

*Forti non ignavo.*¹

Literature 21



Pygmalion and Galatea and Julius Caesar – Soldier: How He Fought In Gaul

1 Greece

Read “The Story of Pygmalion and Galatea” You will find it on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive in Volume 3, Classics, “Legends of Greece and Rome” by G. H. Kupfer, no. 32.

2 Rome

Stories from Roman History Retold by Lena Dalkeith (1906)

At first scarcely a man in Rome believed that Julius Caesar would ever make a great soldier. The citizens were fond of him because he was always good to them, but at the same time they never expected him to do anything else but eat, drink, and be merry, until he died.

Yet deep down in his heart Caesar was always ambitious; he knew his own greatness, and he meant to astonish the world some day. He feasted and made merry with the other patricians because it served his purpose. For one thing it won the hearts of the citizens; they loved those who spent money freely. And then for another thing it deceived the jealous senators; they, thinking him a careless 'silly sort of man,' did not take much notice of him at first, and so he had time to make his plans for the future.

The time came when they found out their mistake; when Caesar began to show the power that was in him. He made friends with Pompey, and by his help received the command of the army in Spain. And then – Hey Presto, it was like a fairy tale – within three months he had conquered Spain, and was back again waiting with his army outside the walls of Rome for his Triumph.

He returned just before the time for the making of the new consuls. And now Caesar had to choose between two honours. He must either offer himself as consul, or claim his Triumph. He could not do both, for to be consul he must enter the city, and to win his Triumph he must stay outside. No general was allowed to enter Rome with his troops until the day of the Triumph.

¹ To the brave, not the cowardly. Lyell family motto.

Then said the senators, 'Now we shall know whether this man is really to be feared. If his ambition is to rule the State, he will choose the consulship; if he only wishes a little glory he will claim the Triumph.'

Caesar, ever wise, chose the consulship, and for a year he ruled as he liked in Rome; no man was strong enough to stand against him. At the end of the year he asked the senate to give him the command in Gaul. The senators to get rid of him granted his request, for, they said to themselves: 'Perhaps he will be slain in battle, and at any rate, while he is away we shall have time to think of a way to humble him.'

But Caesar feared their spite as little as he feared the strange lands through which he marched, and the fierce warriors with whom he fought. Picture to yourselves the land of Gaul as it was when Caesar and his soldiers conquered it. A few roughly built cities there were, leagues and leagues distant one from the other; high mountains and hills, wide plains, lonely valleys, and great dark, dangerous forests where wild beasts roamed, and savage tribes hid, waiting for the chance to spring out upon their enemies unawares.

And through this wild land Caesar led the brave soldiers who would have followed him cheerfully to the world's end. He was their comrade as well as their general; he led them to battle; he marched by their side, hungered and thirsted, grew cold and weary as they did. He swam with them over rivers, climbed mountains, slept under the stars, and bore – this slight, delicate man – as many hardships as the meanest soldier of them all.

For these things they adored him; the most cowardly would fight like heroes for his sake, and so Caesar won victory after victory, until at last the whole of Gaul was his to command.

Soon the conquered Gauls, looking upon him as their defender, asked him to protect them from the Germans, of whom they lived in deadly fear. Caesar, nothing loath, sent word to Ariovistus, the German king, bidding him come to the Roman camp so that they might have speech together. To which Ariovistus sent answer:

'If I wanted anything of Caesar I should go to seek him; if Caesar wants anything of me let him come hither'; for he was a proud man, leader of thousands of brave, strong warriors, and he had no fear of Caesar.

This answer came to the Romans while they were in the Gallic City of Vesontis.² Caesar at once ordered the Legions to make ready to march northwards. Now amongst the officers were many young patricians who had joined the campaign, not because they wished to fight, but because they thought that they would be able to amuse themselves with the gold won from the conquered tribes.

These cowardly young nobles did not like the thought of the long terrible march which was coming, and the still more terrible battle which would be fought at the end of it. So they went about the camp frightening the men by telling them tales of the strong fierce Germans and their prowess in battle. They even retired to their tents and made their wills as if they had no hope whatever of coming back alive.

Caesar, hearing this, called the discontented officers to him and before the whole army said: 'You may turn back if you will and take your troops with you; I give you free leave; but I will go forward with only the Tenth Legion and will conquer these Germans whom you fear, for they are no more terrible than the foes whom you have already fought with and vanquished.'

2 Modern Besançon.

O the brave soldiers of the Tenth Legion – Caesar's favourite! How proudly their hearts beat, and how happy they were to be so honoured by their hero. The other Legions, in the hope of winning like praise, began to make ready for the march with the greatest good-will possible. The officers, very much ashamed of themselves, begged to be allowed to go forward, and so the whole army set out, marching so quickly and so well that in a few days they reached the German camp.

Ariovistus and his men were surprised and downcast at the sight of their enemy. Such speed on the march seemed almost magical, and they grew sadder than ever on being warned by their soothsayers not to give battle before the new moon, as until then the mystic signs foretold defeat.

Caesar gave them no time to await the new moon. At once he attacked their hill and camp, and this put them in such a fury that they rushed down to the plain, gave battle and were defeated.

This is but one of the many battles fought by Caesar on his way North. Later he crossed the River Rhone into Germany. He sailed the Channel and invaded Britain; and wherever he went fortune was with him, so that he might have said of Gaul what later he said of an Eastern country – '*Veni, vidi, vici,*' which is to say, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'

Two more adjectives for your notebook:

ignavus, -a, -um (ig-NAR-vus) lazy, cowardly

Do not mistake this word for “ignorant” which looks similar but does not have quite the same meaning.

Bible example:

Respondens autem dominus eius dixit ei, Serve male et ignave, sciebas me metere ubi non sevi, et inde cogere ubi non sparsi Matthew 25:26 (Beza's Translation)

This verse comes near the end of the parable of the talents. The faithful servants have been commended for trading with the talents they had been given. The servant who had been given only one talent had done nothing with it except hide it in the ground. Here the Lord (*dominus*) in the parable addresses him as *male et ignave serve*. What case are *serve, male,* and *ignave*? (Answer on the last page.) *Ubi* is a useful little word for your notebook: it means “where.” There are some easy words to guess here but you will have to look up the verse for a full translation.

parvus, -a, -um (PAR-vus) small

You sometimes find this word in English place names. Appleby Magna and Appleby Parva for instance are in Leicestershire. You can find another example here:

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@52.9527762,-2.6558886,14z?hl=en&authuser=0>

Bible example:

et tunicam parvam faciebat ei mater sua quam adferebat statutis diebus ascendens cum viro suo ut immolaret hostiam sollemnem 1 Samuel 2:19

An easier word order would be *et ei mater sua faciebat parvam tunicam* at the beginning. *Faciebat* is “made” and *mater* is “mother.” A related word is “maternal.” Just remove the last two letters of *tunicam*. If you can translate this first little bit you may well remember what the next bit is without looking it up. *Statutis diebus* “by year” i.e. “yearly.” You can guess *ascendens*. *Immolaret* is related to the word “immolate.”³ *Hostiam* is a sacrifice (accusative singular of *hostia*) and you can guess *sollemnem*.

3 To kill as a sacrifice.

Answer:

Vocative case. Notice how the cases of the adjectives agree with (i.e. are the same as) that of the noun (*serve*) that they qualify (describe). Jesus is addressing the unfaithful slave: “O evil and lazy slave...”