# LETTERS OF PONTIUS PILATE

written during his Governorship of Judaea to his friend Seneca in Rome

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## PART I

### ON THE WAY TO JUDAEA

Shipboard off Alexandria

We are at last within sight of Alexandria, my dear Seneca, and to-morrow we land. I shall spend a week meeting my staff, interviewing applicants for jobs (shoals of Greeks, of course), receiving deputations of loyal Jews, and talking to every one who can be useful to me. Then on to Caesarea which, as you know, is my head-quarters.

Here at Alexandria I am to meet Valerius Gratus, my predecessor as Procurator of Judaea, and if anyone can tell me how to solve the riddle of getting on with the Jews, he ought to be the man. Not that I shall not get on with them; I mean to, and I believe I shall. Valerius has stood them - or they have stood him, do you say? - for over ten years, so it can be done, though no one else has done it.*

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*Valerius Gratus was Procurator of Judaea from A.D. 15 to A.D. 26.

I have been lucky, by the way, in engaging two of Valerius's staff for myself. One is Marcius Rufus, his chief military officer and now mine, who has been on leave and is travelling back with me. The other, who is even more important, is his Secretary Alexander. He is a Jew, but one of those Jews that are half-Greek: Greek on the surface, and Jew at the bottom. You cannot do without them. It seems that you cannot get a real Jewish Jew to put himself at the service of a mere Roman governor, and if you could you would be little better off because he would not have the languages. And languages are needed, I assure you. There is one sort of Hebrew for their sacred writing, there is the Aramaic that they commonly talk, there is Greek for non-Jews and for all educated people, whether Jews or not, and there is Latin for the Roman Procurator and his staff if they don't choose to use Greek. Alexander speaks them all, Alexander knows everything. I am told that the only person in this part of the world who is sharper than a Greek is a Greek-educated Jew. Congratulate me, therefore, on my Alexander. I rely on him to tell me what I do not know about my province of Judaea - which is almost everything. There are two persons, you see, whom I must not at any price offend: Caesar Imperator (whom the gods preserve)* and my Jew Alexander.

*The Emperor Tiberius, who reigned A.D. 14 to A.D. 36.

Marcius, on the other hand, is a Roman of the Romans. He despises all foreigners, especially Jews. He knows how inferior they are to Romans, and he has never got over the shock of discovering that the Jews are equally satisfied that the Romans are immeasurably inferior to themselves. I was telling him that I had promised to receive the addresses of loyal Jews in Alexandria. 'Impossible!' he said. 'There aren't any.' The other day, when the sea was rough, a wave came over and struck me in the back, knocking me down. When I could get my breath, I said, 'A treacherous blow!' 'We are on our way to Judaea,' said Marcius.

Procula* is worried that we are to have only a week in Alexandria. She says that she will not have time to do the necessary shopping. My own opinion is that from that point of view a week is much too long. But it really is ridiculous that the Treasury should not make a special 'furnishing grant' or something of that kind to a man in my position. You know I shall have to keep up the palace of Herod** at Caesarea and another that he built for himself at Jerusalem and probably there's a third of the same kind at Samaria. How in the world is a poor man going to maintain these enormous places? It was all very well for Herod. He was one of the richest men in the world and Judaea was only a small part of his kingdom. Valerius will be waiting for me here with an inventory of his private 'fixtures' in these palaces and there will be a pretty bill for me to pay. Besides, he is sure to take a great many things away with him, and I shall have to replace them. So you may imagine Procula spending a happy week among what she declares are the finest shops in the Empire - much better, she says, than those of Rome.

*Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife.

**Herod the Great, whose reign was marked by the erection of palaces, temples and great public works of various descriptions.

You can see yourself how the whole affair has been mismanaged by Rome. When we decided that we must take over the government of Judaea because of the unruliness of the Jews, we should have annexed the whole country that Herod ruled from near Damascus to the Dead Sea and not have left his two sons in possession of large parts of it.* It's an unfair tax on the Procurator of Judaea , who has to keep up the state of Herod on a fraction of his income. Well, some one will have to find the money, and there's no one for it but the Jews. A Rome Procurator must not be worse housed than a semi-barbarous king like their Herod, must he? I tell Procula that if she wants rugs and tapestries, she should wait till she goes on a visit to Damascus or Antioch, but she only smiles at that; a rug in the hand is worth two in the desert to a woman any day. I say again, the Jews will have to pay. After all, it is a reasonable charge to impose on them and they can afford it. The Jews all over the world - and they are all over the world, you can't get away from them anywhere - are sending money to Jerusalem all the time.**

*When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., the Romans allowed his territories to be divided between his sons Archelaus, Antipas and Philip, Judaea falling to Archelaus. In A.D. 6, however, they deposed Archelaus and placed Judaea in the hands of a Rome Procurator, but left the other territories still in the hands of Antipas and Philip.

** Pilate is thinking of the Temple-tribute' which all Jews sent to Jerusalem each year. The Roman Governors in the provinces resented these contributions, but the central government at Rome upheld the Jews in sending them.

You would be astonished at the sight before me as I write - a perfect forest of masts. I did not think there were so many ships afloat. No wonder the Alexandrines say their city is the greatest commercial centre in the world. The Captain has just pointed out to me a whole fleet of big ships on one side of the harbour - the fleet that carries grain to our people in Italy. The grain-traffic, he tells me, is in the hands of - whom do you think? - of course, the Jews. He also confided to me that he liked the Jews better outside Judaea than in it. I shall see. At all events I rejoice that, though I might easily have had a more important province, when I am in Judaea I shall be governor, chief tax collector and commander-in-chief all in one.

I will write again before we leave for Caesarea.

## POLICY TOWARDS THE JEWS

Alexandria

I found your letter waiting for me when I landed and I hasten to thank you for it. I count myself happy that you who are so busy and making for yourself so brilliant a name in the courts should have had the inclination and the time to write me a long letter of good wishes and advice. It was shrewd of you, too, my friend. 'Pilate,' you said to yourself, 'the impulsive, headstrong Pilate, will not be able to argue with me; he will have to take my warnings on with him from Alexandria and chew upon them all the way to Caesarea.' I will do that, I promise you, and whenever I do so I shall wonder again that one so young as you should be so wise.* The State is fortunate which can boast not only of Caesars but of Senecas to serve them, and I shall watch your progress with affectionate eagerness from my exile among the savages.

*Seneca was about thirty years of age at this time.

'What,' you will say, 'savages! So that is all that my letter has accomplished, so that is the spirit in which you take up your task? The Jews are not savages.' No, they are not; I seek but to provoke you. The Jews are highly civilized. They are intelligent and subtle, industrious and tenacious; they can split a hair with the most learned and steal a march with the most cunning. You need not be afraid; I shall not under-rate them.

But, you say, beware of their religion, for on that subject they are the most sensitive, the most prone to take offence, the most indomitable in resistance, of any people on this earth. And, you add, holding up a warning finger, 'You know what Caesar wishes!' I know. No commotions, no rebellions, taxes duly paid: that is what Caesar wishes. Yet you will not pretend that Caesar loves the Jews, at least in Rome. Precisely, says the wise Seneca: in Rome Caesar does not love the Jews any more than he does the Egyptians. They will not mix, they are a race apart, they will not do sacrifice to the Gods or to Caesar, and they claim all sorts of privileges. Caesar does not want such people in Rome, though they flock there more and more. They should stop in their own Judaea, then, and in their own Judaea - let them alone! Is not that the instruction? Have I not laid your letter well to heart? Believe me, I shall not interfere with their religion, their priests or their Temple. But I have heard - and have you, who know so much, not also heard? - that with a Jew religion comes very near to politics? What, pray, is a Roman Governor to do when religion becomes politics? I have heard that some of them will acknowledge no ruler except their God, not even Caesar. Not even Caesar, mark you! Let them beware. I do not think that Caesar will be lightly displeased with servants who are only concerned to secure respect for his authority. In religion the Jews may go their own way. In politics they shall go my way, the Roman way, or I will know the reason why.

To-morrow I meet Valerius in the morning, and in the afternoon a deputation of Alexandrine Jews, who wish to pay me their dutiful respects and (so their letter says) make representations to me about lightening of the burdens on their countrymen in Judaea. I shall be expected, I suppose, to show how much finer a fellow than Valerius I am by reducing the taxes.

The shopping campaign is already in full swing.

## MEETING WITH HIS PREDECESSOR VALERIUS

Alexandria

My time has been so fully occupied that I am only now able to write to you, and we sail for Caesarea in a few hours. Every few minutes there is some interruption; but I will write this letter though I miss the ship.

There is one thing of great importance which I must say at once lest I forget it; the Jews can wait. You told me, you may remember, of a new wash which you had devised for your vine-plants - more efficacious against pests than any known to you, and you attributed to it the generous crop that you had last year. I have told my freedman Leon who manages my farm at Laurentum to write and ask you for the particulars, and I shall be grateful if you will give them to him. He is himself ingenious in all such experiments and omits no pains; you may be sure that you will not have the annoyance of finding that your advice has been sought by those who have not the wit or the will to make the best of it.

I have seen Valerius - a rubicund, jolly fellow, delighted at the prospect of going home. I wanted to ask about Judaea; he would scarcely talk of anything but Rome and chariot-racing, for which he has a passion. However, he told me enough about the furnishing of Herod's palaces to make it clear that my worst fears are true. He says that Archelaus, when Caesar deposed him, sold the contents of the palaces as being his private property, and that consequently every governor since then has had to furnish anew or buy the 'fixtures' of his predecessor. 'How can I pay so much,' I said, 'at the beginning of my term of office?' 'Borrow the money from the Jews,' said Valerius, 'and then increase their taxes in order to pay it back.' 'But,' I replied, 'I am just going to inform a Jewish deputation that out of respect and admiration for their race I intend graciously to remit a tenth part of the taxes.' 'Why not?' said Valerius, 'I did the same myself. But in six months you must restore the ten per cent. and in twelve months put another tenth on that.' He told me also that I should by all means encourage the Jews who throng to Jerusalem from Asia and Africa at the time of the great festivals, especially the Passover. So long as Caesar maintains peace in the provinces, the Jews flourish. They travel in tens of thousands to Judaea, carrying their money with them. 'Then is your chance,' said he. 'Make them pay a visitors' tax when they enter, raise the customs duties on everything that is bought and sold while they are there, and put a specially heavy tax on all the momentoes that they carry away when they go back. They will grumble, but since they are departing to other provinces, that need not trouble you, and the Jews in Judaea, having helped to suck them dry, will take no further interest in them.'

I like Valerius: he knows what is helpful, and is practical.

I had meant to describe the Jewish deputation to you but, after all, that must wait. I shall have more leisure to do it adequately on the way to Caesarea. You may think of me, during the voyage, taking lessons on Judaea from Alexander. What kind of man is he, you ask. You know the sort of Jew that is aggressive, insistent, loud? He is the other sort. He is quiet, deferential, often obsequious - and, unless I am mistaken, as deep and disdainful of me and you, of Rome and Caesar as the noisiest of them all.

At present Alexander is engaged in a brisk flirtation with Acme, Procula's Greek slave, a pretty girl. He has succeeded Marcius. Jew does not marry non-Jew, I believe, but outside marriage they are not particular.

## INSTRUCTION FROM VALERIUS

Shipboard: On the way to Caesarea

The sea is only choppy and I must not grumble, but I am glad that it is a short voyage compared with that from Italy.

I had meant to tell you what Valerius said to me about Galilee. As you know, both Galilee and Peraea (which is east of Jerusalem on the far side of the river Jordan) are in possession of Antipas, son of the Herod who, by turning his coat skilfully during our civil wars, not only kept his kingdom but kept on adding to it. I complained to Valerius that these territories, but especially Galilee, ought to be under the Governor of Judaea. Common sense demands it. Galilee is Jewish, it is flourishing and rich, and Jerusalem is its national and historic capital. Its inhabitants look to Jerusalem as their sacred city and are always travelling to it. Would anyone in his senses dream of carving up a country into strips in such a way, and why should we tolerate it just because Herod had three sons for whom he wanted to provide? Valerius agreed with me at once. 'There is more in it than that, too,' he said, 'as you may soon find out. The Galileans, like all the Jews, hate the Romans, and they are as independent and stiff-necked as can be. But when they want to make trouble, they come out of Galilee, where they can change nothing and achieve nothing, and make it in Judaea, which means Jerusalem. The last serious rising about twenty years ago, when we took over the country, was raised by a rascal called Judas who belonged to Galilee.* That was a real rebellion. The unfortunate Procurator of Judaea is not allowed by Caesar to have any rebellions, while at the same time he is prevented from dealing with the beginnings of seditions in Galilee even if he knows of them, because it is the kingdom of Antipas and he must not interfere.' 'Then we ought,' I said, 'to get rid of Antipas.' Valerius smiled. 'I have been waiting for ten years,' he said, 'and he has never given me a handle. You may take it that Antipas will not allow sedition to start in Galilee if he can help it, because he knows the Romans might seize the chance to absorb his kingdom into Judaea. He keeps on good terms with the Roman Governor of Syria and he has friends in Rome. Like his villainous old father, he flatters the Jews by observing their customs and he keeps himself in power by paying court to the Romans. All the Herods are the same. They know that if it were not for the Romans the Jews would have them out in no time, for the Jews love them little though they love the Romans less.'

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*Judas of Gamala headed a revolt on the death of Herod in 4 B.C. and again in A.D. 6-7, when the Romans first imposed their formal scheme of taxation. It was from the party of Judas and Zaddok, a Pharisee, that the 'Zealots' arose whose implacable hostility led to the fatal revolt of the Jews against the Romans.

I asked Valerius how it was that if all the Jews detest the Romans equally, he had managed to keep things quiet for ten years. 'It's quite true,' he said, 'that they all hate us. There is scarcely one of them that would speak to us, let alone eat with us, if he could help it, but they do not all hate us in the same degree. There are some of them at Jerusalem who would sooner put up with the Romans than lose the power and position that they hold. Their noble priestly families - as arrogant a crew as can be found in Asia - ruled the whole country before the time of Herod. Herod destroyed their power and almost destroyed them. Now they have raised their heads again. We have given them back much of their authority, especially in regard to their religion, and, in order to keep it, they are ready to tolerate us. They do not want another Herod to sweep them aside and send them to the executioner. Nor do they like sedition - unless it were likely to be successful - for they know the power of Rome. They have no use for a Judas, whether from Galilee or anywhere else, who by raising a popular revolt may bring them into conflict with Rome and end their privileges. They make a bargain with Rome. "We hate you and despise you," they say, "but on terms we can help you. Leave us alone and we will keep the country quiet for you.'"

You see, my friend, how quickly I am learning. I am to work with these priests at Jerusalem and look out for an opportunity which, I am not likely to get, of tripping up Antipas. Between you and Valerius and Secretary Alexander I shall soon be a statesman. All the same, I shall press for an increase in the garrison of Judaea. Four thousand men is not enough. I shall say, when I get the chance, that I need more troops to watch the frontiers of Galilee and Peraea.

I have not told you about the deputation after all, but I will write again before we land at Caesarea.

## A JEWISH DEPUTATION AT ALEXANDRIA

Shipboard, near to Caesarea

Now at last I can describe the Jewish deputation. It was a bigger affair than I had expected, but then the Jews in Alexandria are much more important than I had supposed. There is a Jewish settlement which they say occupies nearly half the city; I know that on the day before the deputation came I drove and drove and always the people and the placards and the shop-signs were Jewish. Everywhere children and everywhere aged greybeards, grave or gesticulating, in the street. I have never seen so many old men. Do they ever die, I wonder? Or is it only than one notices them more, they are so different?

It had become known that I intended to receive some of their leading men and there was a great crowd in the square before the palace of the City Prefect, Junius Macrinus, with whom I was staying. You should have heard the uproar when the deputation appeared. The Jews, who were there in force, gave their countrymen an excited welcome, I suppose because they were going to admonish the prospective oppressor of Judaea. This provoked the mob (mostly Greeks), who began to hoot and then to hustle the Jews and finally to throw stones. The Jews resisted and I thought that there would be a riot. However, Junius, who is used to this sort of thing and was amused at my taking it so seriously, had a company of troops in readiness and they soon hurried the deputation indoors and cleared the square. Everything went like clockwork. Two men, I believe - both Greeks - were killed.

You would scarcely believe how much the Jews are disliked in this part of the world. The crowd called them 'swine,' 'robbers' and 'blood-drinkers.'* Partly it is because they are arrogant and exclusive, but the Greeks cannot forgive them for beating them in trade. There is a saying in Alexandria that 'an Egyptian could make money from a pyramid, a Greek from a stone, and a Jew from a grain of sand.'

*Apparently an allusion to the calumny of the 'ritual murder' of infants which has been brought against the Jews by their enemies from very ancient times.

Alexander, the secretary, had prepared me for the deputation. He hinted that he could write my speech, but I intend to make my own speeches. 'The deputation,' he said, 'will be important: as a sign of respect to the new Procurator it will be headed by Philo and Alexander.' He seemed to expect me to say something. 'Oh yes,' I said, 'Philo and Alexander. I must remember their names.' Junius was delighted. 'I do not believe you have ever heard of either of them,' he said. The secretary went on unmoved. 'Philo has a certain reputation as a philosopher.' 'Why,' said Junius, 'he is the greatest living Jew. He is called "The Jewish Plato," which infuriates the Greeks. I have never read a word of him, but I believe he has set out to prove that the Hebrew scriptures contain the whole of Greek philosophy.' 'Alexander,' added the secretary, 'is Philo's brother, and is the leader of the Jews in commerce and finance as Philo is in letters.' Junius added that Alexander was the recognized head of the Jewish community, enormously wealthy and ready to lend money on good security. I thought myself that I must take note of Alexander. Philo and Alexander were, in fact, the spokesmen of the party. I was brief and soldierly. 'You have, I hear, a petition to make to me,' was all I said when Junius presented them. Each of the pair had something to ask of me. They spoke quietly but, I need scarcely say, with complete assurance, as though equals to equals.

Philo spoke first, since he was to deal with religion. He began with compliments to Rome, to Caesar, and to me. He said that the Jews had always fought hard for their independence, but had never for long been able to preserve it. Always some great Power from the north or from the south had overcome them: Egypt, Assyria, the Greeks, the Syrian kings, and finally Rome. Nowadays they not only recognized that they could not hope to prevail against the might of Caesar, but they no longer desired to, for Caesar gave them peace and good government. I interrupted to say that there were constant complaints of some fellow springing up in Judaea - an itinerant preacher or a so-called patriot or a mere bandit - and he always ended by inciting the people against Rome. Philo rejoined that these were in any event ignorant, illiterate men who counted for little, and that the rulers at Jerusalem, supported by all that was best and most educated among the Jews, were satisfied to have things as they were, provided that they were left undisturbed in the exercise of their religion, and in this every Jew throughout the world was on their side. He went on to warn me, with professions of respect, that in Judaea the Jews would not abate one jot or tittle of their religious convictions. They had, he said, endured the extreme of persecution before, and, if need be, they would do so again. Antiochus of Syria had tortured and slain them by the thousand in his determination to force heathen customs upon them and to make them rather Greeks than Jews, but at the end they had defeated him.* Herod had sought to bribe them by the magnificence of his benefactions and by building them a Temple which was the wonder of the world, but when he set a golden eagle over the Temple Gate they had pulled it down, for neither the cross nor the stake had terrors for the God-fearing Jew.** He reminded me - not, he observed, that he thought it necessary - that the Jews, worshipping an invisible God, would accept no statue or image of living beings, and that even Herod had not placed his head on his own coins in Judaea.

*Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) endeavoured to destroy Jewish religion and 'Hellenize' the Jews. The successful revolt led by Judas Maccabaeus marked the failure of his policy. Antiochus dedicated the Temple at Jerusalem to the Olympic Zeus and erected in it the pagan altar which is the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of in the Book of Daniel.

**Herod the Great's policy towards the Jews was one of benevolent (and suspicious) contempt. He did not seek, like Antiochus, to 'Hellenize' them, but at the same time that he restored the Temple on the grandest scale in order to gratify them, he established a theatre and amphitheatre at Jerusalem whose pagan character was a constant offence to them.

I asked him bluntly whether he proposed that Caesar's head should not be placed on his own coins within his own dominions; but he was too shrewd to be trapped by the question; he only hoped, he said, that I would respect the susceptibilities of the Jews in the ancient home of their race and their religion even as Caesar himself desired that they should be respected.

I asked him whether he was aware that in Rome Caesar had ordered that the Jews should abandon their special forms of worship on pain of being expelled from Italy or forced into the labour battalions of the army.* He replied that he knew this was so, but that whereas Caesar would not tolerate a distinctive race with special exclusive privileges in Rome, he was equally firm in allowing them the undisturbed enjoyment of their religious customs in their own home. He added pointedly that everybody knew this was the policy laid down by Caesar for his governors, and they were grateful for it both to him and to them. He ended with a petition: the instructions given me at Rome before I left - and Valerius too laid stress upon this - informed me that at Jerusalem the Roman Governor keeps the vestments of the High Priest in his custody. He only hand them over to the High Priest on the eve of the great festivals and he receives them back again when the festival is finished. It is a sign of authority to which Rome attaches great importance. The Jews, of course, resent it. Philo proposed that, since Judaea had behaved so well during Valerius's term of office, I should restore the vestments to the High Priest. I answered coldly that the Jews must earn any concession by good behaviour shown to me, that I knew Caesar's mind and should carry it out, and that I had every intention of allowing the Jews the full exercise of their religion, provided that they recognized in every proper manner the authority of Caesar. The question of the vestments, I said, was one which only Caesar could decide.**

*The Emperor Tiberius had enforced this measure seven years earlier - in A.D. 19.

**Herod the Great had kept the vestments in his own custody and the Romans continued the practice. When, in A.D. 36, Pilate was summoned to Rome to answer to the accusations of misgovernment that were made against him, the vestments were restored to the charge of the priests in the Temple.

I hope you will approve of this mild and cautious utterance. Religion is one thing; by all means let them have their religion. But when they say that their religious scruples forbid them to tolerate the symbols of the authority of Rome - a statue or an image or even an inscription - that is another matter altogether. I shall see about it. I do not think that Caesar will blame me for enforcing his authority.

I thought Philo would never stop. His brother, Alexander, I am glad to say, was briefer. He was full of the poverty of the Jews. He said there was an impression about that all Jews were rich, but it was a great mistake. Judaea was a poor country, a large part of it mountainous and barren. The really rich territory was Galilee - do I not know it! - but people thought Judaea was wealthy because of the contributions which Jews everywhere sent up to Jerusalem. This, however, was 'Temple-money' designed to maintain the services and the priests, and it could no more be touched than the jewels, given by pious benefactors - he himself, by the way, is one of these - which adorn the Temple itself! He urged me to create peace and contentment at the beginning of my governorship by a large remission of taxation. He spoke of my reference to troublesome agitators in Judaea and said that his own experience as a collector of taxes in Egypt was that the less people were taxed the less likely they were to listen to sedition. I said I would consider it. I could not tell him, - could I? - that a Governor never needs money so urgently as in his first year of office and that every Governor has an endless string of creditors at Rome. If it were not for his creditors, would any man consent to govern Jews? A most illiberal sentiment, you will say. So it is, so it is, but I cannot always be a Seneca. To think of the untold wealth that flows from every city of Asia and Africa and almost of Europe to Jerusalem, and I cannot so much as touch it! Nor, I assure you, will I attempt to.

Soon we shall be within sight of Caesarea. Procula is full of excitement about it: but then, she does not realize for how many years she may have to live in it.

## ARRIVAL AT CAESAREA

In harbour, Caesarea

Congratulate me, my friend, for I have reached my 'province.' Wish me a quiet and uneventful term, without rebellion, droughts or tumults, so that I may earn promotion and in some higher post than this help to make history.

I have left Procula on deck. She is wildly excited. She expected, I believe, to find tents and savages, and here is a city which looks, she says, almost as good as Naples. Certainly there is nothing Jewish about its appearance. The first thing we saw, from many miles out, was a temple of white, gleaming marble high up on a hill. Then the outline of a great amphitheatre, also white. Next, as we came nearer, a tall, dark tower standing straight up, as it seemed, out of the water. We found that it was established on the end of a gigantic mole made of enormous blocks of stone. I have seen nothing so striking as this mole in Italy. It runs out crescent-shaped, from the southern end of the city towards the north; it is several times as broad as any of our roads, with towers upon it and arches where seamen may lodge. It projects so far towards the northern shore that it leaves only a narrow entrance from the open sea and within it is the haven of calm waters in which we now lie. The size of the stones is almost beyond belief, and how Herod contrived to get them here and have them hewn and plant them in position is more than I can understand. He must have searched all Asia and Africa for skilled engineers.

Before Herod built the harbour and called it after Caesar, the place was a mere roadstead, open and dangerous. Now the commerce of the whole country can flow through it and much comes here that used to go to Tyre, farther north. I hope still more will come that I may get the benefit of the customs duties!

As we approached the entrance, Marcius pointed out to me first one building and then another, and always he added, 'Herod built it - Herod built them all.' Truly he was a wonderful man, for this is only one of the cities that he created out of nothing, and wherever he built he never forgot to build to the glory of Caesar and of Rome. (The temple that I first saw is dedicated to Caesar.)

As I watched and listened to Marcius I exclaimed, 'A great king, no wonder Caesar praised him!'* I was astonished to hear a harsh voice near me saying, 'A great murderer!' and there, if you please, was my humble Alexander, with a scowl on his face and a snarl in his voice, looking as though he hated (as I am sure he does) even the stones that Herod had set up.

*It was reported that the Emperor Augustus and his minister Agrippa had said that 'the dominions of Herod were too little for the greatness of his soul.'

'He was a Jew himself,' I said, in order to tease Alexander. I knew that Herod was only a half-Jew, being of the race of Idumaeans, and I suppose that if there are any persons whom the Jews hate more than pure Romans and Greeks, it is people who are part-Jew like Idumaeans and Samaritans.**

**The Idumaeans, whose country lay south of Judaea, had been defeated in war and forcibly 'Judaized' by the Jewish ruler, John Hyrcanus I (135-105 B.C.).

'He was no Jew,' said Alexander curtly. 'And he was the vilest murderer that ever came even from Idumaea.'

'Whom did he murder?' I asked. 'I know he executed rebels somewhat freely, but I expect that most of them deserved no less. You mean the executions in his own family?'

'Murders!' said Alexander. (He is rather pertinacious.) 'He put to death Hyrcanus, the aged grandfather of his wife Mariamne, and then her brother. He put to death her mother Alexandra. He put to death Mariamne herself and for that, by the justice of God, for he had a deep passion for her, he suffered the tortures of the damned. He put to death his own two sons by Mariamne and another son by another wife, who had set his mind against those two. He put to death -' and then he rolled off a long list. I cannot remember all of them - I have so much to think of - but I know there were two successive husbands of Herod's own sister Salome among them. I asked Alexander what motive Herod had. Was it merely pleasure in killing?

'No,' he said, 'the family of Hyrcanus was of the princely Jewish stock and Herod exterminated every member of it lest it should produce a rival to himself.'

'At Rome they call that statesmanship,' I said, I hope not indiscreetly.* I asked Marcius what was his view of Herod. He was thoughtful. 'A great prince,' he said. 'He had large ideas about everything. Caesar Augustus was right when he said that Herod was big enough to rule both Syria and Egypt. He was the shrewdest man that Rome has had to deal with in these parts. He knew how to be useful to Rome and also how to use her. But at home he was a wild beast; he lived on blood.'

*Apparently an allusion (and a dangerous one) to the jealousy with which the Emperor Tiberius regarded all possible claimants to the Imperial power.

It is true enough. His own wife and his own sons! That takes some stomaching.

The streets are decorated in our honour, and we can hear the noise of the crowds assembling to greet our procession.

## MEETING WITH CAIAPHAS

In the Palace of Herod, Caesarea

We are duly installed and I am hard at work. I sit from morning to night, studying reports from every quarter of Judaea, going into accounts, listening to petitions. I really believe that for the last twelve months Valerius must have saved up every difficult and disagreeable question for me to settle. There is no end to the disputes between Greeks and Jews, Samaritans and Jews, Idumaens and Jews, and Jews and Jews. All of them are described as important; there is a fine crop of trouble for me, however I decide them. I suppose that I shall do the same by my successor when my turn comes. My reception was fairly good, but the non-Jews were much more cordial than the Jews. The Jews in the streets were cool and unresponsive. Marcius says that Valerius has ruled them so gently that they see no reason to hope for much from me. 'They will be more enthusiastic,' he added, 'about your successor.'

When I reached the palace I found the high officials gathered to welcome me: my own staff, representatives of the two Herods, and the High Priest from Jerusalem. The High Priest is one Joseph Caiaphas. He is a tall man, imposing in appearance, suave in manner and, I should say, of supple mind. I observed that his mere presence made a great impression on every one. There had been great discussion whether he would come to Caesarea or wait at Jerusalem until I paid my first visit there. Had he not come, I should certainly have taken it amiss, for it would have been a plain sign of hostility.

On the other hand, he came alone. No ex-High Priest, and there are several living, came with him. Especially, neither Annas nor any of his sons was there. This Annas and his sons, I should tell you, are the most powerful of the priestly families at Jerusalem. For years they have either held the highest offices or made it difficult for anyone else to hold them. Old Annas himself was High Priest when Valerius came here and Valerius found him impossible; he merely wants the protection of Rome so that he can go his own way in everything. Valerius transferred the office to a member of another family, but the experiment was a failure: then he appointed one of Annas's sons, but that was like having the old man back again. Once more he appointed a rival priest and once more the rival was not strong enough. So he chose Caiaphas, who is Annas's son-in-law, hoping that the ambitious crew would regard this as enough of prestige and influence for the family and that Caiphas would be willing and able to hold his own against them. It is not, do you think? A bad arrangement. Caiaphas keeps the peace with us and the office in the family; Annas and his sons stand a little farther off and hold the support of those who think Caiaphas is too subservient. At heart, all of them alike, office-holders and office-speakers, accept the Romans - for the present. The last thing that any of them wants is a clash with Rome that would destroy their own power.

Caiaphas, at the public ceremony, merely said, 'The Jews greet the representative of Caesar.' A chilly welcome, but afterwards, in private, he was more communicative. He told me that he regarded it as his duty to work with the Romans. He said that his people, as he hoped I knew, were passionately attached to their independence, but that he and the great Jewish families recognized that they could not struggle against Rome. He said that the thing that he always feared was a popular rising which he and his friends could not check in time. 'This country,' he said, 'is very difficult to control. It is full of mountainous and desolate tracts in which evil-disposed or ambitious persons cannot be prevented from gathering together and from which they can sally out to make trouble in the towns.' There had, after the death of Herod, been several instances of adventurers who gathered a band of people about them and actually set themselves up for King. One of them might be a mere bandit; another might be a political rebel against any sort of foreign rule; a third might presume to lay down the law about religion. In any event there was danger. The common people were extremely ignorant - I was amused to see the contempt with which he spoke of them - and any sort of leader with a gift of action or of speech meant to them some one who might restore the liberties which they had once enjoyed. 'Besides,' he said, speaking very quietly, 'you have to remember that all Jews believe that some day - a distant day, I am afraid (this with a smile) - a deliverer will arise who will restore the ancient glories of our people.' I do not pretend to understand their religion, but I gathered that the coming of this deliverer (Messiah he called him) would be incompatible with government by Rome, or by any other power. I must ask Alexander about this. The voice of Caiaphas was equable, almost casual, as he talked to me. I take it that he and his friends will support no rivals, be they Kings or Messiahs, who endanger their authority under Caesar's governor.

I thanked Caiaphas and asked him where Annas was. He replied that Annas had a cold, and in any event seldom left home. He would present himself to me at Jerusalem. I said that Annas had several sons, one of whom had been High Priest.* He answered that it would not be seemly for them to come in the absence of their father. I imagine that the old man completely overshadows them.

*Eleazar, appointed by Valerius Gratus. In all five sons of Annas at one time or another held the office of High Priest. Annas himself was High Priest for nine years and Caiaphas for eleven.

Caiaphas and I understand each other, I think, but I shall need to watch him.

The position is extraordinary; I wish that you were here to study it. As I look out from the palace, I see below me this town which, apart from Jews, is full of Greeks, Egyptians and the rest. Away to the south is a strip of plain along the sea. Behind it are foothills and then, rising behind them, a barrier of mountains, bare and rugged, among which dwell the real Jews, stiff-necked and obstinate. They are surrounded by enemies - Samaritans to the north, Idumaeans to the south, Romans at the points of military vantage and Greeks everywhere, and they do not desire to have them other than enemies. The very troops, the auxiliaries, by which we hold them down, are recruited from these enemies on their own soil, for they themselves will not serve in the army and we - wrongly, as I think - exempt them. They shut themselves up in their Jerusalem and, still more, in their Temple, unchanging and, at heart, unyielding.

I have had no letter from you, my friend, since I came here. Take heed; I shall not write again until I hear from you.

## A GOVERNOR'S PROBLEMS

Caesarea

Your letter has come and I am grateful to you for it and for your offer of services. I shall venture to make use of you at once and you yourself have given me the hint. You say that things are not only quiet at Rome but too quiet for some people; that the mob grumbles as 'stingy Caesar' for not giving them largesse and games and hopes that he will treat them more generously when he comes back to Rome.* You approve of Caesar's policy, and so do I; let them go without their Games and do some honest work for a change. But I am not Caesar and I cannot afford to have my people grumbling. Therefore I must exhibit Games, and that is why I ask for your assistance.

*In this year Tiberius retired to the island of Capreae, in the Bay of Naples. He never returned to Rome.

First of all, I shall have some fighting with wild beasts. I would have liked to have the sort of contest that I saw in Alexandria - some bulls against an elephant, but elephants cost too much for Procurators. The chief display will be half a dozen lions against a dozen Idumaean prisoners armed with darts. You can see at once that it will be an affair of tactics; if they can separate the lions, but there - I know you have a mind above such things. (They have six light darts each, so the odds are on the lions.) Some other prisoners - these are criminals - will fight on horseback against the bulls. These prisoners are chosen because they cannot ride. Later, the gladiators - and here you can assist me. I want to give the people a novelty. I find that they have rarely seen a Gaul and scarcely ever a Briton. Now I design a chariot-fight between Parthians on the one side and Gauls and Britons on the other. The chariots are here - I shall have six on each side - and I am getting the Governor of Syria to send me some Parthian prisoners. There will be six to drive and six to do the fighting. Can you get me the Gauls and Britons, especially the Britons? They must be used to chariot-fighting, and I want to buy them outright, so that those who survive can be used at other Games by me or loaned to friends. I should be very willing to have none but Britons if so many are available. There is much interest here in that island, and every one is asking why Caesar does not go in and add it definitely to our possessions. We shall never be really safe in Gaul until we do so. But, I know, caution is nowadays the word.*

*Tiberius, following the maxims of Augustus, was reluctant to extend the boundaries of the Empire and the conquest of Britain was not seriously undertaken until A.D. 43, under the Emperor Claudius.

I have asked Alexander what the High Priest meant with his talk about a Jewish deliverer or Messiah, and I know that you, of all people, will want to hear his answer. Like everything in this strange country, it is a mixed question of religion and politics. Apparently the Jews are led by their sacred writings to believe that some day or other their God, who has chosen them out from all the peoples of the world (a funny notion), will re-establish them in the position which they held hundreds of years ago, when neither Romans nor Greeks had come upon them. But, says Alexander, their educated men and their rulers, like Caiaphas, are much too sensible to think that it can be done in these times of ours, and so they postpone the coming of a deliverer to the indefinite future, or even say that it applies not to this world at all but to another life succeeding this - a very sensible view to take, you will say, and so do I. But the ordinary Jew, who buys and sells or farms or fishes, sees the future differently. The more he is oppressed by barbarians, as he would say, like Greeks or Syrians, Egyptians or Romans, the more does he look forward to the coming of a deliverer, a sort of God, sent from his heaven to liberate the Jews; some of them even think that this deliverer will not only free Judaea but will conquer all the world. That is why Caiaphas spoke meaningly to me; there's never a rascal sets himself up anywhere in these parts but a horde will gather round him and believe his story that he is sent to be their King. 'What would Caiaphas and Annas make of that?' I said to Alexander. He never stirred a muscle. 'It is doubtful,' he said, 'how far the deliverer would require the services of a High Priest any more than of a Roman Governor. Annas and Caiaphas undoubtedly believe that the deliverer will come some day. They must believe no less, but they will be very slow to admit that he has actually come; the common people believe that he may come now and they may decide at any moment that he has arrived.'

Is it not a comic idea - this paltry little race, that has been overrun by half a dozen conquerors, carried into slavery, and scattered about the earth, believing that it is chosen out of all others and that its God, who has never been able to prevent its misfortunes, will send some one to overthrow Caesar and Rome? You would think that when they see we only keep 4,000 soldiers here they would know how weak and contemptible they really are, but I suspect that, though Caiaphas knows better, many of them think that those 4,000 are all that Rome has got. In any case, if you can rely on a God to perform all sorts of miracles, it does not matter how many soldiers are on the other side. I fear that some day they will require a lesson.

If you have the chance I beg you to commend me to Lucius Aelius Sejanus.* Pray tell him that I am contemplating making some new roads in this country and that I shall ask permission to call the first of them by his name. I shall write to him myself later. I had hoped to send him a present of the wine of the country, but oh, my dear friend, it is like vinegar. No wonder the Greeks here do a roaring trade in noble Chian and our warm Falernian.

*The favourite of Tiberius, who at this time was the real ruler of the Empire. Later, he was denounced by his master from his retreat in Capreae, accused of conspiracy and hurried to execution.

## DECISION TO VISIT JERUSALEM

Caesarea

I have decided to go up to Jerusalem shortly. Here I see next to nothing of my Jews. Caesarea is full of Greeks, Syrians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and all that sort of rabble. There are many Jews, it is true, but they are of the common sort - traders, moneylenders and the like. The men who count are at Jerusalem, and it might be thousands of miles away, though it is just up in the hills. Caiaphas is careful to keep in touch with me, but so far as most of them are concerned I might not exist at all. I am going up, therefore, to make the acquaintance of Annas and his friends.

Besides, I want to see their head-quarters: the nest in which they harbour their seditions, if any there be; the stronghold which, according to Marcius, will give even Rome no little trouble if ever they should defy us. I must take a look at the defences and consider how my little garrison will be situated if there should be a rising. The roads, too, and the water-supply - you will commend me for this, I know - these things are always bad until the Romans take them in hand. Also I am curious to see their Temple, though I suppose they will hardly let me take a look at it, and I must find out where they keep the Temple-money, if only to protect it against robbers. You need not suspect me; I shall not emulate Crassus or Sabinus,* but you know that if anyone raided their treasury I would get the blame. I assure you I am ready to get on with them, but I must find out what sort of people they are and what they are doing. Here in Caesarea I feel that I am cut off from my own province, and I remain uneasy, though the chief of my intelligence section reports that all is quiet and no sign of trouble brewing. He, by the way, is a Graecized Samaritan, Joseph by name. Most of his family lost lands and life at the hands of Herod. He hates Herod's sons and he hates the Jews, so he is a useful servant to us. I hope to go to Jerusalem in three weeks' time.

*Both these Roman Generals had plundered the Temple treasury.

The Games went off very well. The Gauls and Britons fought magnificently. The crowd were so delighted that they insisted on them fighting again and again with new antagonists until almost all were killed. The contest between the lions and the Idumaeans was not so successful; the lions separated the Idumaeans, so it was soon over. One of the Idumaeans fought splendidly and I would have liked to save him, but the lions were too quick.

There was one curious episode which illustrates the obstinacy of these Jews. There were four of them in prison here condemned to death for highway robbery. I offered to let them fight against a tiger, the conditions being that they should be armed with any sort of wooden weapons that they liked to choose or make, but that they should first do public homage to the bust of Caesar in the arena. They were quite willing to fight - they were fine strong men, all of them - but they refused to sacrifice to Caesar. I told them they would be thrown to the tiger as they were, and they laughed at me. So thrown they were, and now Alexander, with a glum face, warns me that the Jews have some religious objection (apart from the personal one) to having their bodies torn by animals. They have so many religious objections.

Postscriptum.

I have opened this letter to inform you that Alexander, supported by Marcius, Joseph and every one else, now tells me that I cannot go up to Jerusalem on the day which I had fixed, because it is the Sabbath of the Jews. It would give deep offence, they say; it would be taken as a deliberate provocation; there would be mourning and protests and perhaps rioting. 'Rioting on the Sabbath!' I said. 'Surely not!' But I suppose they might make an exception to do a little rioting. Of course, I had to give way; I could tell that at once from Marcius's face. The Sabbath is incredible sacred to them, he says; they will neither do nor tolerate labour of any kind; you must not do this, you must not do the other; it seems to me there is scarcely anything you can do. I wonder, does their sacred river Jordan flow on the Sabbath or does it take a rest? I asked Marcius the question. 'There are some of them,' he replied, 'who will not eat an egg if it is laid on the Sabbath.' 'if you have a wooden leg,' I asked, 'can you walk it out with you upon the Sabbath?' Nothing disturbs my Marcius. 'I believe,' he answered, 'that their learned men are divided on that subject.'* I could hardly contain myself. 'Of course,' I said, 'on the Sabbath they do not perform the functions of Nature?' Alexander intervened. 'You are quite right,' he said, looking at me with admiration. 'Some of them do not.'** I was a little puzzled. 'But supposing - ' I said, and then we were interrupted and the subject dropped.

*This was, in fact, a subject of controversy among the learned.

**The ascetics of the Essene sect.

You had better write me another of your admirable essays on the virtue of toleration and the equality of man, for I assure you I am at present in great need of it.

## DIFFICULTIES IN VISITING JERUSALEM

Caesarea

I could burst with indignation. Everything is ready for the journey to Jerusalem and this morning I have discussed with Marcius the last touches. 'Anything else that you can think of?' I inquired. I felt brisk, full of a lively expectation about Jerusalem, and almost amiable towards my Jews. 'Of course,' he said, 'we do not take the images on the standards.'* I protest that I showed no astonishment; I am learning not to be astonished in this country. Then, 'Why not?' I said. 'When we take the standards to Jerusalem,' he repeated, 'we always leave the images behind.' 'Not on this occasion, I think,' said I, 'whatever Valerius Gratus may have been weak enough to do.' He did not turn a hair. 'Every Procurator since Caesar took over the country has left the images behind,' he asserted, 'otherwise the Jews would be deeply offended.'

*The standards of the Roman soldiers frequently had fixed to them medallions bearing images of the Emperors.

I assure you, my blood boiled. 'Do you mean to tell me,' I asked, 'that when the Roman Governor makes his formal entry into the chief city of the Jews, he is to omit from the standards of his troops the images of the Imperator Tiberius Caesar, whom may the gods preserve, and of Augustus Caesar Imperator, his great predecessor?' 'I do,' he said. 'It is the accepted policy and I beg you to follow it. The Jews will not tolerate the image of any god or emperor in Jerusalem: neither statues nor medallions on the standards nor images on coins. You know yourself that although the silver coins minted in Italy that reach this country bear Caesar's image - for that cannot be avoided - the copper coins that are minted in Judaea itself have not his image on them. So, too, with the standards.' He looked me in the face. 'It is Caesar's will that their religion not be offended. They have no image of their god. In the depths of their Temple in Jerusalem is a little chamber which is inhabited by their god, but it is empty; there is nothing in it.'

'Caesar would not object,' I said, 'if I took his image into Jerusalem, and nothing happened. He would be pleased to think that I was breaking down the hostility of these Jews to him and Rome and all the outside world.'

'If there is a tumult,' Marcius said, 'and an attack on the troops in the narrow streets of Jerusalem, I cannot answer for the consequences. Would Caesar be pleased then?'

Straight talking, as you see. Alexander was there and I looked at him from time to time, but the little Jew had the good sense to keep his mouth shut. At the finish, I have had to give way. What else could I do? I cannot risk a tumult and a rising so early in my term of office, with so few troops available and the certainty that I should be condemned for failure, though if I were successful all Rome would praise my 'firmness.'

But it goes against the grain. To enter Jerusalem before the eyes of these arrogant priests and their surly people, as though we were on sufferance! It is the same everywhere. What do the Britons think when they see that we stop short at their island? What do these Jews think when they see that we choose rather to humiliate Caesar than offend them? They will take toleration for weakness and caution for timidity. And it will do no good. Evil will come of it. Mark me, we shall have our work to do over again and in the end we shall have to do it thoroughly. At present I must yield. I would offend the Jews cheerfully, but I cannot afford to cross Caesar or Sejanus.

Procula goes with me. She has long ago exhausted Caesarea; she insists that it is time she saw something truly Jewish. I tell her that at all events, when we go up without the images, she will be seeing something that is truly un-Roman.

## RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM

Jerusalem

We have been here a week and it seems like a year. It is as though we were in a different country. I felt it immediately as we came up from the coast. Caesarea, after all, is bustling and cheerful, with a friendly face towards one. Here, as we marched up and up into these bleak hills, which stretch away north and south as far as the eye can see, I felt like an invader entering for the first time a hostile land. All the way along we saw groups of people from the farms and scattered hamlets watching us silently. It was the same when we entered Jerusalem. There was no welcome at the gates nor in the street. Not a shout nor a salute; no sign even of Caiaphas nor of any of the high-priestly caste. Crowds enough in the streets, for the place is like a rabbit-warren, but all of them glum and silent, as though they had been given the order, or sneering at us if they thought that they had caught our eye. The place is a volcano, and if I had more troops, and Caesar permitted, I would not mind if the explosion came. Marcius says that it will not come - not yet. The high priests, he asserts - and by that he means the little ring of families from whom the high priest is always chosen - will have as little to do with me as possible, but they have things well in hand. And I will have them well in hand before I finish, and so I have told Marcius. He warns me to expect no friendliness from the priests or people. To all of them alike we are aliens and usurpers, to be regarded with coldness and suspicion until their god thinks fit to remove us from their necks.

This is a wretched city. Except for the great Herod's works there is scarcely a single building worth a glance. Whatever pride and taste they possess they have put into their Temple. The streets are narrow and ill-paved. Their drains and water-supply are disgraceful even for Asia; it is no wonder that they suffer from all kinds of disease. I shall have to see about this.

The hand of Herod is evident everywhere. How that man must have despised and laughed at the Jews! On one day he would humour them and on the next strike them in the face - or, more likely, do both things almost together. He built them a Temple which is one of the wonders of the world and they are proud of it, as well they may be, and at the same time he built a theatre in the City and an amphitheatre outside it. And of what use was that, you say, since they so much resent the introduction of such wicked spectacles? I think that is just what must have delighted Herod. Their priests and all their stricter folk denounced him and his evil works, but many of the common people flocked to the spectacles. What people could resist the temptation? So Herod, in the eyes of the good Jew, was a corrupter of the people, more subtle and more dangerous than the mere persecutor.

It goes without saying that Herod built a palace too - an enormous affair which is also a fortress. It gave him an additional grip on the City. Whatever else he did, he never forgot the necessity of securing himself against his people. The whole country is dotted with his fortresses. I do not live in the palace; something more modest is enough for my pretensions. Besides, I like to have my soldiers near me. I live in the Antonia, the citadel which is close to and overlooks the Temple. I have the troops there and can keep a keen eye on the Temple, for if there is trouble afoot, especially at the time of the great Festivals, it is in the Temple that sooner or later it will show itself. You cannot imagine the eagerness of the Jews to fight each other. They are as full of factions as the Greeks, and you know what that means. A few of them favour the family of Herod; the chief priests, as I have told you, think it well to make the best of us Romans; the fanatics and agitators of the common people look askance at them both. Then the country people are always coming up from over Jordan or from Galilee and the inhabitants of the City are quick to make trouble with them, not to mention the Samaritans, with whom any good Jew is ready to pick a quarrel.

The Temple is astonishing. There cannot be its like in the world. it is a city in itself, and the priests and servants attached to it must number thousands. There are enormous colonnades and courts, one after another. Foreigners may go into the outer court, and then there is a barrier, and if any foreigner goes through and is detected, he suffers the death penalty. Even our own soldiers are executed by us if they transgress the barrier. Then there is another court which marks the limit for women and another for men, and so on to the priests' courts and the great altar of sacrifice and the inmost chamber of all - the empty one - which no one enters but the High Priest, and he only once a year. The quantity of sacrifices made by private persons is amazing, and the part of the outer court where the offerings are bought and sold is just like a great fair. The priests get part of all the offerings, and, to make sure of their income, they insist that no one shall offer sacrifice except in Jerusalem and in the Temple itself. And then there are the presents from rich Jews and the tribute-money from rich and poor alike. The Treasury is concealed somewhere in the depths of the Temple - I don't know where precisely.

You will ask me how I have been received since I first entered the City. Not well. They ask for trouble. I had invited all their chief men to meet me at the Antonia on the morning after my arrival. There was no reply, but they came. I had been told by Alexander that I had better receive them in the outer court, as some of them would have scruples about entering the actual building. I even offered to give them food and wine - not wine of the country, but real wine - before they left, but, of course, Alexander replied that that was impossible; they would not accept it; besides, it was the day before or the day after some festival or other, and that made them stricter than ever about meeting those whom they call the heathen. In this, as in everything, I gave way. You cannot say that I am not patient with them.

There was a great crowd when they came. I expect that most of them were as curious to see me as I to see them. All the Sanhedrim were there, some seventy of them. This is the body that rules the Jews, under our authority; their chief priests, officials and most distinguished lawyers and philosophers compose it. I greeted Caiaphas and he presented the leaders to me; among them Annas and one or two who had held the office of High Priest, the Captain of the Temple Guard, the chief of the Treasury and a few more. Annas had his sons there, a whole row of them. One of them has already been High Priest, and no doubt the others expect to be* The old man, I should say, is worth the lot of them. He has a hawk's face, with thin lips (for a Jew), and every now and then, when he is moved, a spark of fire in his eyes. I do not know whether it is cunning or inclination that decides his policy, but, although he is one of the heads of the priestly nobles who work with us and are almost all of the faction called Sadducees, he seeks the support and applause of the other faction, the Pharisees, who are all for the utmost observance of the Jewish law and for as much opposition as is practicable to Greeks and Romans and any other foreigners.

*Five sons of Annas held the office. Eleazar had been High Priest about A.D. 16-17. Jonathan became High Priest in A.D. 36-37 and was later assassinated at the instance of the Procurator Felix. Theophilos was High Priest after Jonathan, and Matthias a few years later. Annas the younger became High Priest for a few months in A.D. 62, and was murdered by the populace.

Now observe what happened. The leading Sadducees have seats on the Sanhedrim, but the majority of its members are Pharisees, who regard the Sadducees with suspicion and disapproval as temporizers in religion and (therefore) in politics. All were listening to hear what I would say and what the noble Sadducees would say to me. After the presentations, I began by saying to Caiaphas that I was sorry that they had not thought fit to greet me at my entry into the City. I spoke in Greek because that, as you know, is the language of the educated throughout the East. Before Caiaphas could reply Annas said something sharply in a foreign tongue and there was a little movement of applause among some of them. Caiaphas said hurriedly that it was a matter of custom and that the Roman Governor had never, so far, demanded a formal welcome on entering Jerusalem.

I am becoming, I really think, a miracle of self-control. I did not ask what Annas had said, but I discovered afterwards that he had said in Aramaic, which they use among themselves, that it was surely enough that they should consent to come to me at all. I turned to them, however, and said - again in Greek - that I hoped the indisposition was better which had prevented him from coming to welcome me at Caesarea. He smiled slightly and replied, again in Aramaic - an insulting thing to do - and there was a general laugh. I made Alexander translate for me this time. It appeared that the insolent fellow had said that his indisposition was better but might return at any moment. However, I know how to deal with such gentry and I addressed them in Latin, to teach them their place, and ordered Alexander to translate into Greek. I told them roundly that I was displeased with my reception in Caesarea, and, still more, in Jerusalem, but that they should have no reason to complain of me so long as their conduct was sincerely loyal. They listened sourly and then Caiaphas said hastily that they knew their duty to Caesar and to Rome. I asked if they had any request to make of me, and he replied that it would make for good feeling and contentment if I would restore the High Priest's vestments to their keeping. That, I replied, as at Alexandria, was a matter for Caesar, and it would depend entirely on their conduct whether I could make any recommendation. Then I went on to say that I had greatly admired what I had seen of the Temple and I desired to inspect it; perhaps some of them would show me its wonders on the following day. Caiaphas assented. I suggested that those who had been High Priests should accompany us. They all looked at Annas. He bowed gravely. 'To the outer court!' he said, this time in Greek. Really, the man is intolerable. 'I know that,' I said. 'Have we not set up inscriptions both in Greek and in Latin forbidding strangers to pass beyond the outer court?' Then I could not resist temptation. 'Yet I have heard,' I added, 'that one of my predecessors visited even the inmost chamber.' You remember that when Cneius Pompeius* took Jerusalem in the course of his Eastern conquests he penetrated to the most sacred chamber - an act of desecration which they have never forgiven. You should have seen their faces. A murmur of horror and anger broke from them; some of them spat upon the floor; some of them took a step towards me. Annas stepped forward, but I did not give him time to speak. 'I have no intention myself,' I said, 'to go beyond the outer court, just as I have confidence that you will continue to perform the daily sacrifice in honour of Caesar and of Rome.' That quieted them, for it was a reminder that, tolerant as we are, we do exact from them a daily symbol of submission.

*Pompeius the Great, who entered the Holy of Holies in 63 B.C.

Finally, I told them that I would expect them to report to me promptly any agitator among the common people who might threaten trouble. I need not, I said, particularize the kind of trouble that I meant; they knew well enough what happened when some robber or fanatic, half crazy about religion or the liberty of his country, began to set up himself as a leader and collect a following. I relied on them for loyal support. With this I dismissed them.

I shall spend a fortnight here and then make a round of inspection before I return to Caesarea. I must see the country-people. I believe they have not the slightest understanding of the power and importance of Rome - a most dangerous form of ignorance. I shall be glad to get away, but Procula will be sorry to leave Jerusalem. She finds everything picturesque, and, besides, their religion and their Temple-worship attract her. It is curious how these Eastern religions fascinate the women. If it is not Egyptian, it is the Jewish brand; the greater the mystery and hocus-pocus, the readier they are to submit themselves to the priests. Procula visits the outer court and questions Alexander about their wonderful inmost empty chamber. I tell her that some day she will forget and pass through the barrier. Then it will be my unpleasant duty to have her executed.

By the way, I have two questions for you. How many synagogues are there in Jerusalem? Fifty, do you say? There are nearly five hundred. And who discovered the alphabet? The ancient Egyptians or the Assyrians, you reply. No, it was Abraham, the ancestor of the Jews. You do not beleive it? What presumption! Neither do I, but the Jews do, or pretend to. Everything good must have come out of the Jews. I do not know, but I expect they claim the discovery of fire and the cartwheel. It is a consolation that at least we have the credit for the good Roman sword.

Your equable and tolerant mind will not, I fear, approve the tone of this letter. I freely confess that Jerusalem does not improve my temper.

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# PART II

## FIRST MENTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Caesarea

I thank you for your letters and especially for your zeal in defending my interests against Pomponius Rufus. I warned him long ago that his new house, if built to that height, would interfere with my rights of light. The sly rascal has waited long enough to carry out his plans. Let him discover in the courts, my friend, how staunch a champion and how eloquent a counsel I possess in you.

I heard last week that an itinerant preacher had turned up in the hill-country south of Jerusalem. His name is John. As it appeared that he was causing a certain amount of excitement, and might cause more, I sent Joseph to Jerusalem on a mission of inquiry. I have given him authority, if he thinks it necessary, to seek out personally the source of the ferment and report what it amounts to. It may be nothing, but I ought to know.

## FURTHER NEWS OF JOHN

Caesarea

I have heard from Joseph. He says that the matter may be serious, and after gathering such information as is available in Jerusalem, he has gone off into the mountains to hear for himself what the preacher John is saying. I wish him joy of the expedition. It is about as disagreeable a region as there is in the whole of my dominion - bleak and barren mountains, seamed with deep ravines and watercourses, which lead down steeply to the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. It is chiefly inhabited, so far as I can ascertain, by ill-omened birds, wild beasts, lepers and half-mad hermits such as this John seems to be. In Joseph's absence, I have been examining the reports of our spies in other parts of the country. It appears that John's fame is spreading and the common people are beginning to talk about him. Some of them are setting off in high expectation for the scene of the preaching. I shall be glad to have Joseph's report. This is my first experience of this sort of agitation and I shall deal firmly with it.

One more word about Pomponius. Spare no expense. What is important is not so much that my rights of light should be protected as that Pomponius should be shown to be a rascal.

## EYE-WITNESS'S REPORT ON JOHN

Caesarea

What I hear from Rome makes me almost glad to be a mere Procurator. A mutual friend of ours - I had better not mention names - writes to me that Sejanus not only is ambitious of marrying into the family of Caesar, but that at the same time he speaks slightingly of Caesar himself. 'Monarch of an islet,' he called him the other day - had you heard that? I scarcely dare write the words. If these things get to Caesar's ears, I shall be glad that I did not owe my appointment to the favour of Sejanus.

Joseph is back at last and I have been in consultation with him and Alexander. He had some difficulty tracking the preacher down. He had to go up-hill and down-dale in all sorts of weather, and was regarded with an unfriendly eye by the Jews who were also on the road. There are many of them on the road, too: most of them from Judaea, but a good many from Antipas's territory on the other side of Jordan, and some from Samaria and even Galilee. When he did discover John - the fellow moves from village to village all the time - do you know what he found? One of Antipas's officers, who was watching John on behalf of his master. The talk was that John would soon be leaving my territory and crossing over Jordan to that of Antipas. I don't know whether I shall give him the chance.

This may be a very serious matter. John is just one of those people of whom I have been warned. According to Joseph's report he is 'half-clad, half-starved and half-crazy,' but that does not matter with these Jews. It is what he says that counts, or rather, perhaps, what they choose to think he means. He is telling them that the great time, the new era, which they all expect, is coming, and for them that only means one thing: no more Herods, no more Romans, no more Governors, troops or taxes. The idea of liberty, of independence, of the revival of the glorious days which they enjoyed under their old kings - it's that which draws them from all over the country. Joseph declares that John has only to announce that he is the expected leader and the whole countryside will be on fire. He makes no pretence, so Joseph says, that he is himself a leader, but he is doing what is almost as bad: he tells them that a leader is coming, and that soon, which is just what they are looking for. I have questioned Alexander about this and he is wise and mysterious. I asked him whether this leader was the same as the deliverer or Messiah that Caiaphas had spoken of. He says no; that before the deliverer there must come, according to their sacred writings, an advance-guard or messenger or prophet - whatever you like to call him - and that when this person arrives then all the people will know that the deliverer himself is to come next.

You will see that from the standpoint of the Roman Governor it is all the same thing. John predicts the imminence of a new prophet; the appearance of the prophet will be followed by that of the deliverer, and then Caesar and Rome will make way for the new age. It is, you will agree, impossible that such fantastic but pernicious ideas should be allowed to spread among the people. You cannot imagine the expectancy that there is everywhere in the air here. Every one is waiting, waiting, for things that are to happen. I have the conviction that the best place for people like John is prison, and that is where I propose shortly to put him.

I have written to Caiaphas asking what he and the Sanhedrim have to say about it and informing him of what I intend. They ought to have reported to me before now.

I must not forget to tell you an amusing thing about John. He is telling the Jews that, in order to make themselves worthy of the great days that are coming, they must humble themselves for the wicked lives which they have led. This tickles me, as it would do you if you knew the Jews. Most of them do not relish this part of the doctrine at all. In their own opinion they have nothing to be humble about; nor ever have had. The new age is all very well, but its business is to set the Jews above all other peoples. Humiliation is proper to Greeks, Romans and such-like. I would like to know what my friend Annas thinks about humbling himself at the bidding of a ragged preacher escaped out of a cave! But I know already. The priests are used to the like of John. There is a whole sect of fanatics of his breed in this country - a good many of them in the very region that he comes from - who live severe lives and despise the easy-going priesthood at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas would give him short shrift, I am sure, especially if he showed signs of becoming really popular. It is all very well for their God to produce a new age, but the High Priests certainly expect to be consulted first.

This seems to me an opportunity to assert myself. I shall wait for a letter from Caiaphas, but whatever he says, I now intend to strengthen the garrison at Jerusalem. I hope for your approval.

## THE IMAGES OF THE CAESARS

Caesarea

I have heard from Caiaphas about John. He sends me an official answer which is most discreetly framed. You might like the text of it. It says:

'The Sanhedrim, having sent representatives to question John the son of Zacharias and having satisfied itself that he does not claim to be either the Messiah of the Jews or one of the Prophets, is of the opinion that he has committed no offence under the Law which would justify it in putting him on his trial. At the same time it recognizes that the civil power may reasonably take a wider view of the consequences which might follow an extension of his teaching.' Caiaphas sent a private note by the messenger. He has no objection to my taking measures if I think them necessary. I am sure that at heart he and his friends hope I will. You see the game. John may easily become an embarrassment to them, even if he is not so already. They would like him out of the way, but it would suit them better for me to remove him than that they should bear the odium themselves. Upon my word, I would not oblige them but that I have thought of a new measure for teaching both them, and the common people, who is their master here. I told you that I had decided to send up more troops to Jerusalem in case this affair of John should cause disturbances. I have made up my mind that the new troops shall this time carry the Imperial images on the standards when they enter Jerusalem. 'What madness!' I hear you say, and at once you conjure up visions of riot, tumult and open war. But listen. You do not give your Pilate sufficient credit for sagacity. Do you think that only Jews are cunning? My troops will enter Jerusalem in the dead of night. In the morning, when the Jews awake, go about their business, throng into the Temple, they will see the standards, with the images prominently displayed upon them, already established on the ramparts of the Antonia. They will storm the Antonia, you say? Tell that to the Marines. But, if they did attempt it, what a story I should have to send to Rome! The tiresome, treacherous Jews making a direct attack upon Caesar's images and the standards of the legions after I had so far respected their scruples as to send the troops in under cover of the dark! What would our patriotic Roman mob say to that story? Why, I should be a hero for a day and have the Syrian legions placed at my disposal. But do not fear. When Jerusalem hears that the talker John is to be arrested and sees the Roman eagles in its midst, it will think twice before openly resisting. Caiaphas will be shocked at my imprudence, but it is time they understood that they are part of the Roman State, and I have given Marcius his orders.

I am sending you some Syrian pottery. I hope your slaves are more careful than mine. I have told mine that the next one who damages a valuable vase or statue will figure at the Games, and not as a spectator.

## THE ROMAN'S BURDEN

Caesarea

Commend me, my friend, for a good Roman. I too am carrying the blessings of Italy to the benighted East. I have brought two surveyors, one from Alexandria and one from Antioch. I have instructed them to present plans to me for remaking certain roads, for constructing baths at Samaria, and for leading a good supply of water to Jerusalem from the springs south of the City. I shall get no thanks for this, but where or when does the Roman receive gratitude for the benefits which he brings to the Eastern peoples? They live like pigs and when he raises them from their filthy state they only complain that he sweats money out of them to pay for public works which he wants and not they. Was it not Caesar Augustus - or was it the great Julius - who called this the Roman's burden, which, whatever his inclinations, he cannot avoid?

Would you believe that at Samaria there are no baths, although our officers, both military and civil, go up there in the hot weather for their health? As to the roads, I propose to reconstruct that which runs along the coast and the two which run into Jerusalem from the north and the east. Our troops will move much more quickly, and so of course will trade and the pilgrim traffic, which will help my revenues. As to the water-supply, it will be a pure benefaction to Jerusalem for which they ought to set me up a statue. Yet, do you know, the only question that interests them at all is, who is to pay for it. How in the world they survive at all under present conditions at the time of their great festivals I cannot understand. Normally, perhaps, Jerusalem has some 50,000 inhabitants, and there are only a few wells of water to supply them all. But at the time of the Passover the pilgrims arrive by tens of thousands. No one knows the exact total, but some say that there are half a million people crowded into Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. Jerusalem itself is packed out; they sleep on the roofs and even in the streets, and they flock in droves each morning from the surrounding country. Where do they all get their water from for drinking and for their ceremonial washings? I cannot tell you, unless perhaps their god Yahveh provides it by a miracle or the festival counts as a continuous Sabbath and they must not drink at all. However, water they shall have, both clean and plentiful, whether they like it or not, and pay for it they must according to the custom of the Roman provinces.

The troops have gone, with Marcius in command. They carry the images of three Caesars - Tiberius himself, Augustus and Julius. They will be in the Antonia before dawn to-morrow. I addressed the men personally. I told them that the name of Rome and the Caesars was in their charge and that they must protect it, but that on their side there must be no provocation.

I have told Marcius to send a troop, arrest John and dispatch him to me at Caesarea. I must do this in any case, since if Antipas knows, as he does, that disaffection is being stirred up on my side of the border, he will make the most of it.

## CONFLICT WITH THE JEWS

Caesarea

Now I have news for you. I have had the most exciting week of my life. Truly I have put the fat in the fire. Jerusalem is in an uproar, the hubbub spread throughout the country, and here in Caesarea I am beset by a multitude of angry Jews.

At the first all went well. The troops reached the Antonia while it was still dark and the standards were erected on the battlements. They could be seen from some parts of the Temple. I must tell you that with the earliest dawn the priests begin their preparations for the morning sacrifice and soon the crowd of worshippers assembles. (A good custom, since it makes the people get up early.) It was barely daylight when some one discovered the imagaes on the standard-poles. They have the eyes of hawks where we are concerned. At once there was an outcry. Some of them rushed to the Antonia, others to the priests, others back into the town to spread the news. Caiaphas was round at the Antonia in no time and begged Marcius at any rate to remove the standards from the public view. Marcius politely said no and referred him to me. Caiaphas said he would have to take a strong line; he had already summoned the Sanhedrim; they would complain not only to me but to Rome and would tell the people so, but that he was doubtful whether the mob could be restrained from an actual attack upon the citadel. Marcius did not budge and Caiaphas was at his wits' end what to do. Meanwhile, all Jerusalem gathered in the Temple, and round the Antonia. They threatened not only us but the Sanhedrim as well. Many of them carried clubs and stones, and when Caiaphas emerged from the offices of the Sanhedrim to address them they menaced him violently, accusing the Sanhedrim of having brought this 'insult' on their religion by its tolerance of us and demanding that it should at once secure its removal. Caiaphas replied that the Sanhedrim would do its utmost, but there must be no violence; they would at once send a powerful deputation to me at Caesarea and, if I did not yield, they would forthwith appeal to Caesar and ask for my removal. He added that if any of the crowd chose to accompany the deputation they could do so; they could help to prove to me how deeply moved they were by this act of sacrilege, but they would only do serious injury to their religion and their country by an uproar in Jerusalem. Caiaphas is a shrewd man. He provided them with an outlet for their anger and himself with the means (as he hoped) of intimidating me.

Taking him at his word, they have come to Caesarea. Yes, my dear Seneca, they left their work and their religion and set off to walk, thousands and thousands of them, to me at Caesarea. They came not only from Jerusalem but from a hundred towns and villages; everywhere, as the news spread, they set off for Caesarea. When I heard what was happening I went up on the roof of the palace - this was four days ago - and the roads were black with them as far as the eye could see. They were marching steadily like men with a purpose, as people do in Rome when they are going to the Games. All ages were there, from greybeards down to boys. Their most learned Rabbis came, each with a following of pupils and admirers. A crowd of priests from the Temple escorted the deputation, which was led by Caiaphas and Annas. When the deputation entered the palace there was a tremendous scene of enthusiasm among them. The rest of the population looks on sourly. With a little more provocation, there would be a massacre.

I rather enjoyed the conversation with the priests. Caiaphas was dignified, Annas truculent, and his son Eleazar (formerly High Priest) noisy. But one and all they are anxious to get out of a hole. They are afraid of the mob and still more afraid of their enemies in Jerusalem who are busy undermining their position, calling them pro-Romans, 'abettors of idolatry' (the crime of crimes in the eyes of a good Jew), traitors and the like. You can readily imagine the arguments. On their side, no Procurator had ever done such a thing before; Caesar would disapprove of it; Caesar had always been considerate; neither I, nor Caesar - especially Caesar - could desire riot and open revolt, which were to be expected if I did not cancel my order. On my part, the presence of the images was an ordinary sign of the Roman authority; it was much less offensive than the daily sacrifice which already they performed to Caesar and to Rome; I had gone out of my way to spare their feelings by sending the troops in under cover of the night; to withdraw the images now would be an unprecedented humiliation of Caesar and to withdraw them in the face of threats would be a signal proof of weakness.

Since this meeting they have been here several times, both publicly and privately, and at intervals they harangue the crowd. I have told Caiaphas that he must order his people to go back home, but he says that the most he can do is to keep them quiet by promising to give me no peace until he has persuaded me. Their numbers, so far from diminishing, increase steadily. A great many people come in from curiosity, but all kinds of wild fanatics are arriving from distant parts and making violent speeches. I don't know how they all subsist, but I suppose a good quarrel over religion is meat and drink to them.

The situation cannot last, but I confess I find it a little difficult to deal with. I could disperse them by force, but I do not want bloodshed; all the people at Rome who are for peace and quietness (and who don't in the least understand the difficulties of provincial governors) would be up in arms against me. On the other hand, I ought not to yield. I dearly want to teach these Jews a lesson. Besides, it is really important, as a matter of policy, to break down their exclusiveness, and I have made a beginning. So far from Roman rule being genuinely accepted here, there is a slow but steady movement against it and against the priests who tolerate it. Unless we begin to break their obstinacy we shall, before long, have to reconquer Judaea. If I could only rely on proper support at home, but there - I know that when I talk with hand on sword-hilt I must not expect too much sympathy from you.

I wish you had the job yourself for a few months.

I will let you know the upshot.

## DEFEAT OF PILATE

Caesarea

I thank Jove that the place is clear of Jews again. The last of their rag-tag-and-bobtail is disappearing into the mountains, and I write to you, my dear Seneca, in haste to tell you what has happened. I shall be quite frank with you, for the truth is that I may need the help of you and of my other friends. I am glad that Caesar himself is not in Rome, for I cannot conceal from myself that the facts might be misrepresented to him. No, I said I would be frank with you; I should be afraid that the facts might be reported to him truly.

After four days the Jews showed no signs of weakening. They stood and sat and slept and said their prayers all round the Palace and in the adjoining streets and squares. Especially they said their prayers. Marcius wrote to me that everything in Jerusalem was at a standstill and that he was passively beseiged in the Antonia. Joseph reported that the Sanhedrim had sent envoys to Herod Antipas, his brother and the Governor of Syria begging them to intervene with me on the ground that a serious outbreak in Judaea would have an unpleasant repercussion in their territories. The priests had also chosen the mission which they would, if need be, send to Rome. I determined to use a direct threat of military force. I announced that on the next day - the sixth day of these proceedings - the Jews were to assemble in the market-place early in the morning and I would address them personally. At the same time I ordered all the available troops to be concealed in the surrounding buildings. At the conclusion of my speech they were to pour out and advance upon the Jews.

The market-place is an open space which will hold twenty thousand people, and it was packed. The din, when I arrived, was indescribable. For ten minutes they shouted at me and at one another. They behaved like madmen. I do not know what they were saying; I doubt whether many of them knew themselves. The priests, who had made a line (to protect me, I believe) in front of the raised platform on which I sat, could not obtain silence. At last I rose, gave a signal to my officials and made as though to leave. That quieted them for a second and Caiaphas, mounting the platform, told them that the Sanhedrim had asked me to address them personally (this was not true) and that it was their duty to listen quietly. They became silent for the time.

I was polite, I was conciliatory. I told them that Caesar had always been anxious not to interfere with their religion and that I was no less disposed than other Governors to respect their scruples. But this was not religion, it was purely an administrative act to which they ought not to take exception. They could not expect to be exempt from the symbols of Roman dominion, I might almost say of Roman citizenship, which were common to the whole civilized world. At this murmurs arose. I was willing, I said, to consider any reasonable request that they might make, but first of all they must return quietly to their homes. Until that, nothing could be done. Or did they desire to enter on a conflict with the power of Rome? I ceased abruptly and gave the signal. Immediately the troops appeared on every side and, with all their weapons ready for immediate use, hemmed in the crowd.

What do you suppose they did, wisest of the wise men of Rome? Fall into panic, tremble before the Roman sword, seek to escape? They showed no signs of it. Assail the troops, plunge into the conflict with which I threatened them? Not for a moment. At first they were taken aback and made no sound or movement. Then one of their leaders in front of me cried out loudly in Aramaic and, baring his neck to the sword, knelt down before the soldier nearest to him. He had said, so I was told, that sooner would they suffer death than yield. In a flash they followed his example. Everywhere, priests and people alike, they did the same thing. They struggled among themselves to get to the front in order to present their necks to the Roman executioner and behind the lucky ones they knelt down with bared necks, row after row, thousands upon thousands, to await their turn. The position was ludicrous. I could not very well order a wholesale butchery. I had never intended to. Even had they had but one head I could not have cut it off, though it would have given me the greatest pleasure. I had failed and knew it. It took but a few seconds for me to make up my mind. I signalled to the chief priests to follow me and withdrew for consultation. Let me cut short the story of my humiliation. I announced that I was deeply impressed by their devotion to their religion (and that was true enough), but that what impressed me most was the order and calm resolution which they exhibited. Had it been otherwise, had they sought to intimidate me by violence - but you see the argument and, though you may smile, I assure you that the priests did not. They thanked me gravely and Caiaphas went out and announced my decision in almost my own words, adding that they must have confidence in me and in their priests and return quietly to their homes. Thereafter jubilation, thanksgiving and, of course, more prayers. Yahveh gets the credit for it. All day long they have been departing, singing their psalms. Let them sing while they may. But if some day they get a different sort of governor from me, if Caesar abandons his policy of patient toleration, if their wild fanatics overthrow these politic and cunning priests, if the Roman armies march - will Yahveh save them then?

I look to you and to my other friends to put the best face on it when this story reaches Rome. After all, I have but sought to compel respect for Caesar and his images have lorded it above their Temple for a week. It is a beginning, even if at the finish I have lost the throw.

Now I await the preacher John. Marcius should by now have laid him by the heels. When he is safely here in gaol, the sword shall deal with him. If their victory over me makes them think that the new age has begun, I will at least take care that the prophet does not live to see it.

So you have been reading one of your tragedies to an admiring audience in Rome? I am sure it will be full of fine sentiments. Would I were there to listen to them. Would you were here that you might apply them to these incorrigible Jews, with me to watch the fun.

## ARREST OF JOHN BY HEROD ANTIPAS

Caesarea

Marcius has returned to Caesarea bringing two pieces of information. The first is that I have become popular in Jericho, the border-city down by the river Jordan. It is a most important place, for the commerce of the lower Jordan valley passes through it and the customs-revenue is large. Some time ago complaints of gross extortion against the customs-staff were made to me. The chief collector is - was, I should say - a low-class Jew. He was robbing the merchants right and left and the proceeds were not reaching my treasury. One of his underlings, another Jew, who thought he was not getting a fair share of the spoils, betrayed him and two subordinates. It was a bad case; they had kept back some of our moneys as well as the profits of their own extortions. I tried them here in Caesarea and then sent them back to Jericho, the leader to be crucified and the other two to be scourged to death. The Jews were delighted, not only because the chief collector had robbed them but because he was a Jew whom they hated for entering our service. Now they can hate his successor, for I am going to appoint the informer to his place. I ought to be able to rely on his loyalty if he is not murdered by his countrymen. The other news is that John has escaped me. He went on one of his preaching expeditions into Antipas's country. The result was the same as with us: crowds of wretched peasants working themselves up into frenzy and wanting to know whether they could not follow his leadership. Antipas can do with talk of a new Kingdom even less than we can. If there is any trouble in his country, Roman troops will be sent in to help him, and once they are there it will be good-bye to his ridiculous little monarchy. He knows that and he was waiting for John. The preacher is safely put away now in the dungeons of Machaerus, an unpleasant, gloomy fortress in the hills east of the Dead Sea. I should say that he has seen the last of his Judaea. If Antipas has any sense he will make an end of him. It is the only safe method, believe me, with people who mix up their religion and their politics.

I am not sorry, on reflection, that Antipas has taken this business on himself. A certain amount of odium will attach to him, for John has many followers. But sometimes, when I lie awake at night, I wish that I had had the handling of John. The Jericho tax-collector is a poor substitute.

## THE PROBLEM OF THE AQUEDUCT

Caesarea

I was not surprised to hear that the two Herods had lodged a complaint against me at Rome when they heard about the images. The dogs! They have the morals of the mongrel tribes from which they spring. But - thanks no doubt to you and my other friends - I have defeated them. I have received an official letter in Caesar's name (written by one of Sejanus's freedmen) commending me for getting out of a difficult situation without bloodshed and at the same time censuring my action in getting into it. The moral is that one must not fail; one should indeed think long before taking action but then go through despite all opposition.

Antipas is too busy with his schemes against me. It is many weeks now since he imprisoned John and he has just sent me a letter, a suave piece of hypocrisy, saying that a certain John, a dangerous fanatic, had been arrested on his side of the frontier, but since the man belonged to my province and had preached disaffection for a considerable time within my border, he presumed that I would wish to deal with him myself and he was therefore ready to hand him over to me. I have replied that my officers would several times have arrested John had he not been able to take refuge in Antipas's territory and that Antipas had therefore better handle the incidents that arose on his own ground. I may have yet to face difficulties of my own, for I hear that some of John's followers are going up and down, following his example and, needless to say, declaring that their master will come back.

It is a relief to turn to the making of roads and aqueducts. I am really happy when I see the gangs of labourers at work on the hill-roads up to Jerusalem: 'roads,' mark you, my good Seneca, not 'road,' for I am remaking both that which runs up from the coast and that which leads up from the Jordan and Jericho. 'Why bother?' you say. 'Is that not an extravagance?' No, because by those roads the materials come up for my Jerusalem aqueduct. I shall be proud of the aqueduct, I can assure you. I shall rely on it to perpetuate my name in history. I have spent more time in the hills south of Jerusalem during the last few weeks than I have spent in Caesarea. There are twenty-four miles of the roughest country imaginable to be subdued and I ride from point to point watching the men cutting through the hills, breaking up rocks, bridging ravines, laying the foundations for my reservoirs. I have drawn labourers from all the surrounding regions, from Galilee and Samaria, Trans-Jordan, Idumaea, and even from Syria, but comparatively few from Jerusalem, the place which is to benefit. The people of Jerusalem will have nothing to do with us even when we seek to help them. They have nothing but scorn for Samaritans and Galileans who take our part to bring them a good supply of water. They would sooner go without water, or have it foul, than take a Roman wage. Let me tell you a story. There is a Rabbi at Jerusalem who said that probably there were only two really good Jews in the whole world - himself and his son. Or perhaps, he added, there was but one - himself.

I am anxious over the cost of the aqueduct. The men are paid regularly, but large sums will soon be due to the contractors. They cannot come out of the ordinary taxes nor, so far as I can see, can I make a special levy which would produce the necessary amount. I have asked the Sanhedrim to make suggestions to me, but they are unhelpful. They talk and talk but they make no proposals. They say the contractors are extravagant or they admit the necessity of the aqueduct but say the work should have been postponed or they declare outright that Rome should pay for it. I will make them sing a different tune, when I have finished with them.

## FIRST MENTION OF JESUS

### Caesarea

The Sanhedrim are obstinate. I have told them that they must find ways and means within three months of paying for the aqueduct and roads. I have had endless conferences with their chief men. I repeat until I am weary - 'For the first time in its history Jerusalem will have good drinking-water. It is essential for the health of your great city.' They remain unmoved. One of them said loftily - 'Water for drinking is not of real importance. That is only an affair of the unclean body. What matters is provision for the soul - water for the ablutions that are ordained by our Law.' (They are always at their ceremonial washings; I have never been able to understand how people who wash so much can look so dirty.) This argument gave me a chance. 'Precisely,' I retorted, 'you require great quantities of water for your ablutions and for the temple sacrifices.' (They have, you must know, a huge bowl of water in the Temple for swilling away the blood from sacrifices.) 'The aqueduct is therefore a matter of religion as much as of health and decency and I should expect you to be prepared both to support me and to pay for the service which I am doing you.'

Then a brilliant idea came into my head. 'Since,' I added, 'the aqueduct, on your own showing, will be a great assistance to your religious exercises, why no pay for it with the Temple-money?' You would hardly believe with what fury they received this reasonable suggestion. 'Robbery' and 'sacrilege' were the weakest words they used. I protested to them that they might regard it as a loan and by imposing a levy on the population of Jerusalem and spreading it over twelve months (or longer if they chose) repay the Temple funds. They were almost beside themselves, but I stood firm and ordered them to bring the proposal before a formal meeting of the full Sanhedrim. The more I think over it, the more agreeable does this project look to me. It solves the difficulties with such simplicity.

The news in your last letter makes entertaining reading. I thought we had fallen low enough when sprigs of our ancient noble houses drove their own chariots at the Games, but I never expected to hear that a Claudius was fighting as a common gladiator before the lousy mob or a Domitius fawning as an actor on the stage. I have, I fear, no such exciting scraps of gossip for you. One of the Rabbis who was suspected of looking with favour on my aqueduct was murdered yesterday as he left his house for the Sanhedrim. Five ruffians fell on him with knives; he had over twenty wounds. There is not the smallest chance of catching the murderers, although their hiding-place will be known to many people. Reports from the frontier state that another wandering preacher, one Jesus, has turned up in Galilee; I have told Joseph to keep an eye on him. The only daughter of one of the chief priests of Jerusalem has run off with a Greek merchant. They wanted me to arrest the pair and declared that she has taken some of her father's money. He can spare it. Alas! the soldiers did not arrive at the quay till the ship was safely gone, and to-day I am very much in Procula's good graces.

I cannot get over my astonishment at your letter. What will Tiberius Caesar say when he hears that a Claudius has become a gladiator!*

*The Emperor Tiberius belonged to the Claudian line, which was notorious for its arrogance. 'The pride of the Claudian family,' says Tacitus, 'was inveterate in his nature.'

## DEATH OF JOHN AND QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

### Jerusalem

I have come up to Jerusalem to settle my quarrel with the Sanhedrim and this time I mean business. They formally refuse to make any contribution from the Temple-tribute, even for a few months. They have sent me a tiresome screed arguing that an aqueduct is an Imperial affair and that Caesar's treasury should pay for it. At the most they will only admit that it should be paid for out of the ordinary taxation of the province, and that, they say, is already heavier than the province can bear. They are insolent enough to assert that the supply of water for the ceremonial ablutions demanded by their Law has always been sufficient and that their other needs do not justify so lavish an expenditure. I have informed them that the money must be found without delay and that I shall, if necessary, take steps to find it for them.

I have no patience with their precious Law, which hedges them (and us) at every turn with minute regulations. Some of it comes from their Sacred books but the most tedious part, so far as I can learn, is of their own creation. Their learned men have spent their lives for generations in devising the most elaborate and ridiculous religious rules. Can you believe that they have whole volumes written about their rules for washing and that there is a tome or two devoted solely to the subject of washing before meals? Have you ever heard of the Rabbi who died of thirst? He was shut up in a besieged town and had a few spoonfuls of water assigned to him each day. He used it all for ceremonial washings and died in agonies of thirst. I would like to put old Annas to that test. Or do you know the story of the pious mule? It belonged to a priest who would touch no food on which, at purchase, tithe had not been paid to the Temple. For days the mule refused its feed. Was it sick? Was it lame? Was it merely mulish? No, my dear Seneca, believe me they discovered that when its food was bought tithe had not been paid to the Temple. It would not break the Law. They are all mules in Jerusalem.

By the way, I shall not be troubled any more by John, the preacher, son of Zacharias. He is dead. I have received a formal intimation from the Governor of the castle of Machaerus. He received orders from his master Herod Antipas - despatched from his capital, Tiberias in Galilee - to execute John as a fomentor of rebellion and to inform me of the fact. There was, I hear, a special reason for Antipas's action. You remember I told you that another agitator called Jesus had turned up in Galilee. Alexander, who knows a great deal of what is going on - and tells me because he is jealous of the worthy Joseph - says that this Jesus originally came from Galilee to visit John. He was actually in Judaea when the news spread that John had been arrested, whereupon he fled to his own country. There he is playing exactly the same game as his master. He is exhorting his fellow-countrymen to be humble (I like him for that) and talking large about the coming kingdom. Also he has set up as a wonder-worker, curing people who are sick and various madmen (they are numerous in Galilee) and of course this draws the superstitious mob. Antipas would not like it in any case, but what really disturbed him was the discovery that communications have been passing between Jesus and the followers of John. So, very wisely, he has made an end of John and is already - Joseph confirms this - inquiring about Jesus. I shall have good ground of complaint if he lets this business grow.

There is one side of it which amuses and delights me. Jesus is quarrelling with the lawyers and the priests. Anything that touches the Law or threatens their authority rouses their instant jealousy. Just as I have told the Sanhedrim that I expect them to report to me any agitation that they hear of, so I make it a point to let them know pretty briskly of any negligence I can impute to them. I informed Caiaphas of the reports concerning Jesus that were reaching me and told him that since the Sanhedrim claimed authority even in Galilee, he had better see to it. He replied at once with emphasis, saying that from what they had heard of Jesus, though it was little as yet, they disapproved of him heartily and that they were sending a deputation of learned men to Galilee to summon him for examination. In himself the man is a person of no consequence: the son of a common workman. But then, Simon, one of the rascals who gave trouble some years ago, was a slave, and Athronges, another mischief-maker, was a shepherd. It is the worst of these Jews that rank means nothing to them. They will follow any son of the soil if he can fight well, rob well, or talk well - especially if he work a few wonders into the bargain - and, before you know where you are, they will set him up for king. However, with Antipas and the Sanhedrim watching him, and with me waiting for him in Judaea, it is a poor prospect for Jesus.

In any case I cannot feel excited about anything at present except my aqueduct. It is a noble work, worthy to rank with that of Herod himself at Caesarea. Can you suggest to me how I am to get the money? My ears are wide open. But wait in patience. I have a secret; I rub my hands over it but I dare not tell it even to you. I hope, when I write next, to inform you that I have the money in my hands, for get it I will though the Jews smart for it.

## SEIZURE OF THE TEMPLE-TRIBUTE

Jerusalem

Three days ago, early in the morning, I seized the Temple-tribute. Not all of it - admire my moderation. I did not raid the treasury in the Temple itself, for that would have meant a pitched battle and casualties which I could not afford. You will excuse my diffidence, I think, when you remember the circumstances of my more fortunate exemplars: Crassus had occupied Jerusalem with a great army when on his way to Parthia, while Sabinus actually took the Temple by storm. Both my pretensions and my methods were more modest.

The Temple-tribute is brought to Jerusalem from the foreign Jewish communities about this time every year.* Egypt, Asia Minor and the Euphrates region are the largest contributors. Most of it comes in coin, but there are also the rich gifts of the pious: plate for the Temple service, jewels and ornaments, gold to be melted down. Egypt's contribution, alas! reached the Temple safely a week ago, but that from the Asiatic cities was waiting at Caesarea for an escort and that from the Euphrates (it is included a fine bar of solid gold, the gift of Ctesiphon) was under escort a few miles from Jerusalem. The Jews, I should explain, send guards of their own, but within the province the governor provides a military escort. The chest which had arrived at Caesarea I confiscated without more ado. The Jews could not resist; they went off, howling, to Jerusalem, and found on arrival that the same fate had befallen the Euphrates caravan. That required some arranging. We doubled the escort on the last night and when the caravan arrived at the neighbourhood of the Temple in the early morning Marcius sallied out from the Antonia with a full cohort and literally ran the whole procession into the citadel. The sight was really comic. Our men enjoyed it thoroughly. It was all done so quickly that the Jewish guards, who included some highly dignified officials, could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the gates of the Antonia shut behind them and my men methodically counting and carrying off the chests. One or two were foolish enough to offer resistance but we soon cured that. No bloodshed, but they had some bruises to show their countrymen.

*In the early spring.

The uproar over the images in my first year - you remember that regrettable incident? - was nothing compared with what happened now. All Jerusalem turned out within an hour. They shouted and screamed, they threatened to tear down the aqueduct, they beat on the walls of the Antonia with their fists. The priests packed themselves in a dense mass round the Temple-treasury lest that also should be attacked by me. The loss of money touches them on the raw. I was not minded, this time, to let them demonstrate for days. I had dressed up a large part of my soldiers in ordinary clothes, beneath which their arms were hidden. Some I slipped out of the Antonia before daybreak. Another large contingent was concealed in Herod's palace. They were all Samaritans and Idumaeans, so that they could disguise themselves easily without fear of recognition. There were about a thousand of them. They gathered on the outskirts of the crowd and took part in the shouting. From what I know of some of them I should say that they did all they could to stimulate the mob. In the afternoon I came out on the tower above the gateway. I announced that the money would be used by me for their benefit in the way that I thought fit. I then ordered them to disperse. Redoubled tumult; threats against the sacrilegious governor, curses, and even stones. A trumpet blew, and my fine fellows, disclosing their weapons, fell upon the mob. The cry of rage and terror that went up might have been heard at Rome. The crowd fled pell-mell, but the crush was so great that many could not escape into the narrow streets and the arms of the soldiers were weary with striking. I have no idea how many were killed, for the dead were carried off quickly by their friends, but the number is large. Everything has been quiet since. I ought to tell you that I strictly forbade my men to pursue the crowd into the Temple and the order was obeyed. I have seen nothing of Annas and Caiaphas, not because they did not come but because I refused to have anything to say to them. They are sending the usual deputation to Rome, but I am not nervous about the result. The principal contractors, whom I have already paid with the Temple-money, are good friends of Sejanus and they have no doubt that with a judicious expenditure among his freed-men all will be well.

So I am satisfied. The aqueduct will shortly be finished and there is money and to spare to pay for it. I have settled some of my accounts with the Jews and especially with their religion-mongering priests. They have had a sharp lesson - let us hope that they will profit by it. Yet I fear that the tone of this letter will not be pleasing to you, my dear Seneca. I will therefore make a suggestion. You complained bitterly of Rome in your last letter to me: of the noise, the exorbitant rents, the dearness and badness of the food. Visit me, then, in Judaea, and revive your wearied spirit. Do you say, with the admirable Horace, that those who cross the sea change only their climate and not their mind? Ah, but cross to Judaea and see whether your liberal-minded tolerance does not undergo a striking change. I know I am disposed to gird against the Jews; it is a just reproach. But then I live among them, you only see their shops and synagogues from a safe distance as you hurry past in your litter to a cause celebre or a gathering of the wits.

## A LESSON TO GALILEANS

Jerusalem

I felt that I must write to you again before I set out on one of my periodical inspections of the province. Marcius and Joseph both warn me that I shall have a bad reception because of the seizure of the sacred money. I am not so sure. It is sacrilege, of course, to all of them, but the country-people do not love the greedy, grasping priesthood at Jerusalem, who fatten on their offerings and, besides, only Jerusalem benefits from my gift of good water; why did not Jerusalem pay for its water and so save the Temple-tribute from spoliation? Perhaps I shall not be so unpopular after all. I shall let the people know that they Sanhedrim wanted to pay for the aqueduct out of the people's taxes.

It is a month now since the coup, on which I have received many congratulations from my friends. Except for one serious episode, everybody has been fairly peaceful. I did not weaken in my determination. I forbade all demonstrations, public-meetings and even gatherings in the streets. That put a stop to their street-corner oratory. The worst of the offenders were not the priests and lawyers themselves, but the young know-alls who attend their lectures, and supply the wits that the common people lack. There was one man in particular, a pertinacious fellow, a loud-mouthed logic-chopping Jew from Tarsus, who had much to say, when arrested, about being a Roman citizen. It turned out that he was, so he was released, but I bade the centurion whisper to him not to come into our hands again since even a Roman citizen might be killed in attempting to escape. There were seditious placards too, during the first few days, defaming me and Caesar. The city broke out into a perfect rash of them, until we caught a party of three at work on the walls of the Antonia in the night. There was something else on the wall of the Antonia, besides placards, in the morning.

As I told you, there was one serious incident. It was produced by a part of Galileans who came up to the Temple. These people are never very popular in Jerusalem. They are regarded as a mixed race, as a little inferior to the pure Judaean Jew, and so I daresay they are, being so close to Phoenicians and Greeks and various sorts of Syrians. The Galileans think themselves as good as any Jew alive; they are all the more defiant of us Romans because they are themselves ruled by a semi-Jew, like Antipas, and in any case a visit to Jerusalem is to them an excursion on which they enter with boisterous high spirits. This party, which arrived a fortnight ago, had heard of my seizure of the Temple-money but had not heard that demonstrations were prohibited. When the noisy rabble reached the Antonia I sent to warn them, but in vain. They abused us angrily and declared that on entering the Temple they would protest against the customary sacrifice to Caesar and to Rome. I had them followed into the outer court of the Temple by a troop of soldiers who fell upon them with swords while they were buying the animals for their own sacrifices. The other Jews looked on. I think this proof that I would not stop short even at entering the Temple has made a good impression. The remnant of the Galilean party set off again for their own country the same day and when they spread the news it should teach their fellow-countrymen not to take liberties with me. I have sent a report to Antipas and begged him to restrain his subjects better.

I do not like what you tell me about the prevalence of 'informers' at Rome. If a man sides with or against Sejanus, he takes the risk and ought not to complain of the result, but this system is exposing even the most innocent to private spite and vengeance. Surely a Roman ought to be safe from denunciation by his freedman. I pay no attention to anonymous informers here, though there are many of them at work. Those who hate us most are always seeking to ruin the priests and nobles who work with us, but unless the accuser is prepared to stand forward I do not listen to him. In that I know I shall have your support. For rebellion, no mercy! But our Roman justice must not be used for settling private grudges. 'Admirable,' says L. Annaeus Seneca, 'and under which heading comes the appropriation of the sacred Temple-money!'

## ANTIPAS'S INQUIRIES AT NAZARETH

Caesarea

I have spent nearly a month going round the northern districts of my province. I have inspected frontier posts, conferred with my revenue officers, heard innumerable grievances and redressed not a few. I wanted to find out for myself whether this part of the country was suffering as much from the effects of drought and bad harvests as I had been told. I found that it was. In many places the condition of the people was truly miserable. I discovered that every synagogue had been used as a centre of ill-will against me, but I summoned the village elders, heard their stories of distress, and announced remissions of taxation. In certain cases I promised to send them relief as soon as I got back to Caesarea, and that I am now doing. On the whole, I am not dissatisfied.

It was a pleasure to be among the Samaritans. They have a most likeable hatred of the priesthood at Jerusalem, who treat them like dogs and keep them out of the Temple. They think themselves every bit as good as the real Jews and certainly they have the same general characterisitcs: one day they are peasants and the next they are robbers; this week it is the plough and the next it is the knife or the pitchfork against Caesar or Herod or whoever the 'tyrant' of the day may be. Still, I have been governor for three years now without many grave troubles, which is as much as any of my predecessors except Valerius has done. If I were withdrawn now, I should leave the province better than I found it. I am not discontented.

At the beginning of my tour I took Procula up to the border of Galilee. She is paying a visit to the wife of the Governor of Syria, an old school-fellow of hers, and I set her on the high road to Damascus. I sent Alexander with her into Galilee and told him to find out something for me about the latest agitator. He accompanied her to Damascus. He paid a flying visit to Nazareth, to which Jesus belongs, and visited his family. He found them in a state of fright. Antipas's agents have been in Nazareth cross-examining them about Jesus and they fear that they will be involved in any punishment that befalls him. The whole town shares their nervousness. It seems that the family and their friends actually pursued Jesus, who moves about rapidly from place to place, as all these preachers do, and would like to have carried him off and shut him up to keep him - or rather themselves - out of trouble. They told Antipas's people that Jesus was not wholly responsible for his actions; he had always been a little queer and caused his family trouble, and they had never been able to control him. Certainly they cannot now, for he not only repudiates them brusquely, but the crowds who follow him increase every day and will not hear a word against him. So the wretched people are panic-stricken. I have written to Caiaphas pressing to be told whether the Sanhedrim have taken any action.

Do you remember the Greek merchant who ran off with a priest's daughter? While I was away he turned up again in Caesarea - alone. He told every one that the Jewess had left him, but the story goes that he abandoned her somewhere in Africa and the Jews have sent an account of it to her family in Jerusalem. Like a fool he persisted in going on his usual round of business in Judaea. He even talked of visiting Jerusalem. He was a cheery fellow with a mop of black hair, always making jests and laughing at himself. When warned not to go to Jerusalem he said that he had turned proselyte and being converted to Judaism he would be looked after by Yahveh. So he went laughing to Jerusalem and that is the end of him. He has vanished off the face of the earth. The young woman had several brothers and cousins who are among the strictest of the strict. In Rome the whole thing would have been a joke, but you soon learn not to smile over such things here. At least you ought to. The Greek would not learn, and now where is he?

## ATTEMPT IN GALILEE TO MAKE JESUS KING

Caesarea

A budget from you has made me happy. Ships have been delayed by stormy weather so that several letters have arrived at once. Before I open them I think myself important, occupied with weighty affairs of State, a not inefficient part of Caesar's great machine. But when I read them, ah me! I wish that I were again at the centre of the world, in the Forum or the Senate-house, the theatre or Sejanus's ante-chamber, amid the noise and smoke of Rome, where after all a man does live. Here nothing happens - nothing, at least, that matters; from here nothing can arise; how much, I beg you to tell me, will Rome ever know or care about Judaea unless there is a war and comfortable appointments have to be found for our noble idlers on the Commander's staff? There, I have had my growl. Let me see whether, after all, I have any news to repay you for your letters.

Procula has seen and heard the Galilean Jesus. She writes to me that as soon as they had crossed into Galilee and started on the road which runs along the west side of the lake they began to hear of little else. Alexander, the ferret, was nosing here and there, collecting information. It seems that all Galilee is agog about Jesus; every one knows of someone who has heard of someone else who has been cured of some disease or other, and the interesting thing (to me) is that a number of my good subjects of Judaea are also in Galilee, following the preacher when they would be better employed following their jobs at home. Alexander had arranged, as it happened, for Procula to make a halt at a farm-house towards the northern end of the lake, and as she went along - but you shall have the story in her own words as she has sent it me:

'We came suddenly on a crowd of people who were hurrying along the road in front of us and over the slopes leading down to the sea and even along the beach. Others were joining them from the paths that came in from the hills. No one took any notice of us. They were Jews of all kinds - mostly hale and hearty people, but there were sick and cripples too, who were dragging themselves along or being carried by their friends. The crowd was excited, gesticulating, pointing to a boat that was following the coast line, and shouting to those on board. I thought at first that they were angry but Alexander said that they were calling to Jesus, who was on board, to come to shore and speak to them. They kept on shouting the same words over and over again. I could not make it out because it was all in Aramaic and when I asked Alexander he only shook his head and muttered something about it being a bad business. He would not tell me what they meant, though he told me later. When we stopped at the farm-house the crowd rushed on and presently I could see them leaving the high road and hurrying down to the shore. Alexander asked permission to go after them and I said he could provided that he took me with him. So we went, with an escort - you need not be afraid - and after half an hour we found them all in a great mass, down near the sea, with Jesus standing on a knoll in the field, addressing them. There were thousands upon thousands of them, and at the back, quite close to us, some groups of better-dressed Jews, who were standing aloof, watching and listening. Alexander took a look at them and muttered again. "Spies from Jerusalem," he said and went off to talk to them.

'I saw the preacher clearly. He is a strange man, gaunt and rugged, as though he were burnt up by the fire of his passion. When you see his face and hear him speak, he is full of self-confidence, imperious, often fierce. The crowd were noisy at first because those at the back could not hear and there were interruptions. He put them down with a few words. He was like a general among the legions and they obeyed like common soldiers. He spoke always as though he thought no one could contradict him. He began quietly but then raised his voice and it became harsh and vehement. The Jews from Jerusalem were fidgetting and muttering to each other. Alexander said he was denouncing them and their friends. I have never heard anything that sounded so passionate and bitter. Then he became quieter again and went off in a rapt way as though he did not know the people were there. There was a murmuring and stirring all through the crowd then but not angrily, and they pressed forward to him. Alexander could not take his eyes off him. He would pay no attention to my questions. He kept on saying to himself "A better time coming!" and laughed in a queer, anxious sort of way. I thought he was quoting something that the preacher had been saying. He kept looking at the party from Jerusalem and said he must get a report to you at once.

'Then a curious thing happened. Jesus suddenly raised his arm and cried out something sternly. They stopped pushing towards him and sat down on the grass in a great circle round him - except the Jews from Jerusalem, who made no movement but went on watching. I am sure I have seen some of them going to the Sanhedrim. Then Jesus called some men who were standing close to him and they brought him bread. He broke this into little pieces - so small that from where I stood you could scarcely see them at all. He gave these to the men and they went along the ranks distributing them to the crowd, who ate them while the preacher went on talking. I wish I could have understood. All I could get out of Alexander was that the preacher was enrolling them as his followers but that it was not a military business at all but purely religious; the eating of the bread was a symbol that they enrolled themselves under him, to live as he lived and to do all the things that he had been telling them to do. Alexander added that it was dangerous, it might be misunderstood.

'The strangest thing was to follow. When the ceremony was finished everything was still for a few seconds and then the crowd began to stir and talk. Gradually they became more and more excited. Jesus said something to the men about him, and running down to the sea, they began to pull the boat close in so that he could embark again. When the crowd saw that he was going to leave them they broke all bounds. They ran forward, crying and shouting, and surrounded him. Some of them were brandishing sticks and clubs and knives. They were not threatening him; it was quite different. Others of them were weeping. Many of them fell down at his feet. All the time I could make out that they were shouting the same words that I had heard them using on the high-road when they were looking out to sea. I asked Alexander what they were saying. I had to shake him by the shoulder before I could get an answer out of him. He was impatient with me. "King!" he said, "that's what they are saying. King of Israel! King of the Jews! And Messiah!" I am not sure what the last means, but you will know.

'I could see that Jesus was repelling them. He would not listen to them. He almost drove them back with words and gestures. I am sure he was telling them that they had made a great mistake. He was almost beside himself. He made those who were kneeling rise and those who were brandishing weapons put them down. He was more stern and determined than he had been all the afternoon. At the same time he began to move down to the sea hurriedly as though he must escape. The crowd followed slowly in a dejected way. They seemed to be disappointed and bewildered. "He is angry with them for calling him King of the Jews," I said to Alexander. "He has cause to be," said Alexander. "He is a dead man from to-day."

'There was another incident. Before Jesus could get on the boat, the Jews from Jerusalem, who had been watching every movement of the crowd, walked rapidly down the hill and spoke to him. They met each other as enemies; I could see that though I could not hear the words. The talk only lasted a few moments. They said something to him and he looked at them with a face of stone. Then he answered curtly and turned his back on them. Some of his followers helped him into the boat. I thought they were puzzled too, and perhaps afraid. He was not afraid himself. He spoke and acted as though he was ready to fight the whole world.

'Whatever it was that was said to the Jews from Jerusalem they were pleased about it. They came away whispering and smiling and, when I left, they were going about among the crowd, as busy as bees. I knew they were denouncing Jesus, because they kept on looking out to sea and pointing to the boat. Alexander is now engaged in writing you a report upon the whole affair.'

'King of the Jews!' my dear friend - you mark the words! Yes, I know, it is only in Galilee and, likely enough, I shall not myself be worried. Trust Antipas to look to it! Would you like to hear the report of the sage Alexander? He says:

'Galilee would rise at a word but he does not say the word. He puzzles the people even while he attracts them. He has performed strange cures, though every one has a different story of his own about them and it is impossible to say how much of it is truth. The gatherings that he addresses have been like clay between his hands. In controversy no one can stand against him. He is at daggers-drawn with the priests, the lawyers and the Law. He is terrible in his attacks upon them: most fierce and unsparing. He would overthrow the whole system which the priests have imposed upon the Jewish nation, and the priests will never forgive him for it. At the first sign that the people are turning against him, the priests will make an end of him.

'There are signs that they are about to turn against him now. They have hailed him as the expected deliverer, the new king of the Jews. He refuses the titles. This afternoon he beat the crowd off almost by force when they acclaimed him. You never saw such a hang-dog look as they had when they drifted away. In his own mind he is no king or Messiah. I believe he dreads lest they should insist on treating him as either one or the other. Above all else the popular ferment has been caused by the cures, and I have found, by careful inquiry, that on every occasion he has tried to conceal what he has done and so to prevent the people from hailing him as the deliverer. He seeks to avert the danger that he fears. The war which he wages is against the Sanhedrim and the Judaic Law. If he persists they will surely take his life. Their delegates were on the watch to-day and some of them are remaining in Galilee. But I doubt whether they will be under the necessity, or have the chance, of taking him. Unless he takes to immediate flight, Herod Antipas will seize him.

'Antipas can do nothing else after to-day. I hear that Jesus has already sailed for the other side of the lake to take refuge in the territory of Herod Philip. If he stays there Philip will lay hands on him. If he returns to Galilee he is lost. May I suggest that it would be interesting to have a report from the High Priest on his view of the case?'

You see, then. Another popular hero rising to worry me and call himself King. No, you will say, he does not so; it is they who call him King. And what difference, pray, does that make to the Procurator? If Jesus values his life he will keep out of Judaea. If Antipas lets him slip through his fingers I will not. Only one thing grieves me. 'He is at daggers-drawn with the priests, the lawyers and the Law.' I could like him for that. But a king in Judaea, even one who would not (at present) be a king, a man imperious, fierce, burnt up by his own passion, the type of man to whom this restless and insurgent people willingly gives heed - no, no, that will not do! When he is dead, then they can call him king.

By the way, the Greek merchant has been found under a pile of stones in a ravine outside Jerusalem. There was scarcely a whole bone in his body. Apparently they used clubs. The story is that the Jewess has gone off to Rome with an Egyptian actor. You know how she will end.

## FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO SYRIA

### Caesarea

What, my dear Seneca, all the Jews expelled from Rome!* A clean sweep of tailors and milliners, money-lenders and red-nosed comedians! O most desirable of cities: would that I could be there! Yet it is unjust, as you say, that the whole community should be banished because some rascals turned Temple-gifts to their own private uses. Yes, yes, it is unjust, yet no one will sympathize. It must be their own fault that, all the world over, no one sympathizes with an ill-treated Jew - no one, that is to say, except my Seneca. A dreadful thought assails me. Where is Caesar going to send them? Pray Yahveh it be not to Judaea!

Alexander was right. Jesus of Nazareth has fled. Nothing has been heard of him for weeks. He is not in Galilee and he is not in Philip's territory. He must have gone north into Syria, where no one cares about him.

Let me tell you first about Caiaphas. The wily Priest has sent me several of his unctuous states-manlike reports. I know his difficulties. He has to keep an eye on the Governor (who has the soldiers and Rome behind him); on his own Pharisees who think he is obsequious to us; on the people who might be led away by any wild man this day or to-morrow; and on the priests and lawyers who love their law and suspect that in its defence he and his kind are no better than they should be. He says it would be charitable to suppose that Jesus is a madman, and that this is indeed the opinion of his family, but whether mad or not, he is seducing ignorant people from their duty alike to their religion and to the recognized authorities. He adds that the delegates from the Sanhedrim have exposed him repeatedly, and the exposure is now rapidly having an effect. They will take the sternest measures against Jesus, should he come into their hands, as a false pretender and rebel against the Law and as for the political side of it - do you remember they said the same thing about John? - they realize that it may cause me a legitimate concern. Themselves, too, I should say, for in the long run with these ruling priests it all comes down to politics. It is their nature: all Jews are politicians - but so is their Procurator.

For the time being, then, the preacher has taken to his heels. I have other reports from Galilee. It seems that he paid some flying visits from Philip's territory, only to find that the tide had set against him. The events which Procula and Alexander saw were decisive with his followers. He would not be their King, he would not acknowledge that he was the promised deliverer. Maybe, as Alexander says, it is no part of his intention to be the one thing or the other. After his refusal, the Jerusalem Rabbis dogged him everywhere. They found it much easier to persuade the people that, after all, he was only a rebel, an enemy to their venerated Law. I believe that in his own town an attempt was made to murder him, though, of course, they have their special grievances against him there. Now he is without friends and has vanished into the far north.

This is a small matter, but still something of a relief to me. The country is fairly quiet - if those Jewish friends of yours don't come from Rome! - and I shall have, I suppose, to stop here for some years more. I am a poor man, in spite of the jesting threats against the Jews which I used to send to you over three years ago, and I would prefer to spend my remaining years of office quietly until Caesar transfers me. As this thing stands at present, I can handle it comfortably, but if a fanatic of this sort were to accept the popular demand - to 'give the word,' as Alexander said - I might be hard pressed with the miserable little force that is allowed me.

## PILATE COMES TO JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER

### Jerusalem

I have come up as usual for their great festival the Passover. It amused me, when I received your letter just before leaving Caesarea, to find you complaining of the congestion in Rome. You should be here. Judaea has been filling up for weeks past. They come by tens of thousands, weeks in advance, and spread over the country, visiting their friends and relatives, searching out the villages their fathers came from, and making pilgrimages to the places where their history began. During the last week they have been concentrating on Jerusalem. Every ship that has reached Caesarea has been crowded inside and out. The conditions on board some of them must have been disgusting. You never saw such a medley as passes out from these ships. Some of them must have spent their last penny in paying the fare; not a few have got here without paying any fare at all. You know the sort of mixture that comes out from the Games in Rome - riff-raff from the slums and blue blood cheek by jowl. It is the same here and Jewish blue blood has no more liking for riff-raff than blue blood has in Rome. They smell abominably. You should see the aristocrats turning up their rich or learned noses.

The whole lot throng the roads. The stream is continuous from the coast, from Samaria and from Jericho. Many of them sleep in the open. Some of the wealthier bring tents and bedding with them. In Jerusalem and the neighbourhood everybody who can takes in lodgers. They charge a pretty price. Foodstuffs are doubled and trebled in price. I believe the language that the foreign Jews use about their brethren in Judaea shocks even the Greeks. To-day, when I approached, there was a complete block for a good mile from the city, and had it not been for some stout work by my escort I should still be kicking my heels outside the walls.

I have half my total force in readiness - 2,000 men. There is no reason to anticipate anything beyond the usual brawls, but one must be prudent. You know how religion always excites the lowest passions. The Jerusalem Jew is at his worst at these times and the visitors resent his arrogance. They are most apt to brawl in the Temple, that being the heart and kernel of their worship! In the synagogues they are not so dangerous, because most of these foreign communitites have each a synagogue of their own, where they can agree fairly well, but in the Temple they all meet together and can quarrel about priority in offering sacrifice, or about the inadequacy of the other people's gifts, or about being more Jewish Jews than one another.

Having got through earlier Passovers without serious disturbance I have no reason to be anxious. The danger lies in the immense suppressed excitement that underlies the festival. They work themselves up to a state of ecstasy. With all these thousands gathered from the far ends of the earth, they imagine themselves a free and independent people, they live again in the old days, they think that their Yahveh has only to perform one of his preposterous wonders and we Romans would vanish in the wind. If the spark were handy, a fire might easily be lit.

Do you know that since I arrived to-day, the Jews have been complaining that I have not expedited the carriage of foodstuffs to the city? They block the roads and then complain that the foodcarts don't come through. But that is their way. They are intractable. If the place were full of pigs they would sooner starve than eat.

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*Certain Jews had induced Fulvia, a Roman lady converted to Judaism, to make gifts to the Temple and had then appropriated the money. The Jewish community was thereupon expelled from Rome.

I will let you know how we go on.

## REAPPEARANCE OF JESUS

Jerusalem

Do you remember the preacher Jesus, who fled to Syria some months ago to save his life from Antipas? He has appeared again. What is more - you may think it incredible, but it is true - he is on his way to Jerusalem. My spies report that having passed hurriedly through Galilee he has crossed the frontier. I have despatched agents to keep in touch with him. According to present information he denounces the priests and Pharisees at every step and avows his intention to be in Jerusalem for the Passover. He brings a following with him. I suppose there are always people who are tired of life.

It was good of you to find me an expert on vine-culture so quickly. These Jews have wits - none sharper - and they are industrious, but they are sadly lacking in scientific knowledge. If they were not bled by their priests they would have much more money for modern knowledge and equipment, but what can you do when a bloated corporation of priests fattens on an impoverished people? Send your expert at once, I pray you, by way of Alexandria and he shall go straight out on a round of country visits.

## JESUS IN JERUSALEM

Jerusalem

So far all goes well. I derive a modest amusement from what I hear of the divisions and jealousies among these different Jews. Remarkable enough at any time, they are much more so when the foreign Jews are here. To begin with, the extreme Pharisees despise even the Jews in their own country who do not belong to their special sect. To them a man is good, that is to say virtuous, if he observes the Law minutely, and not otherwise. I assure you that if they have a woman of the common folk to work in the house, they think the house and all the inmates are made unclean by it. You may imagine how much greater is their contempt for the Jews from Egypt or Syria who actually mix with heathen folk like you and me, or Sejanus and Caesar.

The foreign Jews resent this arrogance. Many of them are extremely rich, many of them (especially those from Egypt) are more learned than their Pharisaic critics, and, of course, they are civilized. Yet when they go into the Temple, mix with the Pharisees and listen to the lectures of the learned, they find themselves treated with sneers and insinuations that they are little better than the Greeks whose language they speak - and often enough, it is the only language that they do speak, since they have neither Hebrew nor Aramaic. On several occasions the rank and file have almost come to blows, but this is a harmless recreation and I do not interfere.

You will expect to hear more about the preacher Jesus. I am, for two reasons, proceeding cautiously. My first thought was to arrest him before he entered Jerusalem and came in contact with the crowds. But that course would have its dangers, at a time like this. Since he crossed the frontier he has done nothing openly to justify it, his followers would spread the report that I had seized a noble patriotic Jew, and so, figuring once more as the oppressor, I might have on my hands a sudden outburst of passion of the kind which I desire to avoid. Besides, Annas and Caiaphas have both been to see me. It was at once apparent that they, and especially Annas, were extremely desirous that I should remove what they consider a danger to themselves. They hate the man and no doubt with good reason. The Pharisees and lawyers are really disturbed about the attacks on the Law; the priesthood scents a danger to its livelihood; while Annas, Caiaphas and the other noble Sadducees are not only concerned for the maintenance of the whole priestly system (they are pretty indifferent themselves about the Law), but fear some sudden turn of affairs which might convert this Jesus into a national hero - and then what would become of them and their power? (I suggest to you, as a subject for one of your plays or meditations, that the greatest stimulant of all to a man's activities is the desire for Power.)

They suggested to me that, remembering what had happened in Galilee, it would be wise for me to seize Jesus quietly and put him out of the way. I am not, however, so stupid as to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them and bring on myself an unnecessary odium. I replied that the trouble was primarily their affair but undoubtedly it might concern me at any moment. I wished to avoid a tumult and presumed that was also their desire. They were emphatic that it was so. I said that I should hold my hand for the present, but that if there were any disturbances I would act at once and I expected their loyal co-operation. This they promised me. If nothing happens during the festival it is my intention, though I did not tell them this, to wait until the crowds disperse again and then make an end of Jesus. I cannot allow him to stir up Judaea as he stirred up Galilee. If he provokes trouble during the festival - whether by his own act or by the people losing their heads over him, even against his will - I shall strike at once. But the priests must co-operate and I am certain they will. Do you understand fully why they will? Not only because they hate this particular man, though they do, but because, if they stand out, the case may easily become one of the nation against the wicked Governor, which does not suit their plans, and because also there are some of them whose names I know - and they know that I know - who are tarred with the anti-Roman brush and had better show themselves zealous to assist me when the chance is offered them.

Jesus is in Jerusalem. He entered yesterday. His entry, if he had any intention of raising the populace, was a failure. Few of them knew about it. He came up by the road from Jericho. It was crowded with Jews from the Euphrates region and from Syria, who had never heard of him. If there were any Galileans who recognized him, they would only remember that he had failed them in Galilee last year. His own immediate followers are poor stuff. (I had Alexander following the group and Joseph mingling with the general crowd.) They are ignorant and superstitious men who are only dangerous because they share the usual delusion about leaders of his kind. They are always expecting Jesus to perform a 'wonder,' whether it is bringing to life a dead man or killing a live one, and they think about him just like the peasants and workmen of Galilee, expecting him at any moment to set about delivering the nation and bringing in a new age. I know by this time that a Jew in his own country can scarcely think in any other terms.

There was no evidence yesterday, any more than there has been before, that the preacher takes this view of himself. He entered with no more than the stir that there usually is when a party escorts some local notability. His followers shouted themselves hoarse and a few others, seeing them do it, shouted too. If six men throw their caps up for a reason, six others of the herd will follow suit. I had taken all precautions. I had some disguised soldiers walking with the crowd from Jericho and some more ready at the entrance to the city. Marcius had orders, if any attempt was made to rouse the mob, to cut down Jesus and his followers at once, but nothing happened. That is not to say that nothing will happen. Alexander wormed himself into the confidence of some of the preacher's followers. He says they have the most extraordinary ideas about the brilliant change that is going to come over their fortunes, but that all that their leader intends - Alexander is positive about this - is to pursue in Jerusalem his quarrel with the priesthood and the Law. It is enough.

I hope I am not mistaken in believing that you are interested in these long explanations. Were I writing to anyone else, I would say merely that I have cause to fear another pestilent agitation and that I mean to crush it while I may.

## SCENE IN THE TEMPLE AND DECISION TO ARREST JESUS

Jerusalem

Both Herod Antipas and brother Philip are in Jerusalem. These princelings behave as though they owned the East. They have brought rich presents for the Temple, they pose, they cultivate the Jews. They go in procession to and from the Temple services and the mob, which has forgotten how many Jews old Herod tortured, burned or crucified, claps and cries out for them as though it would be a fine thing to have a Herod instead of me at the Antonia. I have not met the princes, but I have stationed a guard of Roman soldiers at their gates. It is a proper mark of respect; it is also a hint that we keep an eye on them. Some of the noble families who supported the father have sent representatives to wait on the sons and accompany them to the Temple, but the ruling coterie, those who have office and those who hope to have it, hold aloof. They know which side their bread is buttered.

The affair of Jesus is coming to a head. Yesterday, accompanied by his immediate followers, he visited the Temple. He stopped in the outer court, which is an enormous place like a fair-ground, full of the paraphernalia for Temple-gifts and sacrifices, and thronged by thousands of Jews chaffering and arguing at the top of their voices in a score of languages and dialects. You know that market of theirs in Rome which one takes visitors to see from curiosity. It is like that, with a hundred times the hubbub. Suddenly Jesus began to assail his enemies the priests and all their works in the most violent terms. So far as I can learn, he denounced the whole ritual-mongering business of the Temple. Very sensible, too, except for his own safety. Had he been understood or attracted wide attention he would have been murdered on the the spot. If you remember that the life of these Jews, not only here but to the far ends of the earth, centres in the Temple-worship and that it is a highly organized business controlled by a powerful and jealous corporation, you will see that only a madman or a suicide would act like this. As it went, there was only a scuffle and the thing passed off. It was rather like his entry into the City. He himself speaks Aramaic and a large part of his hearers would have no idea of his meaning. Besides, the noise is appalling. You know the Jews; if you are not noisy they think that you are ill. Nothing whatever came of the affair and, if it was intended as a demonstration, it was another failure. Jesus soon left the Temple again together with his followers who, according to my reports, are getting nothing out of their visit to Jerusalem but chagrin and disappointment. This is not at all the sort of thing which they anticipated. Denunciations of the Temple-worship in the Temple are likely to have an unfortunate end for them, as they probably suspect.

This incident has played into my hands. The man is an avowed failure. Ignored at first, he has now offended beyond forgiveness. Few people may have heard and seen his outburst, but a great many will know about it before to-night. You may say that if he has failed so signally, he is also negligible. Possibly, but there is a risk, and I do not take risks. Consider the audacity of his action. To me, who know these people, it is almost inconceivable. To challenge the priesthood in their sacred citadel and at the Passover, backed by a handful of peasants more ignorant even than himself - I could laugh at the thought were it not that a man so rash and passionate, and at the same time so determined, might make another sort of appeal to-morrow which might have a different ending. I have determined to suppress him. Public opinion, thanks to his folly, will support me. Still, I shall have the arrest carried through as quietly as possible in conjunction with the Sanhedrim. His companions will give no trouble.

After the scene in the Temple the old fox Annas sent an envoy to me. More than anyone he has a vested interest in the maintenance of peace; as you know, he has several sons whom he intends for the highest offices. At the same time, he has his finger on the pulse of the Pharisees who are rebels at heart against us and would help any seditious movement if it had a serious foundation. His point is the same as my own, that Jesus is not an actual but a potential danger. He urges that we should strike while few people know of him, and while those who do - and they will increase hourly - are shocked by his gross impiety (Annas's words). He adds that, if necessary, they will produce one of Jesus's own followers who will give damning evidence about certain ambitions which his master has avowed in private conversations. That does not concern me. I don't doubt they will provide themselves with the evidence they want, but I have already all that I require. The top and the bottom of it is that the man is, or might be, a political danger to me, as Antipas thought he was in Galilee last year, and as Antipas recognized the preacher John to be, when he cut his head off at Machaerus and so saved me the trouble.

I am concerting with the priests. Jesus and his following spend their nights outside Jerusalem; we know the place. He will be arrested quietly and executed without undue delay.

I had not thought of it before, but I think I shall give my friend Antipas the opportunity of condemning Jesus. The trouble began within his jurisdiction, so that it is the correct and polite thing to do. Besides, it would be pleasant to show Antipas both that a mischief-maker has slipped through his hands but not through mine, and also, that when he has condemned his subject, he has to hand him over to the superior authority, the Roman Governor, for execution of sentence. Yes, I will send him to Antipas.

## ARREST OF JESUS

Jerusalem

Your freedman Krito has arrived this morning bringing your letters and others which he had picked up for me at Caesarea. He starts back again at once, so that the letter I write you now must be a short one. I wish it had been only your letters he had brought me, for they gave me the pleasure which I always experience in hearing about you in Rome. But no sooner had I read them than I was thrown into ill-temper by the news from Caesarea. You know - I am sure I have told you this before - that when the Passover is finished and a large part of the foreign Jews troop back to the coast on their way home, I hold Games in Caesarea for several days. It is a relaxation for me as well as for them, and it is good for trade. Do you ask whether they come to my Games? Of course they come. They are not Pharisees. They are Greek Jews, Cyrenaic Jews, Asiatic Jews, merrier and humaner folk than their harsh Judaic brethren.

Could anything be more exasperating than the blow which has befallen me? In the first place a ship bringing six lions from Cyrenaica has foundered. The crew had not even the good grace to go down with the ship. Still, lions are cheap and I do not make too much of it. What is more serious is the loss of my gladiator Aduatucus, a Gaul. He was the best swordsman in the East. Since I came out here he had fought nearly fifty contests and had never been beaten. The women love him. The Governors of both Syria and Egypt had tried to buy him from me - once or twice I lent him as a great favour, but I always refused to sell - and I had told him that when he completed fifty contests I would give him his freedom and make him trainer of the troop. He might have become manager of the Games, he might have gone back with me and become first favourite of the crowd at Rome. Why, he might have caught Caesar's eye, entered his Household and controlled provincial governors. With this career before him, and knowing the value that I attached to him, he was inconsiderate enough to enter into a tavern brawl about a girl with two Thracians. They stabbed him to death and then took their own lives, so that I have not even the poor consolation of using them for the Games. By Jove, I am annoyed.

You were asking about the aqueduct. It works admirably and I have reason to know that the foreign Jews applaud me for it. They disapprove, as they are bound to do, of my use of the Temple-money, but they see that I am not behind the Governors of more important provinces in my care for the Roman name and the health of my people. The Jews here also use the water, even the Pharisees. The only difference is that they show no gratitude.

Jesus was arrested late last night. I provided a troop of soldiers who accompanied the officials of the Sanhedrim. The advantage is that as the news spread this morning - if it did spread - it would be known that Procurator and Sanhedrim had acted jointly. The Sanhedrim are not popular with the most zealous Jews, but the general impression would be that if all the authorities, Roman and Jewish, were acting together, this must be a troublesome fellow who was better out of the way. The arrest was made without disturbance. Jesus himself gave no trouble and his followers ran at once. I believe some of them are well on their way home.

The prisoner was taken to the High Priest's quarters until this morning when he was handed over to my people. I believe Caiaphas got a few of the leading priests together and they examined him for themselves. The case is a perfectly simple one, from my point of view, and will give no difficulty. Since Antipas will not handle the matter - I am coming to that in a moment - I shall execute Jesus as a maker or a cause of sedition against Caesar. But these priests have always to remember that sedition against Caesar is usually a merit in the eyes of the populace (and of a good many Pharisees too), and they will want to make out a good case for themselves. They will insist, I suppose, on Jesus's defiance of the Law, attacks on the ritual and outbreak in the Temple. Probably they will say that he regarded himself as the expected Messiah (of which there is no evidence), and the people, with their mouths agape, have no use for a Messiah who cannot keep himself out of the hands of the despised Romans. That is not the kind of deliverer the Jews want any more than his own followers.

I have not seen the man myself, though I shall do presently. I gave orders for him to be taken to Antipas, as I said I would, with a polite statement that as the disturber of the peace was a Galilean, he would perhaps consider the matter came within his jurisdiction. I received a reply, equally polite, that Antipas recognized my courtesy but waived any right that he might have over an offender in my City of Jerusalem. A touching exchange of courtesies! I shall finish the matter off to-day.

Your freedman waits, but one word more. Is it true, as I hear from Lentulus Spinther, that Sejanus's nephew has been refused an audience by Caesar and that Sejanus has doubled the Praetorian Guard at Rome? What if Sejanus falls? What if he refuses to fall? Do not become famous too hastily, my friend. Obscurity, though inglorious, is safe, When the master walks through the fields with stick in hand, fortunate is the poppy with inconspicuous head.*

*Sejanus was summarily executed in the next year and his friends were involved in the catastrophe.

## TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF JESUS

Jerusalem

I must complete the letter which I began this morning. Immediately after despatching Krito, I confirmed with Marcius the military arrangements for the Passover, which begins to-morrow. I heard reports from Joseph, who thinks that acts of violence against individuals amongst the ruling Sadducees will grow. In his opinion it does not much matter whether the province is as quiet as I contrive to keep it or whether there is constant friction between us and the Jews; his feeling is that the extreme men are tired of peace. Afterwards I tried and condemned the prisoner Jesus. He was crucified at once along with some other prisoners who were awaiting execution. It is not a bad thing to have an object lesson of this kind on the eve of the Passover because, in such a nondescript gathering as we have here, there must always be dangerous characters who have exceptional opportunities for their special qualities. By this time Jesus is buried. It is their custom to bury an executed offender the same day and, besides, the Sabbath begins at sunset - has, indeed, already begun. The Sanhedrim asked permission to bury the body this afternoon. It suits them, having got Jesus out of their way, to dispose of the whole matter before the Passover begins and so to damp down any discussion which might arise, especially after the inscription that I ordered to be attached to the prisoner, about which more presently.

The trial was short but in due form and order. Jesus was accused of disturbing the peace, stirring up disaffection and claiming to be King of the Jews. There was evidence both from our side and from that of the Jews, both from Galilee and from this city. Caiaphas, Annas and the leading Sadducees were prominent and so were some but not all of the chief Pharisees; some of the Pharisees would lend no assistance in convicting a rebel against Caesar however much they desired his death as a rebel against themselves. However, that did not help him. The priests had much to say of his attacks on their religion, but I cut them short on that. They cannot have it both ways. If we are not allowed to interfere in their religion, they cannot appeal to us when their observances are attacked; as soon as the offence becomes political, directly or indirectly, then we take note of it. They may squabble about Yahveh, like the Egyptians about Isis, till they burst, but when a man brawls in the Temple he tends to provoke a general explosion and that concerns us closely. The charge against Jesus of disturbing the peace was proved to the hilt and he could not deny it.

I inquired of the prisoner, through Alexander, whether he admitted the more serious accusations. The Jews alleged that he regarded himself as the destined deliverer of the nation, which involves the end of both their authority and ours. This would constitute a much more direct offence than that for which Antipas put John to death. They cited both the public utterances in which Jesus had spoken of a new kingdom as being imminent and also certain admissions about himself which they said he had made to his own followers. This was, I suppose, the special evidence which Annas said that they intended to produce. I put the question to him. I asked him whether he considered himself to be the deliverer. 'So THEY say,' he answered, indicating the High Priest and his neighbours, with a curt gesture of contempt. I pointed out to him that he was accused also of representing himself as King of the Jews. I asked him whether he considered himself to be that. He made the same answer - 'So YOU say,' meaning, I suppose, that in neither case was there anything in his own conduct or motives to support the accusation, but that he knew well enough that we meant in any case to fix the charge upon him. He realized that he was trapped, and that there was no way of escape, but he was bold and resolute, defiant, almost insolent. They are all alike, these Jews, bitter and unyielding, whether to us or to each other. Standing alone he might be, forsaken and with enemies on every side who meant his death, with his own countrymen delivering him to the Roman executioner, but he was cool and determined, like the men who engineered an attempt on the life of the great Herod and suffered the extremes of torture sooner than yield an inch. A dangerous breed!

I condemned him to death. I could, of course, do nothing less. All roads lead to that conclusion. Alexander, who has a cool and detached way of regarding his countrymen, insists that this man, so far from posing as Messiah, or King, like most of the mischief-makers during the last thirty years, did all that he could to prevent the stupid people from fastening that part on him. Alexander thinks that there was nothing that Jesus sought to avoid so much as this, knowing that if such a conception of him spread abroad, it would deliver him into our hands and be fatal to his campaign - a hopeless campaign in any case - against the priesthood and its system. Alexander has talked to some of his followers and says that the preacher had unquestionably warned them often and in the severest terms that they were not to regard him or speak of him as the Deliverer whom all these Jews expect, and that it was only when he thought that the old conception of him had died away in Galilee that he decided to come up to Jerusalem. It may be. But I am sure that if he was not a dangerous rebel yesterday, he would have been to-morrow. For either he would have succeeded in his assault on the priesthood or he would not. If he had not, how long would a man of his temperament, so passionate, headstrong and bold, have abstained from making that appeal to the patriotic feelings of these Jews which always - always - meets with a quick response, even when made by men of much less powerful character than his? You remember Procula's and Alexander's description of the scene in Galilee? And supposing that he had conceivably made headway against the priests and all the mummery of the Temple ritual, how long would it have been before he turned upon Caesar and the sacrifices to Caesar and to Rome? Would he have respected the cult of Divus Augustus, do you suppose? But long before we had to consider that eventuality we should have had to intervene with force between their contending factions. Why, as it is, they are almost in a state of suppressed civil war, ready to fly at each other's throats. Give them a bad governor - a governor even half as bad as they say that I am - and the feud between those who tolerate us and those who despise the tolerators will break into open war. This is an unfruitful soil in all respects but one. The seeds of disorder will grow if you only scratch the soil. My policy is to destroy them the moment that they sprout.

But I had forgotten: allow me one word about the inscription announcing the offence of Jesus. It was 'King of the Jews,' set up over the cross. The Pharisees were indignant. They themselves want a King of the Jews. It would give them the greatest pleasure to see Caesar overthrown to-morrow and a Jewish King installed - not a half-Jew like Herod - who would rule the country through them and suppress their Sadducean rivals. But it angered them to see the precious title, 'King of the Jews,' held up to ridicule; it was too plain a reminder of their servitude. Besides, they thought it an insult that a crucified criminal, a presumptuous countryman who had defied them, should be labelled 'King.' I took a short way with them. 'What I have written I have written,' said I, and bade them begone. I know the breed. From the moment that this Jesus set up his individual judgement against theirs they meant to have his life. Scratch a priest and find an autocrat. All the world over, if a man says that he will use his own intelligence about things divine, the priests prick up their ears and feel their knives. If he goes further and tells his fellow-men that they also are entitled to use their own intelligence - off with his head and there's an end of it!

I run on so, my dear Seneca. The subject carries me away. I must apologize to you again; I am afraid that even you will find the subject tedious. For, after all, what does it matter? What does it matter - one Jew more or less?

I wish I could find a substitute for Aduatucus.