

Cæsar had performed their work abroad ; they now were looking homewards. Their great chief had ambitious designs for himself. He now no longer feared Cato nor Cicero, but of Pompey he was afraid. He knew that either he or Pompey must go down if one or the other was to rule, and therefore he crossed the fatal Rubicon, and rode on to seek the death of Pompey, only, alas ! to hasten on the events which were to bring himself to an equally violent death. Pompey lay dead on the sands of an Eastern shore, and Cæsar marched to Rome to quiet disturbances there, and to rule the State as he had been accustomed to rule his legions. Men stood by affrighted. Cicero had always been friendly with Cæsar. They had kindred tastes, especially in literature, but the great orator stood aghast at Cæsar's growing power. He worked on quietly as a lawyer ; more than once he pleaded cases before " most excellent Cæsar," as he was wont to call him, but he had sad forebodings of coming trouble. He loved the Republic. At the cost of his own political success, he had defended it against lawless anarchy. He now began to see in Cæsar a " one-man power," savouring of that ancient monarchy which had in time developed a Tarquinius Superbus—and he shuddered. But what could he do ? His influence with the people was gone ; the Senate was cowed by the power of Cæsar ; the veteran legions were at hand to govern when lawful means might fail. He could only wait and watch. And Cæsar held unconstitutional sway, hurrying with fearful haste to the memorable " Ides of March," when in the Senate-House, " even at the base of Pompey's statue, which all the while ran blood," great Cæsar had to fall.

Once more the assassin's dagger had to do what nothing else could effect. His best friends stabbed him

to the heart, and Cæsar fell. Cicero expressed great satisfaction at this. He seems, indeed, to have exulted over it with savage glee. But may we not say that this was not at the death of his friend, nor yet at the method employed to bring the desired political relief, but merely at the fact that a terrible warning had been given to those who should at any time attempt to assume royal sway in Rome ? The key to many of the expressions of Cicero, otherwise inexplicable, lies, I think, in his extreme love and jealous care for the constitution of the Republic which he loved. It may be, indeed, that he cared only for himself. Some have seen in Cicero an extraordinary example of vanity. Certainly there are traces of it. He wanted to be the bright light, and Cæsar's light was too strong for that. But there were indications that he loved the constitution of the Republic as well. At any rate he rejoiced that Cæsar was dead. Historians differ as to the reason of this. Some think it was simply because, Cæsar gone, Pompey dead, Cicero must rise. It may be so ; men like to rule, and Cicero had an unusually strong desire in that direction. But he soon found that Cæsar was more potent with the people than he had dreamed of. A great reaction speedily set in. It was found that his was a noble, generous heart, and the men who had used their unhallowed daggers had to flee the country, and, even in foreign lands or distant colonies, within three years, they all came to a tragic end. Cicero, however, still lived on, the life and soul of the Senate. He brought all his brilliant powers of oratory to bear upon reviving the embers of the Republic. The men who were to swoop down upon the unhappy State were carrying on distant wars. Mark Antony was the leading spirit of the old Cæsarfaction, and Cicero opposed him with an amount of energy surprising