

in an old man. His fourteen orations against Antony, known as "the Philippics," are brilliant efforts of oratory. The fire of the old man burnt its brightest as it was about to go out for ever. But his eloquence could not withstand military power. The celebrated triumvirate was formed. Octavius, Lepidus and Antony joined forces and marched on to Rome. Great fear and consternation was the result. Murder was committed on every hand. Our poor old orator, who, since the death of Cæsar, had had a brief lease of power, felt that his last burning shot had been fired, and that no longer would the Senate walls listen to his brilliant words. The victorious party approached the city, and Cicero fled. It was his only hope; but he did not fly with sufficient haste. He hated to leave Rome. He was an old man and loved his country. His hesitation cost him his life. Soldiers found him and cut off his head. It was brought to Mark Antony, who treated it with every mark of scorn and contempt—a disgraceful act in which his wife joined. Her hatred knew no bounds. She even pierced with her bodkin the poor silent tongue—that tongue which was so eloquent in the denunciation of her husband's crimes and vicious life.

This was the end of Cicero. The light of the old era was fast burning out. Cicero little knew how close his times were upon a new light which was to spring, not from Rome nor yet from Greece, but from a little despised province—a light which was to usher in a new era, brightened by principles that were to serve no single State, but the whole world. He died forty-three years before Christ. We are now nearly 1900 years after Christ, and it is not too much to say that the world has not yet risen to the height of His morality. He saw what Cicero would have given worlds to see—the

true principles which were in the end to bring happiness for mankind. Cicero was Roman, and he nearly saw the old era end. Christ began a new era, and He was cosmopolitan. It was the world he sought to help. Cicero made the well-being of man a study. He tried to bring happiness to Rome by reviving, or rather introducing, among his countrymen the philosophy of the learned Greeks. He studied Plato and Aristotle, and was thus enabled to produce many excellent works full of wise counsel. Nothing could be more excellent than his letters to his son Marcus, known as "De Officiis." Young men of any age would be vastly benefited by reading them.

No one can read his books without feeling that one is in the presence of a good and a pure soul, who sought to know what "that good was for the sons of men on earth." His essays on "Friendship" and "Old Age" will remain charming examples of ancient moral principles as long as the world lasts; and his treatise on the "Nature of the Gods" shows that he had no faith whatever in the mythical deities of the Greeks and of his own countrymen; but there was a noble reaching out beyond these things to a Great Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He saw there what he could not see in Rome—the beauties of perfect order and government. His knowledge of astronomy impressed him all the more with the power and wisdom of the Great Ruler of all things.* Dean Merivale calls Cicero "the best specimen of the highest culture, both morally and intellectually, in the ancient world." Erasmus thought him inspired; and an old scholar declared, "I am

* He says in his treatise on the "Nature of the Gods" (II. 5): "It is quite impossible for us to avoid thinking that the wonderful motion, revolutions and order of the many and great heavenly bodies, no part of which is impaired by the countless and infinite succession of ages, must be governed and directed by some supreme Intelligent Being."