

*Bella horrida bella.*¹

Literature 20



Hyacynthus and Pompey the Great How He Won His Third Triumph

1 Greece

Read “Hyacynthus” (Ἰάκινθος) You will find it on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive in Volume 3, Classics, “Legends of Greece and Rome” by G. H. Kupfer, no. 31.

2 Rome

Stories from Roman History Retold by Lena Dalkeith (1906)

XI. “Of Pompey the Great: How He Won His Third Triumph”

The great King Mithridates was very old when Pompey first was sent to the east to conquer him. An old man he was, but a great soldier to the last, and ever ready to do battle with his hated enemies.

Mithridates had spent most of his life in warring with the Romans. Once, Sylla, the Dictator, had vanquished him, but after Sylla's death Mithridates recovered his kingdom, and once again attacked the Roman Provinces in Asia.

Many battles were lost and won on both sides, but on the whole Mithridates had the advantage. The Roman soldiers, discontented and rebellious, would not rest until Lucullus their leader had been recalled to Rome and Pompey sent in his stead.

The soldiers loved Pompey; they would have none other to lead them, for to fight under Pompey

1 . You can probably translate this phrase of Virgil's yourself. Answer on the last page.

was to conquer. Then he was good to look upon, pleasant in his manners, just and generous in his ways. To be sure he used to scold when they did wrong, but he never failed to praise and reward their bravery. And above all he was their master; he knew how to make himself obeyed; he was their favourite, their hero; he was Pompey the Great.

So Pompey went to the East to take command over both army and navy, and soon leaving ships to guard the sea, he set out with his troops in search of the enemy.

Mithridates was strongly encamped upon a mountain, but when the Roman Legions came in sight he moved his army further away, for there was no water upon the mountain, and moreover he was not yet ready to fight.

Pompey then pitched his camp in the same place, but when his soldiers cried out for water, he told them to dig wells in the ground, and lo! in a little while there was water in plenty, and every one wondered why Mithridates had not thought of this before.

Afterwards Pompey again gave chase and surrounded the enemy's camp. For forty-five days Mithridates was besieged, but he managed to slip away again with the best of his troops. Keen as a hound on the trail Pompey followed, and after a long march overtook his prey near the river Euphrates.

It was midnight when he ordered out his troops from the camp, yet the night was not too dark. Low in the sky the pale moon hung peaceful and still, and the soldiers looked like dim ghosts moving softly in the faint shadowy light.

In the Eastern camp old Mithridates lay asleep, and while he slept he dreamed. He thought that he was sailing over pleasant seas blown by fair winds towards a safe harbour. On a sudden, while he was telling his friends how happy he was, the ship was wrecked and he found himself clinging to a broken mast, tossed hither and thither by great black ugly waves. And then Mithridates awoke, for his friends had come to tell him that the Romans were about to attack.

He had now to defend his camp. The troops were ordered into line. Closer and closer came those dark splendid shapes that were the Romans, and the light of the moon shining behind them caused their shadows to fall in long black lines, so that the old King's troops were puzzled to know which was shadow, which soldier.

In doubt they flung their spears too soon, and the Romans, quick to see their mistake and to profit by it, shouted as they marched, and this confused and frightened their enemies more than ever. They fled, and many were slaughtered in the flight.

Suddenly, above the noise and the terror and the tumult of the fight came a sound as of thunder and the rushing of a mighty wind, and Mithridates at the head of eight hundred horsemen swept through the enemy's ranks and vanished into the night.

Pompey never captured the great king, for some time after this, in despair, Mithridates slew himself. But his kingdom was taken by the Romans, with many others besides, and Pompey, having conquered the East, set about returning with his army through Greece into Italy. And now the patricians and even the people began to fear what the great general might do.

'The soldiers adore him,' they said, 'and with so great an army he might easily make himself Dictator or even King.'

But they had nothing to fear from Pompey. As soon as the army landed he told his soldiers to go to their homes, for he had no more need of them until the day of his Triumph.

Only the generals who had won great victories were honoured by a Triumph. They rode through the streets of Rome in a beautiful chariot drawn by beautiful horses, followed by other chariots, on which were placed all the richest treasures captured in the war. After them marched the officers and soldiers bearing banners and trophies, and then came the prisoners, some with and some without chains. Songs were sung and trumpets blown, and all that day the Roman citizens made holiday.

At Pompey's third Triumph there were so many treasures to show, and so many soldiers and prisoners to follow that it had to be divided into two days.

Oh! proud was Rome of the hero then! At the head of the procession, upon splendid banners blazed the names of the conquered nations – sixteen in all. Kings and queens, princes and nobles walked among the captives, and the treasures displayed were priceless.

It seemed to the citizens as they looked that Pompey was the conqueror of the world. His first triumph was over Africa, his second over Europe, and his third over Asia. And they would have laughed with scorn if you had told them that already in Rome there was a greater man, one who very soon was to do far greater deeds than ever Pompey had done; one whose name is written to this day in the book of Fame among the first on the soldiers' page – Julius Caesar.

Two more adjectives for your notebook. They are set out so that you can write in words you know or guess above the Latin words. Then look up the text in your Bible.

extremus, -a, -um furthest, last

Bible example:

*si sumpsero pinnas meas diluculo et habitavero in **extremis** maris, etenim illuc*

manus tua deducet me et tenebit me dextera tua.

Psalm 137:9&10.

English words that will give you clues: (re)sume, pen (what were they originally made of?), (il)luminare, manual, (con)duct, tenebrous (“shadowy”), (ambi)dextrous.

iustus, -a, -um just, right

Bible example:

*Noe vir **iustus** atque perfectus fuit in generationibus suis, cum Deo ambulavit*
Genesis 6:9b.

What is the tense of *ambulavit*? (Answer on last page.)

English words that will give you clues: virile, generation. *Atque* is just “and.”

Answers:

“Wars horrid wars.”

Perfect tense.