

them; but, if war should arise, I, who have been their hostage, and no unprofitable ambassador in my father's behalf, will be their most determined enemy. Nor do I this day require that the favour of the Romans should be any advantage to me; I only deprecate its being made detrimental. It neither commenced in war, nor is it meant to subsist in war. I was a pledge of peace, and to procure a continuance of peace I was sent ambassador. Let neither be esteemed an honour or a crime. Father, if I have been guilty of any undutiful behaviour towards you, or any criminal behaviour towards my brother, there is no punishment to which I will not submit without murmuring. If I am innocent, let me not, I beseech you, be destroyed by envy. My brother's accusation this day is not the first that he has brought against me; but it is the first made openly, and is entirely undeserved by me. If my father were angry with me, it would become the elder brother to intercede for the younger, to obtain pardon for his youth and for his error; but, in the very person from whom I ought to receive protection, in him I meet my ruin. From a feast and intemperate drinking I have been hurried, almost half asleep, to defend myself against a charge of fratricide. Without advocates, without patrons, I am compelled to plead my own cause. If I were to speak for another, I would have taken time to study and compose my discourse, though in that case I should run no other hazard than that of my reputation for abilities; but, before I knew the reason of being summoned hither, I heard you in a paroxysm of passion ordering me to account for my conduct, and my brother accusing me. He employed against me a speech long before prepared and studied; while I had no longer time for learning the nature of the case than while the charges against me were recited. During that short space, whether should I listen to my accuser or study a defence? Thunderstruck by the sudden and unthought-of calamity, I was scarcely capable of understanding what was alleged against me, much less of settling properly in my mind, what defence I should make. What hope, indeed, could I have, if my judge were not my father? with whom, though my elder brother has the advantage of a larger share in his affection, yet surely, standing thus accused, I ought not to meet a less share of compassion. For my prayer is that you would save me, for my sake and for your own; he demands that, for his security, you should put me to death. In what manner,