

bribery at elections. The Romans of his day were very like ourselves. They did as we do, thought as we think, wrote as we write. Their laws were very like our own, but they had not such means of enforcing them as we have. Were not our public officers watched very closely there would be considerably more speculation and robbery than there is. This was the great trouble among the Romans. The greatest prize that a man could get in the way of chances for speculation was the governorship of a Province. Their Provincial governor was like our Viceroy or Governor-General,—and it was a recognized privilege for him to get what he could out of his unfortunate people. Plunder and robbery was the order of the day. Sometimes the bounds of decency in this respect were so overstepped that a show, at least, of inquiry was made. This was the case with Verres, who had been Governor of Sicily. The unfortunate Sicilians cried out against his unblushing robbery. To quiet public feeling, Cicero was sent to inquire into the case, and that generally meant to shelve it; but the natural honesty of Cicero made it a real inquiry. He collected a mass of evidence of the most extraordinary robbery and fleecing that had ever been known. He brought witnesses to Rome to prove his points. He prepared his speeches, worked up the case with zeal and vigour, but he met with great opposition. Every obstacle was thrown in his way, and never is the honesty of Cicero more manifest than in his pertinacity in bringing this case of wholesale robbery to justice. The case was purposely delayed by every possible quibble, with the hope that the new election of consuls, then close at hand, would bring better prospects for Verres. Cicero knew it would, and therefore, in order to save time, simply brought on a few of his strongest

witnesses and let his carefully prepared speeches go. This, however, was sufficient. Verres fled the country, and Cicero gained his suit—the more fool for his pains, men thought, for some day he might have a province of his own, and he was only cutting the ground from under his feet. But that day did come to Cicero. He was sometime afterwards made governor of Cilicia, and no single complaint was ever made against him. His pleadings against Verres took shape in his own actions. He was as honest in practice as he was in tongue,—two things which certainly do not always go together.

A Roman politician was often called upon to address the people, because whenever any new law was proposed it was brought before the common city crowd, who assembled in the forum or public square to listen to the discussion of it. This was a feature peculiar to the constitution of the Roman State. The people voted directly, not by representatives. It was as if in our own cities, instead of having aldermen, public meetings were every now and then held and measures voted upon then and there. This plan brought public men constantly before the people, and their merits or demerits were judged accordingly.

Hitherto Cicero had not addressed the people on any great measure, and he knew that the highest position in the republic, *i.e.* the Consulship, could not be readily reached without it. He had set his heart upon that position. If he could rise to be Consul he would ever after have far more influence in every department of public life than he otherwise could have, and an occasion soon rose to bring him before his fellow-citizens. It was remarked that Pompey was born in the same year with Cicero, and Cæsar six years afterwards. They had been boys together and companions; now they were men battling for positions in the