

## CHAPTER VI

I MUST now go back a few years to write about my uncle Tiberius, whose fortunes are by no means irrelevant to this story. He was in an unhappy position, forced against his will to be continually in the public eye, now as general in some frontier-campaign, now as Consul at Rome, now as special commissioner to the provinces; when all he wanted was a long rest and privacy. Public honours meant little to him, if only because they were awarded him, as he once complained to my father, rather as being chief errand-boy to Augustus and Livia, than as one acting in his own right and on his own responsibility. Moreover, with the dignity of the Imperial family to maintain and Livia continually spying on him, he had to be very careful of his private morals. He had few friends, being, as I think I have said, of a suspicious, jealous, reserved and melancholy temperament, and those rather hangers-on than friends, whom he treated with the cynical contempt that they deserved. And, lastly, things had gone from bad to worse between him and Julia since his marriage with her five years before. A boy had been born but he had died; and then Tiberius had refused to sleep with her ever again; for three reasons. The first was that Julia was by now getting middle-aged and losing her slender figure—Tiberius preferred immature women, the more boyish the better, and Vipsania had been a little wisp of a thing. The second was that Julia made passionate demands on him which he was unwilling to meet and that she used to become hysterical when he repulsed her. The third was that he found, after repulsing her, that she was revenging herself by finding gallants to give her what he withheld.

Unfortunately he could get no proof of Julia's infidelities apart from the evidence of slaves, for she managed things very carefully; and slave-evidence was not good enough to offer Augustus as grounds for divorcing his beloved only daughter. Rather than tell Livia about it, however, for he mistrusted her as much as he hated her, he preferred to suffer in silence. It occurred to him that, if he could once get away from Rome and Julia, the chances were that she would grow careless and Augustus would eventually find out for himself about her behaviour. His only chance of escape lay in another war breaking out somewhere on one of the frontiers important enough for him to be sent there in command. But no signs of war appeared in any quarter and, besides, he was sick of fighting. He had succeeded my father in command of the German armies (Julia had insisted on accompanying him to the Rhine) and had now only been back in Rome for a few months: but Augustus had worked him like a slave ever since his return, giving him the difficult and unpleasant task of investigating the administration of workhouses and labour conditions generally in the poorer quarters of Rome. One day, in an unguarded moment, he burst out to Livia: "O mother, to be free, for only a few months even, from this intolerable life." She frightened him by making no answer and haughtily leaving the room, but later in the same day called him to her and surprised him by saying that she had decided to grant his wish and obtain temporary leave of retirement for him from Augustus. She took the decision partly because she wanted to put him under a debt of gratitude to her, and partly because she now knew about Julia's love-affairs and had the same idea as Tiberius about giving her rope and letting her hang herself with it. But her chief reason was that Postumus's elder brothers, Gaius and Lucius, were growing up and relations between them and their stepfather Tiberius were strained.

Gaius, who was not a bad fellow at bottom (and neither was Lucius) had to some extent come to fill the place in Augustus's affections that Marcellus had once held. But he

spoil them both so shamelessly, in spite of Livia's warnings, that the wonder is that they did not turn out far worse than they did. They tended to behave insolently towards their elders, particularly men towards whom they knew Augustus would secretly like them to behave so, and to live with great extravagance. When Livia saw that it was useless trying to keep Augustus's nepotism in check she changed her policy and encouraged him to make greater favourites of them than ever. By doing so, and letting them know she was doing so, she hoped to gain their confidence. She calculated, too, that if their self-importance was increased only a little more they would forget themselves and try to seize the monarchy for themselves. Her spy-system was excellent and she would get wind of any such plot in good time to have them arrested. She encouraged Augustus to have Gaius elected Consul, for four years ahead, when he was only fifteen; though the youngest age at which a man could legally become Consul had been fixed by Sulla at forty-three, before which he had to fill three different magistratal offices of ascending importance. Later, Lucius was given the same honour. She also suggested that Augustus should present them to the Senate as "Leaders of Cadets". The title was not, as in the case of Marcellus, given them for a specific occasion only, but put them in a position of permanent authority over all their equals in age and rank. It seemed perfectly clear now that Augustus intended Gaius as his successor; so it was not to be wondered at that the same sort of young noblemen as had boasted the untried powers of young Marcellus against the ministerial and military reputation of the veteran Agrippa now did the same for Agrippa's son Gaius against the veteran reputation of Tiberius, whom they subjected to many slights. Livia intended Tiberius to follow the example of Agrippa. If he now retired, with so many victories and public honours to his credit, to some near-by Greek island and left the political field clear for Gaius and Lucius, this would create a better impression and win him far more popular sympathy than if he stayed behind to dispute it. (The historical parallel

would become still closer if Gaius and Lucius were to die during Tiberius's retirement and Augustus were to feel the need of his services again.) So she promised to prevail on Augustus to grant him indefinite leave of absence from Rome and permission to resign from all his offices; but to give him the honorary rank of Protector of the People—which would make him secure against assassination by Gaius, should Gaius think of removing him.

Livia found it extremely difficult to keep her promise, for Tiberius was Augustus's most useful minister and most successful general, and for a long time the old man refused to treat the request seriously. But Tiberius pleaded ill-health and urged that his absence would relieve Gaius and Lucius of much embarrassment: he admitted that he did not get on well with them. Still Augustus would not listen. Gaius and Lucius were mere lads, totally inexperienced as yet in war or statecraft, and would be of no service to him at all should serious disturbances break out in the City, in the provinces, or on the frontier. He realized, perhaps for the first time, that Tiberius was now his only stand-by in any such emergency. But he was irritated at having the realization forced on him. He refused Tiberius's request and said that he would listen to no arguments. Since there was no help for it, therefore, Tiberius went to Julia and told her with studied brutality that their marriage had become such a farce that he could not bear to remain in the same house with her a day longer. He suggested that she should go to Augustus and complain that she had been ill-treated by her ruffianly husband and would not be happy until she had a divorce. Augustus, he said, was for family reasons unlikely, worse luck, to consent to the divorce, but would probably banish him from Rome. He was ready even to go into exile rather than continue to live with her.

Julia decided to forget that she had ever loved Tiberius. She had suffered much from him. Not only did he treat her with the greatest contempt whenever they were alone together, but he had by now begun cautiously experimenting

in those ludicrously filthy practices which later made his name so detestable to all decent-minded people; and she had found out about it. So she took him at his word and complained to Augustus in far stronger terms than Tiberius (who was vain enough to believe that she still loved him in spite of everything) could have foreseen. Augustus had always had great difficulty in concealing his dislike for Tiberius as a son-in-law—which had of course encouraged the Gaius faction—and now went storming up and down his study calling Tiberius all the names that he could lay his tongue on. But he nevertheless reminded Julia that she had only herself to blame for her disappointment in a husband about whose character he had never failed to warn her. And, much as he loved and pitied her, he could not dissolve the marriage. For his daughter and stepson to separate after a union that had been given such political importance would never do, and Livia would see the matter in the same light as himself, he was sure. So Julia begged that Tiberius should at least be sent away somewhere for a year or two, because at the moment she could not abide his presence within a hundred miles of her. To this he eventually agreed, and a few days later Tiberius was on his way to the island of Rhodes, which he had, long before this, chosen as the ideal place for retirement. But Augustus, while granting him the rank of Protector, at Livia's urgent insistence, had made it plain that if he never saw his face again it would be no grief to him.

Nobody but the principals in this curious drama knew why Tiberius was leaving Rome, and Livia used Augustus's unwillingness to discuss the matter publicly, to Tiberius's advantage. She told her friends, "in confidence", that Tiberius had decided to retire as a protest against the scandalous behaviour of the party of Gaius and Lucius. She also said that Augustus had sympathized greatly with him, and had at first refused to accept his resignation, promising to silence the offenders; Tiberius had then insisted that he did not wish to make further bad blood between himself and

his wife's sons, and had demonstrated the fixity of his purpose by going without food for four days. Livia kept up the farce by accompanying Tiberius to his ship at Ostia, the port of Rome, and beseeching him, in Augustus's name and her own, to reconsider his decision. She even arranged that all the members of her immediate family—Tiberius's young son Castor, and my mother, and Germanicus, Livilla and myself—should come along with her and increase the poignancy of the occasion by adding our pleas to hers. Julia did not appear, and her absence fitted in well with the impression that Livia was trying to create—that she had been siding with her sons against her husband. It was a ridiculous but well-staged scene. My mother played up well, and the three elder children, who had been carefully coached, really spoke their parts as if they meant them. I was bewildered and dumb until Livilla gave me a good pinching, at which I burst into tears and so did better than any of them. I was four years old when all this happened, but I had turned twelve before Augustus was reluctantly compelled to recall my uncle to Rome, the political situation having by then greatly changed.

Now Julia deserves far greater sympathy than she has popularly won. She was, I believe, naturally a decent, good-hearted woman, though fond of pleasures and excitements, and the only one of my female relations who had a kindly word for me. I also believe that there were no grounds for the charges made against her many years later, of infidelity to Agrippa while she was married to him. Certainly all her three boys resembled him closely. The true story is as follows. In her widowhood, as I have related, she fell in love with Tiberius and persuaded Augustus to let her marry him. Tiberius, enraged at having had to divorce his own wife for her sake, treated her very coldly. She was then imprudent enough to approach Livia, whom she feared but trusted, and ask her advice. Livia gave her a love-philtre, which she was to drink, saying that within a year it would make her irresistible to her husband, but that she must take

it once a month, at full moon, and make certain prayers to Venus, saying nothing about it to a living soul, or the drug would lose its virtue and do her a great deal of harm. What Livia very cruelly gave her was a distillation of the crushed bodies of certain little green flies, from Spain, which so stimulated her sexual appetite that she became like a demented woman. (I shall explain later how I came to learn all this.) For a while indeed she fired Tiberius's appetite by the abandoned wantonness to which the drug drove her, against her natural modesty; but soon she wearied him and he refused to have any further marital commerce with her. She was forced by the action of the drug, which I suppose became a habit with her, to satisfy her sexual cravings by adulterous intercourse with whatever young courtiers she could trust to behave with discretion. She did this in Rome, I mean: in Germany and France she seduced private soldiers of Tiberius's bodyguard and even German slaves, threatening, if they hesitated, to accuse them of offering her familiarities and to have them flogged to death. As she was still a fine-looking woman, they apparently did not hesitate long.

After Tiberius's banishment Julia grew careless, and all Rome soon came to know of her infidelities. Livia never said a word to Augustus, confident that in due time he would come to hear about them from some other quarter. But Augustus's blind love for Julia was a by-word and nobody dared to say anything to him. After a time it was generally assumed that he could no longer be ignorant, and that his condonation of her behaviour was a further caution to silence. Julia's nocturnal orgies in the Market Place and on the Oration Platform itself had become a matter of grave public scandal, yet it was four years before so much as a rumour reached Augustus. Then he heard the whole story from none other than her sons, Gaius and Lucius, who came together into his presence and angrily asked him how long was he going to permit himself and his grandchildren to be disgraced. They understood, they said, that regard for the family's good name made him very patient with their mother,

but surely there was a limit to his long-suffering? Were they to wait until she presented them with a litter of many-fathered bastard brothers before any official notice was taken of her pranks? Augustus listened with horror and amazement and for a long time could do no more than gape and move his lips. When he found his voice it was to call in strangled tones for Livia. They repeated their story in her presence, and she pretended to sob, saying that it had been her greatest grief these three years that Augustus had deliberately shut his ears to the truth. Several times, she said, she had gathered up courage to speak to him, but it had been quite clear that he did not want to listen to a word she said. "I was confident that you really knew all about it and that the subject was too painful for you to discuss even with me. . . ." Augustus, weeping, with his head between his hands, muttered that he had never heard the slightest whisper, or entertained the faintest suspicion that his daughter was not the chastest woman at Rome. Livia asked, why then did he suppose that her son Tiberius had gone into exile. For love of exile? No, it was because he was unable to check the excesses of his wife and yet was distressed that Augustus was condoning them, for so he believed; and since he did not wish to antagonize Gaius and Lucius, her sons, by asking Augustus for leave to divorce her, there was no course open for him but to withdraw decently from the scene.

This talk about Tiberius was wasted on Augustus, who threw a fold of his robe over his head and groped his way to the passage leading to his bedroom, where he locked himself in and was seen by nobody, not even by Livia, for four whole days, during which time he took no food or drink, nor any sleep, and what was still stronger proof—if any was required—of the violence of his grief, went all that time unshaved. Finally he pulled the string which ran through a hole in the wall and tinkled a little silver bell in Livia's room. Livia came hurrying to him with a face of loving concern, and Augustus, not yet trusting his voice,



wrote down on his wax-tablet the single sentence, in Greek: "Let her be banished for life, but do not tell me where." He handed Livia his seal-ring so that she might write letters to the Senate by his authority, recommending the banishment. (This seal, by the way, was the great emerald cut with the helmeted head of Alexander the Great from whose tomb it had been stolen, along with a sword and breast-plate and other personal trappings of the hero. Livia insisted on his using it, in spite of his scruples—he realized how presumptuous it was—until one night he had a dream in which Alexander, frowning angrily, hacked off with his sword the finger on which he wore it. Then he had a seal of his own, a ruby from India, cut by the famous goldsmith Dioscurides, which all his successors have used as the token of their sovereignty.)

Livia wrote the recommendation for banishment in very strong terms. It was composed in Augustus's own literary style; which was easy to imitate because it always sacrificed elegance to clarity—for example, by a determined repetition of the same word, where it occurred often in a passage, instead of hunting about for a synonym or periphrasis (which is the common literary practice). And he had a tendency to over-prepositionalize his verbs. She did not show the letter to Augustus but sent it direct to the Senate, who immediately voted a decree of perpetual banishment. Livia had listed Julia's crimes in such detail and had credited Augustus with such calm expressions of detestation for them that she made it impossible for him ever afterwards to change his mind and ask the Senate to cancel their decision. She did a good piece of business on the side, too, by singling out for special mention as Julia's partners in adultery three or four men whom it was to her interest to ruin. Among them was an uncle of mine, Iulus, a son of Antony, to whom Augustus had shown great favour for Octavia's sake, raising him to the Consulship. Livia, in naming him in her letter to the Senate, strongly emphasized the ingratitude that he had shown his benefactor and hinted that he and Julia were

conspiring together to seize the supreme power. Iulus committed suicide. I believe that the charge of conspiracy was groundless, but as the only surviving son of Antony, by his wife Fulvia—Augustus had put Antyllus, the eldest, to death immediately after his father's suicide, and the other two, Ptolemy and Alexander, his sons by Cleopatra, had died young—and as an ex-Consul and the husband of Marcellus's sister, whom Agrippa had divorced, he seemed dangerous. Popular discontent with Augustus often expressed itself in a wish that it had been Antony who had won the Battle of Actium. The other men whom Livia accused of adultery were banished.

A week later Augustus asked Livia whether "a certain decree" had been duly passed—for he never mentioned Julia by name again and seldom even by a roundabout expression, though she plainly was much in his thoughts. Livia told him that "a certain person" had been sentenced to perpetual confinement on an island and was already on her way there. At this he seemed further downcast, that Julia had not done the one honourable thing left to her to do, namely to take her own life. Livia mentioned that Phœbe, who was Julia's lady-in-waiting and chief confidant, had hanged herself as soon as the decree of banishment had been published. Augustus said: "I wish to God I had been Phœbe's father." He delayed his public appearance for a further fortnight. I well remember that dreadful month. We children were all, by Livia's orders, made to wear mourning and not allowed to play or make a noise or even smile. When we saw Augustus again he looked ten years older and it was months before he had the heart to visit the playground in the Boys' College or even to resume his daily morning exercise, which consisted of a brisk walk around the Palace grounds with a run at the end over a course of low hurdles.

Tiberius had the news about Julia sent him at once by Livia. At her prompting he wrote two or three letters to Augustus, begging him to forgive Julia, as he did himself, and saying that however badly she had behaved as a wife

he wished her to keep all the property that he had at any time made over to her. Augustus did not answer. He firmly believed that Tiberius's original coldness and cruelty to Julia, and the example of immorality he had given her, were responsible for her moral degeneration. So far from recalling him from banishment he refused even to renew his Protectorate when it came to an end the following year.

There is a soldiers' marching-ballad called *The Three Griefs of Lord Augustus*, composed in the rough tragi-comic style of the camp, which was sung many years later by the regiments stationed in Germany. The theme is that Augustus grieved first for Marcellus, next for Julia, and the third time for the lost Eagles of Varus. Deeply for Marcellus's death, more deeply for Julia's disgrace, but most deeply of all for the Eagles, for with each Eagle had vanished a whole regiment of Rome's bravest men. The ballad laments in a number of verses the unhappy fate of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Regiments which, when I was nineteen years old, were ambushed and massacred by the Germans in a remote marshy forest; and tells how, after the news of this unparalleled disaster reached him, Lord Augustus kept knocking his head against the wall:

Lord Augustus each time bawling  
 As he fetched his head a crack,  
 "Varus, Varus, General Varus,  
 Give me my three Eagles back!"

Lord Augustus tore his bedclothes,  
 Blankets, sheet and counterpane.  
 "Varus, Varus, General Varus,  
 Give my Regiments back again!"

The next verses say that he never afterwards formed new regiments under the numbers of the three destroyed, but kept the gap in the Army List. He is made to swear that Marcellus's life and Julia's honour had been nothing to him by comparison with the life and honour of his soldiers,

and that his spirit would have "no more rest than a flea in an oven" until all three Eagles were recovered and safely laid in the Capitol. But though since then the Germans had been thrashed again and again in battle, nobody had been able to discover where the lost Eagles were "roosting"—the cowards kept them so closely hidden. That was how the troops belittled Augustus's grief for Julia, but it is my opinion that for every hour he grieved for the Eagles he must have grieved a full month for her.

He did not wish to know where she had been sent, because this would have meant that his mind would be continually turning there and he would hardly be able to restrain himself from taking ship and visiting her. So it was easy for Livia to treat Julia with great revengefulness. She was not allowed wine, cosmetics, fine clothes or luxuries of any sort and her guard consisted of eunuchs and very old men. She was allowed no visitors and was even set to work on a daily spinning task as in her schoolgirl days. The island was off the Campanian coast. It was a very small one and Livia purposely increased her sufferings by keeping the same guards there year after year without relief; they naturally blamed her for their banishment in that confined and unhealthy spot. The one person who comes well out of this ugly story is Julia's mother, Scribonia, whom it will be recalled Augustus had divorced in order to be able to marry Livia. Now a very old woman, who had lived in retirement for a number of years, she boldly went to Augustus and asked permission to share her daughter's banishment. She told him in Livia's presence that her daughter had been stolen from her as soon as born but that she had always worshipped her from a distance and, now that the whole world was set against her darling, she wished to show what *true* mother's love was. And in her opinion the poor child was not to blame: things had been made very difficult for her. Livia laughed contemptuously but must have felt pretty uncomfortable. Augustus, mastering his emotion, signed that the request was granted.

Five years later, on Julia's birthday, Augustus asked Livia suddenly: "How big is the island?"

"Which island?" asked Livia.

"The island . . . where an unlucky woman is living."

"Oh, a few minutes' walk from end to end, I believe," Livia said with affected carelessness.

"A few minutes' walk! Are you joking?" He had thought of her as in exile on some big island, like Cyprus or Lesbos or Corfu. After a while he asked: "What is it called?"

"It's called Pandataria!"

"What? My God, *that* desolate place? O cruel! Five years on Pandataria!"

Livia looked at him severely and said: "I suppose you want her back here at Rome?"

Augustus then went over to the map of Italy, engraved on a thin sheet of gold studded with small jewels to mark the cities, which hung on the wall of the room in which they were. He was unable to speak, but pointed to Reggio, a pleasant Greek town on the straits of Messina.

So Julia was sent to Reggio, where she was given somewhat greater liberty, and even allowed to see visitors—but a visitor had first to apply in person to Livia for permission. He had to explain what business he had with Julia, and fill in a detailed passport for Livia's signature, giving the colour of his hair and eyes and listing distinguishing marks and scars, so that only he himself could use it. Few cared to submit to these preliminaries. Julia's daughter Agrippina asked permission to go, but Livia refused out of consideration, she said, for Agrippina's morals. Julia was still kept under severe discipline and had no friend living with her, her mother having died of fever on the island.

Once or twice when Augustus was walking in the streets of Rome there were cries from the citizens: "Bring your daughter back! She's suffered enough! Bring your daughter back!" This was very painful to Augustus. One day he made his police-guard fetch from the crowd two men

who were shouting this out most loudly, and told them gravely that Jove would surely punish their folly by letting them be deceived and disgraced by their own wives and daughters. These demonstrations expressed not so much pity for Julia as hostility to Livia, whom everyone justly blamed for the severity of Julia's exile and for so playing on Augustus's pride that he could not allow himself to relent.

As for Tiberius on *his* comfortably large island, it suited him very well for a year or two. The climate was excellent, the food good, and he had ample leisure for resuming his literary studies. His Greek prose style was not at all bad and he wrote several elegant silly elegiac Greek poems in imitation of such poets as Euphorion and Parthenius. I have a book of them somewhere. He spent much of his time in friendly disputation with the professors at the university. The study of Classical mythology amused him and he made an enormous genealogical chart, in circular form, with the stems raying out from our earliest ancestor Chaos, the father of Father Time, and spreading to a confused perimeter thickly strewn with nymphs and kings and heroes. He used to delight in puzzling the mythological experts, while building up the chart, with questions like: "What was the name of Hector's maternal grandmother?" and "Had the Chimæra any male issue?" and then challenging them to quote the relevant verse from the ancient poets in support of their answer. It was, by the way, from a recollection of this table, now in my possession, that many years afterwards my nephew Caligula made his famous joke against Augustus: "Oh, yes, he was my great-uncle. He stood in precisely the same relationship to me as the Dog Cerberus did to Apollo." As a matter of fact, now that I consider the matter, Caligula made a mistake here, did he not? Apollo's great-uncle was surely the monster Typhæus who according to some authorities was the father, and according to others the grandfather of Cerberus. But the early genealogical tree of the Gods is so confused with incestuous alliances—son with

mother, brother with sister—that it may be that Caligula could have proved his case.

As a Protector of the People Tiberius was held in great awe by the Rhodians; and provincial officials sailing out to take up their posts in the East, or returning from there, always made a point of turning aside in their course and paying him their respects. But he insisted that he was merely a private citizen and deprecated any public honours paid to him. He usually dispensed with his official escort of yeomen. Only once did he exercise the judicial powers that his Protectorship carried with it: he arrested and summarily condemned to a month in gaol a young Greek who, in a grammatical debate where he was acting as chairman, tried to defy his authority as such. He kept himself in good condition by riding and taking part in the sports at the gymnasium, and was in close touch with affairs at Rome—he had monthly news-letters from Livia. Besides his house in the island capital he owned a small villa some distance from it, built on a lofty promontory overlooking the sea. There was a secret path to it up the cliff, by which a trusted freedman of his, a man of great physical strength, used to conduct the disreputable characters—prostitutes, pathics, fortune-tellers and magicians—with whom he customarily passed his evenings. It is said that very often these creatures, if they had displeased Tiberius, somehow missed their footing on the return journey and fell into the sea far below.

I have already mentioned that Augustus refused to renew Tiberius's Protectorship when the five years expired. It can be imagined that this put him in a very awkward position at Rhodes, where he was personally unpopular: the Rhodians seeing him deprived of his yeoman escort, his magisterial powers, and the inviolateness of his person, began to treat him first with familiarity and then with contumely. For example, one famous Greek professor of philosophy to whom he applied for leave to join his classes told him that there was no vacancy but that he could come back in seven days' time and see whether one had occurred. Then news came

from Livia that Gaius had been sent to the East as Governor of Asia Minor. But though not far away, at Chios, Gaius did not come and pay Tiberius the expected visit. Tiberius heard from a friend that Gaius believed the false reports circulating at Rome that he and Livia were plotting a military rebellion and that a member of Gaius's suite had even offered, at a public banquet at which everyone was somewhat drunk, to sail across to Rhodes and bring back the head of "The Exile". Gaius had told the fellow that he had no fear of "The Exile": let him keep his useless head on his useless shoulders. Tiberius swallowed his pride and sailed at once to Chios to make his peace with his stepson, whom he treated with a humility that was much commented upon. Tiberius, the most distinguished living Roman, after Augustus, paying court to a boy not yet out of his teens, and the son of his own disgraced wife! Gaius received him coldly but was much flattered. Tiberius begged him to have no fears, for the rumours that had reached him were as groundless as they were malicious. He said that he did not intend to resume the political career which he had interrupted out of regard for Gaius himself and his brother Lucius: all that he wanted now was to be allowed to spend the rest of his life in the peace and privacy which he had learned to prize before all public honours.

Gaius, flattered at the chance of being magnanimous, undertook to forward a letter to Rome asking Augustus's permission for Tiberius to return there, and to endorse it with his own personal recommendation. In this letter Tiberius said that he had left Rome only in order not to embarrass the young princes, his stepsons, but that, now they were grown up and firmly established, the obstacles to his living quietly at Rome were no longer present; he added that he was weary of Rhodes and longed to see his friends and relations again. Gaius forwarded the letter with the promised endorsement. Augustus replied, to Gaius not to Tiberius, that Tiberius had gone away, in spite of the strong pleas of his friends and relations, when the State had most



need of him; he could not now make his own terms about coming back. The contents of this letter became generally known and Tiberius's anxiety increased. He heard that the people of Nîmes in France had overthrown the statues erected there in memory of his victories, and that Lucius too had now been given false information against him which he was inclined to believe. He removed from the city and lived in a small house in a remote part of the island, only occasionally visiting his villa on the promontory. He no longer took any care of his physical condition or even of his personal appearance, rarely shaving and going about in dressing-gown and slippers. He finally wrote a private letter to Livia, explaining his dangerous situation. He pledged himself, if she managed to secure permission for him to return, to be solely guided by her in everything so long as they both lived. He said that he addressed her not so much as his devoted mother but as the true, though so far unacknowledged, helmsman of the Ship of State.

This was just what Livia wanted; she had purposely refrained hitherto from persuading Augustus to recall Tiberius. She wanted him to become as weary of inaction and public  
A. D. 2 contumely as he had previously been of action and public honour. She sent back a brief message to say that she had his letter safe, and that it was a bargain. A few months later Lucius died mysteriously at Marseilles, on his way to Spain, and while Augustus was still stunned by the shock Livia began working on his feelings by saying how much she had missed the support of her dear son Tiberius all these years; for whose return she had not until now ventured to plead. He had certainly done wrong, but had also certainly learned his lesson by now and his private letters to her breathed the greatest devotion and loyalty to Augustus. Gaius, who had endorsed that petition for his return, would, she urged, need a trustworthy colleague now that his brother was dead.

One evening a fortune-teller called Thrasyllus, by birth an Arab, came to Tiberius at his house on the promontory.

He had been two or three times before and had made a number of very encouraging predictions, but none of these had yet been fulfilled. Tiberius, growing sceptical, told his freedman that if Thrasyllus did not entirely satisfy him this time he was to lose his footing on his way down the cliff. When Thrasyllus arrived, the first thing that Tiberius said was, "What is the aspect of my stars to-day?" Thrasyllus sat down and made very complicated astrological calculations with a piece of charcoal on the top of a stone table. At last he pronounced, "They are in a most unusually favourable conjunction. The evil crisis of your life is now finally passing. Henceforth you are to enjoy nothing but good fortune."

"Excellent," said Tiberius, drily, "and now what about your own?"

Thrasyllus made another set of calculations, and then looked up in real or pretended terror. "Great Heavens!" he exclaimed, "an appalling danger threatens me from air and water."

"Any chance of circumventing it?" asked Tiberius.

"I cannot say. If I could survive the next twelve hours, my fortune would be, in its degree, as happy even as yours; but nearly all the malevolent planets are in conjunction against me and the danger seems all but unavoidable. Only Venus can save me."

"What was that you said just now about her? I forget."

"That she is moving into Scorpio, which is your sign, portending a marvellously happy change in your fortunes. Let me venture a further deduction from this all-important movement: you are soon to be engrafted into the Julian house, which, I need hardly remind you, traces direct descent from Venus, the mother of Aeneas. Tiberius, my humble fate is curiously bound up with your illustrious one. If good news comes to you before dawn to-morrow, it is a sign that I have almost as many fortunate years before me as yourself."

They were sitting out on the porch and suddenly a wren

or some such small bird hopped on Thrasyllus's knee and, cocking its head on one side, began to chirp at him. Thrasyllus said to the bird, "Thank you, sister! It came only just in time." Then he turned to Tiberius: "Heaven be praised! That ship has good news for you, the bird says, and I am saved. The danger is averted."

Tiberius sprang up and embraced Thrasyllus, confessing what his intentions had been. And, sure enough, the ship carried Imperial dispatches from Augustus informing Tiberius of Lucius's death and saying that in the circumstances he was graciously permitted to return to Rome, though for the present only as a private citizen.

As for Gaius, Augustus had been anxious that he should have no task assigned to him for which he was not fitted, and that the East should remain quiet during his governorship. Unfortunately the King of Armenia revolted and the King of Parthia threatened to join forces with him; which put Augustus in a quandary. Though Gaius had shown himself an able peace-time governor, Augustus did not believe him capable of conducting so important a war as this; and he himself was too old to go campaigning and had too many affairs to attend to at Rome, besides. Yet he could not send out anybody else to take over the Eastern regiments from Gaius because Gaius was Consul and should never have been allowed to enter upon the office if he was incapable of high military command. There was nothing to be done but to let Gaius be and hope for the best.

Gaius was lucky at first. The danger from the Armenians was removed by an invasion of their Eastern border by a wandering tribe of barbarians. The King of Armenia was killed while chasing them away. The King of Parthia, hearing of this and also of the large army that Gaius was getting together, then came to terms with him: to the great relief of Augustus. But Augustus's new nominee to the throne of Armenia, a Mede, was not acceptable to the Armenian nobles, and when Gaius had sent home his extra forces as no longer necessary they declared war after all.

Gaius reassembled his army, and marched to Armenia, where a few months later he was treacherously wounded by one of the enemy generals who had invited him to a parley. It was not a serious wound. He thought little of it at the time and concluded the campaign successfully. But somehow he was given the wrong medical treatment, and his health, which from no apparent cause had been failing him for the last two years, became seriously affected: he lost all power of mental concentration. Finally he wrote to Augustus for permission to retire into private life. Augustus was grieved, but granted his plea. Gaius died on his way home. Thus of Julia's sons only fifteen-year-old A.D. 4 Postumus now remained, and Augustus was so far reconciled to Tiberius that, as Thrasyllus foretold, he engrafted him into the Julian house by adopting him, jointly with Postumus, as his son and heir.

The East was quiet now for a time, but when the war that had broken out in Germany again—I mentioned it in connection with my schoolboy composition for Athenodorus—took a serious turn, Augustus made Tiberius army-commander and showed his renewed confidence in him by awarding him a ten years' Protectorship. The campaign was a severe one and Tiberius handled it with his old force and skill. Livia, however, insisted on his making frequent visits to Rome so as not to lose touch with political events there. Tiberius was keeping his part of the bargain with her and allowed himself to be led by her in everything.