

It was a decisive crisis. The oligarchy, though degraded, degraded and disarmed, was not yet overthrown, for the management of public affairs was still in the hands of the senate; but it would fail, if its opponents should appropriate to themselves that management and more especially the superintendence of military affairs; and now this was possible. If proposals for another and better management of the war by land and sea were now submitted to the comitia, the senate was obviously—looking to the temper of the burgesses—not in a position to prevent their passing; and an interference of the burgesses in these supreme questions of administration was practically the deposition of the senate and the transference of the management of the state to the leaders of opposition. Once more the concatenation of events brought the decision into the hands of Pompeius. For more than two years the famous general had lived as a private citizen in the capital. His voice was seldom heard in the senate-house or in the Forum; in the former he was unwelcome and without influence, in the latter he was afraid of the stormy proceedings of the parties. But when he did show himself, it was with the full retinue of his clients high and low, and the very fact of his solemn reserve imposed on the multitude. If he, who was still surrounded with the undiminished lustre of his extraordinary successes, should now offer to go to the East, he would beyond doubt be readily invested by the burgesses with all the plenitude of

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