

noted for any brilliant oratory, therefore his talent in that direction would give him vast power. All this came to him at the earliest age he could qualify, and no position was more gladly hailed than that of quæstor, not so much for its actual duties—for it was a sort of treasurership, chiefly in the provinces, each Provincial Governor having his quæstor—as for the passport it gave to the Senate and to future positions. Once quæstor, the next thought was to be ædile, a position which was far more costly than lucrative, as the ædile had to provide the public with games in the amphitheatre. It was a most trying position, because some men, who had nothing to recommend them but their wealth, provided such magnificent spectacles as to charm the heart of the people and insure future promotion. But this rendered it all the more difficult for successive ædiles. Cicero obtained this position in due course, having served as quæstor the five years required by law. Though possessed of no great wealth, and unable, therefore, to lavish that extravagance that some of his predecessors in office had indulged in, he nevertheless performed his duties honourably and to the entire satisfaction of the people, whom he was able to serve in other ways far more substantially than by the brutality and glitter of a public show, though indeed there were fewer things that the Roman people were fonder of. But Cicero was an advocate. He had great influence with the judges on the bench; he helped many a poor citizen out of trouble, and while holding on as best he could to the Conservative or Senatorial party, he contrived to get a firm hold upon the hearts of the people, and this not by any means the mere rabble; for although the quæstorship and ædileship were in the gift of the general public under a free franchise, yet the next office, that of prætor, was by the vote “in

centuries” as it was called, and this gave the power alone into the hands of the wealthier and better citizens. As soon as eligible for the post, Cicero was unanimously elected to it. Every gift that the people could give him so far was bestowed upon him most willingly and honourably. As prætor he had still more power. No higher post remained for him except that of consul, a magnificent prize in the eyes of every Roman citizen. Two consuls were elected every year, and their power was supreme. They were the rulers of the day, the presidents of the State. No man could hold the position a second time except under peculiar circumstances or the extraordinary exigencies of the times. But once consul, a certain standing in the Senate and in the State was secured which lasted for life. To be of “consular rank” was a high boast among the Romans; and if the actual power itself lasted but one year, it was a great object of ambition, and not by any means easy to secure—for although it was obtained by popular vote, the good-will of the Senate also was necessary. With the Senate against a man he must almost surely fail, and Cicero did not feel sure of the Senate. They acknowledged his ability, but could not get over the fact that he was a mere “new man,” or provincial. Besides, they dreaded his power with the people. *Their* votes were pretty certain to be his,—although even here he had a hard battle to fight. It was a corrupt age. Men expected bribes, and Cicero was honest and detested bribery. Much then would depend upon the nature of the other candidates for the office. These were two, Antonius (uncle of the well-known Mark Antony) and Lucius Catiline (afterwards known as a notorious conspirator). These, with Cicero, formed three candidates. Now, for many reasons, Antonius was sure of the position. He had the undoubted support