

CHAPTER XXX

WHEN my mother heard of Gemellus's murder she was very grieved and came to the Palace asking to see Caligula, who received her sulkily, for he felt that she was about to scold him. She said: "Grandson, may I speak to you in private? It is about the death of Gemellus."

"No, certainly not in private," he answered. "Say what you wish to say in Macro's presence. I must have a witness by me if what you have to say is as important as all that."

"Then I prefer to keep silent. It is a family matter, not for the ears of the sons of slaves. That fellow's father was the son of one of my vine-dressers. I sold him to my brother-in-law for forty-five gold pieces."

"You will please tell me at once what it was you were about to say, without insulting my ministers. Don't you know that I have the power to make anyone in the world do just what I please?"

"It is nothing that you will be glad to hear."

"Say it."

"As you wish. I came to say that your killing of my poor Gemellus was wanton murder and I wish to resign all the honours I have had from your wicked hands."

Caligula laughed and said to Macro: "I think the best thing that this old lady can do now is to go home and borrow a pruning-knife from one of her vine-dressers and cut her vocal chords with it."

Macro said: "I always gave the same sort of advice to my grandmother, but the old witch refused to take it."

My mother came to see me. "I am about to kill myself, Claudius," she said. "You will find all my affairs in order."

There will be a few small debts outstanding: pay them punctually. Be good to my household staff; they have been loyal workers, every one of them. I am sorry that your little daughter will have nobody now to look after her: I think that you had better marry again to give her a mother. She's a good child."

I said: "What, Mother! Kill yourself? Why? O don't do that!"

She smiled sourly. "My life's my own, isn't it? And why should you dissuade me from taking it? Surely you won't miss me, will you?"

"You are my mother," I said. "A man only has one mother."

"I am surprised that you speak so dutifully. I have been no very loving mother to you. How could I have been expected to be so? You were always a great disappointment to me—a sick, feeble, timorous, woolly-witted thing. Well, I have been prettily punished by the Gods for my neglect of you. My splendid son Germanicus murdered, and my poor grandsons, Nero and Drusus and Gemellus murdered, and my daughter Livilla punished for her wickedness, her abominable wickedness, by my own hand—that was the worst pain I suffered, no mother ever suffered a worse—and my four granddaughters all gone to the bad, and this filthy impious Caligula. . . . But you'll survive him. You'd survive a Universal Deluge, I believe." Her voice, calm at first, had risen to its usual angry scolding tone.

I said: "Mother, have you no kindly word to give me even at a time like this? How did I ever intentionally wrong you or disobey you?"

But she did not seem to hear. "I have been prettily punished," she repeated. Then: "I wish you to come to my house in five hours' time. By that time I shall have completed my arrangements. I count on you to pay me the last rites. I don't want you to catch my dying breath. If I am not dead when you arrive wait in the ante-room until you get the word from my maid Briseis. Don't make a muddle

of the valedictory: that would be just like you. You will find full instructions written out for the funeral. You are to be chief mourner. I want no funeral oration. Remember to cut off my hand for separate burial: because this will be a suicide. I want no perfumes on the pyre: it's often done but it's strictly against the law and I have always regarded it as a most *wasteful* practice. I am giving Pallas his freedom, so he'll wear the cap of liberty in the procession, don't forget. And just for once in your life try to carry one ceremony through without a mistake." That was all, except a formal "Good-bye". No kiss, no tears, no blessing. As a dutiful son I carried out her last wishes, to the letter. It was odd her giving my own slave Pallas his freedom. She did the same with Briscis.

Watching her pyre burning, from his dining-room window, a few days later, Caligula said to Macro: "You stood by me well against that old woman. I'm going to reward you. I'm going to give you the most honourable appointment in the whole Empire. It's an appointment which, as Augustus laid down as a principle of State, must never fall into the hands of an adventurer. I am going to make you Governor of Egypt." Macro was delighted: he did not quite know, these days, how he stood with Caligula and if he went to Egypt he would be safe. As Caligula had said, the appointment was an important one: the Governor of Egypt had the power of starving Rome by cutting off the corn-supply, and the garrison could be strengthened by local levies until it was big enough to hold the province against any invading army that could be brought against it.

So Macro was relieved of his command of the Guards. Caligula appointed nobody in his place for a time, but let the nine colonels of battalions each command for a month in turn. He gave out that at the end of this time the most loyal and efficient of them would be given the appointment permanently. But the man to whom he secretly promised it was the colonel of the battalion which found the Palace Guard—none other than the same brave Cassius Chærea

whose name you cannot have forgotten if you have read this story with any attention—the man who killed the German in the amphitheatre, the man who led his company back from the massacre of Varus's army, and who afterwards saved the bridgehead; the man too who cut his way through the mutineers in the camp at Bonn and who carried Caligula on his back that early morning when Agrippina and her friends had to trudge on foot from the camp under his protection. Cassius was white-haired now, though not yet sixty years of age, and stooped a little, and his hands trembled because of a fever that had nearly killed him in Germany, but he was still a fine swordsman and reputedly the bravest man in Rome. One day an old soldier of the Guards went mad and ran amok with his spear in the courtyard of the Palace. He thought he was killing French rebels. Everyone fled but Cassius, who though unarmed stood his ground until the madman charged him, when he calmly gave the parade-ground order, "Company, halt! Ground arms!" and the crazy fellow, to whom obedience to orders had become second-nature, halted and laid his spear flat along the ground. "Company about turn," Cassius ordered again. "Quick march!" So he disarmed him. Cassius, then, was the first temporary commander of the Guards and kept them in order while Macro was being tried for his life.

For Macro's appointment to the governorship of Egypt was only a trick of Caligula's, the same sort of trick that Tiberius had played on Sejanus. Macro was arrested as he went aboard his ship at Ostia and brought back to Rome in chains. He was accused of having brought about the deaths of Arruntius and several other innocent men and women. To this charge Caligula added another, namely that Macro had played the pander, trying to make him fall in love with his wife Ennia—a temptation to which in his youthful inexperience, he admitted, he had nearly succumbed. Macro and Ennia were both forced to kill themselves. I was surprised how easily he got rid of Macro.

One day Caligula as High Pontiff went to solemnize a

marriage between one of the Piso family and a woman called Orestilla. He took a fancy to Orestilla and when the ceremony was completed and most of the high nobility of Rome were gathered at the wedding feast, having great fun, as one does on these occasions, he suddenly called out to the bridegroom: "Hey, there, Sir, stop kissing that woman! She's my wife." He then rose and, in the hush of surprise that followed, ordered the guards to seize Orestilla and carry her off to the Palace. Nobody dared to protest. The next day he married Orestilla: her husband was forced to attend the ceremony and give her away. He sent a letter to the Senate to inform them that he had celebrated a marriage in the style of Romulus and Augustus—referring, I suppose, to Romulus's rape of the Sabine women and Augustus's marriage with my grandmother (when my grandfather was present). Within two months he had divorced Orestilla and banished her, and her former husband too, on the grounds that they had been committing adultery when his back was turned. She was sent to Spain and he to Rhodes. He was only allowed to take ten slaves with him: when he asked as a favour to be allowed double that number Caligula said: "As many as you like, but for every extra slave you take you'll have to have an extra soldier to guard you."

Drusilla died. I am certain in my own mind that Caligula killed her but I have no proof. Whenever he kissed a woman now, I am told, he used to say: "As white and lovely a neck as this is, I have only to give the word, and slash! it will be cut clean through." If the neck was particularly white and lovely he could sometimes not resist the temptation of giving the word and seeing his boast proved true. In the case of Drusilla I think that he struck the blow himself. At all events nobody was allowed to see her corpse. He gave out that she died of a consumption and gave her a most extraordinarily rich funeral. She was deified under the name of Panthea and had temples built to her, and noblemen and noblewomen appointed her priests, and a great annual festival instituted in her honour, more splendid

than any other in the Calendar. A man earned ten thousand gold picces for seeing her spirit being received into Heaven by Augustus. During the days of public mourning that Caligula ordered in her honour, it was a capital crime for any citizen to laugh, sing, shave, go to the baths, or even have dinner with his family. The law-courts were closed, no marriages were celebrated, no troops performed military exercises. Caligula had one man put to death for selling hot water in the streets, and another for exposing razors for sale. The resulting gloom was so profound and widespread that he could not himself bear it (or it may have been remorse), so one night he left the City and travelled down towards Syracuse, alone except for a guard of honour. He had no business there, but the journey was a distraction. He got no further then Messina, where Etna happened to be in slight eruption. The sight frightened him so much that he turned back at once. When he reached Rome again he soon set things going as usual, particularly sword-fighting, chariot-racing, and wild-beast hunting. He suddenly remembered that the men who had vowed their lives in exchange for his during his illness had not yet committed suicide; and made them do it, not only on general principles to keep them from the sin of perjury, but more particularly to prevent Death from going back on the bargain they had struck with him.

A few days later at supper I happened to be laying down the law, rather drunkenly, about the inheritance of female beauty, and quoting examples of my contention that it usually missed a generation, going from the grandmother to the granddaughter. Unfortunately I wound up by saying, "The most beautiful woman in Rome when I was a boy has reappeared, feature for feature, and limb for limb, in the person of her granddaughter and namesake Lollia, the wife of the present Governor of Greece. With the sole exception of a certain lady whom I shall not name, because she is present in this room, Lollia is in my opinion the most beautiful woman alive to-day." I made this exception merely for tactfulness. Lollia was far and away more beautiful than

my nieces, Agrippinilla or Lesbia, or than any other member of the company. I was not in love with her, I may say: I had merely noticed one day that she was perfect, and remembered having made exactly the same observation about her grandmother when I was a boy. Caligula grew interested and questioned me about Lollia. I did not realize that I had said too much, and said more. That evening Caligula wrote to Lollia's husband telling him to return to Rome and accept a signal honour. The signal honour turned out to be that of divorcing Lollia and marrying her to the Emperor.

Another chance remark that I made at supper about this time had an unexpected effect on Caligula. Someone mentioned epilepsy and I said that Carthaginian records showed Hannibal to have been an epileptic, and that Alexander and Julius Cæsar were both subject to this mysterious disease, which seemed to be an almost inevitable accompaniment of superlative military genius. Caligula pricked up his ears at this, and a few days later he gave a very good imitation of an epileptic fit, falling on the floor in the Senate House and screaming at the top of his voice, his lips white with foam—soap-suds, probably.

The people of Rome were still happy enough. Caligula continued giving them a good time with theatrical shows and sword-fights and wild-beast hunts and chariot-races and largesse thrown from the Oration Platform or from the upper windows of the Palace. What marriages he contracted or dissolved, or what courtiers he murdered, they did not much care. He was never satisfied unless every seat in the theatre or Circus was occupied and all the gangways crowded; so whenever there was a performance he postponed all lawsuits and suspended all mourning to give nobody any excuse for not attending. He made several other innovations. He allowed people to bring cushions to sit on and in hot weather to wear straw hats, and to come bare-footed—even senators, who were supposed to set an example of austerity.

When I eventually managed to visit Capua for a few days, for the first time for nearly a year, almost the first thing

Calpurnia asked me was: "How much is left in the Privy Purse, Claudius, of that twenty million?"

"Less than five million, I believe. But he's been building pleasure-barges of cedar-wood and overlaying them with gold and studding them with jewels and putting baths and flower-gardens in them, and he's started work on sixty new temples and talks of cutting a canal across the isthmus of Corinth. He takes baths in spikenard and oil of violet. Two days ago he gave Eutychus, the Leek Green charioteer, a present of twenty thousand in gold for winning a close race."

"Does Leek Green always win?"

"Always. Or almost always. Scarlet happened to come in first the other day and the people gave it a big cheer. They were tiring of the monotony of Leek Green. The Emperor was furious. Next day the Scarlet charioteer and his winning team were all dead. Poisoned. The same sort of thing has happened before."

"By this time next year things will be going badly with you, my poor Claudius. By the way, would you like to look at your accounts? It's been an unlucky year, as I wrote to you. Those valuable cattle dying, and the slaves stealing right and left, and the corn-ricks burned. You're the poorer by two thousand or more gold pieces. It's not the steward's fault, either. He does his best and at least he's honest. It's because you are not here to act as overseer that these things happen."

"It can't be helped," I said. "To be frank, I am more anxious about my life than about my money these days."

"Are you badly treated?"

"Yes. They make a fool of me all the time. I don't like it. The Emperor is my chief tormentor."

"What do they do to you?"

"Oh, practical jokes. Booby traps with buckets of water suspended over doors. And frogs in my bed. Or nasty pathics smelling of myrrh: you know how I loathe frogs and pathics. If I happen to take a nap after my dinner they flip date-stones at me or tie shoes on my hands or ring the fire-

bell in my ears. And I never get time to do any work. If I ever start they upset my inkpot all over it. And nothing that I say is ever treated seriously."

"Are you the only butt they have?"

"The favourite one. The official one."

"Claudius, you're luckier than you realize. Guard your appointment jealously. Don't let anyone usurp it."

"What do you mean, girl?"

"I mean that people don't kill their butts. They are cruel to them, they frighten them, they rob them, but they don't kill them."

I said: "Calpurnia, you are very clever. Listen to me now. I still have money. I shall buy you a beautiful silk dress and a gold cosmetic box and a marmoset and a parcel of cinnamon sticks."

She smiled. "I should prefer the present in cash. How much were you going to spend?"

"About seven hundred."

"Good. It will come in handy one of these days. Thank you, kind Claudius."

When I returned to Rome I heard that there had been trouble. Caligula had been disturbed one night by the distant noise of the people crowding to the amphitheatre just before dawn, and pushing and struggling to get near the gates, so that when these opened they could get into the front rows of the free seats. Caligula sent a company of Guards with truncheons to restore order. The Guards were ill-tempered at being pulled from their beds for this duty and struck out right and left, killing a number of people, including some quite substantial citizens. To show his displeasure at having had his sleep disturbed by the original commotion and by the far louder noise that the people made when they scattered screaming before the truncheon-charge, Caligula did not appear in the amphitheatre until well on in the afternoon when everyone was worn out by waiting for him, and hungry too. When the Leek Greens gave an equestrian display they were hissed and booed. Caligula leaped

angrily from his seat: "I wish you had only a single neck. I'd hack it through!"

The next day there was to be a sword-fight and a wild-beast hunt. Caligula cancelled all the arrangements that had been made and sent in the most wretched set of animals that he could buy up in the wholesale market—mangy lions and panthers and sick bears and old worn-out wild bulls, the sort that are sent to out-of-the-way garrison towns in the provinces where audiences are not particular and amateur huntsmen don't welcome animals of too good quality. The huntsmen whom Caligula substituted for the performers advertised to appear were in keeping with the animals: fat, stiff-jointed, wheezy veterans. Some of them had perhaps been good men in their day—back in Augustus's golden age. The crowd jeered and booed them. This was what Caligula had been waiting for. He sent his officers to arrest the men who were making most noise and put them into the arena to see if they would do any better. The mangy lions and panthers and sick bears and worn-out bulls made short work of them.

He was beginning to be unpopular. That the crowd always likes a holiday is a common saying, but when the whole year becomes one long holiday, and nobody has time for attending to his business, and pleasure becomes compulsory, then it is a different matter. Chariot-races grew wearisome. It was all very well for Caligula, who had a personal interest in the teams and drivers and even used sometimes to drive a car himself. He was not a bad hand with the reins and whip and the competing charioteers took care not to win from him. Theatrical shows grew rather wearisome too. All theatre-pieces are much the same except to connoisseurs: or they are to me at all events. Caligula fancied himself a connoisseur and was also sentimentally attached to Apelles, the Philistine tragic actor, who wrote many of the pieces in which he played. One piece which Caligula admired particularly—because he had made suggestions which Apelles had incorporated in his part—was played over

and over again until everyone hated the sight and sound of it. He had an even stronger liking for Mnester, the principal dancer of the mythological ballets then in fashion. He used to kiss Mnester in full view of the audience whenever he had done anything particularly well. A knight began coughing once during a performance, couldn't stop, and at last had to leave. The noise he made by squeezing along past people's knees, and apologizing and coughing and pushing his way through the crowded aisles to the exit disturbed Mnester, who stopped in the middle of one of his most exquisite dances to soft flute-music and waited for everyone to settle down again. Caligula was furious with the knight, had him brought before him and gave him a good beating with his own hands. Then he sent him off post-haste on a journey to Tangier, with a sealed message for the King of Morocco. (The King, a relative of mine—his mother was my Aunt Selene, Antony's daughter by Cleopatra—was greatly mystified by the message. It read: "Kindly send bearer back to Rome.") The other knights resented this incident very much: Mnester was only a freedman and gave himself airs like a triumphant general. Caligula took private lessons in elocution and dancing from Apelles and Mnester and after a time frequently appeared on the stage in their parts. After delivering a speech in some tragedy, he used sometimes to turn and shout to Apelles in the wings: "That was perfect, wasn't it? You couldn't have done better yourself." And after a graceful hop, skip and jump or two in the ballet he would stop the orchestra, hold up his hand for absolute silence and then go through the movement again unaccompanied.

As Tiberius had a pet dragon, so Caligula had a favourite stallion. This horse's original stable name was Porcellus (meaning "little pig") but Caligula did not consider that grand enough and renamed him "Incitatus" which means "swift-speeding". Incitatus never lost a race and Caligula was so extravagantly fond of him that he made him first a citizen and then a senator and at last put him on the list of his

nominees for the Consulship four years in advance. Incitatus was given a house and servants. He had a marble bedroom with a big straw mat for a bed, a new one every day, also an ivory manger, a gold bucket to drink from, and pictures by famous artists on the walls. He used to be invited to dinner with us whenever he won a race, but preferred a bowl of barley to the meat and fish that Caligula always offered him. We had to drink his health twenty times over.

The money went faster and faster and at last Caligula decided to make economies. He said one day, for instance, "What is the use of putting men in prison for forgery and theft and breaches of the peace? They don't enjoy themselves there and they are a great expense for me to feed and guard; yet if I were to let them go they would only start their career of crime again. I'll visit the prisons to-day and look into the matter." He did. He weeded out the men whom he considered the most hardened criminals, and had them executed. Their bodies were cut up and used as meat for the wild beasts waiting to be killed in the amphitheatre: which made it a double economy. Every month now he made his round of the prisons. Crime decreased slightly. One day his Treasurer, Callistus, reported only a million gold pieces left in the Treasury and only half a million in the Privy Purse. He realized that economy was not enough: revenue had to be increased. So first he began selling priesthoods and magistracies and monopolies, and that brought him in a great deal, but not enough; and then, as Calpurnia had foreseen, he began using informers to convict rich men of real or imaginary crimes, in order to get their estates. He had abolished the capital charge for treason as soon as he became Emperor, but there were plenty of other crimes punishable with death.

He celebrated his first batch of convictions with a particularly splendid wild-beast hunt. But the crowd was in an ugly temper. They booed and groaned and refused to pay any attention to the proceedings. Then a cry began at the other end of the amphitheatre from the President's Box where

Caligula sat: "Give up the informers! Give up the informers!" Caligula rose to command silence, but they howled him down. He sent Guards with truncheons along to the part where noise was loudest and they whacked a few men on the head, but it began again more violently elsewhere. Caligula grew alarmed. He hurriedly left the amphitheatre, calling on me to take on the presidency from him. I did not welcome this at all and was much relieved, when I rose to speak, that the crowd gave me a courteous hearing and even shouted "Feliciter" which means "Good luck to you!" My voice is not strong. Caligula's was very strong: he could make himself heard from one end of Mars Field to the other. I had to find someone to repeat my speech after me. Mnester volunteered, and made it sound much better than it was.

I announced that the Emperor had unfortunately been called away on important State business. That made everyone laugh; Mnester did some beautiful gestures illustrative of the importance and urgency of this State business. Then I said that the President's duties had devolved on my unfortunate and unworthy self. Mnester's hopeless shrug and the little twiddle with a forefinger at his temples expressed this excellently. Then I said: "Let us go on with the Games, my friends." But at once the shout rose again, "Give up the informers!" But I asked, and Mnester repeated the question winningly: "And if the Emperor does consent to give them up, what then? Will someone inform against them?" There was no answer to this but a confused buzzing. I asked them a further question. I asked them which was the worst sort of criminal—an informer? or an informer against an informer? or an informer against an informer against an informer? I said that the further you took the offence the more heinous it became, and the more people it polluted. The best policy was to do nothing which might give informers any ground for action. If everyone, I said, lived a life of the strictest virtue, the cursed breed would die out for want of nourishment, like mice in a miser's kitchen.

You would never believe what a tempest of laughter this sally provoked. The simpler and sillier the joke, the better a big crowd likes it. (The greatest applause I ever won for a joke was once in the Circus when I happened to be presiding in Caligula's absence. The people called out angrily for a sword-fighter called Pigeon who was advertised to perform but had not turned up, so I said "Patience, friends! First catch your Pigeon and then pluck him!" Whereas really witty jokes of mine have been quite lost on them.)

"Let's get on with the Games, my friends," I repeated, and this time the shouting stopped. The games turned out very good ones. Two sword-fighters killed each other, with simultaneous thrusts in the belly: this is a very rare happening. I ordered the weapons to be brought to me and had little knives made of them; such little knives are the most effective charms known for use in cases of epilepsy. Caligula would appreciate the gift—if he forgave me for quieting the crowd where he had failed. For he had been in such a fright that he had driven out of Rome at full speed in the direction of Antium; and did not reappear for several days.

It turned out all right. He was pleased with the little knives, which gave him an opportunity of enlarging on the splendour of his disease; and when he asked what had happened at the amphitheatre I said that I had warned the crowd of what he would do if they did not repent of their disloyalty and ingratitude. I said that they had then changed their rebellious cries into howls of guilty fear and pleas for forgiveness. "Yes," he said, "I was too gentle with them. I am determined now not to yield an inch. 'Immovable rigour' is the watchword from henceforward." And to keep himself reminded of this decision, he used every morning now to practise frightful faces before a mirror in his bedroom and terrible shouts in his private bathroom, which had a fine echo.

I asked him: "Why don't you publicly announce your Godhead? That would awe them as nothing else would!"

He answered: "I have still a few acts to perform in my human disguise."

The first of these acts was to order harbourmasters throughout Italy and Sicily to detain all vessels that were over a certain tonnage, put their cargoes in bond and send them empty under the convoy of warships to the Bay of Naples. Nobody understood what this order meant. It was supposed that he contemplated an invasion of Britain and wanted the vessels for use as transports. But nothing of the sort. He was merely about to justify Thrasyllus's statement that he could no more become Emperor than ride a horse across the Bay of Baiæ. He collected about four thousand vessels, including a thousand built especially for the occasion, and anchored them across the bay, thwart to thwart in a double line from the docks of Puteoli to his villa at Bauli. The prows were outward, and the sterns interlocked. The sterns stuck up too high for his purpose, so he had them trimmed flat, sawing off the helmsman's seat and the figure-head from every one; which made the crews very unhappy, because the figurehead was the guardian deity of the ship. Then he boarded the double line across and threw earth on the boards and had the earth watered and rammed flat; and the result was a broad firm road, some six thousand paces long from end to end. When more ships arrived, just back from voyages to the East, he lashed them together into five islands which he linked to the road, one at every thousand paces. He had a row of shops built all the way across and ordered the ward-masters of Rome to have them stocked and staffed within ten days. He installed a drinking-water system and planted gardens. The islands he made into villages.

Fortunately the weather was fine throughout these preparations and the sea glassy smooth. When everything was ready he put on the breastplate of Alexander (Augustus was unworthy to use Alexander's ring, but Caligula wore his very breastplate) and over it a purple silk cloak stiff with jewel-encrusted gold embroidery; then he took Julius Cæsar's

sword and the reputed battle-axe of Romulus and the reputed shield of Æneas which were stored in the Capitol (both forgeries in my opinion, but such early forgeries as to be practically genuine) and crowned himself with a garland of oak-leaves. After a propitiatory sacrifice to Neptune—a seal, because that is an amphibious beast—and another, a peacock, to Envy, in case, as he said, any God should be jealous of him, he mounted on Incitatus and began trotting across the bridge from the Bauli end. The whole of the Guards cavalry was at his back, and behind that a great force of cavalry brought from France, followed by twenty thousand infantry. When he reached the last island, close to Puteoli, he made his trumpeters blow the charge and dashed into the city as fiercely as if he were pursuing a beaten enemy.

He remained in Puteoli that night and most of the next day, as if resting from battle. In the evening he returned in a triumphal chariot with gold-plated wheels and sides. Incitatus and the mare Penelope to whom Caligula had ritually married him were in the shafts. Caligula was wearing the same splendid clothes as before, except that he had a garland of bay-leaves instead of oak-leaves. A long wagon-train followed heaped high with what were supposed to be battle-spoils—furniture and statues and ornaments robbed from the houses of rich Puteoli merchants. For prisoners he used the hostages which the petty kings of the East were required to send to Rome as earnest of good behaviour and whatever foreign slaves he could lay his hands upon, dressed in their national costumes and loaded with chains. His friends followed in decorated chariots, wearing embroidered gowns and chanting his praises. Then came the army, and last a procession of about two hundred thousand people in holiday dress. Countless bonfires were alight on the whole circle of hills around the bay and every soldier and citizen in the procession carried a torch. It was the most impressive theatrical spectacle, I should think, that the world has ever seen, and I am sure it was the most pointless. But how everybody enjoyed it! A pine-wood went on fire at Cape

Misenum to the south-west and blazed magnificently. As soon as Caligula reached Bauli again he dismounted and called for his gold-pronged trident and his other purple cloak worked over with silver fish and dolphins. With these he entered the biggest of his five cedar-built pleasure-barges which were waiting on the shore-side of the bridge, and was rowed out in it to the middle island of the five, which was by far the biggest, followed by most of his troops in war-vessels.

Here he disembarked, mounted a silk-hung platform and harangued the crowds as they passed along the bridge. There were watchmen to keep them on the move, so nobody heard more than a few sentences, except his friends around the platform—among whom I found myself—and the soldiers in the nearest war-vessels, who had not been permitted to land. Among other things, he called Neptune a coward for allowing himself to be put in fetters without a struggle, and promised, one day soon, to teach the old God an even sharper lesson. (He seemed to forget the propitiatory sacrifice he had made.) As for the Emperor Xerxes who had once bridged the Hellespont in the course of his unlucky expedition against Greece, Caligula laughed at him like anything. He said that Xerxes's famous bridge had been only half the length of the present one and not nearly so solid. Then he announced that he was about to give every soldier two gold pieces to drink his health with, and every member of the crowd five silver pieces.

The cheering lasted for half an hour; which seemed to satisfy him. He stopped it and had the money paid out on the spot. The whole procession had to file past again and bag after bag of coin was brought up and emptied. After a couple of hours the money-supply failed and Caligula told the disappointed late-comers to revenge themselves on the greedy first-comers. This, of course, started a free fight.

There followed one of the most remarkable nights of drinking and singing and horse-play and violence and merry-making that was ever known. The effect of drink on

Caligula was always to make him a little mischievous. At the head of the Scouts and the German bodyguard he charged about the island and along the line of shops, pushing people into the sea. The water was so calm that it was only the dead-drunk, the decrepit, the aged and little children who failed to save themselves. Not more than two or three hundred were drowned.

About midnight he made a naval attack on one of the smaller islands, breaking the bridge on either side of it and then ramming ship after ship of the island until the inhabitants whom he had cut off were crowded together in a very small space in the middle. The final assault was reserved for Caligula's flag-ship. He stood waving his trident in the fore-castle top, swept down on the terrified survivors and sent them all under. Among the victims of this sea-battle was the most remarkable exhibit of Caligula's triumphal procession—Eleazar, the Parthian hostage, who was the tallest man in the world. He was over eleven foot high. He was not, however, strong in proportion to his height: he had a voice like the bleat of a camel and a weak back, and was considered to be of feeble intellect. He was a Jew by birth. Caligula had the body stuffed and dressed in armour and put Eleazar outside the door of his bed-chamber to frighten away would-be assassins.