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THE ADVENTURES  
OF  
JULIUS CÆSAR,  
IN  
MALTA

BY A CENTURION OF THE LXXI LEGION.



Printed at the "Daily Malta Chronicle," 104, St. John's Square.

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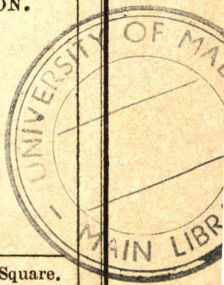
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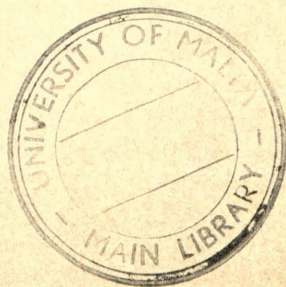


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TO  
LADY FREMANTLE  
THIS SMALL WORK IS, BY KIND PERMISSION,  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR



# JULIUS CÆSAR REDIVIVUS.

## I.

It seems good to me, most excellent Æmilius, to set forth in order the things which I beheld when I visited the island of Melita and whereat I marvelled.

Having been conveyed thither in a great trireme we cast our anchor from the prow towards the Ides of March; whereupon the trireme was immediately surrounded by innumerable small ships bearing, as I thought gifts of food, raiment and trinkets for the commander of the trireme. My guide, however, informed me that the galley slaves brought merchandise to barter with the travellers for gold; the travellers however, seemed to set little store by the merchandise and heeded not the sellers thereof. Leaving the trireme we took ship in one of the lesser craft, my guide having informed me of the name on his tablet: I marvelled at the name but comprehended it not. My guide then conducted me to the Via Maxima wherein is a great building: I wist not whether it was the senate house or a temple of the gods: but hearing many centurions of the legions calling for libations unto Bacchus I concluded it to be a temple to that deity and paid my

dues with a libation and gave tribute of gold unto Josephus the High Priest.

My guide then informed me that the Consul would review his legions that day on the Campus Martius before noon: being desirous of seeing the consular army in battle array I hied me thither in a chariot, the driver of which urged his steed with many pious invocations which I understood not but whereat I marvelled exceedingly. I then beheld the seven legions of the consular army and marvelled much at their attire for they were clad in raiment of brown with helmets of snowy whiteness, save only two legions which outshone the rainbow by the brilliancy of the raiment wherewith they clad their nether limbs. One of these legions was composed of Amazons, as I thought, being clad after the manner of women, but my guide informed me that these legions were from the land of Scotia and that their dress and tongue were not as those of their brethren.

One legion, seeming more pious than the rest, was accompanied by a beast: I enquired of my guide for what purpose this was, whether for a peace offering to the consul or to take the omens from the entrails thereof but he replied that this legion was from the land of Cambria and that they too, like those of Scotia, had many strange customs and that the beast was in no wise to be slain, whereat I marvelled, Then the centurions spake many

words which I comprehended not, but my guide informed me that they commanded the legionaries to dress themselves, but they made no change in their attire nor did those from Scotia, whom I took to be Amazons, add one whit to their apparel, whereat also I marvelled but held my peace.

Then amid much sounding of clarions and beating of drums the consul arrived, accompanied by many proconsuls and praetors wearing brazen headgear, and these were more gorgeously arrayed. The centurions then spake much, harshly, as it seemed to me, and the legionaries welcomed the consul by waving aloft their spears.

The legions then performed many exercises with an excellence at which I was astonished and whereat the damsels and other spectators applauded loudly, and returned to their camps. I also returned to the citadel, and, repairing to the temple, poured another libation unto Bacchus.

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## Julius Cæsar's Impressions of Polo.

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Having witnessed the review of the consular army and poured my libation in the hall of the temple, I was again conducted to the Campus Martius, whither crowds of horsemen and many chariots were wending ; now to some of these chariots were yoked two horses, not, as was our custom in the chariot races, side by side, but one before the other, the charioteer, meanwhile urging his steeds with blasts from a brazen trumpet, and the foremost steed being often curious to see whence these sweet strains come, turns round and advances towards the charioteer. Now my guide informed me that the officers of the legions, as also those of the war vessels, delight greatly in thus yoking their steeds : whereat I marvelled exceedingly. Being at length arrived at the Campus Martius I found the Cavalry preparing for their exercises, now many of native cavalry were there—small of stature and for the most part bare as to the feet—commanded by two Generals whose cognomina, I learnt, were “Black” and “White,” and these gave many commands in a loud voice to the native levies, who galloped hither and thither with many ejaculations : now the regular cavalry were dressed less uniformly than the

infantry legions : the greater part, however, had raw hides girt about their legs, to which were fixed small scythes, somewhat, as it seemed to me, after the manner of those which the ancient Britons fixed to the axles of their chariots ; for the purpose, as I supposed of inflicting wounds on their enemies, should they be compelled to flee from them on foot.

The horsemen then ranged themselves in two maniples of four apiece, having first encircled their bodies with cloth of brilliant hue : insignia of rank as I imagined : they then armed themselves with spears of curious construction and I waited breathless till I should see the two maniples advance against each other at the charge, and while I waited, lo ! a small ball was hurled among them by one of the native levies, whereat they contended fiercely for the possession thereof, and some being more skilled than their fellows struck it violently with their spears : and among those who contended was one, a centurion of the Royal household as I learnt, who outshone his companions by the vehemence with which he urged his steed, shouting the while the war-cry of his tribe, which appeared to strike terror into the breasts of the opposing maniple, and at this I marvelled not. Having contended thus for some time the arbiter, seeing the strife to wax heated, gave the signal for the combatants to desist, whereupon two more maniples prepared to enter the arena. I then enquired of



my guide whether the cavalry were often exercised in this manner, to which he replied that the exercises I had witnessed formed the chief recreation of the centurions of the legions and also of the officers of the triremes on the Portus Maximus. And thus, marvelling much at the manner of the recreation, I returned once more to the citadel.

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## Julius Cæsar takes part in the Carnival and winds up at the Borsa.

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Having witnessed the review of the legions and the recreation of the centurions, and being urged by the importunities of the Senate and People, I lingered still in the citadel: and it now seems good to me, most illustrious Æmilius, to set forth the narrative of the rejoicings which I witnessed on the Kalends of March and for a space of two days thereafter, which rejoicings, as I was informed, were to celebrate the return from exile of certain maniples of a legion which had been sent into banishment, though for what reason I was unable to ascertain. During the feast, which, as I have already related, was prolonged for several days, the dress of the people was of a varied and peculiar nature, the reason being, as I learnt, that the great solemnity of the occasion demanded that the people should in no wise be clad in the raiment they were wont to assume every day, to this end, therefore, the officers of the legions and also of the war vessels donned their warlike habiliments, while the citizens arrayed themselves in curious attire, which I can by no means attempt to describe, as so great was the diversity of their apparel that scarcely any two were

dressed alike, but most of all I marvelled that they should conceal their countenances, the reason for which I was unable at that time to discover.

Learning that the triumphal procession would be marshalled in the Via Maxima shortly before sunset, I repaired thither at that hour, and as I hastened I saw a great crowd, engaged in strife, hurling missiles of some nature among themselves, whereupon I hastened to the guardians of the city to desire them to quell the disturbance, deeming it unfitting that the rejoicings should be marred by bloodshed. On being informed that this conduct was merely an expression of their joy I marvelled greatly but held my peace ; it was then that I perceived the reason of the citizens encasing their features in armour and thinking it expedient to profit by their example, I hastened to the temple and demanded the wherewithal to protect my own features; one of the priests of the temple procured me armour, stating with unwonted suavity of manner that it was “the best in the island”. I tendered him several sesterces in exchange, doubting in no wise the truth of his assertion. I then beheld the triumphal cars of the nobles, gaily caparisoned with banners, marshalled in the Via Maxima ; these proceeded slowly through the city, the nobles in the cars, singing the while triumphal hymns while some evoked sweet (?) strains from horns and other instruments, others hurling showers of missiles at the pedestrians.

Having witnessed the procession for some time I retired to the temple, where I learnt that there was to be held, the same evening, a great feast of Terpsichore in one of the public halls to terminate the festivities, to which, by the courtesy of the citizens, I was bidden; I was informed however that it was necessary to discard the toga I was in the habit of wearing and don one of a parti-coloured and ornate design provided with a species of helmet, nor was I, by any means, to lay aside the armour for my face. These preparations being thus accomplished, I sallied forth to the dancing hall, on entering which I was hailed with shouts from all sides, signifying, as I ascertained, "Now we shant be long!" a common form of salutation, I was informed among the people, the meaning of which, however I was at a loss to discover.

Being gratified above measure by the cordiality of my reception, I ascended into the upper chamber where the votaries of Terpsichore were already disporting themselves; here I found a great crowd, attired in togas of a nature similar to mine, and amongst them a small band attired wholly in white, wearing the insignia of their tribe upon their sleeves, who being armed with weapons and musical instruments of various sorts buffeted me therewith upon the head and body, but I, supposing this to be merely another curious method of expressing their joy, marvelled greatly but, being myself unarmed, returned

not their salutations. I then joined in the dances, being led by the hand by several damsels in turn, who told me that their several prænomena were "Mary," "Jane," "Susie" and "Polly" and the like, whereat I evinced great enthusiasm, but beyond this I was unable to discover their identity, they also, as I inferred from the nature of their conversation, being equally ignorant of mine.

Having participated in the revels for some time, I partook of meat and wine in the chamber set apart for refection, and then, repairing to the temple once more, I sought oblivion in slumber.

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## Julius Cæsar spends the day on Guard.

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On the day following the Terpsichorean revels, the narrative of which I set forth in my last epistle, I was exceedingly desirous to examine closely the Palace of the Chief Governor and peradventure, by the courtesy of his household to obtain an entrance thereto ; accordingly I repaired thither about the third hour and as I approached it I saw a small company of soldiers, fully armed and equipped and commanded by a centurion, advancing towards the fortress opposite the Palace of the Chief Governor : I stood and gazed, wondering whether they would take the fortress by storm, and as I watched, the sentinel gave the alarm by shouting in a loud voice, whereupon the garrison rushed out, followed, a few minutes later, by the commander of the garrison who was apparently in no wise disconcerted at this sudden invasion.

Meanwhile the storming party took up its position, as nearly as I can judge about ten, paces from the garrison ; but as you will remember when we served together in the Gallic war I was by no means proficient in the art of judging distances, this may be by no means a true estimation on my part. The opponents then, with unwonted courtesy, saluted each

other by waving their spears and blowing trumpets and the commanders of both forces entered the fortress, for the purpose as I supposed of holding a council of war: having conferred between themselves for some time, they signed what I supposed to be a treaty of capitulation and the garrison were permitted to depart, honourably as I supposed, since they neither laid down their arms nor were they compelled to pass under the yoke: and while I stood wondering why the garrison should have capitulated with so little resistance, the centurion of the victorious band beckoned me into the fortress. Now, being desirous above measure to learn why he had been able to gain possession of it without bloodshed, as the opposing forces were, as far as I could perceive, of nearly equal strength, I followed him up a winding staircase to the upper chamber: in answer to my enquiries he informed me that it was in no wise an act of hostility that I had witnessed, but that he and the legionaries under his command had charge of the citadel for that day and that those whom I had assumed to be the vanquished force had merely had charge of the citadel the previous day and now, being absolved from their responsibility, were returning to their camps, he further added that on his vigilance and on that of his soldiers depended the safety not only of the person and property of the Chief Governor but also of the whole city, seeing I would have questioned him

further he checked me stating that, as he also had been engaged in the worship of Terpsichore till past midnight, he was weary and would fain slumber: whereat I marvelled but disturbed him not. I then proceeded to examine the walls of the chamber which were adorned with frescoes and mural paintings of divers descriptions, much after the manner of those in our villas at Herculaneum and Pompeii, representing feats of arms and trophies and standards of various legions, some of which, I observed were of great antiquity: now during my examination of the frescoes the alarm was suddenly given by the loud sounding of a bell and the centurion, awakening from his slumber with many ejaculations, seized his helmet and his weapons of war and hastened with what celerity he might to his post, and as I watched from the upper chamber I saw a messenger approach on horseback; at first I imagined him to bear tidings of the advance of some hostile tribe, but as he rode with great deliberation and hastened not I doubted if this was the case; he approached the garrison who saluted him in their accustomed manner, and having conferred for a brief space with the centurion he departed. On the return of the centurion he informed me that the messenger was an envoy from the chief officers of the army and that his mission was, comparatively speaking, one of peace, he added however that at times the envoy chose



the most unsuitable hours for his visits and occasionally was wont to disturb the rest of himself and his men by bringing tidings in the dead of night as well as during the day, I marvelled at this want of consideration on the part of the envoy but held my peace. I then beguiled the hours in conversation, enquiring on many subjects touching the organization and equipment of the army and found that they differed in many respects from those of my own. Once more was the alarm given on which occasion I beheld what I took to be a sacred chariot which was saluted with the highest honours, the charioteer the while returning the salute by waving aloft his whip: this, I was informed, was the state chariot of the Pontifex Maximus to whom as I learnt are paid "the honours due a Brigadier General save only when forming part of a religious procession." Towards sunset many damsels arrived and food and libations were served: a company of musicians also discoursing sweet music outside the fortress; thinking these preparations heralded further Terpsichorean revels I would have invited one of the damsels to tread a measure with me, had not my host stayed me, and informed me that the musicians had been specially procured, at great expense, in my honour. On the departure of the damsels and musicians I beguiled another hour or so with enquiries as to the army and other matters till after the third hour of the night, when my host

informed me he should retire for the night. I then thanked him for his entertainment whereat he seemed ill at ease and informed me that it was in no wise an "entertainment" as such were, by the laws of the army forbidden, I marvelled at his words and took my leave, being saluted on my departure by the soldiers and the centurion with much sounding of trumpets which courteous salutation I returned and wended my way in wonder to the temple.

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## Julius Cæsar is bidden to a Pic-Nic.

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It now behoves me, most worthy Æmilius, to set forth the narrative of a feast to which I was bidden and at the manner of which I marvelled greatly : now certain of the inhabitants of the city bade me to a feast and when I enquired of them whither I should repair and in what quarter of the city their dwelling was situated they replied that it was in no wise in a house that the feast was to be held but in a remote and secluded valley, whereat I marvelled, and concluded that though those who had bidden me were seemingly of exalted rank they were of some nomadic tribe and had no fixed abode or else that the feast was to perform some mysterious rites which rendered it necessary to seek more seclusion and privacy than could be afforded by the city itself. I subsequently learnt, however, that this manner of feasting was reckoned among the chief forms of recreation by the people, whereat I marvelled greatly. One of those who were bidden informed me with unwonted courtesy that he would be glad to escort me thither in a two horsed chariot, the nature of which I have related in one of my former epistles. Accordingly on the appointed day at about the third hour after noon, I

repaired to the Circus Britannicus on the outskirts of the town, where a great crowd was already assembled consisting chiefly of the younger men, both of the legions and of the triremes, and many damsels. My friend assisted me into his chariot, and being seated beside him I proceeded at my leisure to observe the multitude; some were in chariots of a nature similar to the one I occupied, some on horseback, and others, and at these I marvelled greatly, were provided with two wheels, parts as I imagined of a vehicle which they were about to convert into a chariot similar to the others and to which in due course two or more horses would be yoked: my friend however informed me that this was not the case and that the chariot wheels formed their sole means of locomotion, and that this form of recreation found great favour in the eyes of the people.

The procession then set out headed by those on the chariot wheels, and the rapidity with which they travelled filled me with envy and admiration, so much so that I bethought me I would myself essay this method of locomotion. Soon after we had set out the foremost of our steeds began to wax exceeding restive and to exhibit a marked disinclination to proceed in the direction in which the charioteer would have urged him; being alarmed at this I would have quitted the chariot had not my friend bidden me be comforted as such demeanour was by no means un-

common among steeds yoked in this manner ; being at length pacified somewhat they proceeded in a more docile fashion in the required direction, but this I was at a loss whether to assign to the skill of the charioteer or the propitiousness of the fates. Our route then lay up a steep ascent, and as we were slowly wending our way up this I heard groans as of some human being or beast apparently in great pain, and on looking round to discover whence they emanated, I observed one of those on the chariot wheels laboriously endeavouring to gain the summit: the labour of Sisyphus seemed light in comparison with his task, and, prompted by the dictates of humanity, I would fain have descended from the chariot to assist him, but on second thoughts I deemed it not unlikely that he would resent interference with his “recreation” and desisted; but resolved, for my own part to abstain from this form of recreation. At length we reached the place appointed for the feast, and I beheld a white cloth spread upon the ground covered with cakes, meat, wine and other libations; the guests then proceeded to sit down upon the ground, and with what ease they could—since there were neither tables or couches—to appease their hunger; when they had completed their repast the greater part of them contended in trials of skill of various kinds, the like of which I had never before witnessed; the victors in these were rewarded with gifts, and as night approached we all returned to the citadel.

Prior to his departure Julius Cæsar goes to the  
Opera.

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The days of my sojourn on the island of Melita being now nearly accomplished, it seemed to me that as I had not yet witnessed the performance in the Opera this was above measure worthy of beholding; accordingly I repaired thither one evening and marvelled exceedingly at the splendour and construction of the building which was in no wise similar to those of our time being apportioned off for the most part in small chambers; having taken my place in one of these I surveyed the multitude, most of whom, I observed were officers of the legions or of the triremes, and while I gazed thus intently I beheld several young men dressed in raiment of a dark hue and less gaily adorned than their fellows composing themselves to slumber. These, I gathered, were the younger officers of the Royal Triremes the nature of whose couches on the vessels precluded as I learnt any comfortable repose therein, and who were compelled therefore to seek the seclusion of the theatre to obtain that repose so essential to the efficient performance of the divers duties inseparable from a

maritime career : I marvelled greatly that the music should in no wise disturb their slumbers but concluded that the roaring of the winds and waves had accustomed them to slumber under circumstances which would have prevented anyone unused to a seafaring career from so doing. I was above measure delighted with the excellence of the performance and expressed my satisfaction in no measured terms to my companion who replied that I had been unfortunate in selecting this particular drama to witness as the music was so loud as to render conversation a matter of no little difficulty. I marvelled greatly at his words as, for my own part, my intention had been to listen attentively to the drama and in no wise to indulge in vain and idle conversation ; but I learnt that my intention was by no means that of the majority of the spectators who, for the most part close the theatre as a place wherein to discuss the current topics of the day. The representation being concluded I repaired to the temple to bid farewell to the centurions and others to whom I was indebted for the great and unwonted courtesy they had manifested towards me during my sojourn in the island. I found many in the temple, for the most part engaged in performing their accustomed rites of the worship of Bacchus : this deity, I may mention, being the tutelary deity of the greater part of the centurions and the piety and regularity with which his rites are

conducted form one of the most striking features of the temple. Having joined in the ceremony I was conducted into an upper chamber, which I had never before entered and which was furnished in a manner different from that of any other chamber in the temple; it contained three tables of curious and unwonted design, on which many of the frequenters of the temple were striking balls fashioned, as I learnt, of ivory from the African deserts, with long staves: I concluded this to be another form of recreation and watched it eagerly though I failed to comprehend the nature of it. Amongst those who indulged in this form of recreation was one of great stature, a centurion, I learnt, of one of the legions of Scotia, who seemed to surpass them all, as I inferred from the applause which his manner of striking the ivory balls evoked; the night now being far spent I sought my couch, and next morning hied me on to a trireme and left the shores of Melita once more for Italy, filled with amazement at the courtesy of the inhabitants and even more at the manner of their recreations.





## The return of Julius Caesar on a Brief Visit.

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Being wearied of my native land, and yearning for the hospitality of the island of Melita I have, as I have already informed you I had the mind to do, returned thither, but marvel greatly at the transformation that I behold since I quitted the island on the Ides of April; the citadel, more especially during the heat of the day is deserted, many of the centurions are absent and also the greater part of the officers of the triremes, the damsels moreover with whom I was wont to indulge in the worship of Terpsichore are also absent. I marvel at the simultaneity of the absence of the damsels and of the centurions and am at a loss whether to ascribe it to accident or design. On my urgent enquiry as to the whereabouts of Polly, Susie and Elizabeth with the flowing locks, I was informed that they had quitted the island as also had the youth of caerulean hue. I marvelled whether this likewise was merely a coincidence but could obtain no information. The one thing which remained unchanged and whereat I was much gratified appeared to be the worship of Bacchus which appeared to be conducted with undiminished piety and regularity. It now behoves me to relate a curious circumstance at which I marvelled greatly. On the morning follow-

ing my arrival, being desirous of inhaling the morning air, while as yet the heat of the sun's rays were not of such virulence as to preclude the possibility of this, I descended the steps from the fortress to the Portus Marsamuscetto with the intention of being conveyed to the further shore thereof. Here I was accosted by many men who exclaimed in tones which I assumed to be of almost an angry nature "Boat Signor" "Il forte Signor" "I am Signor" etc. I in no wise doubted the truth of their assertion but regarded them not, and embarked in one of the larger vessels, of which I observed there were now several, whereas when I departed there were but few. Having reached my destination after a comparatively uneventful voyage, I disembarked and turned my footsteps towards the sea-shore, thinking it more profitable to escape from the vendor of "halib" and others wares of an equally incomprehensible nature to me, who at that early hour thronged the streets of the town in which I now found myself, and seek the repose and solitude of the cliffs. While I was wandering with no fixed intent along the coast I lit by chance on a small building, almost hidden from view and behind which ramparts and lines of circumvallation had been constructed. Imagining, from the solicitude with which this building was evidently defended, that it was a temple of no little sanctity, I determined to inspect it. I accordingly descended a few steps and approached it; seeing it to be apparently deserted, I entered. After

I had been in the temple for some few minutes I perceived a figure concealed in a remote corner crouching down in a semi-recumbent attitude on the ground : imagining that I had entered the retreat of some hermit I approached him with a view to questioning him as to why he had thus selected a life of solitude and retirement, but before I had time to frame my interrogations he informed me that he was a legionary of the army and that the laws compelled him during the early hours of the day to remain concealed, and with many gesticulations he bade me begone. I hastily concluded that this was a criminal condemned to a life of solitude in this remote building and that the adjacent fortifications had been erected with a view to his safe custody, and without further comment I hastily retreated, without once checking my steps to look round and with many inward thanksgivings that I had escaped maltreatment at his hands, but withal with considerable amazement and no little pity for the poor wretch doomed to such a career. Returning to the citadel, and having poured a thanksgiving unto Bacchus, I followed the custom of the rest of the inhabitants and passed the heat of the day in slumber : at about the tenth hour I was standing on the steps of the temple in the Via Maxima debating whither I should proceed for diversion in the cool of the evening, when I beheld a body of cavalry approaching along the Via Maxima. These numbered as far as I could judge, about

15 or 20, each of whom in addition to the steed he was bestriding led another; thinking these betokened cavalry exercises on the Campus Martius I enquired of Josephus if this was the case, and was informed that it was in no wise so and that these were the steeds of the centurions of one of the Imperial legions who were about to indulge in the form of recreation that I described in a previous epistle. He also informed me that the centurions of this legion were renowned throughout the island for the assiduity with which they practised this form of recreation, no less than for the number of their steeds; thinking that I would again behold this recreation I chartered a chariot and hied me unto the Campus Martius.

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## Julius Cæsar is amazed at a Cricket Match.

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Towards the evening of the day on which I visited the hermit's cave—and here it seems fitting to state that it was in no wise, as I had concluded, the cave of a hermit, or the abode of some abandoned and desperate malefactor that I had visited, but merely a temple sacred to the Goddess of the Sea where the centurions and also, I was credibly informed, the ladies of their households were wont to disport themselves in the waves, and that so far from the inhabitant being a criminal he was the attendant priest of the temple, a post, as I learnt of great honour and much coveted by the legionaries—towards evening then, as I have already stated, I hied me in a chariot to the Campus Martius to witness the games; on arriving there I found many centurions together with such damsels as still remained in the island, gathered together in a part of the Campus adjacent to where the others were disporting themselves on horseback. Now these centurions and damsels were seated in two large pavilions, similar to those in which the consuls were wont to take up their quarters in our later campaigns against the Gauls. Seeing many steeds hard by the pavilions and also a camp fire burning, I concluded

that the inhabitants of the citadel, finding the heat inside the ramparts insupportable, were wont, during the summer months, to encamp on the Campus Martius. Thinking it fitting to pay my respects to such of the inhabitants as I had been acquainted with during my former sojourn, I determined not to devote myself to the games on horseback but to approach the encampment. On arriving there I found, however, that the assembled multitude had foregathered for the purpose of beholding another contest of skill, and that the pavilions had been erected for the more convenient worship of Bacchus, presumably on account of the considerable distance that separated the multitude from the larger temple in the Via Maxima. Having been most cordially received by many of those who had been acquainted with me during my previous visit, I applied myself to watching intently a curious contest of skill the like of which I had never before witnessed, and which even now I am at a loss to comprehend. The nature of it was somewhat on this wise, the opposing maniples, numbering, as far as I could judge, about half a score each, represented two legions of the army one of which has since left the island, the other whose nature I was at a loss to comprehend since they were neither horse nor foot soldiers and had for their watchword the word "Ubique." One maniple then entered the arena and took up their position in it with little regard, as it seemed to me, to uniformity, and

scattered themselves over it with little or no method ; two members of the opposing maniple then advanced into the arena armed with clubs of a curious and unwonted design and took up their positions some thirty paces from each other, hard by two sets of staves to which I imagined that they would in course of time be bound by ropes or thongs, but doubtless time did not admit of this. One of the opposing cohort then hurled at one of those armed with clubs a hard spherical missile which he endeavoured to ward off his body with the club ; which if he succeeded in doing he began to run swiftly with a view, as I supposed, of escaping from the arena ; having run, however, a short distance and finding no possibility of escape, since he was hemmed in by the phalanx of the opposing cohort he returned with equal celerity to the place whence he came ; having continued thus to ward off the blows with varying dexterity for some time, the staves by which he was standing were at length shattered by the missile and, fearful doubtless lest a like fate should overtake him, he relinquished the contest and returned to the pavilion. All those of the one maniple essayed their skill at warding off the blows and returned in turn to the pavilion. Now one of the combatants I would fain inform you exhibited a more truculent disposition than his fellows and, being doubtless enraged at the celerity with which the missile was hurled at him, not only warded it off but drove it in

the direction of one of the opposing maniple with all his force, who, however, with the utmost dexterity managed to avert destruction by catching the missile in his hands with a facility at which I marvelled greatly. The wielder of the club then retired but whether he was bidden to do so on account of the violence he displayed in wielding the club or whether he was filled with remorse at nearly causing the death of one of the opponents I wist not. The other maniple then took the clubs in turn and essayed their skill, while those whose watchword was "Ubique" kept guard round the arena, and among them was one, a legionary I was informed, who spread terror and consternation into the breasts of his opponents by the rapidity and dexterity with which he hurled the missile. I would fain add also that another of the same cohort had evinced greater dexterity in averting destruction with his club than his fellows, and he, I was informed, was a centurion; this curious contest was prolonged for three days amidst great applause from those in the pavilions, a scribe meanwhile recording the exploits of the combatants on a tablet. On the third day those whose motto was "Ubique" were adjudged to be victorious and the combatants quitted the arena. I wist not why they were assumed to be victorious since, like the vanquished cohort, they had been unable to break through the phalanx of their opponents and effect an escape



from the arena, though possibly they evinced greater dexterity in warding off the blows of the missile, but being loth to make parade of my ignorance by enquiring I held my peace. I marvelled greatly at this form of recreation more so than at any I had witnessed, and learnt that it found great favour in the eyes of the inhabitants during the summer months. I also learnt that it was the custom, as in this case, for the victorious cohort to celebrate their victory by a great feast at which curious rites were performed.

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Julius Cæsar is entertained at dinner by the  
—— Regiment and takes his leave.

Having received tidings from the Senate and People of urgent affairs demanding my immediate return to Rome it was with the greatest reluctance that I felt it imperative to make preparations for my speedy departure ; I therefore proceeded to visit the camps of the various legions to whose courtesy and unfailling hospitality I had been indebted during my two sojourns in the island, and also to crave of one of the members of the Chief Governor's household the boon of an interview with the Chief Governor to take my leave and to express, however inadequately, the pleasure I had derived from my visit to the island and my gratitude for the facilities that had been accorded to me for witnessing the exercises, at various times, of the legions under his command. Hearing of my impending departure, one of the legions, whose designation at this moment escapes me, bade me to a farewell feast, which invitation I accepted with alacrity, and hearing it was the custom of the guests on these occasions to don their apparel of war, and fearing lest I should incur the displeasure of my hosts by failing to

do likewise I determined to assimilate my attire to theirs, and therefore donned the tunic and breastplate which I wore in the campaign against Brutus and Cassius which I was fortunate enough to discover among my impedimenta, regretting, however, that the lapse of time had shorn it somewhat of its pristine beauty. Being arrived at the appointed hour at the camp of the legion whose hospitality I was partaking of, I entered the vestibule and was greeted with shouts of applause by the assembled guests. Being, as you well know, of a retiring and unassuming disposition it was some few moments before I could recover sufficiently from this enthusiastic reception to answer the salutations of the centurions, and almost before I could do so I found myself performing the rite of the preliminary libation to Bacchus, which was served in small vessels. Having beguiled a few moments in desultory conversation the feast was heralded by a great blast of trumpets and the procession was formed to the banquetting hall and I was motioned to lead the way, which I did with reluctance, my modesty again restraining me. Being seated at the board I proceeded to scrutinize the assembled centurions, and was much struck with the gorgeousness and variety of their apparel; their tunics were in almost all cases of a brilliant scarlet, their nether garments, save in the case of some few who were, as I had learnt on a previous occasion, of the legions of Scotia, being of a less

brilliant hue. I have stated that there were some whose tunics, were not of scarlet, now some of these I perceived to be officers of the Royal Triremes; but one other was there conspicuous by the sombreness of his apparel, since he was attired wholly in black, which was only relieved by a small admixture of the scarlet cloth in which his fellows were attired, and he I learnt was a noted swordsman and athlete and the organizer of the gladiatorial shows which took place in the island from time to time. The banquetting hall was sumptuously adorned with many silver trophies, spoils of war, as I imagined; the standards of the legion occupied a conspicuous place at the further end. During the feast music was discoursed by the musicians of the legion, at whose performance I was much struck. Now towards the close of the feast a solemn rite was performed; one of the centurions stood up and made a short oration addressed to another centurion whom I assumed to be an officer of exalted rank, since he was distinguished from his fellows by a broad crimson belt across his breast—though indeed his apparent youth seemed to render this assumption almost untenable. The general then, since I must perforce conclude that he was so, made a short reply to the oration, and the assembled guests then rose to their feet and poured a solemn libation and this I was informed was in honour of the Queen of Britannia who was head of the army. The feast being concluded we

adjourned to the vestibule, and shortly after we had done so I was startled by another blast of trumpets and an apparent commotion in the camp. The general seized his weapons and hastened from the vestibule with a view, as I supposed, of quelling the tumult. Since I had come unarmed to the feast I sought the gladiator, deeming that my greatest chance of safety lay under his protection; he however allayed my fears and assured me that my life was, for the present at any rate, in no danger, I thanked him for his assurance and was in some measure pacified. The general shortly returned and whispered a few words to one of his subordinates and peace again prevailed. Three of the guests then seated themselves round a small table on which were two small heaps of paper tablets of curious design. One of the hosts with unfailing courtesy pressed me to pour a libation with him which I did, he then enquired of me, as far as my memory serves me, whether I would take a hand. Marvelling that he should doubt my readiness to perform such a small act of courtesy, I thanked him for the libation and grasped his hand with the utmost cordiality, he seemed somewhat taken aback at my effusiveness and invited me to essay my skill with the tablets; the rudiments of the contest were explained to me and I determined to hazard my fortune. I gathered however that my method of manipulating the tablets found but little favour in the eyes of one of the competitors, but as the other

two seemed to look upon it with undisguised satisfaction the displeasure of one seemed but of little moment. At the close of the contest, when I had cast all my tablets upon the table, one of the competitors, he who had evinced dissatisfaction, exclaimed that he had called, if I remember right, for trumps. I regretted that I had in no wise heard him summon them and would had requested an attendant to bid the musicians hurry to the vestibule when he checked me. Failing to comprehend the nature of the contest and thinking that the displeasure of the one might assume such proportions as would not be compensated for by the satisfaction of the other two, I determined to desist, and at the urgent entreaty of the general and several of his subordinates I joined in a general libation. The night being now far spent I determined to seek the temple in the Via Maxima where I had taken up my abode. On taking my leave I requested the favour of a trial of skill with the gladiator should I at any time return, as I was exceeding desirous of establishing the superiority of the trident and net over his weapon, which request he readily granted me and I took my departure. I discovered on awaking next morning that I had inadvertently exchanged my brazen helmet for a headgear of a curious nature, ornamented, it is true, by various devices of silver but withal less handsome than my own, but as the hour for my departure is already at hand, I am constrained to leave behind me

my brazen helmet together with my most heartfelt gratitude and many hopes for their continued prosperity to the centurions, officers of the triremes, and other inhabitants of the island of Melita.

The following lines are the outcome of a train of thoughts induced by reading novels while confined to bed in a tent.

*Malta, March, 1897.*

As I'm lying here in an E.P. tent  
I'm bored almost to distraction  
To these rambling rhymes my soul gives vent  
And it gives me some satisfaction  
I try to think but the bugles blow  
Every minute, it seems, for defaulters,  
Which causes all my ideas to go  
And the thread of my musing alters.

I've been tied by the leg for over a week  
By a wound that declines to heal  
And the novels I've read induce me to speak  
Of a thing that I often feel  
There seem to me two kinds of life  
One, that in books of we read  
And the other we live, a continual strife  
With fate which has always the lead.

Now in books when a chap gets a wound in the leg  
Its in action—he gets the V.C.  
In life its the paltry three half penny peg  
Of a tent—thats whats happened to me.  
Can you fancy a writer of novels, say Ouida  
Who seeks to enthrall or amuse  
Taking pen, sitting down, and informing the reader  
“The Hero stumbled and ripped up his trews.”



Then Ouida would tell you the hero is borne  
To some sick room scented with flowers  
And is nursed back to health by his sweetheart forlorn  
Who reads to him daily for hours  
And it is'nt correct without Eau de Cologne  
And the maiden the time to beguile  
And the mother who leaves the young people alone  
Then they marry ; we all know the style.

On the poetry side I think I have said  
All there is to be said so we'll turn  
To the hero in life and see his sick bed  
And see what the reader will learn  
To begin with the beautiful girl is "non est"  
With her calm, pale, but beautiful face ;  
Her substitute's clumsy but doing his best,  
The "Jock" who appears in her place.

The half darkened room, loving smiles and the scent  
Of the flowers all vanish in prose  
Instead of a room all one gets is a tent  
Smiles and scent—we're not worried with those  
No, in books its romantic in real life it's not  
The real facts of the case I wont dwell on  
So in sheer desperation I'm writing this rot  
And cursing the peg that I fell on.

Then again, when a novelist writes of the chase  
The hero is always in front  
And none of the field even equal his pace  
Much less distance "The flower of the hunt"  
What a change if they'd write of a sportsman like me  
Who, when he takes a hand at the game.  
Its a monkey to one if the first check he'll see  
Ere his two guinea screw goes dead lame.

And the hero has always some millions to spend  
When they write about love and the like  
And in novels it always "comes right in the end"  
Even when they elope on a "bike"  
He goes to her Dad who says "Bless you my boy  
I forgive you: you love her I know"  
And he tearfully adds "I wish you both joy  
She'll have 5 millions down when I go"

But in real life again what is really the case  
When two young folks find they're in love  
He goes to his fond dotting father whose face  
Partakes more of the lion than the dove  
"Just increase my allowance 200 a year  
That and my pay our requirements will suit"  
"You blazing young idiot get out d'ye hear"  
These remarks are enforced with a boot.

Still there's fun to be had in real life, and my lot  
Like the Psalmist's of old is no bad'un  
If I seem discontented with mine, well I'm not  
But I own that my soul it would gladden  
To roam for a time on the novelist's shore  
In one dazzling dream of delight  
Where one seems to have all one can wish for and more.

\* \* \* \* \*

There's "lights out:" no more bugles to-night.

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## The Malta Season.

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You all know my boys of town and its joys  
I'n the season ; you ve most of you been there  
You stroll in the Park ; at the Empire you lark  
And many a frolic you ve seen there.

Now the scene we will alter and travel to Malta  
And glance for a while at our fun  
While a home frost & snows send the blood to your nose  
Here we're basking in tropical sun.

The liners begin to pour visitors in  
As soon as the summer departs boys  
So varnish your boots ; look out your best suits  
And keep an eye on the thing called your hearts boys.

You're found of a dance, well now is your chance  
You find that of these there are plenty  
You encounter a treasure may I please have the pleasure  
"So sorry, I'm full up to 20" !

Beef and beer at the club sounds a bit like a pub  
You go wearily home with a head  
Where you find to your sorrow 'Sir, for duty tomorrow,'  
On a half sheet pinned on to your bed.

Well the days duty's done and now for more fun  
You drive your girl down to the Marsa  
But take my advice dont do this more than twice  
Or you may have to interview Pa Sir.

And in Carnival time the fun is sublime  
Lots more chances of taking the floor Sir  
And your luck's at its height when they kindly invite  
You to honour their show at the Borsa.

What Bals Masque's slow! you dont mean to go!  
You rave at such outings as folly  
You'll not get such a chance as you will at this dance  
Of flirting with Susie and Polly.

Then the Opera too is the right thing to do  
But I know what you are with a gal eh!  
So I tell you straight out you'll be mashed without doubt  
On the giddy young things of the ballet.

Having gained Pa's consent to your feelings give vent  
And ride o'er the island at random  
Or else take your tea in some vale by the sea  
And drive HER out in the tandem.

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## The Effects of a Scirocc.

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I'm inclined to exclaim as half dozing I lie  
Tho' I may be accused of profanity.  
With that blase old beggar in days gone by  
"Vanity all is Vanity."

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“ Back to the Guard Room Again. ”

—  
WITH VERY SINCERE APOLOGIES TO R. K.  
—

I'm here in a red serge jacket and a blooming white  
hat with a spike.  
A guarding the town of Valletta, a job that I dont  
much like.  
“2nd Lieut. Tomkins will command the main guard  
tomorrow”  
Is what I see in the orders much to my pain and  
sorrow.

I'm back to the guard room again Colonel  
Back to the guard room again  
But a few days have passed  
Since I was here last  
Now I'm back to the guard room again.

The orders say go and I've got to but I dont much  
want to, I own  
For it aint a regular beano spending the day alone

I'm earning my five and three pence by 24 hours in  
my clothes  
And they say we dont work for our living which  
shews what a —— lot they knows.

I'm back to the guard room again Colonel  
Back to the guard room again  
A Lieutenant's career  
Aint all skittles and beer  
When he's back to the guard room again.

I'm sick of the dear old pictures I know the whole  
lot so well  
And I sit like a dog at a rat hole waiting to hear  
that bell  
The Field Officer comes in the morning and some times  
again at night  
But he dont always say that he's coming and I think  
out of kindness he might.

But I'm back to the guard room again Colonel  
Back to the guard room again  
Confound that old bell  
"Advance Grand Rounds, Alls Well"  
He's back to the guard room again.

The bishops carriage passes the Jehu waggles his  
whip  
And then if his Grace is in it, it gives the sentry the  
tip:  
Heres four files and a corporal marching about so  
hurry up down the stairs  
If you do back your neck it dont matter: its promotion  
and nobody cares.

I'm back to the guard room again Colonel  
Back to the guard room again  
Yes I'll be all there  
If H.E. takes the air  
For I'm back to the guard room again.

But to-morrow I'll get into mufti and play polo or  
drive out to tea  
Of course some Johnny'll be here but I'm thinking  
it wont be me.  
I wont be here for some time now, I've done with the  
guard room I trust  
For a bit, and well, strike me purple! tomorrow I'll  
go on the bust,

I'll get back into mufti again Colonel  
Back into mufti again  
My red serge may stay  
In its box for a day  
I'll be back into mufti again.

Halt! who goes there?

Why a poor chap who's sitting and grumbling a  
trying to think he's a bard  
A chap who's near driven to drinking, 'cos he thinks  
that his life's too hard-on guard  
I'm sorry I'm driven to writing my woes in this po-  
pular strain  
But I'm forced to write rot and complain of my lot  
For I'm back to the guard room again.