

App. Civ. 1, 57-60

Text Übersetzung:

(Übersetzung Horace White)

[57] When Sulla heard of this he resolved to decide the question by war. He called the army together in a conference. They were eager for the war against Mithridates because it promised much plunder, and they feared that Marius would enlist other soldiers instead of themselves. Sulla spoke of the indignity put upon him by Sulpicius and Marius, and while he did not openly allude to anything else (for he did not dare as yet to mention this kind of a war), he urged them to be ready to obey his orders. They understood what he meant, and as they feared lest they should miss the campaign they spoke boldly what Sulla had in his mind, and told him to be of good courage, and to lead them to Rome. Sulla was overjoyed and led six legions thither forthwith, but all of his superior officers, except one quæstor, left him and hastened to the city, because they would not submit to the idea of leading an army against their country. Envoys met him on the road and asked him why he was marching with armed forces against his country. "To deliver her from her tyrants," he replied. He gave the same answer to a second and a third embassy that came to him, one after another, but he announced to them finally that the Senate and Marius and Sulpicius might meet him in the Campus Martius if they liked, and that he would do whatever might be agreed upon after consultation. As he was approaching, his colleague, Pompeius, came to meet him and praised him for what he had done, for Pompeius was delighted, and cooperated with him in every way. As Marius and Sulpicius needed some short interval for preparation, they sent other messengers, in the guise of envoys from the Senate, directing him not to move his camp nearer than forty stades from the city until they could consider of the business in hand. Sulla and Pompeius understood their game perfectly and promised to comply, but as soon as the envoys were returning they followed them. [58] Sulla took possession of the Cœlian gate and of the adjoining wall with one legion of soldiers, and Pompeius occupied the Colline gate with another. A third advanced to the Sublician bridge, and a fourth remained on guard in front of the walls. With the remainder Sulla entered the city, being in appearance and in fact an enemy. The inhabitants round about tried to fight him off by hurling missiles from the roofs until he threatened to burn the houses; then they desisted. Marius and Sulpicius went, with some forces they had hastily armed, to meet the invaders near the Æsquiline forum, and here a battle took place between the contending parties, the first that was regularly fought in Rome with trumpet and signal under the rules of war, and not at all in the similitude of a faction fight. To such extremity of evil had the recklessness of party strife progressed among them. Sulla's forces were beginning to waver when Sulla seized a standard and exposed himself to danger in the foremost ranks. Out of regard for their general and fear of ignominy if they should abandon their standard, they rallied at once. Sulla ordered up fresh troops from his camp and sent others around by the so-called Suburran road to take the enemy in the rear. The Marians fought feebly against these new-comers, and as they feared lest they should be surrounded they called to their aid the other citizens who were still fighting from the houses, and proclaimed freedom to slaves who would share their labors. As nobody came forward they fell into utter despair and fled at once out of the city, together with those of the nobility who had cooperated with them. [59] Sulla advanced to the so-called Via Sacra and there, in sight of everybody, punished certain soldiers who had plundered persons on the road. He stationed guards at intervals throughout the city, he and Pompeius keeping watch by night. Each kept moving about his own command to see that no calamity was brought about either by the frightened people or by the victorious troops: They

summoned the people to an assembly at daybreak and lamented the condition of the republic, which had been so long given over to demagogues, and said that they had done what they had done as a matter of necessity. They proposed that no question should ever again be brought before the people which had not been previously considered by the Senate, an ancient practice which had been abandoned long ago. Also that the voting should not be by tribes, but by centuries, as King Servius Tullius had ordained. They thought that by these two measures--namely, that no law should be brought before the people unless it had been previously before the Senate, and that the voting should be controlled by the well-to-do and sober-minded rather than by the pauper and reckless classes--there would no longer be any starting-point for civil discord. They proposed many other measures for curtailing the power of the tribunes, which had become extremely tyrannical. They enrolled 300 of the best citizens at once in the list of senators, who had been reduced at that time to a very small number and had fallen into contempt for that reason. They annulled all the acts performed by Sulpicius after the vacation had been proclaimed by the consuls, as being illegal. [60] Thus the seditions proceeded from strife and contention to murder, and from murder to open war, and now the first army of her own citizens had invaded Rome as a hostile country. From this time the civil dissensions were decided only by the arbitrament of arms. There were frequent attacks upon the city and battles before the walls and other calamities incident to war. Henceforth there was no restraint upon violence either from the sense of shame, or regard for law, institutions, or country. Now Sulpicius, who still held the office of tribune, together with Marius, who had been consul six times, and his son Marius, also Publius Cethegus, Junius Brutus, Gnæus and Quintus Granius, Publius Albinovanus, Marcus Lætorius, and others with them, about twelve in number, fled from Rome, because they had stirred up the sedition, had borne arms against the consuls, had incited slaves to insurrection, had been voted enemies of the Roman people, and anybody meeting them had been authorized to kill them with impunity or to drag them before the consuls, and their goods had been confiscated. Detectives were in pursuit of these men. They caught Sulpicius and killed him.