

Senate was the most convenient body to be consulted), and to follow such advice when given; but, if the magistrate chose to act independently, the Senate was powerless. The Senate had no legal authority over the Assembly, and except in certain specified cases, it rested with the magistrate to decide whether a question should be settled by a decree of the Senate, or by a vote of the Assembly; and the magistrate was not bound, except by custom, to obtain the approval of the Senate before submitting a proposal to the Assembly.

In the last days of the republic, the whole tendency was in the direction of ignoring and setting aside the authority of the Senate. But, when the authority of the Senate was set aside, the difficulty arose of finding a sufficient substitute. Some central authority was needed. Such authority was found in a "Dictator," supported by an army. The army obeyed the "Dictator" rather than the Senate, and the magistrates were also pushed aside, and subordinated to this absolute authority. The Assembly and the army made Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Cæsar, notwithstanding the strong opposition of the Senate.

"In the better days of the Republic," says Sallust, "good morals were cultivated in the city and in the camp. There was the greatest possible concord, and the least possible avarice; justice and probity prevailed among the citizens, not more from the influence of the laws, than from natural inclination. Citizens contended with each other in nothing but honor. They were magnificent in their religious services, frugal in their families, and steady in their friendships. By courage in war, and equity in peace, they maintained themselves and their state. They adorned the temples of the Gods with devotion, and their own homes with honor. They took nothing from the conquered, but the power of doing harm. Their descendants, on the contrary, have even wrested from

their allies whatever their brave and victorious ancestors had left to their vanquished enemies. As if the only use of power were to inflict injury.

"At first the love of money, and then the love of power began to prevail. Avarice subverted honesty, integrity, and every other honorable principle, and in their stead inculcated pride, inhumanity, and general venality.

"Men made a sport of wealth, and were ambitious to squander disreputably what they had gained with dishonor. To gratify their appetites and passions, they indulged in all kinds of luxury and extravagance, without restraint." "They acted as though the perpetration of outrage were the only legitimate exercise of power.

"After Lucius Sylla recovered the government by force of arms, things proceeded to a more pernicious determination: all became robbers and plunderers. His victorious troops knew neither restraint nor moderation. Their rapacity was increased by the circumstance that Sylla treated them with extraordinary indulgence. Such troops, when they obtained a mastery, despoiled the vanquished of everything. Wealth was considered an honor, and poverty was thought a disgrace. Luxury, avarice and pride prevailed among them. They grew rapacious and prodigal. They undervalued what was their own, and coveted what was another's. They lost all distinction between sacred and profane, and threw off all consideration and self-restraint. Sloth, indolence, dullness and stupidity had taken possession of the nobility. They regarded the fame and virtue of another as infamy to themselves. They had recourse to slander and detraction against any seeking to rise by their own merits."

The small freeholders disappeared from Italy. The lands were owned by the wealthy. The estates were worked by gangs of slaves, superintended by freed-men. The old usages, beliefs and traditions, under which the re-