Sejanus's doing!"

Sejanus sent a messenger at great speed to Tiberius, who had moved for the occasion to a villa only a few miles outside the City, in case of trouble. He reported that the Senate had, on the motion of the Recorder, refused to pay any attention to the letter; that the people were on the point of revolt, calling Agrippina the true Mother of the Country and Nero their Saviour; and that unless Tiberius acted firmly and decisively there would be bloodshed before the day was out.

Tiberius was frightened but he took Sejanus's advice and wrote a menacing letter to the Senate, putting the blame on the Recorder for this unparalleled insult to the Imperial dignity, and demanding that the whole affair should be left entirely to him to settle since they were so half-hearted in his interests. The Senate gave way. Tiberius, after having the Guards marched through the City with swords drawn and trumpets blowing, threatened to halve the free ration of corn if any further seditious demonstrations were made. He then banished Agrippina to Pandataria, the very island where her mother Julia had been first confined, and Nero to Ponza, another tiny rocky island, half-way between Capri and Rome but far out of sight of the coast. He told the Senate that the two prisoners had been on the point of escaping from the

City in the hope of seducing the loyalty of the regiments on the Rhine.

Before Agrippina went to her island he had her before him and asked her mocking questions about how she proposed to govern the mighty kingdom which she had just inherited from her mother (his virtuous late wife), and whether she would send ambassadors to her son, Nero, in *his* new kingdom, and enter into a grand military alliance with him. She did not answer a word. He grew angry and roared at her to answer, and when she still kept silent he told a captain of the guard to strike her over the shoulders. Then at last she spoke. "Blood-soaked Mud is your name. That's what Theodorus the Gadarene called you, I'm told, when you attended his rhetoric classes at Rhodes." Tiberius seized the vine branch from the captain and thrashed her about the body and head until she was insensible. She lost the sight of an eye as a result of this dreadful beating.

Soon Drusus too was accused of intriguing with the Rhine regiments. Sejanus produced letters in proof, which he said that he had intercepted, but which were really forged, and also the written testimony of Lepida, Drusus's wife (with whom he had a secret affair), that Drusus had asked her to get in touch with the sailors of Ostia, who, he hoped, would remember that Nero and he were Agrippa's grandsons. Drusus was handed over by the Senate to Tiberius to deal with and Tiberius had him confined in a remote attic of the Palace under Sejanus's supervision.

Gallus was the next victim. Tiberius wrote to the Senate that Gallus was jealous of Sejanus and had done all that he could to bring him into disfavour with his Emperor by ironical praises and other malicious methods. The Senate were so upset by the news of the suicide of the Recorder, which reached them the same day, that they immediately sent a magistrate to arrest Gallus. When the magistrate went to Gallus's house he was told that Gallus was out of the City, at Baia. At Baia he was directed to Tiberius's villa and, sure enough, he came on him there at dinner with

Tiberius. Tiberius was pledging Gallus in a cup of wine and Gallus was responding loyally, and there seemed such an air of good humour and jollity in the dining-hall that the magistrate was embarrassed and did not know what to say. Tiberius asked him why he had come. "To arrest one of your guests, Cæsar, by order of the Senate." "Which guest?" asked Tiberius. "Asinius Gallus," replied the magistrate, "but it seems to be a mistake." Tiberius pretended to look grave: "If the Senate have anything against you, Gallus, and have sent this officer to arrest you, I'm afraid our pleasant evening must come to an end. I can't go against the Senate, you know. But I'll tell you what I'll do, now that you and I have come to such a friendly understanding: I'll write to ask the Senate, as a personal favour, not to take any action in your case until they hear from me. That will mean that you will be under simple arrest, in the charge of the Consuls—no fetters or anything degrading. I'll arrange to secure your acquittal as soon as I can."

Gallus felt bound to thank Tiberius for his magnanimity, but was sure that there was a catch somewhere, that Tiberius was paying back irony with irony; and he was right. He was taken to Rome and put in an underground room in the Senate House. He was not allowed to see anyone, not even a servant, or send any messages to his friends or family. Food was given him every day through a grille. The room was dark except for the poor light coming through the grille and unfurnished except for a mattress. He was told that these quarters were only temporary ones and that Tiberius would soon come to settle his case. But the days drew on into months, and months into years, and still he stayed there. The food was very poor—carefully calculated by Tiberius to keep him always hungry but never actually starving. He was allowed no knife to cut it up with, for fear he might use it to kill himself, or any other sharp weapon, or anything to distract himself with, such as writing materials or books or dice. He was given very little water to drink, none to wash in. If ever there was talk about him in Tiberius's presence

the old man would say, grinning: "I have not yet made my peace with Gallus."

When I heard of Gallus's arrest I was sorry that I had just quarrelled with him. It was only a literary quarrel. He had written a silly book called: *A Comparison between my Father, Asinius Pollio and his Friend Marcus Tullius Cicero, as Orators*. If the ground of the comparison had been moral character or political ability or even learning, Pollio would have easily come off the best. But Gallus was trying to make out that his father was the more polished orator. That was absurd, and I wrote a little book to say so; which, coming shortly after my criticism of Pollio's own remarks about Cicero, greatly annoyed Gallus. I would willingly have recalled my book from publication if by doing so I could have lightened Gallus's miserable prison life in the least degree. It was foolish of me, I suppose, to think in this way.

Sejanus was at last able to report to Tiberius that the power of the Leek Green Party was broken and that he need have no further anxieties. Tiberius rewarded him by saying that he had decided to marry him to his granddaughter Helen (whose marriage with Nero he had dissolved) and hinting at even greater favours. It was at this point that my mother who, you must remember, was Livilla's mother too, interposed. Since Castor's death Livilla had been living with her, and was now careless enough to let her find out about a secret correspondence which she was carrying on with Sejanus. My mother had always been very economical, and in her old age her chief delight was saving candle-ends and melting them down into candles again, and selling the kitchen refuse to pig-keepers, and mixing charcoal-dust with some liquid or other and kneading it into cakes which, when dried, burned almost as well as charcoal. Livilla, on the other hand, was very extravagant and my mother was always scolding her for it. One day my mother happened to pass Livilla's room and saw a slave coming out of it with a basket of waste-paper. "Where are you going, boy?" she asked.

"To the furnace, Mistress; the Lady Livilla's orders."

My mother said: "It's most *wasteful* to stoke the furnace with perfectly good pieces of paper; do you know what paper costs? Why, three times as much as parchment, even. Some of those pieces seem hardly written on at all."

"The Lady Livilla ordered most particularly . . ."

"The Lady Livilla must have been very preoccupied when she ordered you to destroy valuable paper. Give me the basket. The clean parts will be useful for household lists, and all sorts of things. Waste not, want not."

So she took the papers to her room and was about to clip the good pieces off one of them when it struck her that she might as well try to remove the ink from the whole thing. Until now she had honourably refrained from reading the writing; but when she began rubbing away at it, it was impossible to avoid doing so. She suddenly realized that these were rough drafts, or unsatisfactory beginnings, of a letter to Sejanus; and once she began reading she could not stop, and before she had done she knew the whole story. Livilla was clearly angry and jealous that Sejanus had consented to marry someone else—her own daughter too! But she was trying to conceal her feelings—each draft of the letter was toned down a little more. She wrote that he must act quickly before Tiberius suspected that he really had no intention of marrying Helen: and if he was not yet ready to assassinate Tiberius and usurp the monarchy had she not better poison Helen herself?

My mother sent for Pallas, who was working for me at the Library, looking up some historical point about the Etruscans, and told him to go to Sejanus and, in my name and as if sent by me, ask his permission to see Tiberius at Capri, in order to present him with my "History of Carthage". (I had just finished this work and sent a fair copy to my mother before having it published.) At Capri he was to beg the Emperor, in my name again, to accept the dedication of the work. Sejanus gave permission readily; he knew Pallas as one of our family slaves and suspected nothing.

But in the twelfth volume of the history my mother had pasted Livilla's letters and a letter of her own in explanation, and told Pallas not to let anybody handle the volumes (which were all sealed up) but to give them to Tiberius with his own hands. He was to add to my supposed greetings and my request for permission to dedicate the book the following message: "The Lady Antonia, too, sends her devoted greetings, but is of opinion that these books by her son are of no interest at all to the Emperor, except the twelfth volume which contains a very curious digression which will, she trusts, immediately interest him."

Pallas stopped at Capua to tell me where he was going. He said that it was strictly against my mother's orders that he was telling me about his errand, but that after all I was his real master, not my mother, though she pretended to own him; and that he would do nothing willingly to get me into trouble; and that he was sure that I had no intention myself of offering the Emperor the dedication. I was mystified, at first, especially when he mentioned the twelfth volume, so while he was washing and changing his clothes I broke the seal. When I saw what had been inserted I was so frightened that for the moment I thought of burning the whole thing. But that was as dangerous as letting it go, so eventually I sealed it up again. My mother had used a duplicate seal of my own, which I had given her for business uses, so nobody would know that I had opened the book, not even Pallas. Pallas then hurried on to Capri and on his way back told me that Tiberius had picked up the twelfth volume and taken it out into the woods to look at. I might dedicate the book to him if I wished, he had said, but I must abstain from extravagant phrases in doing so. This reassured me somewhat, but one could never trust Tiberius when he seemed friendly. Naturally I was in the deepest anxiety as to what would happen and felt very bitter against my mother for having put my life into such terrible danger by mixing me up in a quarrel between Tiberius and Sejanus. I thought of running away, but there was nowhere to run to.

The first thing that happened was that Helen became an invalid—we know now that there was nothing wrong with her, but Livilla had given her the choice of taking to her bed as if she were ill or of taking to her bed because she was ill. She was moved from Rome to Naples, where the climate was supposed to be healthier. Tiberius gave leave for the marriage to be postponed indefinitely, but addressed Sejanus as his son-in-law as if it had already taken place. He elevated him to senatorial rank and made him his colleague in the Consulship and a pontiff. ^{A.D. 31} But he then did something else which quite cancelled these favours: he invited Caligula to Capri for a few days and then sent him back armed with a most important letter to the Senate. In the letter he said that he had examined the young man, who was now his heir, and found him of a very different temper and character from his brothers and would, indeed, refuse to believe any accusations that might be brought against his morals or loyalty. He now entrusted Caligula to the care of Ælius Sejanus, his fellow-Consul, begging him to guard the young man from all harm. He appointed him a pontiff too, and a priest to Augustus.

When the City heard about this letter there was great rejoicing. By making Sejanus responsible for Caligula's safety Tiberius was understood to be warning him that his feud with Germanicus's family had now been carried far enough. Sejanus's Consulship was regarded as a bad omen for him: this was Tiberius's fifth time in office and every one of his previous colleagues had died in unlucky circumstances: Varus, Gnaeus Piso, Germanicus, Castor. So new hope arose that the nation's troubles would soon be over: a son of Germanicus would rule over them. Tiberius might perhaps kill Nero and Drusus but he had clearly decided to save Caligula: Sejanus would not be the next Emperor. Everyone whom Tiberius now sounded on the subject seemed so genuinely relieved at his choice of a successor—for somehow they had persuaded themselves that Caligula had inherited all his father's virtues—that Tiberius, who

recognized real evil whenever he saw it and had told Caligula frankly that he knew he was a poisonous snake and had spared him for that very reason, was much amused, and thoroughly pleased. He could use Caligula's rising popularity as a check to Sejanus and Livilla.

He now took Caligula somewhat into his confidence and gave him a mission: to find out by intimate talks with Guardsmen, which of their captains had the greatest personal influence in the Guards' camp, next to Sejanus; and then to make sure that he was equally bloody-minded and fearless. Caligula dressed up in a woman's wig and clothes and, picking up with a couple of young prostitutes, began frequenting the suburban taverns where the soldiers drank in the evening. With a heavily made up face and padded figure he passed for a woman, a tall and not very attractive one, but still, a woman. The account that he gave of himself in the taverns was that he was being kept by a rich shopkeeper who gave him plenty of money—on the strength of which he used to stand drinks all round. This generosity made him very popular. He soon came to know a great deal of camp gossip, and the name that was constantly coming up in conversations was that of a captain called Macro. Macro was the son of one of Tiberius's freedmen, and from all accounts was the toughest fellow in Rome. The soldiers all spoke admiringly of his drinking feats and his wenching and his domination of the other captains and his presence of mind in difficult situations. Even Sejanus was afraid of him, they said: Macro was the only man who ever stood up to him. So Caligula picked up with Macro one evening and secretly introduced himself: the two went off for a stroll together and had a long talk.

Tiberius then began writing a queer series of letters to the Senate, now saying that he was in a bad state of health and almost dying, and now that he had suddenly recovered and would arrive in Rome any moment. He wrote very queerly too about Sejanus, mixing extravagant praises with petulant

rebukes; and the general impression conveyed was that he had become senile and was losing his senses. Sejanus was so puzzled by these letters that he could not make up his mind whether to attempt a revolution at once or to hold on to his position, which was still very strong, until Tiberius died or could be removed from power on the grounds of imbecility. He wanted to visit Capri and find out for himself just how things stood with Tiberius. He wrote asking permission to visit him on his birthday, but Tiberius answered that as Consul he should stay at Rome; it was irregular enough for himself to be permanently absent. Sejanus then wrote that Helen was seriously ill at Naples and had begged him to visit her: could he not be permitted to do so, just for a day? and from Naples it was only an hour's row to Capri. Tiberius answered that Helen had the best doctors and must be patient: and that he himself was really coming to Rome now and wanted Sejanus to be there to welcome him. At about the same time he quashed an indictment against an ex-Governor of Spain, whom Sejanus was accusing of extortion, on the grounds that the evidence was conflicting. He had never before failed to support Sejanus in a case of the sort. Sejanus began to be alarmed. The term of his Consulship expired.

On the day set by Tiberius for his arrival in Rome, Sejanus was waiting, at the head of a battalion of Guards, outside the temple of Apollo, where the Senate happened to be sitting because of repairs that were being done at the time to the Senate House. Suddenly Macro rode up and saluted him. Sejanus asked him why he had left the Camp. Macro replied that Tiberius had sent him a letter to deliver to the Senate.

"Why *you*?" Sejanus asked suspiciously.

"Why not?"

"But why not me?"

"Because the letter is about you!" Then Macro whispered in his ear, "My heartiest congratulations, General. There's a surprise for you in the letter. You're to be made

Protector of the People. That means you're to be our next Emperor." Sejanus had not really expected Tiberius to appear, but he had been made very anxious by his recent silence. He now rushed, elated, into the Senate House.

Macro then called the Guards to attention. He said: "Boys, the Emperor has just appointed me your General in Sejanus's place. Here's my commission. You are to go straight back to the Camp now, excused all guard duties. When you get there tell the other fellows that Macro's in charge now and that there's thirty gold pieces coming to every man who knows how to obey orders. Who's the senior captain? You? March the men off! But don't make too much row about it."

So the Guards went off and Macro called on the Commander of the Watchmen, who had already been warned, to furnish a guard in their place. Then he went in after Sejanus, handed the letter to the Consuls and came out at once before a word had been read. He satisfied himself that the Watchmen were properly posted and then hurried after the returning Guards to make sure that no disturbance arose in the Camp.

Meanwhile the news of Sejanus's Protectorship had gone round the House and everyone began to cheer him and offer their congratulations. The senior Consul called for order and began reading the letter. It began with Tiberius's usual excuses for not attending the meeting—pressure of work and ill-health—and went on to discuss general topics, then to complain slightly of Sejanus's hastiness in preparing the indictment of the ex-Governor without proper evidence. Here Sejanus smiled because this petulance of Tiberius had always hitherto been a prelude to the granting of some new honour. But the letter continued in the same strain of reproach, paragraph after paragraph, with gradually increasing severity, and the smile slowly left Sejanus's face. The senators who had been cheering him grew silent and perplexed, and one or two who were sitting near him made some excuse and walked across to the other side of the House.

The letter ended by saying that Sejanus had been guilty of grave irregularities, that two of his friends, his uncle Junius Blæsus who had triumphed over Tacfarinas, and another, should, in his opinion, be punished and that Sejanus himself should be arrested. The Consul, who had been warned by Macro the night before what Tiberius wanted him to do, then called out "Sejanus, come here!" Sejanus could not believe his ears. He was waiting for the end of the letter and his appointment to the Protectorship. The Consul had to call him twice before he understood. He said: "Me? You mean me?"

As soon as his enemies realized that Sejanus had at last fallen they began loudly booing and hissing him; and his friends and relatives, anxious for their own safety, joined in. He suddenly found himself without a single supporter. The Consul asked the question, whether the Emperor's advice should be followed. "Ay, ay!" the whole House shouted. The Commander of the Watchmen was summoned, and when Sejanus saw that his own Guards had disappeared and that Watchmen had taken their places, he knew that he was beaten. He was marched off to prison and the populace, who had got wind of what was happening, crowded round him and shouted and groaned and pelted him with filth. He muffled his face with his gown but they threatened to kill him if he did not show it; and when he obeyed they pelted him all the harder. The same afternoon the Senate, seeing that no Guards were about and that the crowd was threatening to break into the gaol to lynch Sejanus, decided to keep the credit for themselves and condemned him to death.

Caligula sent Tiberius the news at once by beacon signal. Tiberius had a fleet standing by prepared to take him to Egypt if his plans went astray. Sejanus was executed and his body thrown down the Weeping Stairs, where the rabble abused it for three whole days. When the time came for it to be dragged to the Tiber with a hook through the throat, the skull had been carried off to the Public Baths and used as a

ball, and there was only half the trunk left. The streets of Rome were littered, too, with the broken limbs of his innumerable statues.

His children by Apicata were put to death by decree. There was a boy who had come of age, and a boy under age, and the girl who had been betrothed to my son Drusillus—she was now fourteen years old. The boy under age could not legally be executed, so, following a Civil War precedent, they made him put on his manly-gown for the occasion. The girl being a virgin was still more strongly protected by law. There was no precedent for executing a virgin whose only crime was being her father's daughter. When she was carried off to prison she did not understand what was happening and called out: "Don't take me to prison! Whip me if you like and I won't do it again!" She apparently had some girlish naughtiness on her conscience. Macro gave orders that, to avoid the ill-luck that would befall the City if they executed her while still a virgin, the public executioner should outrage her. As soon as I heard of this, I said to myself: "Rome, you are ruined; there can be no expiation for a crime so horrible," and I called the Gods to witness that though a relative of the Emperor I had taken no part in the government of my country and that I detested the crime as much as they did, though powerless to avenge it.

When Apicata was told what had happened to her children and saw the crowd insulting their bodies on the Stairs she killed herself. But first she wrote a letter to Tiberius telling him that Castor had been poisoned by Livilla and that Livilla and Sejanus had intended to usurp the monarchy. She blamed Livilla for everything. My mother had not known about the murder of Castor. Tiberius now called my mother to Capri, thanked her for her great services, and showed her Apicata's letter. He told her that any reward within reason was hers for the asking. My mother said that the only reward that she would ask was that the family name should not be disgraced: that her daughter

should not be executed and her body thrown down the Stairs. "How is she to be punished then?" Tiberius asked sharply. "Give her to me," said my mother. "I will punish her."

So Livilla was not publicly proceeded against. My mother locked her up in the room next to her own and starved her to death. She could hear her despairing cries and curses, day after day, night after night, gradually weakening; but she kept her there, instead of in some cellar out of earshot, until she died. She did this not from a delight in torture, for it was inexpressibly painful to her, but as a punishment to herself for having brought up so abominable a daughter.

A whole crop of executions followed as a result of Sejanus's death—all his friends who had not been quick in making the change-over, and a great many of those who had. The ones who did not anticipate death by suicide were hurled from the Tarpeian cliff of the Capitoline Hill. Their estates were confiscated. Tiberius paid the accusers very little; he was becoming economical. On Caligula's advice he framed charges against those accusers who were entitled to benefit most heavily and so was able to confiscate their estates too. About sixty senators, two hundred knights and a thousand or more of the commons died at this time. My alliance by marriage with Sejanus's family might easily have cost me my life, had I not been my mother's son. I was now allowed to divorce Ælia and to retain an eighth part of her dowry. As a matter of fact I returned it all to her. She must have thought me a fool. But I did this as some compensation for taking our little child Antonia away from her as soon as she was born. For Ælia had allowed herself to become pregnant by me as soon as she felt that Sejanus's position was becoming insecure. She thought that this would be some protection to her if he fell from power: Tiberius could hardly have her executed while she was with child to his nephew. I welcomed my divorce from Ælia, but would not have robbed her of the child if my mother had

not insisted on it: my mother wanted Antonia for herself as something to mother of her very own—grandmother-hunger, as it is called.

The only member of Sejanus's family who escaped was his brother, and he escaped for the strange reason that he had publicly made fun of Tiberius's baldness. At the last annual festival in honour of Flora, at which he happened to be presiding, he employed only bald-headed men to perform the ceremonies, which were prolonged to the evening, and the spectators were lighted out of the theatre by five thousand children with torches in their hands and their heads shaved. Tiberius was informed of this in Nerva's presence by a visiting senator and just to create a good impression on Nerva he said, "I forgive the fellow. If Julius Cæsar did not resent jokes about his baldness, how much less should I?" I suppose that when Sejanus fell Tiberius decided, by the same kind of whim, to renew his magnanimity.

But Helen was punished, merely for having pretended to be ill, by being married to Blandus, a very vulgar fellow whose grandfather, a provincial knight, had come to Rome as a teacher of rhetoric. This was considered very base behaviour on Tiberius's part, because Helen was his granddaughter and he was dishonouring his own house by this alliance. It was said that one had not to go far back in the Blandus line before one came to slaves.

Tiberius realized now that the Guards, to whom he paid a bounty of fifty gold pieces each, not thirty as Macro had promised, were his one certain defence against the people and the Senate. He told Caligula: "There's not a man in Rome who would not gladly eat my flesh." The Guards, to show their loyalty to Tiberius complained that they had been wronged by having the Watchmen preferred to them as Sejanus's prison escort, and as a protest marched out of Camp to plunder the suburbs. Marco let them have a good night out, but when the Assembly-call was blown at dawn the next day, the men who were not back within two hours he flogged nearly to death.

After a time Tiberius declared an amnesty. Nobody could now be tried for having been politically connected with Sejanus, and if anyone cared to go into mourning for him, remembering his noble deeds now that his evil ones had been fully punished, there would be no objection to this. A good many men did so, guessing that this was what Tiberius wanted, but they guessed wrong. They were soon on trial for their lives, faced with perfectly groundless charges, the commonest being incest. They were all executed. It may be wondered how it happened that there were any senators or knights left after all this slaughter: but the answer is that Tiberius kept the Orders up to strength by constant promotion. Free birth, a clean record, and so many thousands of gold pieces, were the only qualifications for admission into the Noble Order of Knights, and there were always plenty of candidates, though the initiation fee was heavy. Tiberius was becoming more grasping than ever: he expected rich men to leave him at least half their estates in their wills, and if they were found not to have done so he declared the wills technically invalid because of some legal flaw or other, and took charge of the entire estate himself; the heirs getting nothing. He spent practically no money on public works, not even completing the Temple of Augustus, and stinted the corn-dole and the allowance for public entertainments. He paid the armies regularly, that was all. As for the provinces, he did nothing at all about them any more, so long as the taxes and tribute came in regularly; he did not even trouble to appoint new governors when the old ones died. A deputation of Spaniards once came to complain to him that they had been four years now without a governor and that the staff of the last one were pillaging the province shamefully. Tiberius said: "You aren't asking for a new governor, are you? But a new governor would only bring a new staff, and then you'd be worse off than before. I'll tell you a story. There was once a badly wounded man lying on the battle-field waiting for the surgeon to dress his wound,

which was covered with flies. A lightly wounded comrade saw the flies and was going to drive them away. 'Oh, no,' cried the wounded man, 'don't do that! These flies are almost gorged with my blood now and aren't hurting me nearly so much as they did at first: if you drive them away their place will be taken at once by hungrier ones, and that will be the end of me.'"

He allowed the Parthians to overrun Armenia, and the trans-Danube tribes to invade the Balkans, and the Germans to make raids across the Rhine into France. He confiscated the estates of a number of allied chiefs and petty kings in France, Spain, Syria and Greece, using the most flimsy pretexts. He relieved Vonones of his treasure—you will recall that Vonones was the former king of Armenia, about whom my brother Germanicus had quarrelled with Gnæus Piso—by sending agents to help him escape from the city in Cilicia where Germanicus had put him under guard and then having him pursued and killed.

The informers about this time began to accuse wealthy men of charging more than the legal interest on loans—one and a half per cent was all that they were allowed to charge. The statute about it had long fallen in abeyance and hardly a single senator was innocent of infringing it. But Tiberius upheld its validity. A deputation went to him and pleaded that everyone should be allowed a year and a half to adjust his private finances to conform with the letter of the law, and Tiberius as a great favour granted the request. The result was that all debts were at once called in, and this caused a great shortage of current coin. Tiberius's great idle hoards of gold and silver in the Treasury had been responsible for forcing up the rate of interest in the first place, and now there was a financial panic and land-values fell to nothing. Tiberius was eventually forced to relieve the situation by lending the bankers a million gold pieces of public money, without interest, to pay out to borrowers in exchange for securities in land. He would not even have done this much but for Cocceius Nerva's advice. He still used

occasionally to consult Nerva who, living at Capri, where he was kept carefully away from the scene of Tiberius's debauches and allowed little news from Rome, was perhaps the only man in the world who still believed in Tiberius's goodness. To Nerva (Caligula told me some years later) Tiberius explained his painted favourites as poor orphans on whom he had taken pity, most of them a little queer in the head, which accounted for the funny way they dressed and behaved. But could Nerva really have been so simple as to have believed this, and so short-sighted?