

## CHAPTER VII

I WENT back in time a few years to tell of my Uncle Tiberius, but by following that history through until his adoption by Augustus, I have come out ahead of my own story. I shall try to devote these next chapters strictly to events

B.C. 1 that happened between my ninth and sixteenth years.

Mostly it is a record of the betrothals and marriages of us young nobles. First Germanicus came of age—September the 30th was his fourteenth birthday, but the coming-of-age celebrations always took place in March. As the custom was, he went out garlanded from our house on the Palatine, in the early morning, wearing his purple-bordered boy's dress for the last time. Crowds of children ran ahead, singing and scattering flowers, an escort of his noble friends walked with him, and an immense throng of citizens followed behind, in their degrees. The procession went slowly down the slope of the Hill, through the Market Place, where Germanicus was greeted uproariously. He returned the greeting in a short speech. Finally the procession moved on up the slope of the Capitoline Hill. At the Capitol, Augustus and Livia were waiting to greet him, and he sacrificed a white bull in the temple there to Capitoline Jove, the Thunderer, and put on his white manly-gown for the first time. Much to my disappointment I was not allowed to come too. The walk would have been too much for me and it would have created a bad impression if I had been carried in a sedan. All I witnessed of the ceremonies was his dedication, when he returned, of his boy's dress and ornaments to the household gods; and the scattering of cakes and pence to the crowd from the steps of the house.

A year later he married. Augustus did all he could by legislation to encourage marriage among men of family. The Empire was very big and needed more officials and senior army officers than the nobility and gentry were able to supply, in spite of constant recruiting to their ranks from the populace. When there were complaints from men of family about the vulgarity of these newcomers, Augustus used to answer testily that he chose the least vulgar he could find. The remedy was in their own hands, he said: every man and woman of rank should marry young and breed as large a family as possible. The steady decrease in the number of births and marriages in the governing classes became an obsession with Augustus.

On one occasion when the Noble Order of Knights, from whom the senators were chosen, complained of the severity of his laws against bachelors, he summoned the entire order into the Market Place for a lecture. When he had them assembled there he divided them up into two groups, the married and the unmarried. The unmarried were a very much larger group than the married and he addressed separate speeches to each group. He worked himself up into a great passion with the unmarried, calling them beasts and brigands and, by a queer figure of speech, murderers of their posterity. By this time Augustus was an old man with all the petulance and crankiness of an old man who has been at the head of affairs all his life. He asked them, had they an hallucination that they were Vestal Virgins? At least a Vestal Virgin slept alone, which was more than they did. Would they, pray, explain why instead of sharing their beds with decent women of their own class and begetting healthy children on them, they squandered all their virile energy on greasy slave-girls and nasty Asiatic-Greek prostitutes? And if he were to believe what he heard, the partner of their nightly bed-play was more often one of those creatures of a loathsome profession whom he would not even name, lest the admission of their existence in the City should be construed as a condonation of it. If he had his way, a man

who shirked his social obligations and at the same time lived a life of sexual debauch should be subject to the same dreadful penalties as a Vestal who forgot her vows—to be buried alive.

As for us married men, for I was among them by this time, he gave us a most splendid eulogy, spreading out his arms as if to embrace us. "There are only a very few of you, in comparison with the huge population of the City. You are far less numerous than your fellows over there, who are unwilling to perform any of their natural social duties. Yet for this very reason I praise you the more, and am doubly grateful to you for having shown yourselves obedient to my wishes and for having done your best to man the State. It is by lives so lived that the Romans of the future will become a great nation. At first we were a mere handful, you know, but when we took to marriage and begot children we came to vie with neighbouring states not only in the manliness of our citizens but in the size of our population too. We must always remember this. We must console the mortal part of our nature with an endless succession of generations, like torch-bearers in a race, so that through one another we may immortalize the one side of our nature in which we fall short of divine happiness. It was for this reason chiefly that the first and greatest God who created us divided the human race in two: he made one half of it male and the other half female and implanted in these halves mutual desire for each other, making their intercourse fruitful so that by continual procreation he might, in a sense, make even mortality immortal. Indeed, tradition says that some of the Gods themselves are male and others female, and that they are all interrelated by sexual ties of kinship and parentage. So you see that even among those beings who have really no need of such a device, marriage and the procreation of children have been approved as a noble custom."

I wanted to laugh, not only because I was being praised for what had been forced on me greatly against my will—I will soon tell you about Urgulanilla, to whom I was married

at this time—but because the whole business was such an utter farce. What was the use of Augustus addressing us in this way, when he was perfectly well aware that it was not the men who were shirking, as he called it, but the women? If he had summoned the women it is just possible that he might have accomplished something by talking to them in the right way.

I remember once hearing two of my mother's freed-women discussing modern marriage from the point of view of a woman of family. What did she gain by it? they asked. Morals were so loose now that nobody took marriage seriously any longer. Granted, a few old-fashioned men respected it sufficiently to have a prejudice against children being fathered on them by their friends or household servants, and a few old-fashioned women respected their husbands' feelings sufficiently to be very careful not to become pregnant to any but them. But as a rule any good-looking woman nowadays could have any man to sleep with whom she chose. If she did marry and then tired of her husband, as usually happened, and wanted someone else to amuse herself with, there might easily be her husband's pride or jealousy to contend with. Nor in general was she better off financially after marriage. Her dowry passed into the hands of her husband, or her father-in-law as master of the household, if he happened to be alive; and a husband, or father-in-law, was usually a more difficult person to manage than a father, or elder brother, whose foibles she had long come to understand. Being married just meant vexatious household responsibility. As for children, who wanted them? They interfered with the lady's health and amusement for several months before birth and, though she had a foster-mother for them immediately afterwards, it took time to recover from the wretched business of childbirth, and it often happened that her figure was ruined after having more than a couple. Look how the beautiful Julia had changed by obediently gratifying Augustus's desire for descendants. And a lady's husband, if she was fond of him, could not be

expected to keep off other women throughout the time of her pregnancy, and anyway he paid very little attention to the child when it was born. And then, as if all this were not enough, foster-mothers were shockingly careless nowadays and the child often died. What a blessing it was that those Greek doctors were so clever, if the thing had not gone too far—they could rid any lady of an unwanted child in two or three days, and nobody be any the worse or wiser. Of course some ladies, even very modern ladies, had an old-fashioned hankering for children, but they could always buy a child for adoption into their husband's family, from some man of decent birth who was hard pressed by his creditors. . . .

Augustus gave the Noble Order of Knights permission to marry commoners, even freedwomen, but this did not improve things very much. Knights, if they married at all, married for rich dowries, not for children or for love, and a freedwoman was not much of a catch; and besides knights, especially those recently raised to the order, had strong feelings against marrying beneath them. In families of the ancient nobility the difficulty was still greater. Not only were there fewer women to choose from in the correct degree of kinship, but the marriage ceremony was stricter. The wife was more absolutely in the power of the master of the household into which she married. Every sensible woman thought twice before committing herself to this contract, from which there was no escape but divorce; and after divorce it was difficult to recover the property that she had brought him as dowry. In other than anciently noble families, however, a woman could marry a man legally and yet remain independent, with control of her own property—if she cared to stipulate that she should sleep three nights of the year outside her husband's house; for this condition would interrupt his right over her as a permanent chattel. Women liked this form of marriage for obvious reasons, the very reasons for which their husbands disliked it. The practice started among the lowest families of the

City but worked upwards, and soon became the rule in all except the anciently noble families. Here there was a religious reason against it. From these families the State priests were chosen, and by religious law a priest had to be a married man, married in the strict form, and the child of a strict-form marriage too. As time went on suitable candidates for priesthood were increasingly difficult to find. Finally there were vacancies in the colleges of Priests that could not be filled and something had to be done about it, so the lawyers found a way out. Women of rank were allowed, on contracting strict-form marriages, to stipulate that the complete surrender of themselves and property was "as touching sacred matters" and that otherwise they enjoyed all the benefits of free marriage.

But that came later. Meanwhile the best that Augustus could do, apart from his legal penalization of bachelors and childless married men, was to put pressure on masters of households to marry off their young people (with instructions to increase and multiply) while they were still too young to realize to what they were being committed or to do anything but obey implicitly. To show a good example therefore, all we younger members of the families of Augustus and Livia were betrothed and married at the earliest possible age. It may sound strange, but Augustus was a great-grandfather at the age of fifty-four and a great-great-grandfather before he died at the age of seventy-six; while Julia, as a result of her second marriage too, had a marriageable granddaughter before she was herself beyond child-bearing age. The generations somewhat overlapped in this way and the genealogical tree of the Imperial family became a rival in complexity to that of Olympus. This was not only because of the frequent adoptions and the marrying of members in closer degree of kinship than religious custom really permitted—for the Imperial family was by this time getting above the law; but because as soon as a man died his widow was made to marry again and always in the same small circle of relationship. I shall do my best now

to straighten the matter out at this point, without being too long-winded.

I have mentioned Julia's children, Augustus's chief heirs since Julia herself had been banished and cut out of his will, namely, her three boys, Gaius, Lucius and Postumus, and her two daughters, Julilla and Agrippina. The younger members of Livia's family were Tiberius's son, Castor, and his three first-cousins, namely, my brother Germanicus, my sister Livilla and myself. But I must not forget Julia's grandchild—for Julilla had in the absence of any possible husband from Livia's family married a wealthy senator called Æmilius (her first-cousin through a previous marriage of Scribonia's) and had borne him a daughter called Æmilia. Julilla's marriage was unfortunate, for Livia grudged that any granddaughter of Augustus should marry any but a grandson of her own; but as you will soon see it did not trouble her for long, and meanwhile Germanicus married Agrippina, a handsome serious girl to whom he had as a matter of fact been long devoted. Gaius married my sister Livilla but died soon afterwards, leaving no children. Lucius, who had been betrothed to Æmilia but not yet married, was already dead.

On Lucius's death the question arose of a suitable match for Æmilia. Augustus had a shrewd notion that Livia intended Æmilia's husband to be no other than myself, but he had tender feelings for the child and could not bear the idea of her marrying a sickly creature like me. He resolved to oppose the match: for once, he promised himself, Livia should not have her way. It happened shortly after the death of Lucius that Augustus was dining with Medullinus, one of his old generals, who traced his descent from the dictator Camillus. Medullinus told him, smiling, when the wine cups had been filled several times, that he had a young granddaughter of whom he was very fond. She had suddenly shown a surprising advance in her literary studies and he understood that he had a young relative of his most honoured guest's to thank for this improvement.

Augustus was puzzled. "Who on earth can that be? I have heard nothing of it. What is happening? Is it a secret love affair with a literary sauce?"

"Yes, something of the sort," said Medullinus grinning. "I have spoken to the young fellow, and for all his physical misfortunes and capabilities I can't help liking him. He has a frank and noble nature, and as a young scholar he impresses me considerably."

Augustus asked incredulously: "What, you don't mean young Tiberius Claudius?"

"Yes, that's the one," said Medullinus.

Augustus's face lit up with a sudden resolution and he asked rather more hastily than was decent: "Listen, Medullinus, old friend, would you have any objection to him as your granddaughter's husband? If you agree to the match I shall be only too glad to arrange it. Young Germanicus is now nominally master of the household, but in matters like this he takes the advice of his elders. Well, it certainly isn't every girl who could overcome her physical repugnance to such a poor deaf, stammering cripple, and Livia and myself have had a natural delicacy in betrothing him to anyone. But if your granddaughter of her own free will——"

Medullinus said: "The child has spoken to me about this marriage herself and weighed matters very carefully. She tells me that young Tiberius Claudius is modest and truthful and kind-hearted; and that his lameness will never allow him to go to the wars and be killed——"

"Or to run after other women," laughed Augustus.

"And that his deafness is only on the one side, and as for his general health——"

"I suppose the little minx has it worked out that he is not crippled in that part of the body for which honest wives show the most solicitude? Yes, why shouldn't he be capable of begetting perfectly healthy children on her? My old lame, whistling stud-stallion Bucephalus has sired more chariot-race winners than any horse in Rome. But, joking apart, Medullinus, yours is a very honourable house and my



wife's family will be proud to be connected with it by marriage. Do you seriously mean that you approve the match?"

Medullinus said that the girl could do very much worse, quite apart from the unlooked-for honour to the family of being allied in marriage with the Father of the Country.

Now Medullina, the granddaughter, was my first love; and never, I swear, was there such a beautiful child seen in all the world. I met her one summer afternoon in the Gardens of Sallust, where I was taken by Sulpicius in the absence of Athenodorus, who was unwell. Sulpicius's daughter was married to Medullina's uncle, Furius Camillus, a distinguished soldier who was Consul six years later. When I first saw her it was with a shock of surprise, not only at her beauty, but at her sudden appearance, for she came up on my deaf side while I was reading a book, and when I raised my eyes, there she was standing over me laughing at my preoccupation. She was slender, with rich black hair, white skin and very dark blue eyes, and all her movements were quick and birdlike.

"What's your name?" she asked, in a friendly voice.

"Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus."

"Ye gods, all that! Mine's Medullina Camilla. How old are you?"

"Thirteen," I said, mastering my stammer well.

"I'm only eleven, but I bet I can race you to that cedar tree and back."

"Are you a champion runner, then?"

"I can beat any girl in Rome, and my elder brothers too."

"Well, I'm afraid you win by default. I can't run at all, I'm lame."

"Oh, you poor fellow. How did you come here then? Hobble-hobbling all the way?"

"No, Camilla, in a sedan-chair, like a lazy old man."

"Why do you call me by my last name?"

"Because it's the more appropriate one."

"How do you make that out, clever?"

"Because among the Etruscans 'Camilla' is what they call

the young hunting priestesses dedicated to Diana. With a name like Camilla one is bound to be a champion runner."

"That's nice. I never heard that. I shall make all my friends call me Camilla now."

"And call me Claudius will you? That's my appropriate name. It means a cripple. My family usually call me Tiberius, and that's inappropriate because the Tiber runs very fast."

She laughed. "Well then, Claudius, tell me what do you do all day if you can't run about with the other boys."

"I read, mostly, and write. I have read scores of books this year already and it's only June. This one's Greek."

"I can't read Greek yet. I only just know the alphabet. My grandfather is cross with me—I have no father, you know—he calls me lazy. Of course, I understand Greek when I hear it talked: we always have to talk Greek at meals and whenever visitors come. What's the book about?"

"It's part of Thucydides's history. This passage is about how a politician, a tanner called Cleon, began criticizing the generals who were blockading the Spartans in an island. He said that they were not doing their best and that if he were general he would bring back the whole Spartan force as captives within twenty days. The Athenians were so sick of his talk that they appointed him to command the forces himself."

"That was a funny idea. What happened?"

"He kept his promise. He chose a good staff-officer and told him to fight in any way he liked so long as he won the battle, and the man knew his job; so within twenty days Cleon brought back to Athens a hundred and twenty Spartans of the highest rank."

Camilla said: "I've heard my uncle Furius say that the cleverest leader is one who chooses clever people to think for him." Then she said: "You must be very wise by now, Claudius."

"I am supposed to be an utter fool and the more I read the more of a fool they think me."

"I think you're very sensible. You tell things so nicely."

"But I stammer. My tongue's a Claudian too."

"Perhaps that's just nervousness. You don't know many girls, do you?"

"No," I said, "and you're the first one I have met who hasn't laughed at me. Couldn't we see each other now and then, Camilla? You couldn't teach me to run, but I could teach you to read Greek. Would you like that?"

"Oh, I'd love it. But will you teach me from interesting books?"

"From any book you like. Do you like history?"

"I think I like poetry best; there are so many names and dates to remember in history. My eldest sister raves about the love-poetry of Parthenius. Have you read any of it?"

"Some of it, but I don't like it. It's so artificial. I like *real* books."

"So do I. But is there any Greek love-poetry that isn't artificial?"

"There's Theocritus. I like him very much. Get your aunt to bring you here to-morrow at the same time and I'll bring Theocritus and we'll begin at once."

"You promise he's not boring?"

"No, he's very good."

After this we used to meet in the garden nearly every day and sit in the shade together and read Theocritus and talk. I made Sulpicius promise not to tell anybody about it, for fear Livia should hear of it and stop my going. Camilla said one day that I was the kindest boy she had ever met and that she liked me better than all her brothers' friends. Then I told her how much I liked her and she was very pleased and we kissed shyly. She asked whether there was any possible chance of our getting married. She said that her grandfather would do anything for her and that she would bring him along one day to the gardens and introduce us; but would my father approve? When I told her that I had no father and that it all rested with Augustus and Livia she became depressed. We had not talked much about

families until then. She had never heard any good of Livia, but I said that it was possible she might consent, because she disliked me so much that I didn't think she cared very much what I did, so long as I didn't disgrace her.

Medullinus was a straight dignified old man and something of a historian, which made conversation between us easy. He had been my father's superior officer in his first campaign and was full of anecdotes of him, many of which I noted down gratefully for my biography. One day we began talking about Camilla's ancestor Camillus, and when he asked me what action of Camillus's I most admired I said: "When the treacherous schoolmaster of Falerii decoyed the children under his charge to the walls of Rome, saying that the Falerians would offer any terms to get them back, Camillus disdained the offer. He had him stripped naked and tied his hands behind his back and gave the boys rods and scourges to whip the traitor back home. Wasn't that magnificent?" In reading this story I had pictured the schoolmaster as Cato, the boys as Postumus and myself, and so my enthusiasm for Camillus was a little mixed. But Medullinus was pleased.

When Germanicus was asked for his approval of our marriage he gave it gladly, for I had told him of my love for Camilla; and my uncle Tiberius raised no objection; and my grandmother Livia hid her anger as usual and congratulated Augustus on having been so quick to take Medullinus at his word—he must have been drunk, she said, to have approved the match, though indeed the dowry was small, and the honour of the alliance great for a man of his family. The house of Camillus had bred no men of outstanding capacity or reputation for many generations.

Germanicus told me that everything had been arranged and that the betrothal ceremony was to take place on the next lucky day—we Romans are very superstitious about days; nobody would dream, for instance, of fighting A.D. 3  
a battle or marrying or buying a house on July 16th, the day of the Allia disaster in Camillus's time. I could hardly believe

my good fortune. I too had feared that I would be made to marry *Æmilia*, an ill-tempered affected little girl who copied my sister *Livilla* in teasing and making a fool of me whenever she came to us on a visit, which was often. The betrothal ceremony, *Livia* insisted, was to be as private as possible, because she could not trust me not to make a fool of myself if there was a crowd. I preferred it that way: I hated ceremonies. Only the necessary witnesses would attend, and there would be no feast, merely the usual ritual sacrifice of a ram whose entrails would then be examined to see whether the auspices were favourable. Of course they would be; *Augustus*, officiating as priest, in compliment to *Livia*, would see to that. Then a contract would be signed for the second ceremony to take place as soon as I came of age, with stipulations about the dowry. *Camilla* and I would join hands and kiss and then I would give her a gold ring and she would return to her grandfather's house—quietly, as she had come, without any train of singing attendants.

It hurts me even now to write about that day. I stood, very nervously, in my chaplet and clean robe waiting with *Germanicus* by the family altar for *Camilla* to appear. She was late. She was very late. The witnesses began to grow impatient and criticize the bad manners of old *Medullinus* in keeping them waiting on a ceremonial occasion like this. At last the porter announced *Camilla's* uncle *Furius* and he came in, ashy-white and wearing mourning garments. After a short speech of greeting and apology to *Augustus* and the rest of the company for his tardiness and ill-omened appearance he said: "A great calamity has happened. My niece is dead."

"Dead!" cried *Augustus*. "What joke is this? We had a message only half an hour ago that she was already on her way here."

"She died by poison. A crowd gathered at the door, as crowds will, when they heard that the daughter of the house was about to go to her betrothal. When my niece came out, the women all pressed admiringly around her. She gave

a little cry as if someone had trod on her foot, but nobody thought anything of it, and she stepped into the sedan. We had not gone the length of the street before my wife, Sulpicia, who was with her, saw her lose colour and asked whether she felt frightened. 'Oh, aunt,' she said, 'that woman stuck a needle into my arm and I feel faint.' Those were her last words, my friends. She died a few minutes later. I hurried here as soon as I had changed my clothes. You will forgive me."

I burst into tears and began to sob hysterically. My mother, furious at my disgraceful conduct, told one of the freedmen to lead me away to my room; where I remained for days, in a nervous fever, unable to eat or sleep. But for the comfort that dear Postumus gave me, I believe I should have lost my wits altogether. The murderess was never found and nobody was able to explain what motive she could have had. Livia reported to Augustus a few days later that according to reports which seemed reliable one of the women in the crowd had been a Greek girl who considered herself, no doubt groundlessly, to have been wronged by the girl's uncle and may have decided to revenge herself in this monstrous way.

When I was well again, or no iller than usual, Livia complained to Augustus that the death of young Medullina Camilla had happened most unfortunately. In spite of Augustus's pardonable sentiment against such a match, she feared that young Æmilia would, after all now, have to be betrothed to her impossible grandson: everybody, she said, had been surprised that she had not been matched with him before. So, as usual, Livia had her way. I was betrothed to Æmilia a few weeks later; and went through the ceremony without disgrace, because grief for Camilla had made me quite indifferent. But Æmilia's eyes were red when she arrived, from tears not of grief but of rage.

Now as to Postumus, poor fellow, he was in love with my sister Livilla, of whom he saw much because she had gone to live in the Palace when she married his brother

Gaius, and was still there. It was generally expected that he would marry her, to renew the family connexion broken by his brother's death. Livilla was flattered by his passionate devotion. She flirted with him constantly, but had no love for him. Castor was her choice—a cruel, dissolute, handsome fellow who seemed made for her. I knew of the understanding between Livilla and Castor, which I had discovered accidentally, and this made me very unhappy on Postumus's behalf, the more so because Postumus had no suspicion of her character and I did not dare to tell him of it. Whenever Livilla and I and he were together she used to show me pretended affection, which touched Postumus as much as it angered me. I knew that as soon as he had gone she would begin her spiteful tricks again. Livia got wind of the intrigue between Livilla and Castor and kept a careful watch on them: one night she was rewarded by a message from a trusted servant that Castor had just climbed in at Livilla's window by the balcony. She put an armed guard on the balcony and then knocked at Livilla's door, calling her by name. After a minute or so Livilla opened the door, pretending to have been sound asleep; but Livia went inside and found Castor behind the curtain. She talked very plainly to them and appears to have made them understand that the matter would not be reported to Augustus, who would certainly banish them if it was, only on certain conditions; and that if these same conditions were strictly observed she would even arrange that they should marry. Not long after my betrothal to Æmilia, Livia so settled matters with Augustus that Postumus was betrothed, much to his grief, to a girl called Domitia, a first-cousin of mine on my mother's side; and Castor married Livilla. This was the year that Tiberius and Postumus were adopted as Augustus's sons.

Livia considered Julilla and her husband Æmilius as a possible obstacle to her designs. She was lucky enough to get evidence that Æmilius and Cornelius, a grandson of Pompey the Great, were plotting to remove Augustus from

power and to divide up his offices between themselves and certain ex-Consuls, among them Tiberius, though Tiberius had not yet been sounded for his opinion. The plot never gathered much way, because the first ex-Consul whom Æmilius and Cornelius approached refused to have anything to do with it. Augustus did not punish either Æmilius or Cornelius by death or banishment. It had been a welcome proof of the strength of his own position that they could get so little support for their plot, and by sparing them he proved it still stronger. He merely called them to his presence and lectured them on their folly and ingratitude. Cornelius fell at his feet and thanked him abjectly for his clemency; and Augustus begged him not to make a further fool of himself. He was not a tyrant, he said, either to conspire against, or to worship for showing a tyrant's clemency: he was merely a State-official of the Roman Republic who had been temporarily granted wide powers for the better maintenance of order. Æmilius had evidently led him astray by misrepresentations. The best cure for this nonsense was for Cornelius to become Consul next year in due course and so satisfy his ambitions by attaining equal honour with himself; for there was no higher rank than Consul in Rome. (Theoretically this was true.) Æmilius was proud and remained standing; and Augustus told him that as his relative by marriage he ought to have shown more decency, and as an ex-Consul he ought to have shown more sense. He thereupon deprived him of all his honours.

An amusing feature of this case was that Livia won all the credit for Augustus's clemency by claiming to have pleaded, with a woman's tenderness, for the lives of the two conspirators; of whom, she said, Augustus had practically decided to make an example. She got his consent to the publication of a little book which she had written called *A Pillow Debate on Force and Gentleness*, full of intimate touches. Augustus is represented as restless and worried and unable to sleep. Livia begs him prettily to speak his



mind and they go together over the question of the proper treatment of Æmilius and Cornelius.

Augustus explains that he does not wish to put them to death, yet he fears that he must do so, for if he lets them off it will be thought that he is afraid of them, and others will be tempted to conspire against him. "To be always under the necessity of taking vengeance and inflicting punishments is a very painful position for any honourable man to be in, my dearest wife."

Livia answers: "You are quite right and I have a piece of advice to give you—that is, if you are willing to accept it and will not blame me for daring, though a woman, to suggest to you something which nobody else, even of your most intimate friends, would dare to suggest."

Augustus says: "Out with it, whatever it is."

Livia answers: "I shall tell you without hesitation, because I have an equal share in your good fortune and ill fortune and as long as you are safe I also have my part in reigning; whereas if you came to any harm, which the Gods forbid, that is the end of me too. . . ." She advises forgiveness. "Soft words turn away wrath, as harsh words excite wrath even in a gentle spirit: forgiveness will melt the most arrogant heart, as punishment will harden even the humblest. . . . I do not mean by this that we must spare all criminals without distinction: for there is such a thing as an incurable and persistent depravity on which kindness is wasted. A man who offends in this way should be removed at once as a cancer in the body politic. But in the case of the rest, whose errors, committed wilfully or otherwise, are due to youth or ignorance or misapprehension, we should, I believe, merely rebuke them, or punish them in the mildest possible way. Let us make the experiment, therefore, starting with these very men." Augustus applauds her wisdom and confesses himself persuaded. But note the reassurance to the world that on Augustus's death Livia's rule would end, and further note and remember the phrase "incurable and persistent depravity". My grandmother Livia was a sly one!

Livia now told Augustus that the proposed marriage between Æmilia and myself must be cancelled as a sign of Imperial displeasure with her parents; and Augustus was delighted to agree to this, because Æmilia had been complaining bitterly to him of her misfortune in having to marry me. Livia had little to fear from Julilla now, whom Augustus suspected of being an accomplice in her husband's schemes: but she would make sure of her too, before she had done. Meanwhile she had to pay a debt of honour to her friend Urgulania, a woman whom I have not yet mentioned but who is one of the most unpleasant characters in my story.