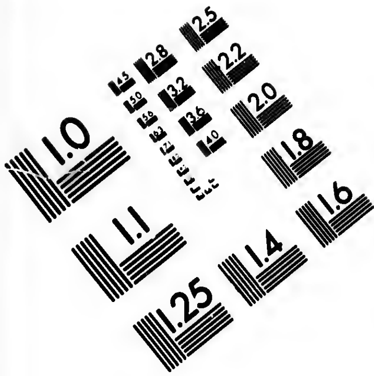
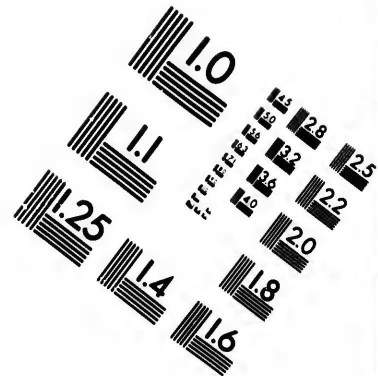

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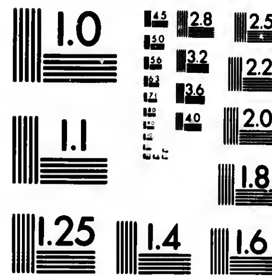
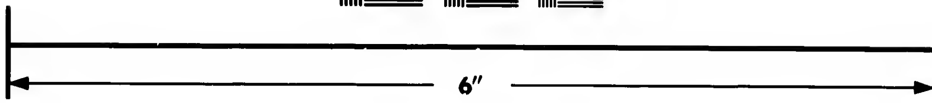


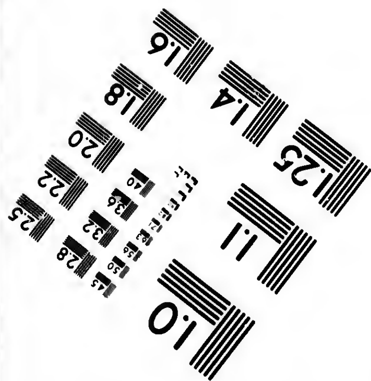
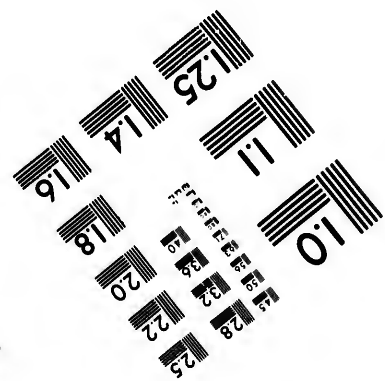

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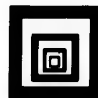

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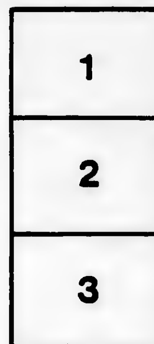
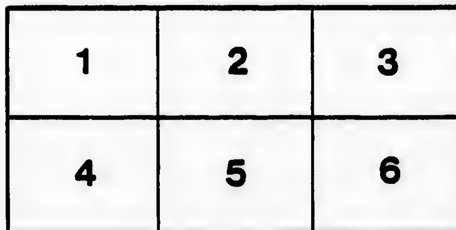
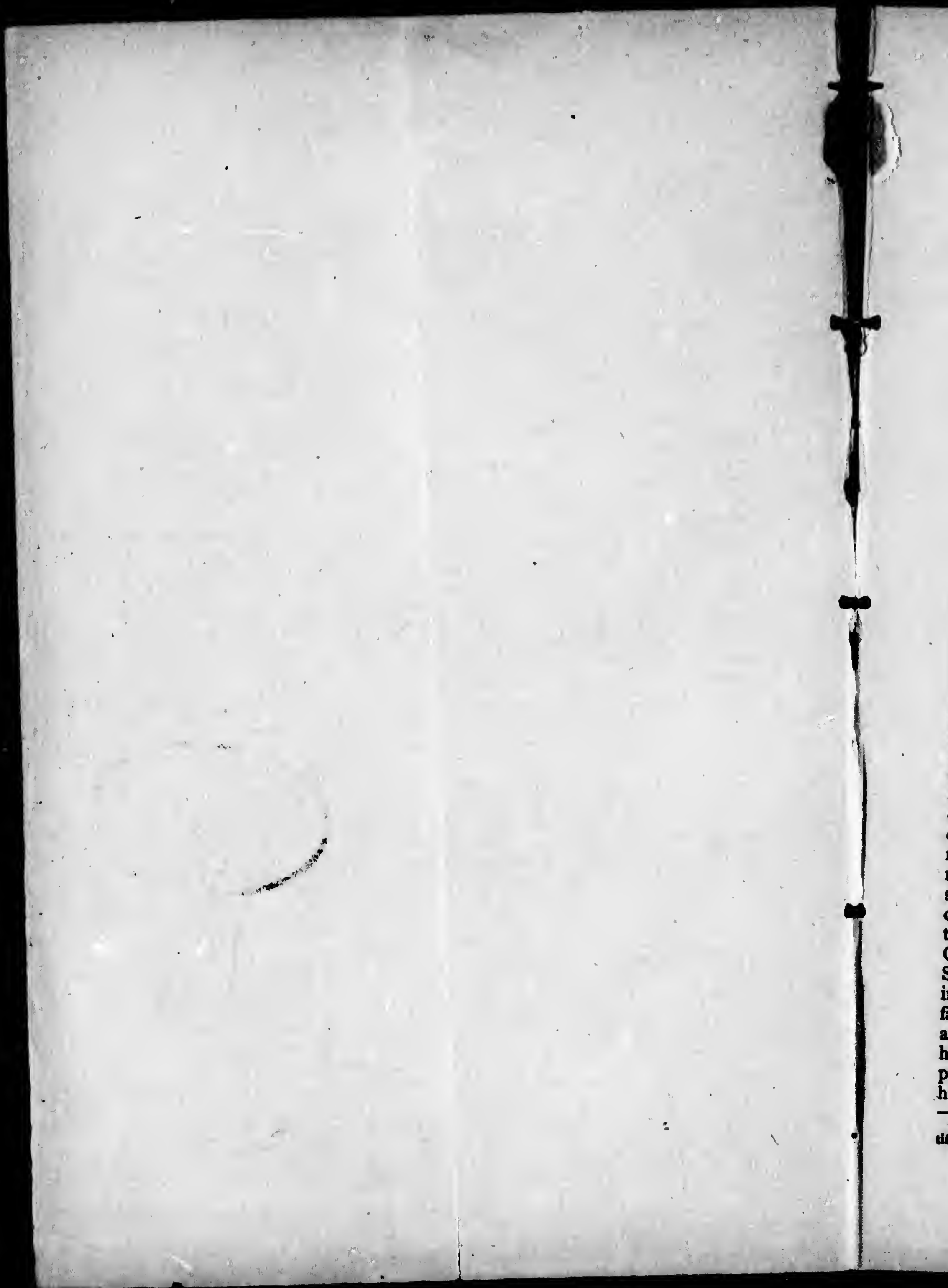


# A PAPER ON CICERO.



# A PAPER ON CICERO.*

BY REV. C. H. MOCKRIDGE, B.D., HAMILTON, ONT.

WHEN Marcus Tullius Cicero was born, Rome was in a troubled state. She had reached great power, and the individual wealth of her citizens had produced many improvements and luxurious modes of living, but very little, if any, refinement of taste. Men and even women were brutal in their tastes. For amusement they loved to gaze on scenes of bloodshed. Unless the stage was left reeking in blood, but very little amusement was given. Unfortunate victims torn to pieces by wild beasts; gladiators, hard and fierce, slashing here and there with rude swords, formed the favourite entertainment of the Roman gentleman and lady. It is little to be wondered at, then, if we find blood-shedding among the Romans a common, almost every-day occurrence. In their political disturbances their streets often ran with blood, and every one who rose to any high place in the State did so at his peril. This had been the case long before Cicero's time for active work in the State. Tiberius and Caius Gracchus were splendid men. Sons of an excellent mother; feeling in every throb of their heart the welfare of the people whose they were, and in whom they rejoiced; grieved in heart and soul at their poverty and oppressions, they devoted their lives to help them and procure such legislation as would put them above misery and want. But the savage character of the age soon bore them down, and crushed them with violent and bloody deaths.

Then there appeared on the scene Caius Marius, born at Arpinum, the place which was destined ere long to be also the birthplace of Cicero. Brave and excellent as a warrior in the first part of his life, Marius ended his days in an unworthy thirst for office. The city he had saved from savage tribes, and whose honour he upheld in his struggle with Jugurtha, he afterwards made red with blood merely to carry out his own personal ambition. The highest position that could be occupied in the Roman republic was that of Consul, and it was rare for any one to be elected to that office more than once; but while Cicero was an infant, sucking his thumb at Arpinum, Marius was loaded with honours at the hands of the Republic, being five times elected Consul. Had he ended his days with this, great honour would have been his; but twice again he obtained the Consulship—once by unworthy intrigue, and at last by a fearful carnage, when he made the streets of Rome run with the best of Roman blood.

But as he went down (for he died soon after this) another great name appeared above the horizon. This was Lucius Sulla, or Sylla. He carried

* Read before the Hamilton Literary and Scientific Association.

on many wars, and made the name of Rome a terror to her neighbours. He was of patrician birth, and therefore favoured the cause of the aristocracy, and though of a depraved and profligate life, was possessed of many of those peculiar qualities which make men rulers over their fellows. While he was holding sway with a rigid hand which made old Romans tremble for the constitution—going so far as to make himself Dictator—three young men were fast growing into notice, men whose names were destined to figure largely in Roman history. These were Cnæus Pompeius (popularly known as Pompey), Marcus Tullius Cicero (who were born in the same year, or 106 years B.C.), and Caius Julius Cæsar, six years younger than the other two, but destined to strain the power ventured upon by Sulla to its highest pitch, until, indeed, the dagger of outraged lovers of the republic should lay him low as a tyrant and as one untrue to the established constitution of his country.

But we are chiefly concerned now with Cicero. Plutarch tells us that as a child he was remarkably bright, and that many people would visit the school in Rome to which his father sent him—taught by a Greek master—for the express purpose of listening to the boy Tully in the recitation of his lessons and his answers to questions. Of somewhat delicate organization, with a neck, Froude tells us, no larger than that of a woman, he and his friends felt that if he was to win distinction it must be as a scholar and politician, not as a warrior. The army, of course, had been the channel through which men usually rose to power, but Cicero marked out a different line for himself. He meant, if possible, to be great. His question was sometimes, "What will history say of me six hundred years hence?" Ambition of this sort has its good points. No man can work lawfully to advance himself without to some extent benefiting his fellow-man. Cicero studied —studied with a view, let us say, to advance himself. Those studies have been of the greatest value. To this day few authors write more elegantly than Cicero. We are fortunate in possessing a very large portion of his writings. The general wreck which happened to early literature has been somewhat kind to him. We have his treatises, speeches, and letters, and from these we are able to form a better opinion of his public, private and even inner life than of any other of the ancients. But his exertions were not altogether with a view to his own advancement. It is not too much to say that he dearly loved the Roman republic. He seems to have lived and worked for it, and, therefore, he always dreaded any one man gaining too much power. As a young man at the commencement of his career as an advocate or lawyer, he viewed with great apprehension the power of Sulla. It was fast ripening into tyranny, and no one had courage enough to lift up voice against it. Sulla established one of the most iniquitous things ever set on foot in any country. It was called the *Proscription*: better might it be called the Bloody List. If A. had any private grudge against B. he could with a little influence get B.'s name put on the fatal list, and that meant death. Any one killing him was rewarded. Men looked on in horror, hoping earnestly for the death of the tyrant who was the cause of such misery and the ruin of so many homes.

It was a case connected with this proscription which first won public praise for Cicero. There is no doubt he possessed wonderful power as a pleader. It is impossible to read his speeches without coming to that conclusion. He possessed all the tact, wisdom and power which go to make up a first-class pleader. He evidently

made every case his own special study, and his points were brought on gradually—the strongest reserved to the last, usually working up to a magnificent peroration, sometimes mixed with most exquisite pathos (as the kinder feelings of his judges for that mercy which we all hope at times to get were wrought upon), and withal with such consummate skill as almost to hide that it was a pathos wrought up for special design. And these qualities as a pleader he showed at a very early day. His first case was an appeal with regard to the Proscription. Men admired his courage even for undertaking the case. But although the life of Cicero is not without examples of timidity on his part, on the whole he had a fair amount of courage,—and especially as a lawyer. To help a client or to make a name for himself, as the case might be, he braved many a difficulty, and put himself more than once in the very jaws of death. But never, perhaps, did he place himself in greater danger than at the first. He dared to dispute a case with the dread Dictator, whose name was a terror to stouter and older men than him. A harmless citizen of the country, named Sextus Roscius, had been surreptitiously put upon the fatal Proscription list. He was murdered, and his property seized by those who had planned the whole crime. His son appealed to law, but was himself accused of having murdered his father. Cicero defended him in an excellent speech. He knew enough not to blame Sulla. He flattered him, compared him to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, who was sovereign of the universe, and, on the whole, a good sovereign, but with so much business on his hands that he could not manage every little minor point of detail. The result of his clever management was that young Roscius was acquitted of the charge laid against him, and was put in possession of his lawful property—and Cicero won what is the most delightful moment of a young man's life, his first hearty applause and congratulations, and that without incurring the displeasure of Sulla.

Soon after this our orator had another opportunity of showing his legal powers, and it is one which brings out strongly the uprightness of his character. He seems to have been thoroughly honest, not only professionally, but in his writings and practice. He seems ever to have been on the side of honesty and right, against villainy and wrong. As men were in his day, he was a paragon of goodness. He made the Grecian philosophers a special study, and had learned the great value of virtue. His very language seemed wanting in power to express what he had learned in Greek, and the *δικαιοσύνη* and *σωφροσύνη* seemed to him to be as wanting in reality as in words. Dishonesty in public officers was what he particularly despised—despised it, indeed, as he did 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 peculation 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 peculation 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 State. Pompey had risen high in the army; Cicero was a politician; Cæsar was watching his opportunity to make a name for himself in whatever department might offer. As yet he knew not where his great strength lay. That wonderful military prowess which he afterwards showed at the head of his famous legions was as yet unknown to him, and the last struggle with Pompey for supreme power was still in the distant future. For the present Cæsar thought his strength lay in supporting Pompey. Much dissatisfaction was expressed with one of the great military men of the day, named Lentulus, who, though successful as a general, was corrupt and cruel. Pompey, on the other hand, was upright and merciful, beloved alike by friend and foe. A law was proposed at Rome by Manilius to put the army under the supreme control of Pompey. This met with much opposition.

Catullus and Hortentius, the two best known orators of the day, opposed it. Cæsar and Cicero supported it—the former by his influence, the latter by his eloquence. The speech of Cicero was one of great power. The high qualities of Pompey were held up in the most glowing light. Whether in Italy or Sicily, in Africa, Gaul or Spain; whether on land or sea, the power of Pompey was seen. And yet he says, "See him in his lovely character; no avarice turned him aside to plunder, no lust led him in pursuit of pleasure; no luxury allured him to seek its delights; the illustrious reputation of no city tempted him to make its acquaintance; even labour did not turn him aside to seek rest."—*Pro Lege Man.* xlv. The effect of this speech was, that the law was carried amid the loud applause of the people in the forum, and Pompey rose equal to the occasion, pushing by force of arms the glory of Rome both far and near.

There were in Rome, as there are now with us, and in every country, two leading parties, best expressed by the names Conservatives and Reformers. On the Conservative side are usually men of high birth and title,—the aristocratic element; on the Reform side usually the populace,—but as the aristocratic element naturally has much influence among the people, strong support has always been found even among them. In Rome, the great seat of aristocracy was the Senate, corresponding in many particulars to the House of Lords, or to our own Senate. In Rome it was supposed that only those of patrician or high birth were to compose the Senate; but in time, wealth and talent asserted their rights, and many members, who had not the magic blue blood in their veins, were found in the Senate enrolled amongst the famous "patres conscripti." If a man desired to rise high in the State there was a certain order that he had to go through. First he had to be quæstor, a most important post, for it at once gave him, under good behaviour, a seat in the Senate for life. Cicero was fortunate enough to obtain this position in his thirty-first year,—the earliest age at which he could qualify. The idea of the Senate, from its name, was that it was to be composed of old men, but that age was placed at anything over thirty,—though I don't know that every man over thirty considered himself an old man then, any more than he does now. Once in the Senate, Cicero was in his element. It was his talent alone that put him there, for he had nothing to boast of in the way of family. He was called a *novus homo*,—born in the provinces. But in the Senate he could make his name known. The best blood of Rome would see his talent there; his position would give him the right at times to harangue the people. He would know all that was going on in the army, in the law courts, and in the state. In his time the Senate was not 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 of the Senate and the people. The real contest lay between Catiline and Cicero. Catiline was of high birth, a patrician; he was a genial, good-natured fellow with everyone, and though Cicero might get a majority of the people, the Senatorial power would be against him. But there was one recommendation Cicero had in his favour—he was a man of good morals, of well-known integrity and honesty. The other candidates had no such merit. They were both worthless, dishonest men; known as frequenters of the vilest haunts in the city; profligate and dissolute in every way,—especially Catiline, pictures of whose enormities are cleverly and scathingly drawn by Cicero himself. To the lasting honour of the Roman State be it said that this turned the scale. The Senate thought that they might stand one consul of depraved habits, but two would be subversive

of all decency and order, and even dangerous to the State. Here is an instance, then, in which virtue was its own reward. The Senate gave Catiline the cold shoulder, and threw all its influence in favour of Cicero, who, with its power and the great hold he had upon the affections of the people, was returned triumphantly at the head of the poll, outstripping, to the surprise of all, even Antonius. It has been said that Cicero was not altogether above blame in this election—that he made a corrupt proposal to Antonius that if he would use his influence with the Senate in his favour against Catiline he would in turn give Antonius a rich Province at the termination of their year of office for him to plunder and fleece. This may be so. We can scarcely answer for what men will sometimes do to procure an election, especially when that is to be the one great election of their life. Cicero lived in an atmosphere of corruption. The taint of it was on every side of him. He may have thought that by procuring his election he would save the State from the foul clutches of a monster like Catiline, and the subtle argument that the "end justifies the means" may have prevailed with him. It may have been so, though there is no proof, and it does not seem likely that one profligate aristocrat would desert another for the purpose of befriending a powerful upstart so honest that no hope of peculation or rapine could be entertained with him as a colleague. Sure of his own election, it would certainly seem more likely, on the plea that "birds of a feather flock together," that he would choose Catiline rather than Cicero—for the rich province, in the end, would be his all the same.

At all events, the dear object of Cicero's life was attained. He had risen honourably through the successive steps of quæstor, ædile, prætor, till the grand consular robe graced his form, and the high rank gave dignity and power to his eloquent tongue. But the sudden and generous support of the Senate threw Cicero somewhat on the horns of a dilemma. He was alike beholden to them and to the people—*i.e.*, we may say, to Conservatives and Reformers; and if at times Cicero seemed now to favour one and now another—in a word, to be, to some extent, a time server, we must remember that he owed a debt of gratitude to both parties. I do not think Cicero was ever a strong party man. Some never can be party men; their ideas are too generous—their grasp of intellect too wide. They see good measures on both sides. They love their country more than their party, and therefore pet names are called them sometimes—"time servers," "weathercocks," "trimmers," and all that. Still we all honour men who will at times rise above party and exclaim, "It is not that I love my party less, but my country more."

All through Cicero's life and writings you see one leading passion—it was the Roman constitution, the *res-publica*, the republic. This he defended from lawlessness on the one hand and from personal tyranny on the other. After rising to the position of consul he soon had a chance to show his hatred of a lawless disregard for the republic. It brought him into great prominence for a while, and won for him unbounded praise, only, however, to bring upon him a bitter crop of trouble in no long time afterwards. This was the conspiracy of Catiline. The feelings of a defeated candidate are not as a rule the most amiable, and Catiline, a man of vicious and desperate character, never forgave the Roman State for leaving him, a man of patrician birth, out in the cold, and choosing in his place a self-made lawyer. Catiline was a man of no ordinary character. Had he been as good

as he was brave, as virtuous as he was persevering, he would have filled a noble place in history. But a depraved life and burning hatred made him one of the worst men of antiquity. It is true we have his character as traced chiefly by his deadly enemy, Cicero himself, and therefore we must to some extent make allowances. Still, there can be no doubt that he was a troublesome and bad man. A deep plot was discovered, mainly through the extraordinary vigilance of Cicero, by which Catiline and his friends were to seize the chief power in the State. Cicero was as eloquent in the Senate and before the people regarding this matter as he had been vigilant in dragging it to light. Catiline was himself a member of the Senate, and was present when Cicero spoke of the plot he had discovered, but under the withering denunciations of the great orator his fellow-Senators gradually moved away from where he was sitting, until he was left alone. He then withdrew not only from the Senate House, but from the city. Many of the leading conspirators were arrested. The Senate did not know what to do with them. Probably many of the members were involved in the conspiracy, and an inquiry would have been awkward. Certain it is no inquiry was made. Cicero thought the time had come for prompt and unusual action, and therefore, without a trial, without a chance to plead their cause, the leading conspirators were put to death, and Cicero was lauded to the skies; he was deemed worthy of divine honours, and was called the saviour of his country. But before long, men began to shake their heads, and the desperate deed was pointed to as a dangerous precedent. A young man of high birth, named Clodius, hated Cicero with a bitter hatred, and, some time after the great orator's consulship was over, he saw a chance to rob him of his honours and to degrade him in the eyes of the people. A more vicious, profligate youth than Clodius did not exist in Rome. He had probably favoured Catiline against Cicero. He now thrust himself into public life, threw up his high place as a patrician, renounced his order, and got himself adopted as a plebeian. This he did in order that he might become tribune of the people. It was a post which no patrician could hold, yet no more important position existed in the Roman State than a tribuneship. It was created at the demand of the people, to save themselves from the tyranny of the upper classes. In the hands of the tribune was placed the deadly power of the veto. No measure could become law, no matter by how large a majority it was passed in the Senate, if the tribune of the people said *veto*. He was like a House of Commons in himself. He could defy consuls and Senate alike. It was the one great power which the common people in the Roman republic had. An idea of its power may be had from this conduct of Clodius. A young, haughty patrician renounces his rank, becomes a plebeian, in order that he may ruin the man who stood highest in power in the State! His deep-laid plans were successful. He had already risen to the position of quæstor, and was therefore a member of the Senate. This power, together with the influence he had with the consuls of the year, and his position as tribune of the people (which he got by well-known arts of electioneering), enabled him to procure a law that any man who had put any Roman citizen or citizens to death without a trial was to be considered guilty of a wrong against the State. The fickle populace were pleased with this law. The eloquent statesman who had so often received marks of their unbounded confidence, now found all changed. Their feelings had been wrought upon

by one that dreaded Cicero. Cæsar was already aiming at chief power. He was about to leave to carry on his wars in Gaul. He had a powerful party in his favour in Rome, but he was afraid of Cicero. He considered him a dangerous man to leave behind. He therefore tried to induce him to accompany him to Gaul, but in vain. It is thought that secretly he helped Clodius in his deep game to ruin him. Poor Cicero found himself suddenly almost without a friend. Pompey, his old friend, could have helped him, but for some reason no help was given. He lost his presence of mind. The Senate felt condemned by the hero of the day, the extraordinary young scapegrace who had become tribune of the people, and all its members put on mourning. Cicero was unmanned. His burning eloquence for the moment was gone. He could only beg and sue for mercy, mercy which he did not get. His foes were jubilant. He was tried under the new law and banished the country! His property was all confiscated, and the brilliant orator of consular rank, the man who had been called Pater Patriæ, and who had been enriched by the State, was stripped of all possessions and driven from home unmanned and weeping like a woman. Pompey, meanwhile, breathed more freely, and Cæsar marched with a lighter heart at the head of his famous legions to fight with and to conquer Gaul.

For nearly a year and a half Cicero pined and fretted in Macedonia, thinking of a man like Clodius lording it over Senate and people in Rome. But this soon wrought its own cure. Much as Cicero had been appreciated, his real value was not known till he was gone. The only men of weight at that time were Pompey, Cæsar, Cato, and Cicero; and circumstances had now deprived Rome of all these except Pompey. Cæsar was off warring in Gaul, Cato (it is thought, to serve Cæsar's own ends, thinking he would be better out of Rome than in it) was sent to govern Cyprus; Cicero was in exile; so the way was clear for the effeminate Clodius to play at legislation. Pompey took no active part, but he soon saw that everything was going wrong. The state of Rome at the time might well be described in the words of King Harry to his son:

> "Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,
> Revel the night; rob, murder, and commit
> The oldest sins the newest kind of ways?
> . . . . .
> England shall double gild his treble guilt;
> England shall give him office, honour, might."

Substituting Rome for England and Clodius for the scapegrace described, you have the state of the Roman capital at this time—a state which Mommsen speaks of as a "Walpurgis dance of political witches." The ship was rocking wildly to and fro, and there was no one to steady the helm. Pompey was afraid for his life, and therefore at once had a decree passed recalling Cicero. The great orator had his enemies, and he has them in some of the historians of the present day. Mommsen and Froude, for instance, seem to dislike to say a good word for him, yet this fact speaks for itself. The need of his presence was felt by the few wise heads then left in Rome, and he was recalled. It was a proud day for Cicero when this recall was received. He certainly had a high opinion of himself. His confident remarks regarding his own powers and work savour of a self-conceit which makes one smile. In fact, in reading his speeches, one gets tired of his vanity. In *his* opinion, *his* consulship was the most brilliant triumph the Roman State had ever seen. He refers to it *ad nauseam*. His bold policy, his active vigilance,

his untiring legislation had saved the Republic. This is the burden of his song continually. And then to fail because of that very act on which he had plumed himself, and to be subjected to the lasting disgrace of exile, was enough to break his proud spirit. However, the recall soon set everything right again. His old vanity came back in a new shape. "The people have seen their mistake; after all, my policy was a good one; my consulship was brilliant; I was the saviour of my country, and the people see it now." In this he certainly made a mistake. Had Cicero been a little more resolute he would have done far better for himself. Had he been true to the people, who certainly clung to him as long as they thought he was their friend, it would have been far better for him. But he was somewhat dazzled by the Senate, and he put himself too much in its power. He thought it a grand thing to have so many aristocratic friends, but he soon learned that the most substantial friends were the people. His recall was an affair of great brilliancy. All the way from Brundisium to Rome he was congratulated and lionized. The citizens of Rome received him heartily. His status and property were restored to him, his houses were rebuilt at the public expense, and once more he became the popular idol. But Rome was in a frightful condition. We cannot, indeed, take everything that Cicero says of his enemies as true. Allowance must be made for the exaggeration of invective; but even admitting this, the men who then ruled in Rome were detestable examples of impurity and vice. In a letter to his brother, Cicero says: "I am broken-hearted, my dear brother—broken-hearted that the constitution is gone, that the courts of law are naught, and that now, at my time of life [he was then 53 years old], when I ought to be leading with authority in the Senate, I must be either busy in the Forum pleading, or occupying myself with my books at home."

But with all his ambition Cicero was not able to quell the turbulence of the times. Mere invective and the calling of hard names had little effect upon men whose lives were as bad as those who were assailed. Cicero's strong point was his oratory. In this he had no rival. He could sway the Senate and he could sway the crowd, but he had no power to fall back upon to help him to give his measures effect. He lacked the iron will to carry out what he was always courageous enough to advocate. He had suffered much in his contest with Clodius. The revenge of this young demagogue was insatiable, for even after Cicero's return he curried favour with the people so as to neutralize the eloquence of Cicero; and when at last Clodius was murdered, the people were enraged and burnt the Senate-House, as if the senators had been the cause of all their trouble. Cicero, as one of the Senatorial party, was detested by the crowd, and losing even his boldness of utterance, he never delivered the speech which he had prepared in defence of the alleged murderer of Clodius. He dared not deliver it. We have it preserved to us now—his speech in defence of Milo;—an eloquent effort, a masterly defence; but reason would have had no avail with the mob, and the speech was never made.

In this way the years wore on. Cæsar was achieving wonders in conquering Gaul and Britain. Pompey was doing equally well in the East. Rome was disorganized, and sooner or later some iron hand must grasp the reins there and make things bend before it. That hand was already stretched out towards the city. The warrior had to do what the statesman, however brilliant as an orator, had failed to do. The veteran legions of

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 Cæsar faction, and Cicero opposed him with an amount of energy surprising

in an old man. His fourteen orations against Antony, known as "the Philippics," are brilliant efforts of oratory. The fire of the old man burnt its brightest as it was about to go out for ever. But his eloquence could not withstand military power. The celebrated triumvirate was formed. Octavius, Lepidus and Antony joined forces and marched on to Rome. Great fear and consternation was the result. Murder was committed on every hand. Our poor old orator, who, since the death of Cæsar, had had a brief lease of power, felt that his last burning shot had been fired, and that no longer would the Senate walls listen to his brilliant words. The victorious party approached the city, and Cicero fled. It was his only hope; but he did not fly with sufficient haste. He hated to leave Rome. He was an old man and loved his country. His hesitation cost him his life. Soldiers found him and cut off his head. It was brought to Mark Antony, who treated it with every mark of scorn and contempt—a disgraceful act in which his wife joined. Her hatred knew no bounds. She even pierced with her bodkin the poor silent tongue—that tongue which was so eloquent in the denunciation of her husband's crimes and vicious life.

This was the end of Cicero. The light of the old era was fast burning out. Cicero little knew how close his times were upon a new light which was to spring, not from Rome nor yet from Greece, but from a little despised province—a light which was to usher in a new era, brightened by principles that were to serve no single State, but the whole world. He died forty-three years before Christ. We are now nearly 1900 years after Christ, and it is not too much to say that the world has not yet risen to the height of His morality. He saw what Cicero would have given worlds to see—the true principles which were in the end to bring happiness for mankind. Cicero was Roman, and he nearly saw the old era end. Christ began a new era, and He was cosmopolitan. It was the world he sought to help. Cicero made the well-being of man a study. He tried to bring happiness to Rome by reviving, or rather introducing, among his countrymen the philosophy of the learned Greeks. He studied Plato and Aristotle, and was thus enabled to produce many excellent works full of wise counsel. Nothing could be more excellent than his letters to his son Marcus, known as "De Officiis." Young men of any age would be vastly benefited by reading them.

No one can read his books without feeling that one is in the presence of a good and a pure soul, who sought to know what "that good was for the sons of men on earth." His essays on "Friendship" and "Old Age" will remain charming examples of ancient moral principles as long as the world lasts; and his treatise on the "Nature of the Gods" shows that he had no faith whatever in the mythical deities of the Greeks and of his own countrymen; but there was a noble reaching out beyond these things to a Great Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He saw there what he could not see in Rome—the beauties of perfect order and government. His knowledge of astronomy impressed him all the more with the power and wisdom of the Great Ruler of all things.* Dean Merivale calls Cicero "the best specimen of the highest culture, both morally and intellectually, in the ancient world." Erasmus thought him inspired; and an old scholar declared, "I am

* He says in his treatise on the "Nature of the Gods" (II. 5): "It is quite impossible for us to avoid thinking that the wonderful motions, revolutions and order of the many and great heavenly bodies, no part of which is impaired by the countless and infinite succession of ages, must be governed and directed by some supreme Intelligent Being."

always a better man for reading Cicero." Unlike most ancient writers, Cicero never offends the finest sense of delicacy. In his speeches, sometimes he used intemperate language and spoke plainly of monstrous sins, but in his writings you see purity itself. They can be put into the hands of the young men and women of our day with perfect safety. Indeed, it would be advisable to do so. In his writings you see a desire to know the highest good for man; but this remained for one greater than any philosopher to give to the world in all its force and power. It remained for the Galilean peasant to show, not only beauty of precept, but perfection of life, coupled with an unselfishness which has ever made His enemies wonder. But though Cicero wrote beautiful philosophy, and gave golden rules of integrity and virtue, he did not profess to be a moral teacher. He was a lawyer and a statesman, yet he saw the root of all the trouble in Rome. It was an utter want of moral principle. This made him tremble for the future of the State, and he made himself acquainted with the best Greek literature in order to teach his countrymen the true philosophy of morality. In such a light let us think of Cicero, and so leave him.