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BY

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CATILINE.

IF in the political life of our own time we are too much in the habit of judging men with reference to party, in our views of history we are equally prone to judge parties with reference to men. There is a natural and perhaps laudable prejudice in favour of a political party which numbers among its ranks the men who have the reputation of decency, probity, and respectability. But is it so clear that such men are likely to be on the right side in political struggles? Their virtues, if genuine, are no doubt, from a public point of view, valuable; but it is unquestionable that they are virtues frequently found in conjunction with narrow minds and timid spirits. If this class of men had a preponderating influence, human progress must cease. Moreover, ill-natured as it may seem, we cannot avoid observing that these virtues are simulated more easily, more naturally, and more unconsciously than any others. The citizen who has wealth and a dignified position

soon learns to pique himself on his exemption from vices to which he has no temptation, and poses, not without ostentation, as the "integer vitæ scelerisque purus." The merit he thus affects has also the advantage of being simple and obvious. As it may be coupled with the humblest capacity and the feeblest character, so it is by ordinary men most easily understood and most highly valued. The average mortal feels incapable of judging the aims and conduct of a Cæsar or a Cromwell. But if you tell him that Catulus was veracity itself,[1] or that Falkland ingeminated *Peace*, *Peace*, he feels that here are solid facts on which at all events he can make up his mind. The inference of course follows, that the party which received the support of such men must have been battling for the right. Capital punishment of citizens without appeal to the people, was as illegal at Rome as general warrants in England. But Cicero was a more respectable man than Clodius, and George Grenville than Wilkes. The systems attacked by Catiline and O'Connell may have been full of folly and injustice. But the men themselves have a bad name. They had an interest in disorder. They stimulated their followers to violence and insurrection. Whereas we know that Cicero and Cato, the Duke and Sir Robert Peel, were highly respectable men (whose interests were

[1] "Hoc verum est; dixit enim Q. Catulus."

bound up with order), and our sympathies must therefore go with them. Thus it is that not a few of the *enfants perdus* of political progress are more hardly judged by posterity, when the abuse they attacked is universally condemned, than by their contemporaries, while it is still an open question.

Of all the characters in history Catiline has been painted blackest. He is to the historians what Judas Iscariot is to the divines. The name itself has a wicked sound to us The very syllables of it seem to connote a monstrous depravity. We cannot hear it but there rings in our ears a confused hurtle of *incendia*, *cædes*, *latrocinium*, *audacia*, *furor*, *scelus*, *parricida*, *sicarius*, and other choice missiles from the Ciceronian armoury. We think of him not as a man, but as a demon breathing murder, rapine, and conflagration, with bloodshot eyes and pallid face, luring on weak and depraved young men to the damnation prepared for himself; a horrid portent rising from below, without visible cause or warning, like some earthquake or volcano, to scorch the fair face of civilisation and convert order into chaos.

In endeavouring to relate the story of Catiline calmly and consistently with common sense, I protest, by anticipation, against the supposition that I am amusing myself with maintaining a paradox. My sole desire is to do something towards the elucidation of a much misunderstood period of Roman

history. I care nothing about the memory of Catiline, except so far as he was the representative, for a time, of the revolution which it is sought to blacken through him, just as the French revolution is blackened by calumniating Danton and Robespierre.

Let us first endeavour to get some true conception of what the Roman revolution was, and what its course had been before Catiline became a prominent actor in it. It did not, like the French revolution, owe its birth to the growth of ideas and the progress of speculation. It was purely a revolt against intolerable practical evils. No government has been such a scourge to the governed, as was that of the Roman oligarchy during the last century of its existence. Some few of the emperors, maddened by the possession of absolute power, outraged and oppressed families or individuals who had become obnoxious to them, and indulged in freaks of cruel tyranny, which history has taken care to record. Asiatic despots have not seldom shown a sublime indifference to human suffering. Party leaders have been pitiless to opponents, and mobs have sometimes waded in blood. But the aggregate of suffering caused by such agencies appears trifling when compared with the systematic, the methodical torture inflicted by the Roman oligarchy on the Roman world. The government was entirely in the hands of the senate. The senate was composed of ex-

officials. Office was again practically unattainable except by "nobiles," men, that is, whose ancestors had filled offices. From Marius to Cicero, a period of forty years, there was no instance of a "novus homo" obtaining the consulship. Nor did the oligarchy choose the most capable men even from its own ranks. Oligarchies are always jealous of distinguished merit, and a Scipio or an Æmilius Paullus was only called to the helm when repeated disasters had shaken the state and discredited the governing class. Vast wealth was to be found among the nobility, but also vast indebtedness; for politics was an expensive pursuit, and no man could hope to succeed who was not as lavish in flinging away his money as he was unscrupulous in getting it. A young man spent all he had and all he could borrow in forcing his way to office. If he was known to be audacious and unscrupulous he found unlimited credit among the money-lenders, for office would be a certain mine of wealth. When his consulship or prætorship had expired he was assigned a province, and then he made his harvest. In the two or three years of his government he had to amass treasure enough to repay his creditors and to place himself in opulence for the remainder of his life. He had no salary; but his power was practically unlimited. He could therefore plunder the wretched provincials at his discretion. His operations were generally carried

on in the most open and shameless manner. The rod, the axe, and the cross were freely employed in the quest, for there was a cold pitiless barbarity about a Roman noble unknown in modern times, except perhaps among the slaveowners in America. While the head brigand swept off the richest prizes, his "cohors" or attachés flew at smaller game, and between them they managed, in the course of two years, to pick the prey tolerably bare. But this was not the worst. If Verres had been governor of Sicily for life, the position of the Sicilians would have been comparatively enviable. Pure selfishness would have taught him to give some protection to life, some security to property, if he did not wish to dry-up the sources of his wealth. Such an arrangement, however, was incompatible with the oligarchical system. Turn about is fair play. Verres and his suite may gorge for two years or even three; but at the end of that time he must give place to some hungry successor just arrived from Rome, he too with debts to discharge, friends to gratify, and a fortune to make. Can we be surprised that under this blasting system, whole districts went out of cultivation, whole towns became uninhabited?

Alongside the governing class at Rome was a moneyed class whose chief field of operation was also in the provinces. As tax-farmers and money-lenders they were a scourge hardly less terrible than

the officials. When an insurrection broke out in a provincial town the first thought of the populace invariably was to massacre the "cives Romanos qui negotiandi causa ibi constiterant." As in our own country, there was no love lost between the business men and the governing class. The noble sneered at the trader and the trader snarled at the noble, and sometimes brooded sulkily over his own exclusion from a political career. But upon the whole there was a tacit understanding between the two classes to divide the spoil. The middle class acquiesced in the monopoly of office by the nobles, on condition that the tax-farmer and money-lender were backed up in the provinces by official authority.

If the provinces were on the high road to ruin, Italy herself, the home of the conquering race, was in little better plight. It was a wise and time-honoured principle, established at a time when the gradual incorporation of Italy with Rome had not been arrested, that the provinces should furnish taxes, not soldiers, and Italy soldiers but not taxes. From fiscal extortion and its concomitant evils the Italians were exempt. But the Italians who enjoyed the enviable privileges of Roman citizenship were before the commencement of the revolution much less than half the inhabitants of the peninsula. The rest, men of the same or kindred stock who had done their share, and more than their share, in building

up the empire, shedding their blood on every battle-field from the Tagus to the Halys, were held in political bondage, and exposed in their native towns to the brutality and caprice of Roman officials. Moreover, throughout the peninsula—on Roman territory still more than on Italian—the free peasantry and yeomanry were being superseded by gangs of slaves, who cultivated the vast estates of wealthy proprietors. The free population congregated in the cities, particularly in the metropolis, where they formed a mass of pauperism every day more appalling to the thoughtful politician.

The dull people who have for the most part had the writing of history to themselves do not seem to have perceived that at the commencement of the revolution (B.C. 133) the greatness of Rome was rapidly declining. Industry dying out before slavery, commerce languishing, land going out of cultivation, population diminishing, frontiers receding, north and east menaced by barbarians, armies that could not fight led by generals that could not command—we have all the symptoms that characterised the final break up in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. The new military system inaugurated by the revolution, and the improved administration which is the glory of the empire, arrested this downward course, and gave the world five hundred years more of Roman civilisation. But to Scipio Æmilianus,

the last hero of the old *régime*, the end must have seemed not far distant.

Under such a complicated load of evils was the Roman commonwealth staggering, evils that clearly portended a fatal issue, evils not springing from natural and unavoidable causes, but distinctly traceable to the infamous system of government maintained by the nobility for the most selfish and sordid ends. This was the system round which the respectable friends of order (*optimates*) rallied, the Catos, the Ciceros, and the Catuli. This was the system which the irreverent advocates of reform (*populares*), the Gracchi, the Catilines, the Cæsars, strove to beat down. The reformers were not all pure-minded patriots, not all men of stainless lives. But if we would deal them even-handed justice, let us never forget what that thing was that they were labouring to destroy and their opponents to keep alive.

The Roman revolution was inaugurated by the Gracchi. Never had a good cause more noble champions. Not even the shameless mendacity of Roman party warfare dared to breathe a slander against their private character.[1] The elder, all enthusiasm, sentiment, and generosity, was born to be loved. The

(1) If Cicero had been their contemporary, with his theories on "Mendaciuncula," derived from his Greek models, the Gracchi we may be sure would have been handed down to us as stained with every vice that humanity most shudders at.

nobles beat his brains out in the street. The younger was cast in a sterner mould, and had the murder of an adored brother to avenge. The first really great man that Rome in six centuries had produced, imperial in his aims, fearless in his choice of means, he gathered up the whole force of the revolution in his single arm and smote the oligarchy with a mortal blow—

> "Moriens animam abstulit hosti.
> Tum super exanimum sese projecit amicum
> Confossus, placidaque ibi demum morte quievit."

The next crisis of the revolution was the attempt of Saturninus to make Marius chief of the State. The charges of vice and profligacy heaped upon Saturninus are, to say the least, unsupported by any trustworthy evidence. Cicero, who must have been well acquainted with many both of his supporters and opponents, although frequently speaking with detestation of his policy, nowhere says a word against his private character. There seems to be no reason to question that he was a sincere reformer endeavouring to carry out the policy of Caius Gracchus, which was in effect to incorporate the Italians with Rome, and to substitute a single ruler responsible directly to the people for the sham Republic. No doubt he resorted to violence. But how could he do otherwise when the nobility were ever ready to meet constitutional action by the bludgeon and the

dagger? His scheme, could it have succeeded, would certainly have been a blessing to Rome. It failed through the miserable political cowardice of Marius. The moneyed men, who had hitherto favoured the revolution, now turned against it, and the fall of Saturninus was followed by a real *terreur blanche*.

Drusus, who headed the revolutionary party in the struggle of 91, is allowed to have been a man of the loftiest character. An aristocrat by birth and temper, he called on the governing class to prove itself worthy of rule by rising superior to selfish greed, and exercising its functions as a duty not as a privilege. In particular he called on them to face the Italian question which had never slept since it had been stirred by Caius Gracchus. He was assassinated. He had fully expected it.

The next conspicuous leader of the revolution was the orator Sulpicius. His character too has been painted very black, without a shadow of evidence. It seems clear that he was an enthusiastic man, whose patience was exhausted by the cant of the conservatives, eternally prating about order and the laws, while they knocked on the head every man who attempted reform by constitutional means. They had appealed to the sword, and so would he. But a new force was now beginning to make itself felt. For the first time in the history of Rome an army

intervened in a political question. Sulla marched his troops on the city. The revolution was for the moment crushed, and its leaders, as usual, massacred. But no sooner had the champion of the senate departed for the East, than the irrepressible conflict broke out again. The senate was powerless. The constitution was virtually at an end. Cinna, and after him Carbo, were chiefs of the state, governing despotically by the will of the majority. Unfortunately, they were not fitted, either mentally or morally, for so serious a responsibility. The only solid result of their government—and that due more to the force of events than to the men—was the final incorporation of the Italians with Rome.

Again the political question hung on the shock of contending armies. Sulla returned with his veterans, and after two campaigns found himself absolute master of the Roman state. Too fond of ease and self-indulgence to care for empire, an aristocrat to the finger tips, Sulla re-established the oligarchical constitution in its stiffest form, having previously assured its duration for at least a few years, by the simple expedient of putting to death every one whom he thought at all likely to recalcitrate. But, like Herod and Macbeth, with all his precaution, he missed the important victim.

The first serious blows to the Sullan constitution came from an old partizan of its founder. The

history of the last twenty years had not been lost upon Pompeius. Cinna, Carbo, and Sulla had successively ruled Rome with absolute power. Pompeius looked on himself as their natural successor; and if he never openly asserted his position, it was because his inordinate vanity constantly led him to believe that it would come to him gradually without any effort of his own. The key to his vacillating career will probably be found in the hypothesis, that being a man of no originality and no earnest political convictions, his only idea was to repeat the career of Sulla. When that chart failed him he lost his reckoning and steered wildly. He wished to be the dignified omnipotent patron of the aristocracy, administering provinces by his lieutenants, occasionally undertaking some extraordinary function, but ordinarily sitting apart in sublime solitude with the Domitii and the Metelli kotooing, and the rabble cheering itself hoarse. Unfortunately, however, he never succeeded in convincing the nobles of the beauty and fitness of this arrangement. He could not persuade them that he was a man of Sulla's calibre. They thwarted his schemes. They sneered at his vanity. They despised his mushroom nobility. They believed that the constitution could stand without his protection, and studied to reduce him within the limits of oligarchic equality. Hence his coalitions with Cæsar, in which he imagined that he was

using his great rival as a tool to humble the nobles. He played with revolution. Cæsar meant it. The time therefore came when Pompeius was content to enrol himself with the nobles not as their master, but as their servant, though probably not without the secret resolution to make a clean sweep of "optimates" and "populares" alike had he conquered at Pharsalia.

If the appointment of Pompeius to carry on the war against Mithridates (B.C. 66) had been very unpalatable to the nobles, they had at least the opportunity, during his four years' absence, of playing their game without being thwarted by his opposition, or humiliated by his patronage. It was clear that a storm was impending. The merciless proscriptions of Sulla had cut off every man of influence and energy among the revolutionary party. But sixteen years had passed away, and with them the traces of that terrible depletion. New leaders had sprung up. Old grievances were flourishing rank as ever; and the pauperised masses, borrowing courage from despair, were once more confronted by the men of privilege, canting, unscrupulous, and ferocious as their fathers before them.

The history of the so-called conspiracy of Catiline, as hitherto written is absolutely unintelligible, except on conventional rules of probability, which may satisfy us in melodrama, but are out of place as

applied to real life. Some things in the past of course we cannot hope to clear up. We shall never know who the Hermokopids were, or who murdered Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, or how Darnley came by his death; and we may acquiesce, without shame in our ignorance, because, important as the effects in these cases accidentally were, the facts themselves are no more of a public nature than the Road murder. The investigation of them belongs, not to the historian, but to some detective, with a literary turn, retired from business. But we may not so dismiss the Catilinarian mystery. It is not creditable to the historian to be at fault when the evidence and probabilities to be balanced are strictly political. The thoughts and actions of individuals may baffle our scrutiny. But nations and societies, and even parties, act in obedience to simple motives and broad general principles. The footsteps of the solitary traveller may be easily lost. But he who would follow the track of an army has only to use his eyes.

If the story of Catiline is unintelligible, it is because the historians one and all have run away with the idea that Cæsar was at that time the leader of the popular party. Mr. Merivale, for instance, prefaces his history of the conspiracy by a picture of the popular party, in which he makes Cæsar the central figure. He "stood forth far more prominently

among his own associates, and gave more distinct expression to their aims than was the case with any one of the chiefs of the opposite faction. To that grand array of aristocratic gravity, of military renown, of learning and eloquence, of austere and indomitable virtue, were opposed the genius and resources of one man," &c. The Emperor Napoleon has not put forward this view more strongly than the English historian. Every law that is proposed emanates from Cæsar. Every prosecution is instigated by Cæsar. The idol of the populace is Cæsar. The very provincials rest their hopes on Cæsar. The sole thought of the oligarchy sleeping and waking is to parry the blows of Cæsar.

Well, but if this hypothesis be true,—if the masses follow Cæsar, and the wealthy classes Cicero and Cato,—where are we to look for the party of Catiline, the party which thought itself strong enough to revolutionise the state, and, according to Cicero, was within an ace of doing so? This is a question which sensible men are not ashamed to answer by maundering about "dissolute youth," "insolvent debtors," and "disbanded soldiers." Any explanation must be preferable to such transparent nonsense.

The fact is that the acknowledged leader of the popular party, after the departure of Pompeius, was not Caius Julius Cæsar, but Lucius Sergius Catilina. When Cæsar's grand career had closed, and men's eyes were still dazzled by the glorious effulgence,

they naturally ransacked their own memories or the traditions of their elders, if perchance they might glean some fragments of information respecting the early life of the hero. They did not gather much; for Cæsar's early years had not greatly impressed his contemporaries. What they did gather we may be sure they made the most of. Every anecdote was treasured up, and every anecdote is characteristic. Now the most characteristic anecdotes of great men are generally the least authentic. Perhaps they are not, for that reason, the less valuable, since they represent the impression a man has produced on the contemporary or succeeding generation. But we must be careful how we arrange them alongside of facts, or spin out inferences from them. Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dion Cassius, writing long afterwards, were naturally disposed to attribute an importance to little facts in Cæsar's early career, which in the eyes of contemporaries they certainly did not possess.

That previous to the affair of Catiline, Cæsar was by no means a leading man in his party may be very clearly proved. Every one knows that by far the largest part of our information respecting the period is derived from the works of Cicero, particularly from his letters and speeches. Previous to the fourth oration against Catiline, which was delivered in reply to a speech of Cæsar, we have sixteen orations, forming in bulk about half of those extant. We have

also eleven letters. Now it is a curious fact, and one which, as far as I am aware, has not hitherto been noticed, that in those orations and letters the name of Cæsar does not occur once. Nay, more, I believe it will be found that nowhere in his subsequent writings, though continually alluding to Cæsar, does he give the slightest intimation that before the affair of Catiline he was a man of consequence. Our other contemporary authority, Sallust, though a great admirer of Cæsar, is equally silent about his early career. Neither Cicero's fourth oration against Catiline, nor the speech of Cato on the same occasion, as reported by Sallust, treat Cæsar as the spokesman of the great popular party, which they could hardly have failed to do had he occupied that position. My own impression is, that the mettle Cæsar showed in that memorable debate first marked out as the champion of the revolution a man who hitherto had been popular indeed, but had not been regarded as a serious politician.

The man on whom the eyes of the revolutionary party were fixed after the departure of Pompeius was, I repeat, Catiline. Sallust tells us so in so many words, "Cuncta plebes Catilinæ incepta probabat."[1] Let us once understand this clearly, and Catiline's position becomes perfectly simple. He was the successor in direct order of the Gracchi, of Saturninus,

[1] De Conj. Cat.. xxxvii. 1.

of Drusus, of Sulpicius, and of Cinna, and was recognised as such both by friends and enemies. The popular cause, it must be owned, might have been in better hands; but it cannot be expected that the men who ride the revolutionary storm will always be men of the purest character. The more dangerous the task is made, the greater is the probability that none will undertake it but fiery, nay, desperate men, whom the passionate sense of wrong has made careless of consequences, both to themselves and others. It is fit and proper that when a Gracchus or a Drusus is murdered, the murderers should have to deal with a Catiline.

Who and what, then, was this man whose deeds and purposes brought upon him not merely failure and death, but a martyrdom of nineteen centuries, from which even his iron soul must have shrunk, could he have forseen it?

L. Sergius Catilina was sprung from one of the most ancient patrician families of Rome. His ancestors had been consuls and decemvirs when the Metelli and Domitii were clapping their chopped hands and throwing up their sweaty nightcaps on the Aventine or Mons Sacer. But the sun of the Sergii had long set. No Sergius had been consul since the burning of Rome by the Gauls. Catiline himself had, like Pompeius and Crassus, borne arms on the side of Sulla. It is, therefore, quite possible that,

like them, he may have been implicated in the butcheries of the proscription.[1] But when we remember the devotion with which he was followed in after years by the Marian party, we shall hesitate to believe that he was guilty of an act so exceptionally odious and horrible as the torture and murder, with his own hand, of M. Marius Gratidianus, a highly popular man, and a near relation of C. Marius. This tale is repeated as a matter of course by every historian; but let us see on what foundation it rests.

Quintus Cicero, in a letter to his brother Marcus, at the time when the latter was standing for the consulship, tells him that Catiline had murdered Gratidianus and also his own brother-in-law, Cæcilius. M. Cicero, in an oration delivered at the same time against Catiline, who was his competitor, and of which some disjointed fragments remain, appears to have advanced the charge publicly. This is the only contemporary evidence. What historians in later ages wrote, we may be sure they wrote on the authority of Cicero. Of the facts they would know no more than we do. Now every one who is acquainted with the ancient orators, both Greek and Roman, is aware that they never shrunk from the most impudent falsifications of fact when it served their turn. At

[1] The cruelties of Pompeius are well known. Crassus, without authority, inserted a man's name on the list of the proscribed, that he might get his property.

the present day, when contemporary history is recorded in a vast printed literature, easily accessible to every one at a moment's notice, a speaker is afraid to make assertions which would be proved to be false in all the newspapers next morning. But a Greek or Roman orator was under no such fear, and his most daring fabrications were commonly introduced by "*μέμνησθε γὰρ δήπου ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι*," or "Ecquis est vestrum Quirites qui non meminerit." Cicero's oration, "In Toga Candida," was an electioneering speech, in which his object was to paint Catiline as black as he could. The stories about Gratidianus and Cæcilius he probably got from his brother's letter, above alluded to, for he was himself absent from Rome during the proscriptions. But, it may be said, Catiline was prosecuted for the murder of Gratidianus. True; but when? Not till this very year. The murder of Gratidianus had taken place eighteen years before. It was one among hundreds of others, resembling it, no doubt, pretty closely in all its circumstances. It was now raked up by Cicero to discredit Catiline with his Marian supporters. Of the thousands who listened to the unscrupulous orator, how many would be able to say how Gratidianus came by his death? When once the charge was set afloat during a hotly disputed election, of course it would be repeated as an indisputable truth by the partisans of Cicero, and Catiline was put on his trial for it.

We are entitled to point to the fact that he was acquitted. The verdicts of Roman juries are not above suspicion. But Catiline himself was very poor, and the long purses were on the side of Cicero. An acquittal may not prove a man innocent; but still less does a prosecution prove him guilty. Sallust, our only other contemporary authority, while raking up everything disadvantageous to Catiline, says nothing of his share in the murders of the proscription, nor did Cicero himself ever again allude to it in his most unsparing invectives. It had served his turn for the moment, which was all he thought of.

The other stories which Cicero and Sallust set afloat, and Plutarch and Dion copied, cannot easily be disproved, for the simple reason that they are not supported by a tittle of evidence. Catiline has the misfortune to lose his wife and only son. Of course, he poisoned them. He has a large circle of friends who are never weary of his society. What more easy than to call them a gang of debauchees? If you had a political quarrel with a man at Rome, you accused him, as a matter of course, of all vices and crimes, natural and unnatural. These were the "mendaciuncula," the fibs, with which, as Cicero tells us in one of his treatises on rhetoric, a good orator will season his speech.[1] It was so much

[1] De Oratore, II. 59.

"common form." You were not liable to be called out, or horsewhipped, or indicted for a malicious libel. Even with these wholesome checks we know what queer stories will get about in England at an election, and what strong language Fizkin will use to Slumkey on the Eatanswill hustings. In England, these libels are soon forgotten; but in Rome they were precisely what remained and have been preserved, because they are imbedded in the speeches of a great orator. Our dull *littérateurs* have adopted them as serious facts, rather than confess how little we really know of ancient history beyond its broad features. Sallust admits, in two places, that he had no evidence for these scandalous stories, and that in the opinion of many they were trumped up by Cicero's friends after the execution of Catiline's partisans, in order to relieve the consul from the odium of that illegal act.[1] Nay, Cicero himself, seven years afterwards, confesses that Catiline enjoyed the intimacy of many of the best men in Rome, who esteemed him for the eminent virtues (maximæ virtutes) he *appeared* to possess. "There was a time," he says, "when he nearly imposed on me, even on me. I used to think him a worthy citizen, a man who delighted in the society of the good, a firm and faithful friend. His criminal enterprises came upon me completely by surprise. I have often

[1] De Conj. Cat., xiv. 7; xxii. 3.

since reproached myself with my mistake."[1] What! a man who had commenced his career by horrible cruelties committed in the face of Rome, who had notoriously murdered his nearest relatives, whose whole life had been passed in the public practice of the foulest and most unnatural debauchery, who had been a sort of professor of depravity among the most depraved wretches of the day—this monster could enjoy the friendship and respect of the best men in Rome! For my part I know what to think.

So much for Catiline's antecedents. There seems to be no reason to doubt that he had been of Sulla's party. Beyond this we do not know a single fact about him, good or bad. All we know is that he was considered a respectable man in the most respectable circles in Rome, and that, as he is admitted on all hands to have possessed some very fine and rare qualities, he must have been a man of mark and promise.

Catiline's public life covers the period from B.C. 68, when he was prætor, to B.C. 62, when he fell on the field of Pistoria. We have no information as to his prætorship. In 67 he went in due course to Africa as proprætor. When he returned in 66, Pompeius, hitherto looked on as the popular leader, was away in Asia, conducting the war against Mithridates, and the popular party was for the moment with-

[1] Pro M. Cœlio, 6.

out a head. The nobles were determined to take advantage of his absence to inaugurate a reaction.[1] The election of consuls for the ensuing year had fallen on Autronius and Sulla. The first was perhaps "ignobilis;" at all events, no Autronius had yet been consul. The latter, though a nephew of the great Dictator, had used his influence with his uncle to save many of the proscribed, and was now on the the popular side.[2] The oligarchy quashed the election on the ground of bribery, although for Sulla at least every century had given its vote, and declared the defeated candidates, Cotta and Torquatus, consuls for 65—a proceeding as outrageous as that of the House of Commons in 1769, when it declared Colonel Luttrell member for Middlesex. To this year belongs what is called the first conspiracy of Catiline. Evidently on his return he had stepped into the place of popular leader, vacant by the absence of Pompeius. He had supported the candidature of Autronius and Sulla, and he is accused of having now conspired with them to kill Torquatus and Cotta. The plot, it is said, failed through Catiline's not giving the signal at the right moment. There is no proof that this charge was seriously and publicly

[1] "Postquam Cn. Pompeius ad bellum maritimum atque Mithridaticum missus est, plebis opes imminutæ, paucorum potentia crevit."—*Sallust, de Conj. Cat.*, xxxix. 1.

[2] Cicero, pro P. Sulla, 26.

made at the time. Later in the year it was arranged that Catiline should stand on the popular interest for 64, and to prevent this the notorious Clodius was employed by the oligarchy to impeach him for malversation in Africa. Upon this trial Clodius brought up the story of the assassination plot. But the Consul Torquatus himself pooh-poohed it, and showed that he acquitted Catiline, at all events, of any share in it, by coming forward in his defence. Doubtless it would never have been heard of again but for the fierce passions subsequently excited. It is worthy of remark that Suetonius, upon the authority of Bibulus and the elder Curio, attributes this plot to Crassus and Cæsar, the latter of whom he says made the mistake about the signal. Catiline he does not even mention.

Catiline was acquitted of malversation; but the object of the oligarchy was gained. The impeachment had been so timed as to make it impossible for him to announce himself as a candidate before the period for giving notice had expired. We may imagine how his fierce temper was rising as he saw the game the oligarchy were determined to play. However, he at once commenced his canvass for 63. Among his competitors were Cicero and Antonius. Cicero was anxious to make common cause with Catiline, and to be nominated with him on the popular ticket. With this view he was anxious to act as

Catiline's advocate on his African trial.[1] But it was determined that Antonius should run with Catiline; and Cicero thereupon threw himself upon the nobles, and was put forward as their candidate. From this moment dates the furious hostility of Cicero to Catiline. Up to this time he had courted the revolutionary party. But he now sold himself to the nobles, and began to earn his wages by denouncing revolutionary measures, and the leader of the party, Catiline. Among the earliest efforts of his venal tongue in this direction were the orations, *In Toga Candida*, *De Lege Agraria*, and *Pro C. Rabirio*. It is in the first of them that the horrible charges against the early life of Catiline were made, for the first time, as far as we know. While accusing Catiline of abetting the cruelties of Sulla, Cicero was not ashamed to oppose the bill for restoring the children of Sulla's victims to their civil rights.

In the meantime the efforts of the oligarchy brought in Cicero at the head of the poll for the ensuing year, Antonius heading Catiline by a few votes. On January 1st, 63, Cicero and Antonius entered on office. Again Catiline renewed his candidature, and again the oligarchy concentrated all its

[1] We know all this from a letter of Cicero to Atticus (i. 2), in which he speaks as if he was already engaged in the case ("Indices *habemus*," etc.). Middleton has the effrontery to say that Catiline "had been soliciting Cicero to undertake his defence."

efforts to defeat the popular champion. To this object Cicero, inflamed by personal hatred and the proverbial bitterness of a renegade, devoted the whole period of his consulship. Judging from all former precedents, an appeal to force was imminent. The nobles were evidently resolved, by fair means or foul, to keep Catiline out of office. On the other hand, Catiline was not a man to submit tamely either to fraud or violence. Probably those did him no injustice who thought him capable of striking the first blow. Most certainly he did not mean to be knocked on the head like the Gracchi and Saturninus, whose cases Cicero was always quoting as wholesome precedents. If the nobles had their armed retainers and the vantage ground of authority and office, he had the populace of Rome on his side, and the peasantry throughout Italy, groaning under an infamous government, and ripe for revolution. Expecting from day to day that a *coup d'état* would force him into open resistance, he passed the word round to be ready for action. If he could obtain the consulship, of course there would be no civil war; and that he would obtain it appeared more and more likely as the day of election approached. Would the nobles let things take their course?

The moment for the *coup d'état* seemed to be come. On October 20th, Cicero got up in the senate and announced the existence of a plot. This was made

an excuse for postponing the election, and the next day Cicero called Catiline to account before the senate. The popular leader disdainfully scouted the idea of a plot. They were welcome to know his plans. The people had found its strength, and while he was alive, should not want a leader. Having said this, he abruptly left the house, amidst the groans of the assembled nobles, to the great disappointment of Cicero, who had hoped that he would be murdered on the spot—as he certainly would have been if Cicero had had the nerve of Nasica or Opimius.[1]

One thing, however, Cicero could do. He could talk; and talk he did. He employed the interval before the election in filling Rome with horrible stories of a plot. He made men's hair stand on end with his ravings. The conspirators had met in the dead of night. They had sworn a fearful oath. They had tasted each other's blood. They had killed a child and eaten its entrails. They had resolved to plunder and burn the city. Rome was mapped out into districts for conflagration.

Grossly improbable as such charges were, they were sure to damage Catiline; and by means of these manœuvres and a lavish expenditure of money, which disgusted even so violent an aristocrat as Cato, the nobility again managed to carry their candidates, Silanus and Murena.

[1] "Omnino vivum illinc exire non oportuerat."—*Cicero, pro Murena,* 25.

That Catiline may at this time have laid plans against the life of Cicero is probable enough. He was not a man whom we could expect to rise superior to the manners of his class. The nobility had never shrunk from assassination where it served their purpose; and Cicero, though he disliked it as applied to himself, could applaud it loudly where a Gracchus or a Cæsar was the victim. Assassination is a form of crime which has always been especially characteristic of oligarchic manners.

The triumph of the reactionary party was the signal for insurrectionary movements in several parts of Italy. We may be sure that Catiline was in correspondence with the insurgent leaders, just as in B.C. 91 Drusus had been in correspondence with Pompædius Silo. But it is evident that he was very reluctant to cast in his lot openly with the insurrection. Drusus, if he had not been assassinated, might have been driven ultimately to take refuge at Corfinium. The personal prowess of Catiline, and the devotion of his friends, probably saved him from assassination, though Cicero distinctly states that he would have had it done if he had thought that his single death would have broken up the revolutionary party.[1] On the other hand, such was still his popularity in Rome, that to get up a riot and lynch him and his friends, as had been done in the cases of the

[1] In L. Catilinam, iv. 12.

Gracchi and Saturninus, was too dangerous an experiment. Cicero therefore used every effort to drive him into the disaffected districts, and when the insurrection broke out in Etruria, on October 27th, Catiline's position at Rome became full of danger. Every one knew his relations with Manlius, the leader of the insurgents; and many who had sympathised with the wrongs and sufferings of an oppressed class, would range themselves on the side of authority when it came to civil war. The moneyed men particularly took fright at the spectre of communism.

Cicero now saw his opportunity, and summoned the senate for November 8th. On that day the Equites—that is to say, the moneyed men and nobles not in the senate—appeared in arms to overawe the populace, and Cicero, emboldened at the sight, delivered his celebrated "Quousque tandem" oration, in which he denounced Catiline as a public enemy The popular leader endeavoured to reply, asserting his attachment to his country, and appealing to his whole life, from his youth up, for the proof of it. But the nobles drowned his voice with their clamour; and his patience at length forsaking him, he flung out of the senate house, exclaiming that he was being driven to ruin by his enemies, but that if he must fall he would not fall alone. Returning to his house, he recommended his wife and daughter to Catulus, the head of the aristocratic party, in a simple and

dignified letter, which, as the Emperor Napoleon says, offers a striking contrast to the passion of Cicero. His conscience, he says, does not accuse him; he has endeavoured to act within the constitution; but he has been crushed by a conspiracy of unworthy men. Even while he writes he learns that the assassins are on his track; he has now no choice but to put himself at the head of the insurrection. The same night he left Rome for Etruria.

The nobles had thus gained their point. Catiline was a rebel, and an outlaw. "Les absents ont toujours tort" was true in a peculiar sense in Roman politics. Such was the veneration for Rome, the seat of empire—"Capitoli immobile saxum"—that in the civil wars the party who yielded possession of it were regarded, and regarded themselves, as rebels and enemies of the state. The flight of Catiline was followed by a proclamation offering large rewards to any one who should give information as to the plot. It is remarked as strange by the historians, that no such information was obtained. The fact is that there was no plot. There was a large political party, numbered by tens of thousands, and its leaders were in correspondence with the insurgents in Etruria. An exact parallel is to be found in our own revolution. Pym and Hampden openly headed a powerful party. But of course they had their private consultations, and no one doubts that they were in

correspondence with the Scotch insurgents. That there was an organisation in Rome for the purpose of burning, slaying, and plundering is a supposition too ridiculous to be seriously discussed.

The leadership of the Catilinarian party in the city now devolved on P. Lentulus, an elderly man, who had been consul eight years before. He was in no respect equal to the task, but age and official rank always conferred precedence amongst Romans.[1] The first step of this man, his negotiation with the Allobroges, ruined his cause. The sword of Cæsar had not yet relieved Rome from the constant dread of the Gaulish avalanche impending over Italy. Once suspected of inviting the barbarian, the revolutionary leaders were fatally discredited. Even the mob, according to Sallust, turned against them. The famous debate of December 5th shows that the government felt itself much stronger. Even Cæsar, while courageously protesting against an illegal sentence, did not dare to extenuate the guilt of the criminals. If the nobles hung back at first, it was because they hoped that their hireling, Cicero, would take the responsibility and odium upon himself. This, however, he was determined not to do, and their courage was at length screwed to the sticking-place by the cynical frankness of Cato, who told them that if

[1] This is one among many reasons why Cæsar could not have been an influential leader before the affair of Catiline.

they wished to preserve their palaces, villas, and other luxuries, they must take their share of the work.

The execution of Lentulus and his companions was a barefaced and deliberate violation of the most solemn article of the Roman constitution, which provided that no citizen should be put to death without an appeal to the people. It was much as if Charles I. had succeeded in arresting the five members, and had gone on to execute them by a vote of the House of Lords or the Privy Council.

The name of Cæsar had not been mentioned by the Allobroges. But some of the wire-pullers of the aristocratic party, particularly Catulus ("Hoc verum est, dixit enim Q. Catulus!"), who thought that advantage should be taken of the excitement to clear away all undesirable persons, urged Cicero, and even offered him money, to make the Allobroges, or some other informer, accuse him.[1] Cicero, however, thinking, no doubt, that he had done a good-day's work for his patrons, declined to run himself into more danger.

The little army of Catiline died round their leader like the Spartan Three Hundred round Leonidas at Thermopylæ. Even Sallust cannot withhold his admiration, and rises into a genuine enthusiasm as he describes the closing scene. "All wounded in front;

[1] "Q. Catulus et C. Piso neque pretio neque gratia Ciceronem impellere quivere, uti per Allobroges aut per alium indicem C. Cæsar falso nominaretur."—Sallust, De Cat. Conj. 49.

not a man taken alive; Catiline himself gasping out his life ringed round with corpses of his foemen." The world has generally a generous word for the memory of a brave man dying for his cause, be that cause what it will. But for Catiline none. The execrations of nineteen centuries lie piled on the grave of the successor of the Gracchi and the forerunner of Cæsar. It is not good to make a literary man your enemy.

Catiline and Cicero were not merely political opponents. The natures of the two men were thoroughly antipathetic. Cicero thought that society existed for the glory of clever writers and eloquent speakers. The strength of character and prudence which make the practical statesman were in his eyes very vulgar qualities. He shrank with dislike and fear from a resolute man. He reverenced constitutional forms as framed in the interest of talkers. His idea of good government was a state of things where talkers should always have full swing, and be listened to with respect, while rough practical men should humbly do their bidding. If he had lived in our time he would have written in the *Saturday*, and had his views about the representation of minorities.

Catiline, on the contrary, was the man of action, who would rather see a thing done than hear it talked about. Not deficient in intellect—far from it; but with an intellect of the practical sort, quick, decisive,

intuitive. He looked on Cicero as a coward and babbler. It made his gorge rise to see the complacent orator mount into the rostra and go through his feats. And then to think that this windbag, this prating knave, "that never set a squadron in the field nor the division of a battle knows, more than a spinster," has talked himself into the first magistracy of a military commonwealth, while I, Lucius Catilina, a soldier every inch of me, with every masculine quality, with a dauntless heart and a ready hand, with a special gift for ruling my fellows, must stand aside, year after year, because my family has gone down in the world, and I have no stake in the country!

An unequal struggle. The man of letters has had the ear of the world ever since, and has told his story without contradiction. More than that, the literary men have stood by one another, as they always do—like game-preservers or Whitechapel thieves; and each in turn has pointed his stale moral with the fate of the unlucky wight who dared to beard the patriarch of their tribe. *Οὐδ' ἄρα οἵ τις ἀνουτητί γε παρέστη.* But the true character of the Roman revolution and of Roman parties has of late years been much better understood. As the greatness and goodness of Cæsar were more ungrudgingly recognised, the character and aims of his precursors could not fail to meet with fairer treatment. The first writer who has thought it

necessary to bring his account of Catiline into some accordance with common sense and probability is, as might have been expected, not a literary man, but a practical statesman. But the Emperor Napoleon's determination to make Cæsar a hero from his cradle has to some extent led him astray in his estimate of Catiline. I will not affirm that I have completely succeeded in painting the man and the situation as they were, for the attempt to restore a likeness from a comparison of caricatures must always be attended with more or less uncertainty. But if I have done any injustice, it has not been to the Roman oligarchy, but to Catiline.

B.C.	Consuls.	
62	D. Junius Silanus L. Licinius Murena	Cæsar suspended from Prætorship. Catiline defeated and slain. Clodius intrudes on the rites of the Bona Dea. Pompey lands in Italy towards the end of the year.
61	M. Pupius Piso M. Valerius Musalla	Trial of Clodius. Cæsar goes to Spain as Proprætor.
60	L. Afranius Q. Cæcilius Metellus Celer	Cæsar returns from Spain. Coalition of Pompey, Cæsar and Crassus against the Nobility.
59	C. Julius Cæsar M. Calpurnius Bibulus	Clodius made a Plebeian and elected Tribune for 58.
58	L. Calpurnius Piso A. Gabinius	Clodius Tribune. Banishment of Cicero early in the year. Cæsar goes to Gaul. Pompey quarrels with Clodius and makes overtures to Nobility.
57	P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther Q. Cæcilius Metellus Nepos	Bill for recalling Cicero defeated Jan. Bill for recalling Cicero carried Aug. Cicero returns Sept.

CLODIUS.

GROSS as are the improbabilities in the vulgar account of the so-called conspiracy of Catiline, the commonly received narrative of the events which followed it, down to the return of Cicero from exile, is even more incoherent and insulting to common sense. We are asked to believe that, stained with the blood of the popular leaders, Cicero was respected and beloved by the vast majority of Roman citizens, and that the troubles which subsequently befell him were simply the result of a personal quarrel with Clodius. To maintain this paradox—for a paradox it must appear to any one accustomed to reflect on political phenomena—the *ex parte* statements of the least trustworthy of ancient writers have been adopted by modern historians as sober truth; his carefully cooked narratives have been

cooked over again till the basis of fact has entirely disappeared; his glaring self-contradictions have been harmonised by arbitrary assumptions, or glossed over with unmeaning rhetoric; and that most constant and calculable of forces, popular sentiment, has been treated as though it were more unreasonable, inscrutable, and fortuitous than the whims of a capricious individual. The origin of this extraordinary conspiracy to disguise an interesting period of history, is partly to be looked for in the credulous unphilosophical spirit, the ignorance of practical politics, the conservative tone of mind, and the literary *esprit de corps* too common among historians. But it is partly due to another cause. The modern writer, accustomed to the voluminous materials from which modern history is drawn, frets at the obscure and meagre narratives which have descended to us from the ancient world. He is not satisfied unless he can produce a full and vivid representation of events, with ample details as to the actors, and warm, sensational colouring for his scenes. He has therefore a strong temptation to believe the most copious and graphic of his authorities, and to shut his eyes to awkward symptoms of mendacity. He cannot make up his mind to confess that we know very little about the details of ancient history. Professor Kingsley tells him that "history is the history of men and women, and of nothing else;" so if portraits of

"men and women" cannot be procured, he must make shift with caricatures.

To determine the broad features of ancient history is not difficult to the properly trained observer; and more than those broad features the philosopher does not desire to know. We might be well content, therefore, to leave the trivial details about "men and women" to scholars, gossips, and antiquaries, if they could indulge their taste without a serious perversion of such important passages in history as the Roman Revolution. There we must resist them, and establish the truth, even though in doing so we have to shock an amiable spirit of hero-worship. I would be the last to deny that the dead have a right to justice at the hands of posterity. "Si l'on ne doit aux morts que la vérité, au moins leur doit-on la vérité." The man who would consciously libel the memory of a Greek or Roman statesman for the sake of strengthening some favourite theory of his own, merits the gravest reprobation. Only, in reviewing the past, as in ordering the present, it is too often forgotten that masses of men have a claim to justice no less well-founded than individuals; and that tirades against the corrupt mob, and sneers at a fickle populace, are, if ill-founded, none the less reprehensible and offensive because the humble individuals who composed those aggregates sleep in forgotten graves. I protest that I have a genuine sympathy for all that

condign: merited.

is amiable and attractive in the character of Cicero. But I cannot forget that he took the wrong side in the politics of his country—nay, that he hired himself to do the work of a vile party. To conceal this is to do injustice to thousands of men who might not have been able to work a rule of three sum for Mr. Clay,[1] but whose political instinct told them where the shoe pinched and how it might be eased.

I propose on the present occasion to show that the lower orders of Rome, who had loved and trusted Catiline, exhibited a consistent and determined hostility to the man who had hunted their hero to death to please the oligarchy; that they seized the first opportunity to visit him with condign punishment; that the subsequent reversal of the sentence was carried in the teeth of their opposition; and finally that the prime agent in a most just retribution was not Clodius, but Cæsar.

The destruction of Catiline had been a triumph for the oligarchy over the democracy. It had all the marks of a genuine *coup d'état* of the old sort, such as those which had disposed of the Gracchi and Drusus. The nobles had gained it themselves without the detested aid of a great soldier. There never yet was an oligarchy, however rotten and tottering, which did not think its chances of permanence fair; and the senatorial party, without one able politician

[1] A qualification for the franchise proposed when this essay was written.

amongst them, pleased themselves with the belief that they had won a victory more satisfactory than even that of Sulla. There was, indeed, a great soldier campaigning in the East, at the thought of whose return they could not but feel rather nervous. But the hotter spirits were prepared to defy even Pompeius. The Senate, they told one another, could hold its own, whether against military tyrants or turbulent demagogues; the day for both, in fact, was gone by; the wealthy middle class had at last made common cause with the aristocracy; the alliance had been sealed in the blood of Lentulus and Cethegus; property and respectability must in the long run be too strong for the mob. As Victor Hugo says, "C'est une chose étrange, que la facilité avec laquelle les coquins croient que le succès leur est dû."

It was true there were symptoms far from reassuring. The populace was not cowed. When Cicero was about to make the usual harangue to the people on laying down his office, he was silenced by the tribune Metellus Nepos, a recognised agent of Pompeius, on the ground that he had executed citizens without a trial. Baulked of his speech, he cried aloud that he had saved his country, and he assures us that his exclamation was received with sympathising cheers. That the nobles standing round him exerted their lungs is probable enough; but as he

seems not to have ventured to address a popular assembly again, down to the time of his exile, it is reasonable to infer that other and less agreeable sounds reached his ears.[1] I may say here, once for all, that I cannot attach any weight to the statements of Greek writers who lived two centuries later, and followed Cicero as blindly as his modern biographers. Besides, if Plutarch and Appian are quoted in support of the applause, I am entitled to point to Dion, who says that *the people* would not allow Cicero to speak.[2] From Cicero himself what account could we expect? Does he, on any single occasion, admit that he was hissed?

Conscious of the illegality of the punishment inflicted on Catiline's friends, the Senate had passed an act of indemnity for all the agents in that violent deed, and had resolved that any person impeaching them for it should be held as a public enemy—in other words, served the same. Such a resolution was in itself utterly illegal, and Metellus announced his intention of proposing to the people a bill for recalling Pompeius with his army to restore the violated constitution. But he was not allowed to address the

[1] There is only one passage in his correspondence during this period which may perhaps imply that he had addressed the people. This was on the agrarian law of Flavius in 60, which Cicero supported against the will of the Senate to please Pompeius. Ad. Att., i. 19. Taking such a line he would perhaps be tolerated.

[2] Dion., xxxvii. 38.

people. Cato placed his hand over the tribune's mouth when he tried to speak. A riot naturally ensued; the Senate eagerly proclaimed martial law, and the consul Murena "took instantly a body of soldiers into the Forum and restored order."[1] The Senate then proceeded to depose Metellus from the tribunate and Cæsar from the prætorship—an assumption of power utterly unknown to the constitution; upon which Metellus thought it prudent to make his escape to his patron, Pompeius. When Pompeius and Cæsar are accused of violating the constitution, let us remember that it had already been torn to shreds by the oligarchy.

The proceedings above-mentioned belong probably to the first month of the year 62. It was on the night of the first of May[2] that Clodius was caught

[1] Forsyth's "Life of Cicero," i. 136.

[2] This is the date expressly assigned by Ovid (Fasti v. 147), for the festival of the Bona Dea. No statement to the contrary is to be found in any ancient author. Yet the crime of Clodius is placed by all modern historians in December, 62. Why? Because no fuss seems to have been made about it till the beginning of 61, and the first notice of it is found in a letter of Cicero to Atticus (i. 12) of Jan. 1, in that year. Drumann (ii. 204) says that Cicero there speaks of it as of recent occurrence. But his words have not necessarily such a meaning: "P. Clodium, Appii F., credo te audisse, cum veste muliebri deprehensum, etc." If the crime had received little attention during eight months and was now being raked up for a political purpose, it is not unnatural that Cicero should refer to it in such terms. It must be remembered that there is no letter to Atticus extant for the year 62. Catiline was

in woman's clothes in the house of Cæsar, where the Roman ladies were celebrating the rites of the Bona Dea, from which all males were jealously excluded.

What the political career of Clodius had been up to this time is not recorded. He was still a very young man, and had been much absent from Rome on service in Asia and Gaul. It seems, however, to be agreed that he was a prominent member of the democratic party, nor is there any other way of accounting either for the extraordinary *acharnement* of the nobles, or the interest the people took in his cause. Cicero's assertion that he owed his popularity to this outrage is a calumny against the Roman democracy, none the less disgraceful because it is ridiculous. When Catiline took up arms, Clodius left the city for the purpose of joining him, but changed his mind, and returned.[2] He afterwards (if Plutarch is to be believed) formed one of Cicero's body-guard at the execution of Catiline's friends, probably for the same reason that Peter warmed him-

not prosecuted for the murder of Marius Gratidianus, nor Rabirius for that of Saturninus, till much longer periods had elapsed.

Of the other passages referred to by Drumann (ad Att. xv. 25; v. 21; vi. 1.), the first proves nothing one way or the other, and the last two seem to me rather to point to May as the date of the festival. His suggestion that Augustus altered it to that month is unsupported by any authority.

[2] Asconius, in Ciceronis Milonianam, 55.

self at the High Priest's fire. He was an impetuous eloquent, and dissolute young man, though probably not more dissolute than a hundred other young noblemen who do not happen to have offended Cicero. With his peculiar reasons for hating Clodius, it is not strange that Cicero, who could touch so playfully on the debaucheries and Mohock pranks of his favourite Cælius, should never mention the affair of the Bona Dea without a hurricane of strong epithets. But why, in the name of all that is genuine and sincere, should learned and reverend gentlemen of the present day work themselves into a passion and pump out floods of moral indignation, because in the year 62 before Christ a young Roman did not believe that he would be struck blind if he peeped at the rites of the Bona Dea? It seems to me that if Roman manners had allowed Cæsar, or any other male relation of the ladies compromised, to give the offender a sound horsewhipping, the requirements of the case would have been amply satisfied. No man of any education and culture believed in these ancient superstitions. The most religously inclined were Deists. Undoubtedly there was still much superstition among the vulgar, and the nobility tried to work upon it. Still, if Clodius had not been politically obnoxious, his affair would never have been exalted into a *cause célèbre*. As it was, no notice was taken of it for seven months. It happens that we

know nothing about the later half of the year 62, owing to a blank in Cicero's correspondence, or we should probably find that Clodius had given some fresh offence to the oligarchy.

In the beginning of 61 the Senate determined to take the matter up, and directed the consuls to propose a bill to the people for bringing Clodius to trial, not before a jury selected by lot in the ordinary way, but before a jury nominated by the Prætor. I do not know that it can be ascertained who the Prætor for this year was. But remembering the violent proceedings of the year before, we are not surprised to learn that, with the exception of the consul Piso and the tribune Fufius, all the magistrates of 61 were in the interest of the Senate.[1] Here, therefore, was a manifest attempt to crush a political opponent by means of a packed jury. The consuls, as directed, proposed the bill, though Piso did not conceal his disapproval of it.[2] The popular feeling, as might have been expected, was strongly against it. Cicero says it was opposed by the gang of Catiline and the agents of Clodius (grex Catilinæ—operæ Clodianæ), and that voting tickets in the negative alone were furnished. It is an old story. Those who like may believe it. There are people to this day who assure

[1] Cicero, Ad. Att., i. 14.

[2] Piso autem consul lator rogationis idem erat dissuasor.—Cicero Ad. Att., i. 14.

you that Napoleon III. obtained his throne by tampering with the ballot-box.

When the nobles saw how things were going, they broke up the assembly, apparently by violence,[1] and the Senate met to deliberate. After an exciting debate it was resolved that the consuls should again propose the bill, and that no public business should be transacted till it was carried. Such an outrageous resolution illustrates the spirit of these Roman Conservatives, and proves that they were animated by some stronger motive than a desire to punish an offence which for seven months they had not thought worth noticing.

At this point it becomes necessary to lay before the reader the vulgar account in order that its irrationality may be clearly understood. I give it in the words of the latest biographer of Cicero. "Hortensius, however, fearing that the tribune Fufius Calenus would interpose his veto if the bill was passed by the people, and so render it a dead letter,[2] proposed that Fufius himself should bring forward a bill declaring, like the other bill, that Clodius's offence was sacrilege, but providing that the jury should be chosen by *lot* out of the *decuriæ*. This was intended as a com-

[1] Concursu optimatum comitia dimittuntur.—*Ibid.*

[2] Observe the coolness of the assumption that the bill would have passed. And Mr. Forsyth ought to know that a tribune's veto was interposed, not after a bill had passed, but before it was put to the vote.

promise, for it limited the number of persons out of whom the jury could be formed, and so diminished the chances of having a needy and corruptible set, and yet preserved at the same time the principle of fairness in not selecting the names. But Hortensius felt so confident that Clodius must be convicted, that he was indifferent as to what kind of tribunal tried him." [1]

If an historian can explain a difficulty, let him do so, and we will thank him. If he cannot explain it, let him state the difficulty and leave it, and we will also thank him. What I cannot understand is the satisfaction some people seem to find in plastering over a difficulty with words, and affecting to give a solution which they must be aware is no solution at all. Neither Mr. Forsyth nor any one else, as far as I am aware, has given an explanation of this trial which a serious inquirer can accept. The statement that the bill of Fufius declared Clodius's offence to be sacrilege is not only absolutely unsupported by any ancient author, but is, when one comes to think of it, unmeaning nonsense. No one disputed that it was sacrilege, or rather "incestum." Equally untrue is it that the bill of Fufius introduced any novelty whatever into the constitution of the jury. It was the ordinary practice "that the jury should be chosen by lot out of

[1] Forsyth's "Life of Cicero," i. 151.

the decuriæ." I defy any one to show that Clodius was not tried exactly like any other criminal.

And yet that there was a compromise is evident. In what did this compromise consist? I make bold to say that the historians have hitherto gone upon an entirely wrong scent.

In the early period of the Roman commonwealth there were no permanent courts of justice. A criminal was tried before the whole people, acting in its legislative capacity, either in the *comitia centuriata* or *tributa*, the difference being that a consul or prætor presided in the former, a tribune in the latter. Each sentence was in fact a *law* for that special occasion. The first modification of this usage was the appointment of a committee of the people to try an offender under the presidency of a prætor (*Quæstio*). A further modification was when permanent machinery of this kind was provided for trying certain classes of crime (*Quæstiones perpetuæ.*) All these *Quæstiones perpetuæ* had been appointed by the people assembled in *comitia tributa*, and being regarded as mere committees of that assembly, they could not inflict capital punishment, a prerogative of which the *comitia tributa* had been deprived at the time of the Decemviral legislation. The *comitia centuriata* (or a committee of it, had such existed) could sentence to death. But during the later period of the commonwealth the *centuriata* had practically become obsolete except for

the election of magistrates. All important business was transacted in the *tributa*, of which, as I have said, the *Quæstiones perpetuæ* were offshoots.[1]

Now, when the oligarchy wanted to try Clodius, I should be glad to know before what court they were to bring him. There might be clear laws against *incestum*. But unless *incestum* came under one of those classes of crime for which *Quæstiones* had been established, there was no means of setting the law in operation. There were *Quæstiones perpetuæ de Repetundis*, *de Sicariis et Veneficis*, *de Parricidio*, etc., but none *de Incesto*. It was a *casus omissus*. On such a difficulty arising, the ordinary course would have been for a tribune, upon the requisition of the Senate, to have proposed the necessary law to the *comitia tributa* for the creation of a new *Quæstio de Incesto*. When the law was carried, the usual number of jurymen (*judices*), probably seventy or eighty, would have been selected by lot from the *decuriæ*, and after the usual challenges on the part of accuser and defendant (*rejectiones*), the remainder would have been impanelled, under the presidency of the prætor, to try the accused.

Such would have been the ordinary procedure. But I imagine that on this occasion the oligarchy, in the spirit of presumptuous violence which they had

[1] See the lucid and philosophical treatment of this subject in Mr. Maine's Ancient Law, chap. x.

manifested since the *coup d'état*, were bent on nothing less than galvanising the *comitia centuriata* into a new life for the purpose of creating by its instrumentality a *Quæstio* to try Clodius. They promised themselves two advantages from this course: the first was, that in creating a new *Quæstio*, a new method of selecting a jury might be introduced; the other was, that a *Quæstio* emanating from the *comitia centuriata* would have the power of sentencing to death. It is astonishing that amidst all the discussion about this celebrated trial, no one should have drawn attention to the significant fact that, though all the tribunes except Fufius were on their side, the Senate direct the *consuls* to move the bill, and that after one failure it is still the *consuls* whom they require to renew the attempt; and this, though one of these magistrates was doing all in his power to defeat the measure which he was obliged in his official capacity to introduce. Why was not a tribune employed in the usual way? There can be but one answer to the question. A tribune could not convoke or set in motion the *comitia centuriata*, and it was by that assembly that the Senate was determined to act. It is true neither Cicero nor any other authority mentions that the bill was moved in the *comitia centuriata*. I presume that for a Roman such information was not necessary, because to tell him that a bill was moved by a consul was equivalent to telling him that it was moved in

the *comitia centuriata*. This point being established, I can see no more probable motives for the policy of the Senate than those I have suggested above; the desire, namely, to pack a jury, and to obtain a sentence of death. There were, it is true, features in the organisation of the *comitia centuriata* which made it somewhat less democratic than the *tributa;* its origin and traditions were less offensive to the oligarchy; but I cannot for a moment suppose that they would have convulsed Rome for so trifling an advantage.

After resolving, then, to propose the consular bill a second time, the Senate had at the last moment flinched from the dead lock that would have ensued if Fufius had met its resolution with the tribunitian veto. Fufius undertook to bring in a bill himself in the ordinary way—that is, in the *comitia tributa*—for constituting a *Quæstio* to try Clodius. With this compromise the Senate was forced to content itself. The attempt to institute a *Quæstio* emanating from the *comitia centuriata*, the power of packing a jury, the satisfaction of executing Clodius—these much-desired objects it had to forego. But as the facts charged against Clodius could not be seriously disputed, as the jury would be certain to contain many of his political opponents, as superstitious feelings might influence many who were his political supporters, the Senate counted almost with certainty

upon obtaining a verdict of guilty, and the infliction of a serious penalty.

The court was constituted, and the trial was conducted, I repeat it, by the ordinary rules. L. Lentulus for the prosecution, and Curio *père* for the defence, challenged as many jurors as the law allowed. At last a jury of fifty-six was impanelled. Clodius set up an alibi, which Cicero was called by the prosecution to disprove.[1] Dio Cassius tells us that he was tried, not only for the affair of the Bona Dea, but for mutinous conduct when serving in Asia, and for incest with his sister; which evidently only means that the accuser, after the usual fashion, raked up all the stories, true or false, that were current about him. Eventually he was acquitted by a majority of six.

Cicero, of course, says that the majority were bribed; and, looking at the notoriety of the facts

[1] Niebuhr, in his lectures (vol. iii. p. 28 of the English edition), says that Clodius "had the impudence to call Cicero as his witness," but that Cicero "not only bore witness against Clodius, but gave free expression to his indignation, and said things which would necessarily have brought about the condemnation of Clodius, had he not purchased his acquittal." This is all a pure invention of Niebuhr's. Cicero, writing immediately after the trial to Atticus (i. 16), expressly tells him that he had said as little as he could: "Contraxi vela, neque dixi quidquam pro testimonio nisi quod erat ita notum atque testatum ut non possem præterire." Niebuhr tells us that he loves Cicero as if he had known him, and that he had obtained a thorough insight into his character by studying that of Frederic Jacobi. Perhaps he found out what Cicero said on the trial in some similar way.

charged against Clodius, historians have unhesitatingly accepted his statement, even to its most incredible and disgusting details. For my part, I see no necessity for such an hypothesis; and I need hardly say that in this and similar cases Cicero's assertions are worthy of notice just so far they are probable, and no further.

In an English court of justice every effort is made to narrow down the discussion to a simple issue of fact. Every irrelevant allegation on either side is jealously excluded by the presiding judge. Usage and public opinion prescribe a course to the jury from which they cannot deviate; though even in England, on political trials, the animus of jurymen leads them sometimes to disregard the evidence. But at Rome, a State trial, though technically relating to a specified act, virtually dealt with the whole life of the accused. Nor was this all. The jury looked on it as their duty to take into consideration other circumstances which we should deem still more foreign to the question. Among these notoriously was the political bearing their verdict would have. A Roman jury never forgot that it was in some sort a committee of the Legislative Assembly. No one can admit more fully than Cicero himself that they not only were at liberty, but were bound to let such considerations weigh with them. In his oration for Flaccus, he says:—"Jurymen of good sense and

high character have always, in giving their verdict, taken into consideration what was demanded by the interests of the community, public welfare, and the exigencies of State."[1] Again, in his oration for Murena, he calls on the jury to acquit his client of bribery, because a verdict of guilty will give encouragement to the partisans of Catiline.[2]

But there was yet another reason why a Roman jury assumed the right of acquitting an accused person, even when the specified charge was proved beyond doubt. Their sentence could not be revised or modified. The prerogative of mercy, which with us belongs to the crown, at Rome rested with the jury. The functions and responsibilities which in England are divided between the jury, the judge, and the crown, at Rome devolved on the jury alone. This important fact appears to be entirely overlooked by historians, who moralise so loftily on the corruption of Roman courts of justice. They might much more reasonably assume the depravity of the Home Secretary

[1] Semper graves et sapientes judices in rebus judicandis, quid utilitas civitatis, quid communis salus, quid reipublicæ tempora poscerent, cogitaverunt.—Pro Flacco, xxxix. Lord Ellenborough, in charging the jury on Peltier's trial, had the indecency to tell them that "he trusted their verdict would strengthen the relations by which the interests of this country were connected with those of France."—State Trials, xxviii. 618.

[2] Pro Murena, xxxvii.—xl.

when he reprieves a criminal, after a verdict of guilty has actually been found and sentence pronounced.

Now let us place ourselves for a moment in the position of a citizen of the popular party who finds himself designated by lot to serve on the jury of Clodius. He feels that this prosecution has been commenced solely with the view of ruining one of the prominent champions of his party. He knows, on the one hand, that there is not an educated man in Rome who believes in the existence of the Bona Dea; and, on the other, that chastity is a very uncommon virtue among young patricians. He remembers that this very act was for seven months treated as a matter of no consequence. He has looked on while every art was tried to take the investigation out of the hands of a regular tribunal, and commit it to a jury specially packed by a tool of the oligarchy. Two years have not elapsed since he saw his political leaders put to death in open contempt of law by the same men who are now availing themselves of the forms of law to crush Clodius. The prosecutors, by arraigning the whole life of the accused, virtually place this issue before him:—Do you think Clodius so bad and dangerous a citizen that the first opportunity ought to be seized for punishing him? To such a question, the citizen who had selected Clodius as his political leader could return but one answer. As far as I can see, if I had been on that jury, my

answer would have been the same. I would no more have sacrificed Clodius to that lawless and malignant oligarchy, than I would have given the late Lord Campbell an opportunity for stretching the meaning of a statute to hang Dr. Bernard.

The alibi raised by Clodius merely amounted to a plea of not guilty. It was not believed, or probably intended to be believed, by anybody. The object of calling Cicero, of all men in the world, to disprove it, is evident. It was hoped that a sensational scene might be got up by producing him in court. In a letter to Atticus, full of the most laughable vanity he asserts that there was such a scene, and that the jury were evidently ready to lay down their lives for him. Knowing as we do from his own words what the complexion of the majority of this jury was, we learn what to think of these certificates of popularity which the orator is always transmitting to his correspondents. Probably the twenty-five Conservatives were noisily demonstrative, thereby not improving the temper of their thirty-one Democratic colleagues. Cicero tells Atticus that he lost all interest in the matter after the idea of proceeding by a consular bill was abandoned, and that on the trial he said as little as he could help, and nothing but what had been amply established by other witnesses. This statement has been overlooked by Mr. Forsyth, who suggests that Cicero may have been the only man in

Rome who could disprove the alibi.[1] The fact is, that all the writers who have treated this question are possessed with the idea that the evidence given by Cicero on this trial was the cause of the ill-will borne to him by Clodius, and that the enmity of Clodius was the cause of Cicero's banishment; both of which suppositions are entirely untrue. Clodius knew that Cicero had come forward, not to give evidence, which was quite superfluous, but from a restless itching to be conspicuous, and a desire to please the oligarchy. The incident was no doubt irritating to a defendant, but it weighed for very little in the war which followed. Cicero nowhere, as far as I know, attributes his troubles to it. In fact, though the trial had taken place in the spring of 61, we do not find in his correspondence anything to show that he anticipated an attack from Clodius till the end of 59. That during all this time a bitter personal hostility was growing up between the two orators is of course admitted. But it did not result from the trial. It arose from the speeches subsequently made by Cicero in the Senate, in which, as he frequently informs Atticus with much glee, he has been "smashing" Clodius (Clodium præsentem fregi in senatu). When the moment came for the orator himself to be smashed,

[1] Clodius pleaded that he had been at Interamna, fifty miles from Rome, at the time of the outrage; whereas he had called on Cicero that very morning.

Clodius was naturally ready enough to be the instrument. But Cicero's fall was due to causes much more serious and deep-rooted than his feud with Clodius, causes which I shall now proceed to explain.

The *coup d'état* of 63 had been made possible by the absence of the great fighting man in the East, and by the alliance between the governing and moneyed classes, for effecting which Cicero takes so much credit to himself. But both these conditions of success soon passed away. Towards the end of 62 Pompeius returned. Every one felt that the reaction was over when he set foot in Italy. That he would resume his old policy of clipping the wings of the oligarchy seems to have been looked for as a matter of course. The only doubt was whether he would not lead his army straight to Rome, and call the Senate to account for the murder of the Catilinarian leaders and the illegal deposition of Cæsar and Metellus Nepos. But Pompeius was a slow-moving politician. His vanity was never disturbed by the fear of a rival. He felt himself master of the situation, and rather took a delight in dallying with it. We may safely affirm that to have both parties in the State larding him with flattery and hanging on every ambiguous word that fell from his lips was more exquisitely delicious to a man of his paltry character than the actual exercise of government. He avoided giving any decided opinion on the trial

of Clodius, and during the rest of the year 61, though steadily paying court to the populace, and taking care to celebrate his triumph with unprecedented splendour, he took no direct part in politics. The consequence was that the nobles, forgetting their first awe, began to hold him rather cheap, and showed an indisposition to ratify his acts in the East, or to provide allotments of land for his veterans. Before the end of the year he had found out his mistake. The nobility were not yet sufficiently humbled for his purpose. He would have preferred, if it had been possible, to step serenely into a quasi-regal position by the acquiescence of the nobility, rather than to storm it indecorously at the head of the mob. But the mountain would not come to Mahomet; so there was nothing for it but to ally himself with the sworn enemies of the Senate, and revert to the policy of his first consulship.

His colleague in that consulship had been Crassus. They had signalized their year of office by upsetting the oligarchic constitution framed by Sulla. It was to Crassus he now again looked for support. The influence of the celebrated millionaire naturally lay with the moneyed men, and although Cicero affected to be the representative and patron of that class we may be sure they looked on him much as the hop-growers look on Sir Fitzroy Kelly.[1] Their real

[1] At the time when this essay was first published Sir F. Kelly was the parliamentary champion of the hop-growers.

representative was Crassus. Now it happened that in 61 the Senate, stupidly elated by its victory over Catiline, and beginning to undervalue Pompeius, had mortally offended the moneyed men, and Cicero was moaning over the dissolution of the alliance which he had taken such pains to patch up. Crassus had stood by his business friends, and could now depend upon them to back him in an assault upon the Senate.

Cæsar was at this time in Spain as pro-Prætor, and in his absence Clodius was the most prominent leader of the popular party. Conscious that his peculiar vocation was to sway a mob, Clodius had decided to divest himself of his rank as a patrician, which prevented him from filling the tribunate; for though any one invited by a tribune could address the *comitia tributa*, it was of course much more convenient to wield that assembly with his own hand. Exasperated but not materially weakened by the destruction of Catiline, recovering its courage when the return of Pompey drew the fangs of the reactionists, the popular party was now prepared to renew the assault on the senatorial government. Naturally its first wish was to punish the chief agents in the *coup d'état*, particularly Cicero. He was well aware that he had sinned past forgiveness. His eternal accounts of the applause which greeted his appearances in public have misled the historians into the belief that he was really popular in the interval

between his consulship and his banishment. The thing is utterly incredible. I have no doubt that the father of his country was invariably hooted by the mob. It is true he does not confess it. But does he ever own to being hissed, or even received with coolness, on any single occasion throughout his career? I have already said that he seems to have fought shy of the rostra between his consulship and his exile, reserving his oratory for the Senate and the courts of law. But notwithstanding his careful silence as to the contumely heaped upon him by the populace, he betrays the truth by the pleasure with which he describes one solitary occasion when he had been spared his usual *charivari*. With respectable people, he tells Atticus, he stands just as he did; with the vile mob he is on much better terms than he was; the acquittal of Clodius, in spite of his evidence, had put it in better humour; and so his "unpopularity had been painlessly let blood."[1] Another reason, he says, was that he was looked on as the bosom friend of Pompeius; "and in fact I am so much in his company, that they call him *Cnæus Cicero;* and so at the games and gladiatorial show I was received with wonderful applause without any

[1] Noster autem status hic est: apud bonos iidem sumus quos reliquisti; apud sordem urbis et fæcem multo melius nunc quam reliquisti. Nam et illud nobis non obest, videri nostrum testimonium non valuisse. Missus est sanguis invidiæ sine dolore. (Ad. Att., i. 16.)

hissing" (Mirandas *ἐπισημασίας* sine ulla pastoricia fistula auferebamus).[1] How many pair of hands it would take to send Cicero home a proud and happy man, every one must judge for himself; but it is very evident that the "hissing" of the unwashed had lately formed an unpleasant accompaniment to the clapping of the front benches.

It was apparent now, even to so dull a reader of the political barometer as Cicero throughout his career showed himself to be, that the democratic party, backed by Pompeius, would soon be dominant; and to his mortification he had discovered that his noble friends, for whom he had incurred so much odium, were ready to sacrifice him when the day of retribution should come. He had therefore attached himself to Pompeius as the only protector who could shield him from popular indignation, and, studiously abstaining from politics, devoted himself to his profession of advocate.

Pompeius had commenced operations after his usual oblique fashion, by procuring the election of his creature Afranius to the consulship for the year

[1] "He had associated himself to the Smith, whose motions he had watched for the purpose of joining him, for it was Oliver Proudfute's opinion that men of action showed to most advantage when beside each other; and he was delighted when some wag of the lower class had gravity enough to cry out without laughing outright, "There goes the pride of Perth,—there go the slashing craftsmen, the jolly Smith of the Wynd, and the bold Bonnet-maker."—*Fair Maid of Perth.*

60. But it was not till the return of Cæsar from Spain in the summer of that year that the attack was conducted with any vigour. To Cæsar no doubt is to be ascribed the plan of action resolved on by the three leaders. The Senate was to be humbled. The chief agents of the *coup d'état* were to be punished. The acts of Pompeius in the East were to be ratified, and his veterans provided with land. Cæsar was to be consul, and in that capacity to execute the scheme of the coalition. Clodius was to co-operate as mob-orator, and the coalition were to promote his adoption into a plebeian house, with a view to the tribunate.

Cæsar's election was carried in spite of a profligate expenditure of money by the nobility, towards which even the strict Cato contributed his share. The first measure of the new Consul on entering office, in January, 59, was to propose an agrarian law, which triumphed over the fierce opposition of the nobles. The other Consul, Bibulus. an obstinate oligarch, was unable to show his face in public. Cæsar acted as if he was sole Consul. Then came the impeachments of Antonius and Flaccus, both of them odious for their share in the *coup d'état.* When the verdict was given against Antonius the people dressed Catiline's tomb with flowers.[1] Cicero knew that he was marked

[1] Cicero, pro Flacco, xxxviii.

out for popular vengeance, but he trusted that his new patron Pompeius would protect him.

Early in the year, Clodius, by the aid of Cæsar, was enrolled a Plebeian. Historians uniformly represent him as taking this step for the sole purpose of gratifying a blind animosity against Cicero. If there is a childish way of explaining a political movement, a literary man will generally adopt it. He is irresistibly attracted by what is petty and personal, as he is repelled and alarmed by the idea of an orderly evolution of human affairs. It is so easy, and to the vulgar mind so agreeable, to attribute the Persian invasion of Greece to a curtain lecture of Atossa's, or the English Reformation to the pretty face of Anne Boleyn. The fall of Cicero was as much due to the quarrel with Clodius about the *alibi*, as the fall of Strafford to his quarrel with Vane about the title of Raby. Cicero's letters to Atticus at this time, while repeatedly alluding to the adoption of Clodius, contain no hint that he looked on it as having any special reference to himself. Towards the end of the year, indeed, he begins to get alarmed. The populace was not satisfied with the punishment of subordinates. It demanded justice on the arch-criminal himself; and Clodius, irritated by the abuse and obscene jests with which Cicero mercilessly pelted him, made no secret of his intention to call him to account. In this he was undoubtedly acting in con-

cert with the coalition, and especially with Cæsar, who, though personally sorry for Cicero, was determined that justice should not be baulked. Amnesty for rank and file is good; but it would have been the height of weakness to spare a leader so guilty and so unrepentant as Cicero. Pompeius acted the basest part conceivable. Over and over again he pledged himself to his *protégé* that no harm should befall him. Cicero felt that his patron was playing him false, but with characteristic weakness clung to this treacherous support. From Crassus, his old foe, nothing but hostility was to be expected.

It is impossible to read Cicero's correspondence during this year without feeling the most profound contempt for him as a political observer. He refused to open his eyes to anything he did not want to see. He will have it that Pompeius, Cæsar, and Crassus, are the most unpopular men in Rome. The masses are full of devotion to the Senate. Cato and Bibulus are the favourites—Bibulus who had been driven into his house by popular fury, and did not venture outside it again during the rest of his year of office; In the theatre hits at Pompeius are the signal for applause. Probably Cicero sitting among the senators in the stalls tried to persuade himself that their petulance was a sample of popular feeling.[1] If he did, he

[1] In Paris, during the hottest period of the Revolution, the reactionists for the most part had it their own way at the theatres.

was destined to learn the truth soon by bitter experience.

Clodius came into office at the close of 59, and lost no time in proposing and carrying a series of democratic measures. With strange perversity we are asked to believe that "the true design of all these laws was to introduce only with better grace the grand plot of the play—the banishment of Cicero." The punishment of Cicero was a logical and practical necessity of the policy of the coalition. Instead of proceeding by the tedious and uncertain method of an impeachment, Clodius proposed a law that "whoever had put to death a Roman citizen without trial should be banished." Then was seen a spectacle that must have been very sweet to all who had suffered or trembled at the time of the *coup d'état*, and who remembered that terrible day when Cicero, surrounded by the nobles and moneyed men with their drawn swords, had led his prisoners through the Forum to the place of execution. Now he might be seen in a squalid dress, followed by a train of crest-fallen aristocrats, and pelted with mud and stones while he strove to excite the compassion of his fellow-citizens. He tells us that "twenty thousand men" (senatus hominumque viginti millia) went into mourning with him. Sanguine as he was of obtaining the applause of posterity, he perhaps hardly expected that the historians would solemnly one after

the other repeat his wild exaggeration, as a reliable statistical fact.[1] But his humiliation availed him as little as the authority of the Senate. "People were mistaken," as Gabinius said, "who thought the Senate was going to have its way this time; the moment was come for those who had trembled to take vengeance." Cicero was banished to a distance of four hundred miles from Rome. If ever a statesman had merited capital punishment it was Cicero; but from the fatal defect in the Roman constitution already alluded to, the penalty which ought to be reserved for high political crimes could not be inflicted, and the populace (ever and everywhere less blood-thirsty and more law-abiding than an oligarchy) did not apply to their fallen enemy the precedent of violence he had himself established. Cæsar, while inflexibly carrying out the programme which justice as well as policy prescribed, harboured nothing of malice in his open, kindly heart. He was really

[1] Mr. Forsyth says that twenty thousand *of the noblest youths in Rome* testified their attachment, etc. Middleton says that "the whole body of the knights and the young nobility to the number of twenty thousand *perpetually attended him about the city.*" London is nearly ten times as large as Rome in the time of Cicero; but "twenty thousand noble youths" would be rather difficult to get together even in the height of the season. One would think, too, that to pelt twenty thousand noble youths with mud would be hardly safe to the pelters. Perhaps if we cut off a couple of figures from 20,000 we shall be near the mark.

sorry for Cicero, whose amiable qualities he was perhaps singular among his contemporaries in liking, and to break his fall he had offered to take him to Gaul as his lieutenant. But Cicero flattered himself that his sentence must be revoked in a few days, or, at most, weeks. His correspondence paints Cæsar and Pompeius to the life. The latter he charges, and justly so, with hypocrisy, meanness, and treachery. Cæsar, on the other hand, is a straightforward opponent, hard as steel in what he had determined. Not for a moment does it occur to the accused man that there will be any use in attempting to work on Cæsar's feelings. But there is not an insinuation against his candour and good faith. From Cicero such silence is eloquent. It was this perfect simplicity of character that carried Cæsar, as it carried our own Cromwell, to immortality. The representative of all that Cicero most dreaded and disliked, he is the only man of that time who has no cause to regret that his portrait hangs in the Tullian gallery.

Cicero's behaviour under adversity is a subject on which I have no wish to dwell. My aim is not to persecute the memory of an individual, but to set the Roman Revolution in a clear light, and strip off the false colours with which the anecdote-mongers have bedaubed it. It is their fault if a rational narrative cannot be built up till this or that man's false reputation has been demolished. Let us hasten to

examine the circumstances under which the sentence of banishment was reversed.

The ups and downs in Cicero's life are a well-known text to stupid sermons on popular fickleness. I maintain that "popular fickleness" is a phrase that literary men — particularly the poorest of them, journalists and historians—have invented to hide their own incapacity for tracing the orderly evolution of political events. The people are not fickle. Perhaps their most striking characteristic, especially under democratic institutions, is the staunchness and obstinacy with which they cling to views and beliefs once embraced. Let any one think of all the stupid, common-place people he knows—the largest part, that is, of his acquaintance. Do they ever change their minds? Or if they do sometimes change, is it not always in obedience to "the logic of facts," as the modern phrase is,—in submission, that is to say, to defeat? They are not the men to turn with the tide and ride in on the wave of success. No; they drop in, silent and unnoticed, when there is no credit to be gained and their adhesion is valueless. There is little to be said for their intelligence, but it is a shame to rob them of their character. When circumstances favour their principles they are noisy and demonstrative. But there comes a time when things go against them. Their principles seem to fail in application, and they are obliged to hold

their tongues. Then the opposite party crow and triumph. But where is the fickleness? You might as well charge a meeting of the United Kingdom Alliance with fickleness because the room in which they are passing decorous resolutions resounded yesterday with the toasts of a dinner of licensed victuallers. A small unstable per-centage there may be, which is swayed by every gust; but the majority of average men are very slow to change.

I have shown, I trust satisfactorily, that the Roman populace, in banishing Cicero, were acting in a natural, consistent way. I am now about to show that they persisted steadily in the same sentiments, and that the reversal of the sentence was accomplished in defiance of their wishes. Such an assertion may startle those who have read of the unanimous vote of the *comitia*, and the triumphal entry of the Father of his Country, borne, as he says, upon the shoulders of Italy. What ought to have startled them is the gross improbability of the story they have always been asked to believe.

Cæsar's consulate had come to a close at the end of 59. Eager to depart for his province of Gaul, where he was to enter on his military career, he nevertheless lingered outside the walls of Rome with a small armed force until he had seen the banishment of Cicero carried into effect. Then at last he turned his face northwards. Thrown as he had been into

close communication with Pompeius during the last year and a half, it is impossible that his penetration should not have thoroughly fathomed the feebleness and duplicity of him who was still supposed at Rome to be the coming man; and when he left to his care the programme of the coalition, it must have been with considerable misgivings as to his ability or willingness to carry it out for any length of time. But he could hardly have anticipated that the fretful incapacity of his ally would spoil everything before the year was out. As long as Cæsar had been on the spot, Clodius had known his place, and had proved a valuable instrument in the hands of the coalition. But no sooner was Cæsar's back turned than the tribune took the bit in his mouth. Even he had found out Pompeius, and to his irreverent spirit there was perhaps something amusing in treading on the toes of the solemn impostor. What the points of collision were it is unnecessary to mention here. Clodius may have been actuated merely by private ambition. But it is at least as likely that he suspected Pompeius of betraying the democratic cause. However that may be, the man of war, swelling with offended dignity, and forgetting the great game he had undertaken to play, in his impatience to crush his antagonist, made overtures to the nobility,—in other words, dissolved the coalition.

The terms of the nobility of course were the re-

establishment of the senatorial government and the recall of Cicero. The first condition Pompeius might hope to evade; but the second had to be executed in advance; and in conjunction with the nobles he paved the way for it by "engineering" the elections, as the Americans say, for the year 57. The new consuls were Lentulus Spinther, a staunch partisan of the Senate, and Metellus Nepos, long known as a tool of Pompeius, who had hitherto made himself conspicuous by baiting Cicero, but was now prepared at the bidding of his patron to promote the orator's recall. The compact between Pompeius and the senatorial leaders was made as early as May, 58, but it was probably kept quite dark till after the elections in July.[1] Cicero had already been apprised of what was in contemplation, and had ventured to write to Pompeius, but it does not appear that he got any answer from the cautious dissembler. In the meantime Pompeius had written to Cæsar to obtain his consent. It is clear that the answer must have been unfavourable; for, later in the year, Cicero's devoted partizan, Sextius, went into Gaul on the same

[1] There had been a motion in the Senate for Cicero's recall in June, which Mr. Forsyth says was made with the approval of Pompeius. I know not what authority he has for the statement, and it is highly improbable; for we know that Pompeius recommended that nothing should be done till the elections were over. Cicero, Ad. Att., iii. 13, 14, 18.

errand.[1] We may take it as certain that Cæsar steadily refused to stultify himself by giving any consent to this imbecile reversal of the policy of the coalition.

If Pompeius had shown his hand before July, perhaps not all his influence combined with that of the nobles would have carried the elections. But, as it was, there were only two tribunes to head the democratic party. On January 25th, 57, in spite, as it seems, of the veto of the tribune Serranus, the Senate caused a bill for the recall of Cicero to be submitted to the people. A riot ensued. Serranus and Q. Cicero were both wounded. The tribune Milo (a desperate ruffian, who afterwards murdered Clodius with the warm approval of Cicero) was besieged by the mob in his house. This time the unconstitutional attempt to ignore the tribunitian veto was defeated. Cicero, of course, says that Serranus was bribed with

[1] Cicero professes not to know what Cæsar said to Sextius, which is of course absurd. "Quid egerit, quantum profecerit, nihil ad causam. Equidem existimo, si ille (ut arbitror) æquus nobis fuerit nihil ab hoc profectum: sin iratior non multum." (Cic. pro Sextio, 33.) I may here remark that Cicero uniformly affects ignorance or uncertainty about the course Cæsar had pursued. Obvious as his motives are for doing so, he has effectually thrown the historians on a wrong scent. Mr. Forsyth, for instance, speaks of Cicero being "disappointed that Pompey *and Cæsar* did not declare themselves more openly in his favour" (i. 213). Even if there were a line of Cicero to support such a statement, which there is not, to credit it would show a hopeless misapprehension of the situation.

the gold of Clodius, and that the assembly was broken up by the gladiators of Clodius. We have not got the Clodian version of the story. But we may guess it from the fact that Cicero's friend, the tribune Sextius, was afterwards prosecuted for having resorted to violence, and that Cicero himself, in a work written eleven years afterwards, praises Milo for his public spirit in providing gladiators at his own expense on this occasion.[1]

I have not wasted much of my space in transcribing the preposterous language of the historians, but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting Mr. Forsyth's innocent reflections on these proceedings.

"All Italy—the Senate, the two consuls, all the tribunes, with one exception, Pompey and Cæsar (who was, however, absent), the two foremost men of Rome, an overwhelming number of the nobility and respectable class of citizens, wished for Cicero's return, and yet the wishes of all were frustrated and their actions paralysed by the violence of one bold, bad man. But the explanation is easy. Every Roman burgher had the franchise, and his vote was as good as that of the wealthiest and most powerful citizen. . . . . There was no true balance of power in the constitution. No law could be passed without an appeal to universal suffrage, and what the sovereign people chose to ordain, even when legal formalities were not observed, had generally the force of law." (i. 216.)

Exactly so. Every Roman burgher had the franchise. No law could be passed without an appeal to

[1] Cicero de Officiis, ii. 17.

universal suffrage. That is just the reason why I decline to accept the lazy hypothesis of "one bold, bad man." That my vote should outweigh the votes of twenty people who disagree with me, and whose interests are opposed to mine, may possibly be very right and expedient; but if it is to be called a true balance of power we may as well shut up the English dictionary.

The sentiment of the people had been unmistakably declared in January. In that sentiment they persisted through the spring and summer, in spite of the influence of Pompeius, the authority of the Senate, and the gladiators of Milo. The Senate at last resolved on desperate measures. The citizens of the municipal towns in Italy had the right of voting in the *comitia* at Rome, but practically they never exercised it. Their interest centred in their own town, with its assembly, senate, and magistrates. They were no longer the independent yeomen who had cheered on the noble brothers, the proto-martyrs of the revolution, and sworn to live or die with the beloved Drusus.[1] The industrial population had perished, or found its way to Rome, and the govern-

[1] "I swear that those shall be my friends and those shall be my foes who are friends or foes to Drusus; also that I will spare neither mine own life nor the life of my children, or of my parents, except so far as it is for the good of Drusus." (Oath of the Italians. Mommsen, iii. 232. Translation.)

ment of a *municipium* virtually lay with the wealthy or comfortable slave-owners. The political sympathies of these men, so far as they troubled themselves with imperial politics, would be with the governing class at Rome—the only class with which officially they came into contact. They neither knew nor cared what went on in the Forum or Campus Martius. They had always looked on the Senate as the supreme authority in Rome. Their municipal constitution had been organised by Sulla in the days of the reaction. They had an idea that Pompeius stood in Sulla's shoes, that he was the coming man, and that it was the correct as well as the safe thing to back him.

The Senate determined to employ this class to crush the democratic opposition at Rome. Letters were written by the consuls to the authorities in the municipal towns that all "qui Rempublicam salvam vellent" (all, that is, who could be depended on to support the Senate) should come to Rome to vote for the recall of Cicero. Pompeius himself made a progress through many of these towns to stimulate their action. The result was that large numbers of Italians were collected in Rome on an appointed day, and under cover of these bands the Senate passed a resolution that any tribune exercising his constitutional right to impede the bill for the recall of Cicero, should be treated as a public enemy—in other words,

knocked on the head; and if the bill was not passed within the next five days of meeting, the exile should return without it.[1] The Italians were then thanked for their attendance, and charged to be in Rome again when tho day should come for voting the bill. Accordingly on the fourth of August, 57, the city was again filled with Italians pledged to support the Senate. The consul Lentulus convoked the centuries. The officers whose business it was to distribute the voting-tickets and take charge of the ballot-boxes (*diribitores et custodes tabularum*), were set aside for this occasion, and their places filled by noblemen.[2] After such precautions it is superfluous to say that the bill was carried. If it was carried, as Mr. Forsyth says, "with hardly a dissentient voice," the farce only appears the more absurd.

Cicero enlarges with wonderful superlatives on the triumphal progress which he says he made through Italy on his return to Rome in September. That the Greek cities in the south may have received him with demonstrations of joy I think quite possible, be-

[1] There is no possibility, I believe, of fixing the date of this first visit of the Italians to Rome. Middleton places it on the 25th of May, and Mr. Forsyth gives May without specifying a day.

[2] If this was merely the statement of a Clodian partisan, I should not ask any one to believe it, But it rests on the authority of Cicero himself, who mentions it twice. Post Red. in Sen., xi.; In Pisonem, xv.

cause we read of their welcoming Pompeius with similar extravagance seven years afterwards; on which occasion Cicero sneers at their enthusiasm as "ineptum sane negotium et Græculum."[1] But nothing shall make me believe that the acclamations he speaks of in the streets of Rome, came from any but the nobles, the followers of the nobles, and the Italians who surrounded his carriage. Within three days after his return (when his Italian partisans had no doubt gone home) the populace drove the Senate out of the Capitol with showers of stones, and Cicero was afraid to show his face. In November we find him walking about Rome with a guard of armed men to protect him from the mob. His house, which he is rebuilding, is pulled down. The house of Milo is assaulted. If Cicero was a favourite with the Roman populace, they certainly dissembled their love most successfully.

Beyond this point the scope of the present enquiry does not carry me. I have endeavoured to give a rational and consistent account of the events which have been distorted so audaciously by Cicero, and so credulously by his admirers. It will not be pretended that I have made a hero of Clodius. I disclaim all desire to blacken Cicero, for whom it is impossible not to feel kindly as a man of

[1] Tusc. Disp., i. 35.

warm, open heart, sprightly temper, infinite cleverness, and a genuine, though sadly embarrassed, love for virtue; amusing, but never offensive, in his vanity; and striving, even in his least justifiable actions, to persuade himself that he was working for a good end. But I cannot consent that the history of the Roman Revolution should be made more incoherent than

> "A tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing,"

in order to force it into harmony with the prepossessions of literary men. No one who has thoroughly conceived the rottenness of the oligarchical government, the vileness of the Senate itself, the mediocrity of its leaders, the misery of the Roman world, incalculable alike in amount and intensity, but will draw breath more freely when he enters at last on the splendid calm of two centuries, unparalleled hitherto in the history of the world, which followed the battle of Actium. The "fæx Romuli," the "swinish multitude," is entitled to the credit of having steadily pushed forwards to this consummation. The high-born, the wealthy, the educated, resisted it with sword and halter, bludgeon and knife. "Not many wise, not many noble," wrote St. Paul, stating a fact, though he could not explain it. If he had lived in

our day he would have said that the proletarian class has naturally a breadth of view which education, unless positive in its spirit, only tends to impair.

B.C. 42	Tiberius born. (Battle of Philippi.)
„ 12	(Æt. 30) Marries Julia.
„ 6	(Æt. 36) Retires to Rhodes.
A.D. 2	(Æt. 44) Returns to Rome.
„ 4	(Æt. 46) Adopted by Augustus.
„ 14	(Æt. 56) EMPEROR.
„ 26	(Æt. 68) Withdraws from Rome.
„ 37	(Æt. 78) Death.

TIBERIUS.

(A LECTURE DELIVERED AT BRADFORD, MARCH 27, 1867.)

PART I.

I HAVE to-night to bespeak your patience and impartiality while I endeavour to deal fairly and dispassionately with one of the most celebrated names of ancient history. I do not under-estimate the overwhelming weight of prejudice against which I have to contend. Emperors are not looked on with favour in England—neither modern nor ancient emperors. And of all who have borne that unpopular title in ancient or modern times, perhaps not one has been regarded with such detestation as the Emperor Tiberius. Most educated people have read something about him in their boyhood, and the very name calls up to their recollection images of gloomy misanthropy, of life-long hypocrisy, of slow but implacable hate, of remorseless cruelty. A city crouching in terror through a long reign, the air heavy with an odour of the dungeon and

the reek of blood, a wearisome monotony of state trials, the spy invading the family circle, the executioner ever plying his halter, a loathsome old man wallowing in foulest excesses in a secluded island, where neither groans nor curses can reach him—such is the picture transmitted to posterity by the most eloquent of historians: a picture how false, how contradictory, how insulting to common-sense, I shall endeavour to show you to-night. Do not suppose that I take a perverse pleasure in maintaining a paradox. I value history too highly to trifle with it; and it is because I grieve to see two hundred years of history turned into nonsense that I would fain bring the light of common-sense to bear on the character and work of some of the leading personages of the Roman Revolution.

Before dealing with Tiberius himself, it will be proper to give some general view of the political and social state of the Roman world in which he moved. You are all aware that the Republic (as it is called) was overthrown by Julius Cæsar; that the murder of that incomparable man was followed by a period of civil war and anarchy; that his nephew Augustus at last established himself as sole ruler; and that after a long reign Augustus was succeeded by his stepson Tiberius. Now I must first ask you to dismiss from your minds all those prepossessions in favour of the Republican Government which are

derived from its name. It was no Republic. It was that worst of all governments, the monopoly of power by a privileged class. You know what that means. A single man ruling with despotic power must take some thought for the well-being of his subjects, or his reign will not last long. But a privileged class with immense landed property, with a degraded agricultural population crawling below its feet at an immeasurable depth, snarled at and worshipped by the moneyed men who hope one day to enter its ranks, wielding its power through the agency of a deliberative assembly consisting mainly of noblemen and their nominees—such a class, I say, can perform with security feats of injustice and oppression from which a despot would recoil with dismay. Wrapping up its arbitrary action in solemn constitutional jargon, evading responsibility by dividing it, arrogating a popular origin by the farce of popular election, it has not one, but a thousand greedy maws to be filled at the public expense, a thousand idle hands ready for any mischief, and (let us add) in the day of retribution a thousand necks where the despot has but one. Such a class was the Roman aristocracy. Such a deliberative assembly was the Roman senate.

There had been a time when this aristocracy had ruled by the best of all titles—that of merit. But that time had long gone by. The descendants of

the men who had tamed and organised Italy, who had beaten back the Keltic barbarian, who had struck down Carthage and Macedon, had lost every private and public virtue that had distinguished those old nobles, retaining nothing but their obstinacy and ferocity. Their fathers had conquered the world, and they were devouring it. Such a horde of blood-suckers and extortioners never before or since fastened on an oppressed people. A groan went up from the whole civilised world. When the great nobles had shorn their wretched subjects, the moneyed men came and flayed them. The plunder of the world was poured into the imperial city, where it was lavished in political corruption and vulgar luxury. This state of things could not have lasted long. It was not this which Rome had promised to the nations when she incorporated them. If Cæsar had not risen up and taken this vile oligarchy by the throat, the solid fabric built up by six centuries of patient toil and devoted patriotism must have collapsed; the barbarians prowling round the frontiers would have burst in, and the era of Alaric and Attila would have been anticipated by four hundred years.

Was there, then, no popular party at Rome, you will ask—was there no humbler class there, as in other countries, bestridden by an aristocracy—a class which suffers from bad government, and bears

it with impatience? There was; and its struggles to put down the oligarchy convulsed Rome during the last century of the Republic. But oligarchies die hard. While the people is moved by sentiment, by belief in abstract principles, by gusts of passion, a priviledged class keeps one end steadily in view the preservation of its privileges. It acts together like one man. Its aims are narrow, but they are definite and precise. There is no waste of force. Each man is closely and permanently interested in maintaining the position. The instinct of self-preservation is a low one; but there is none which calls forth such concentrated and sustained energy. It is thus that we must explain the protracted resistance of the Roman nobility to a democracy apparently so superior in all the elements of political force, and (let me observe in passing) possessed of manhood suffrage and vote by ballot. When corruption and trickery would not avail, these noblemen were always ready to resort to violence. Sometimes the popular leaders were secretly assassinated. Sometimes they were openly lynched. Sometimes martial law was declared, and the Tiber ran thick with corpses. When all other means of resistance were exhausted, Italy was plunged into civil war. A great general with a veteran army, after a frightful slaughter among the democratic party, re-established the Senatorial Government for the last time. But

a greater than Sulla was growing up to manhood. In Julius Cæsar the oppressed people at length found their champion. They had learnt, by a long and painful experience, that the so-called Republican Government was a sham; that its venerable machinery of popular assemblies and elective magistracies, however it might have worked in small communities, such as the free cities of Greece, or as Rome herself had been in earlier times, was totally unadapted to her present position as the capital of a vast empire. The old Republican constitution, so far from being a security for liberty, was merely a convenient instrument for aristocratic misrule. The people carried Julius Cæsar to power, in order that he might crush privilege and establish something like equality. That was the leading idea of the Imperial system as carried out by Julius, Augustus, and Tiberius, its three great founders. They were, in fact, tribunes and champions of the people against the nobility, and of the provinces against Rome. Only, instead of relying upon oratory, and agitation, and street demonstrations, and monster meetings, they carried a sharp sword. So, at length, the aristocracy was tamed.[1]

[1] "Cette première phase de la dictature fut dignement installée par deux types éminents, qui méritent d'être personnellement signalés. Sage héritier du généreux César, Auguste sut noblement surmonter les impulsions résultées de ses longues luttes, et gouverna l'Occident avec

I am going to treat the character of Tiberius biographically, and I will tell you at once why I do so. When a man has died at the age of seventy-eight years, having passed his whole life as a public man in situations of the highest responsibility, surely it is but fair to judge his career as a whole, and to interpret one part of it by another. Tiberius was fifty-six years old when he became emperor. I would put it to you—have you in your own experience found that men come out in an entirely new character after fifty-six? Should you not be surprised if a friend of yours who had lived to old age as a brave, hard-working, just man, remarkable beyond others for soberness, temperance, and chastity in the midst of a dissolute society—I say, would it not take a great deal to persuade you that such a man, when his hair was grey, and the fire of youth was abated, would break out into the most abandoned and shameless licentiousness? If you saw it with your eyes, would you not think you were dreaming? How then would you receive such a tale if it came to you, not only loaded with the grossest contradictions and inconsistencies, but vouched for by the

une sollicitude sociocratique, où toutes les classes devaient concourir au bien public suivant leurs aptitudes respectives. Ce caractère général fut énergiquement développé par Tibère, qui, malgré les turpitudes privées de ses dernières années, effacera bientôt, d'après l'ensemble de ses qualités, intellectuelles et morales, une flétrissure émanée des rancunes aristocratiques."—Comte, Politique Positive, iii. 394.

authority of an informant who had no personal knowledge of the facts, but had evidently swallowed, with too willing credulity, the scandals whispered by the personal enemies of the accused man? Now I undertake to show you that the case of Tiberius is very much what I have supposed. It is to your common sense that I shall appeal. You may not all of you be competent to decide complicated or obscure problems of history, because you have not been familiar with them. But you are familiar with human character, the laws of which are of universal application, and are just the same in Bradford to-day as they were in Rome nineteen centuries ago.

Tiberius was four years old when his mother Livia married the future emperor. He was eleven when the battle of Actium made his stepfather sole master of the Roman world. Augustus was then still in the prime of life, but as the eight years of his union with Livia had proved unfruitful, he seems to have resigned himself to the prospect of having no male offspring, and had therefore married Julia, his daughter by a former wife, to his nephew Marcellus, whom he destined to be his successor. Marcellus, however, died young, and Julia was then married to the warrior and statesman Agrippa, to whom more than any one else Augustus owed his throne. Agrippa was thus marked out as the future emperor. He

was, it is true, as old as Augustus himself. But the health of Augustus at this time seemed failing. By her elderly husband Julia had several children. Tiberius at this time, though enjoying considerable distinction as the stepson of the emperor, was not supposed to have any claim to the succession, which would fall naturally to Agrippa and his children, the emperor's grandsons. He was a good deal absent from Rome on military service in Spain, in the Tyrol, and in Asia. He is described by Suetonius as being tall and well built, with a handsome face and great bodily strength, a description which is borne out by statues and busts still remaining. He was a grave, silent man, and when he walked always carried his head stiffly as if he was on drill. He was strongly attached to the old Roman manners, and it is mentioned that though perfectly acquainted with the Greek language, he particularly objected to the use of Greek phrases in conversation, which was then fashionable.

Contrary to all expectation, Agrippa died at the age of fifty-one, and Julia was again left a widow with her young family. She was still only twenty-eight years old, though she had buried two husbands. Augustus doted on his little grandsons Caius and Lucius, but he was well aware that it was impossible to bequeath his sceptre to a boy. He therefore turned his eye on Tiberius, whom he required to

divorce his wife Vipsania and marry Julia, and so become a father to the lads. This was one of the worst acts of Augustus's reign. Tiberius was tenderly attached to Vipsania, by whom he had a son. To Julia he had an especial dislike. Her light character was the talk of Rome. Every one knew it but her father. During the lifetime of the elderly husband whom she had just buried, she had cast wanton eyes on the handsome young Tiberius, who, as might be expected from the austerity of his character, had rejected her advances with disgust. This lady he was now obliged to marry.[1] Vipsania was of humble birth, and perhaps did not shine at court. But the atmosphere of a court never suited Tiberius. To him it had been happiness to do his duty as a soldier in the summer, and return in the winter to the quiet of domestic life. All this was now at an end. His happiness was blighted. A dark cloud passed over his life and rested on it. Instead of the quiet gentle Vipsania, he saw presiding over his house the fastest lady in Rome, still young and beautiful, but with less than half a reputation. Tiberius had always been a grave man. From that day we may well believe he became a

[1] Vipsania was the daughter of Agrippa, and so the stepdaughter of Julia. The new marriage, therefore, if not absolutely incestuous, had something revolting about it, Julia being the stepmother-in-law of Tiberius.

melancholy man; the most melancholy of men, says Pliny — *tristissimus hominum.* Once, and only once again, did he see his lost Vipsania. It was by chance they met, and he gazed after her, says the historian, with such strained and bursting eyes (*adeo contentis et tumentibus oculis*) that good care was taken he should never see her again.

A war in Dalmatia and Croatia afforded him an excuse for leaving his new wife immediately after their marriage. During two years of a difficult struggle against the stubborn barbarians of that wild country, he exhibited, says Mr. Merivale, "admirable activity and skill, and might already be esteemed the most consummate captain of his day." While he was thus occupied news reached him of the dangerous illness of his younger brother Drusus, who was fighting the Germans in Westphalia. He immediately set off, travelled night and day, rode through the barbarous district lately traversed by the contending armies with no attendant but his guide, and arrived at the camp a few hours before his brother's death. He brought the corpse to Rome, walking before it the whole way from the Rhine to the Tiber, over Alps and Apennines, in the depth of winter. This grave, silent man was not, it seems, without deep feelings, which he manifested in his own way. I do not myself consider that pedestrianism implies the possession of every virtue. But in these

days, when a long walk is thought by many people to be a testimony to character which should outweigh depositions on oath, the report of a Royal Commission, and even the confessions of a criminal himself, perhaps this winter walk of Tiberius from Mayence to Rome may dispose some at least, I do not say to "take him on trust," but to listen with patience and impartiality to an examination of the foul charges which are brought against him.[1]

During the greater part of the next three years Tiberius was at the head of the army of the Rhine, which had been commanded by his deceased brother. He experienced no reverses, but, on the other hand, he did not make much progress towards the conquest of Germany. It is probable that the resources of Gaul, from which the war had to be supported, were exhausted, and that Augustus did not furnish him with adequate means. The fact is, that his position was becoming most unsatisfactory. When he had been compelled to divorce Vipsania and marry Julia, that cruel act had been justified by reasons of state. The welfare of the vast empire demanded that the successor of Augustus should be, not a child, but a mature man. Although no express nomination had

[1] Shortly before this lecture was delivered, the Rev. Charles Kingsley had insisted that the author of the Jamaica atrocities should be "taken on trust" because he had walked across Australia.

been or indeed could be made, the meaning of the arrangement had been unmistakable. But the health of Augustus, which had been very weak in early life, became stronger as he approached old age. He outlived his ailments, and in the latter part of his long reign enjoyed excellent health. Thus it happened that the two lads, Caius and Lucius, grew up to manhood before the throne was vacant; and it was now becoming evident that Augustus was drawing back from the understanding with Tiberius, who, after filling the place of heir-apparent, was to subside into a private citizen. That Tiberius should not feel the injustice most keenly was impossible. Five years had elapsed since his home had been broken up because it was so necessary that he should succeed Augustus. Since then he had not known what it was to have a home. He had been engaged almost incessantly in fighting the battles of his country against the rugged barbarians of the Danube and the Rhine, faithfully discharging the laborious duties of the station to which he had been called. If his private happiness had been crushed, at least he could throw himself heart and soul into the business of the state. And now the bitter reality dawned upon him. His long services, his glorious achievements, nay, his great sorrow, were to be lightly passed over; and a pet grandson of the emperor, an inexperienced and presumptuous lad, was to take precedence of him.

This intention indeed was not openly expressed, for Augustus never assumed the right of naming a successor. But it was plain that he meant to place the young Agrippa on the steps of the throne, and to keep him before the eyes of the people, while Tiberius was banished to distant provinces and the drudgery of frontier warfare. When, upon his return from Germany, he was required to set off for Armenia, his patience at last gave way. He determined to leave Augustus to manage the empire as best he could with the help of his young grandsons. For himself, he announced his intention of retiring from public life and living as a private citizen at Rhodes. He selected Rhodes for his residence partly to make it plain that he did not intend to enter on any rivalry with the young men, partly to avoid his wife, from whom he had hitherto sought refuge in the camp. Augustus, astonished and disconcerted, endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, and complained bitterly in the senate that he should thus be deserted in his old age. Livia also joined her entreaties, but Tiberius was immovable. When forbidden to leave Rome, he resolved to put an end to his life; and had already gone four days without food, when the permission he had demanded was at length accorded to him. He was accompanied to the place of embarkation by those who loved or respected him. But not a word did he utter, from fear probably of compromising them;

and silently kissing some of those who had thus testified their regard, he turned his back on Italy.

In Rhodes he remained seven years, living in the simplest manner, in a small house, cultivating the acquaintance of the citizens, and finding his chief amusement in attending lectures in the university. A few anecdotes are preserved of this period of his life, one of which, being characteristic, may be mentioned. He was in the habit all through life of writing down every evening what he intended to do next day. On one occasion, while at Rhodes, he had thus put down that on the morrow he would visit all the sick in the city, intending, we must suppose, to take some days about it. His attendants misunderstanding the entry in his *agenda*, or desiring to save him trouble, had all the sick persons carried into the market-place; and when he went out next morning, he found them lying there classified neatly according to their diseases. He was greatly shocked, and stood for some moments in considerable embarrassment; but at length went round and begged the pardon of each patient separately—even the humblest and most unknown, says Suetonius.

In this manner five years passed away. Tiberius considered that he had made his intentions sufficiently plain. On the one hand, he would no longer be made to occupy a false position; and on the other, he declined all rivalry with the young Caius, who

was now consul, and beyond dispute heir-apparent. He thought, therefore, that the time was come when he might return to Rome, and live in quiet as a private citizen, without danger of being misunderstood. The other reason for his retirement to Rhodes had also become inoperative. Julia was no longer at Rome. Her scandalous life had at last come to the ears of her father, and he had banished her. Tiberius, therefore, intimated to the emperor that he desired to see his family again. But Augustus, either mistrusting his intentions or enraged at his retirement, returned him the freezing answer that, as he had thought proper to leave his family, he need not trouble himself any more about it.

During the next two years the fate of Tiberius trembled in the balance. Although he had so pointedly declined all rivalry with the sons of Agrippa, they could not but look on him with jealousy. The young Caius had come into the East as viceroy, and did not conceal his ill-will. His courtiers were encouraged to scoff at the exile of Rhodes, and one of them even offered to go and fetch his head, if Caius would only say the word. There was one influential person, however, to whom Tiberius was still dear. This was his mother, the empress. Trembling for her son's life, she implored her husband to consent to his return, and at length succeeded in obtaining it. For two or three

years after this we hear nothing of Tiberius, except that he lived at Rome as a private citizen. Then once more his fortune changed. The two young Cæsars died, the one in Asia, the other in Spain; and Augustus, for the fourth time in his long reign, was obliged to look about him for a successor.[1] His first choice had been his nephew Marcellus, then his old friend Agrippa, then Tiberius, then the two young Cæsars. But he had buried one after another, and now there was nothing for it but to turn once more to the ill-used Tiberius. There was indeed another young grandson; but his low intellect and depraved tastes put him out of the question. There was also a son of Drusus, a promising youth, better know as Germanicus. But he was at this time only nineteen years old. Tiberius, therefore, was summoned from his retirement, and formally

[1] The malicious gossip of Rome accused Livia and Tiberius of poisoning them; and Tacitus, with his "mors fato propera vel novercæ Liviæ dolus," has more than half branded them with the crime. Suetonius, Florus, and even the credulous Dion, observe a more candid silence, and Pliny enumerates among the misfortunes of *Augustus*, "incusatæ liberorum mortes." That Caius died of wounds received in Armenia is proved by the testimony of Velleius, who was with him, and by an inscription still existing. The calumny would not be worth noticing here, but that it shows what stuff Tacitus was ready to use. The character of Livia does not fall within the scope of the present paper. Let Tacitus and the *servum pecus* of modern writers say what they will of her, every clear-judging student will recognise in her one of the noblest types of the Roman matron.

adopted by the emperor. An adopted son among the Romans, as among the Hindoos, stood in all respects in the same position as a son by blood. He took his new father's name, and the family was supposed to be continued just as truly and really as though male offspring had not failed. Henceforward Tiberius was the son and heir of Augustus, and his name was Tiberius Cæsar. Augustus could not name him as his successor, for the position he held was not yet supposed to be hereditary, and public opinion would have been outraged by treating it as such. But he went as near it as he could by adding the words, "This I do for the sake of the state." Tiberius, who had only one son, named Drusus, was at the same time required to adopt Germanicus. Thus Augustus, as it were, entailed the empire first on Tiberius, and after him on Germanicus and Drusus, or the survivor of them; and every man in Rome, from the highest to the lowest, knew that no further change could now be made. If Tiberius had been young or incapable, it would not have been so certain, for some great nobleman would have made a bold push to wrest the sceptre from his hand. But his mature age (he was now six-and-forty), his high character, his military glory, made him beyond comparison the fittest man then living to rule the Roman world, and during the ten years that were yet to elapse before the throne became vacant, his superiority was to be still more

strikingly displayed. The heir to that throne could not waste the prime of life in useless idleness, and an unceasing round of even harmless amusement. He was expected to work for his place betimes, to relieve the sovereign of the toils of frontier warfare, to inspect the most distant provinces of the empire—in short, to lead a life of incessant activity, and so justify his claim to be advanced over the heads of his fellow-men. Immediately after his adoption, Tiberius resumed his old post as general of the armies of the state.

Vast as the empire was, there was still one conquest which was necessary, not merely to its glory, but to its security. As long as Germany remained unsubdued, the civilised world was in perpetual danger. It was not so much that the Teutonic barbarians were a formidable foe, for their numbers are evidently exaggerated, and in fair fight they were no match for the Romans. A glance at the map will show why the conquest was so necessary. If they were to remain unsubdued, the frontier must lie along the Rhine and the Danube, a length of 2,500 miles. Now Europe outside of Russia is in fact a peninsula, of which Poland is the isthmus; and if Germany had been conquered, the frontier would have lain across that isthmus, along the line of the Dniester and the Vistula, a length of only 800 miles, from the Black Sea to the Baltic. To conquer Germany was, therefore, a vital necessity worth any

expenditure of blood and treasure. We all know that it was not effected. On the one hand, the Germans lost the inestimable benefit of incorporation with Rome; and on the other hand, the time came when Rome was unable to defend a frontier of 2,500 miles. The barbarians burst in, and the spontaneous and inevitable change to Feudalism, which would otherwise have taken place without much breach of continuity or any serious waste of the social and material constructions of Humanity, was turned into a scene of needless disorder and uncompensated destruction. This danger was very evident to the early emperors, and therefore it was that such efforts were made to conquer Germany. They failed because Germany was so barbarous. Julius Cæsar had thoroughly conquered Gaul in eight campaigns, because Gaul was a comparatively rich and civilised country, with towns, roads, bridges, agriculture and commerce. But the Germans of the time of Tiberius were still nomads and little better than savages. Savages may be gradually conquered or exterminated by colonists, but you cannot keep armies in a country where there are no towns, and little or no agriculture. This was why the Romans failed to conquer Germany.

It was to this great task that Tiberius now returned. He was at home in the camp. There alone was any trace now to be found of the antique virtue, the discipline, the serious activity which had once been

the distinguishing characteristics of Roman life, and to which old-fashioned type Tiberius always remained faithful. In Rome very likely he was no favourite, where his stiff bearing and austere morality were a perpetual protest against frivolity and dissipation. But his soldiers understood him better. Probably, like William III., he was more genial in the camp than in the capital. His reception by the army of the Rhine, on his return after ten years' absence, as described by an eye-witness, reminds one of Napoleon's return from Elba, or the arrival of Nelson in the British fleet on the eve of Trafalgar. The veterans wept for joy. They pressed round him to grasp his hand. "Do our eyes see you once more, general?" "Have we got you back safe amongst us?" "I served under you in Armenia, general." "Do you remember me in the Tyrol?" "You decorated me in the Bavarian campaign, general," or "in Hungary or in Germany."[1] Such is the scene as described by an eye-witness, the historian Velleius, with a freedom and heartiness of style very unusual in a classical writer.[2]

[1] "Videmus te imperator! Salvum recepimus! ac deinde: ego tecum imperator in Armenia, ego in Rhætia fui, ego a te in Vindelicis, ego in Pannonia, ego in Germania donatus sum!"—Velleius, ii. 104.

[2] Of all the readers of this paper who will pooh-pooh Velleius as a notorious toady of Tiberius, how many can honestly say that they ever read a chapter of his book? Our wretched classical education does

In three campaigns Tiberius carried the Roman arms over all the country between the Rhine and the Elbe. Like all great generals, he was indefatigable in attending to the comfort of his troops and the formation of magazines, and thus he was enabled to continue operations far into the winter. Although this is not an occasion for entering into military details, I should not be doing justice to Tiberius if I did not bring particularly under your notice the third compaign, which, in its conception and execution, was worthy of the greatest of modern generals, and, indeed, belongs to an entirely different walk of art from the comparatively rude combinations of the generals of the Republic. A division of the army with the stores, military engines, and heavy baggage

not even introduce its victims to more than a small fraction of the scanty, but precious, remains of ancient history. How do they know that Velleius is a toady? Because they are told so by the literary men, who can just see that either he or Tacitus must be utterly wrong about Tiberius, and, of course, decide for the finest writer. Velleius was not a depraved, spiteful aristocrat of the capital; he was a distinguished soldier, who had served all over the world, and understood what *virtus* meant, in the old Roman sense of the word. I have never heard Napier called a toady because he speaks with enthusiasm of his old commander. Velleius had as much to gain by flattering Tiberius as Napier by flattering Wellington, and no more. And it is on this pretext, forsooth, that the only witness who speaks of these times from his own knowledge is to be put out of court! The work of Velleius was clearly not undertaken with the primary object of pleasing contemporaries, for it deals with the whole history of Rome, and only a small portion of it is devoted to the events of his own time. It is worthy of remark that, like Tacitus, he sees the times earlier than his own recollection through the delusive mist of pseudo-republican sentimentalism.

was embarked on a flotilla, which sailed to the mouth of the Elbe, and by that hitherto unexplored avenue penetrated to the interior of the country. Tiberius himself, at the head of the grand army, marched by Paderborn and Brunswick to meet the corps so detached, and the junction was effected with admirable precision at a given point. Thus the Roman army was placed at once in the heart of Germany, with all appliances for a campaign, and its subsistence assured. There a great battle was fought and won; and, although the army was marched back to Paderborn on the approach of winter, it is evident, from subsequent operations, that resistance in North Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe was at an end.

In the following year Tiberius planned a campaign of even greater magnitude, and with combinations still more audacious. This was nothing less than an invasion of Bohemia, where, encircled by mountains, lay the strength of the South Germans. For this purpose he proposed to place himself at the head of the army of Pannonia (a province corresponding to Southern Austria, Croatia, and Western Hungary), and to cross the Danube near Vienna, while one of his lieutenants led the army of the Rhine through the Black Forest by the route so well known since to French armies. A junction was to be effected in Bohemia. The execution of this grand plan, the vastest operation ever contemplated by a Roman general,

had already commenced. Both armies were converging on Bohemia, when the whole of Pannonia and Dalmatia burst into a blaze of insurrection in the rear of Tiberius. He had conquered this country himself seventeen years before, and he believed it to be so thoroughly subdued that he had ventured to make it the base of his operations against Bohemia. But when the warlike Pannonians saw the Roman legions cross the Danube and plunge into Central Germany, the temptation was too great for them, and they conceived the hope, not only of cutting off Tiberius, but of invading Italy, for they were well aware that there was not a soldier between them and Rome. The insurrection spread. Dalmatia and Illyria took fire. The crisis was one of awful peril, such, says Suetonius, as Rome had not known since the days of Hannibal. Augustus hastily levied troops, and even filled their ranks from the slave population, telling the Senate that the Pannonians might be before the walls of Rome in ten days. As for Tiberius his position was like that of Napoleon at Moscow. Just as a splendid success seemed within his grasp he found himself obliged to fight for his own safety and that of Italy. And now his consummate generalship shone forth. He drew his army back across the Danube without loss, and set himself to commence afresh the conquest of the revolted districts. For three years did the stubborn contest continue, first in Pannonia,

afterwards in Dalmatia. The historian Velleius, who served through these campaigns, speaks with professional enthusiasm of the skill with which Tiberius handled his troops, the care he took for their comfort, and the fine example he set of energy and endurance. Roman generals, in these times, had got into the lazy habit of being carried in litters. But Tiberius invariably made his marches on horseback at the head of his troops. The general's litter was appropriated to the use of sick or wounded officers. "I myself," says Velleius, "and many others, had the advantage of it." It is related, as another instance of his preference for the antique simplicity of manners, that, like Cato of Utica, he always sat at his dinner instead of reclining, according to the luxurious fashion introduced from Greece. I mention these little traits because they come from an eye-witness, and are characteristic of the man. His whole life was a protest against what he regarded as the degeneracy of his age from the serious disposition, the stiff discipline, and the simple habits of ancient Rome.

Hardly had the Pannonian and Dalmatian war been brought to a prosperous conclusion, when news arrived of a terrible disaster in North Germany. Varus, whom Augustus had appointed governor of the newly-conquered province between the Rhine and the Elbe, was unfortunately a very unfit man for his post. He was more of a lawyer than a general,

and was chiefly bent on filling his pockets. The task before him was not an arduous one; but it demanded honesty, diligence, and, above all things, tact. The North Germans had been thoroughly beaten, and had no thought of renewing the struggle. Roman merchants were penetrating the country, and the natives, like all other Europeans, were taking kindly to Roman manners, and enlisting freely in the Roman armies. Varus spoilt all. He vexed the half-tamed savages with his pettifogging exactions, while by his neglect of all military precautions he tempted them to insurrection. A young chieftain, called Arminius, who had been admitted to Roman citizenship, and had served in the Roman army—the Nana Sahib of his day—decoyed Varus to his ruin. But few escaped to the Rhine to tell the tale. The prisoners were put to death with torture. Thus was destroyed an army (says Velleius, who had formerly served in it) which for valour, discipline, and experience was the finest Rome then possessed. It was a loss that could not soon be replaced, for it took a training of many years to make a perfect Roman soldier. But the loss of the new province was a more irreparable blow. It was like our own disaster in Affghanistan. Vengeance might be taken; the stain on military honour might be wiped out; but re-occupation had to be indefinitely postponed.

Fortunately, Tiberius could now leave Pannonia

and place himself on the scene of danger. Anxious above all things that the Roman prestige might be re-established, he again led an army into Germany. It is recorded, as marking the gravity of the occasion, that he who in all his other wars had been accustomed to keep his plans locked in his bosom, and to rely solely upon himself, now discussed them freely with his officers. He seems to have attributed the late disaster to the luxurious habits which had crept into the camp. For we read that when his army was about to cross the Rhine into Germany he posted himself on the bridge, and in person examined all the baggage to see that the limits prescribed by his regulations were not exceeded. Arrived in the enemy's country, he himself set the example of endurance and simplicity. He took his meals sitting on the bare ground. Though now in his fifty-third year, he gave up his tent and slept in the open air. Every night before he lay down to rest he issued his orders for next day to all his officers in writing. Any officer who did not understand them was enjoined to come to the general himself for explanation at any hour of the night. The expedition was successful. That is to say, the Germans were beaten wherever they showed themselves. But when the summer was come to an end the Roman army was led back across the Rhine, which river, and not the Elbe, was henceforth the frontier of the empire. As

for the Germans, they relapsed into that barbarism of which their country and ours still exhibit many ill effects.

With this campaign the long and brilliant career of Tiberius as a soldier closes. Like Wellington, whom as a general he much resembles, he had never experienced a defeat. His officer Velleius records with gratitude that he was careful of his soldiers' lives, and never allowed his judgment to be influenced either by the criminal desire of gathering glory for himself or by the clamours and criticisms of the camp, because (says Velleius) he cared less for what the world would say than for the approval of his own conscience.[1] Such was Tiberius as a general, and not otherwise did he carry himself as a statesman.

Soon after this Augustus died. Up to this time calumny itself has nothing to say against Tiberius. Few men have lived to the age of fifty-six in the full blaze of a public career, and in the possession of absolute power (for a Roman general in the provinces was absolute), with so little to regret and so much to remember with honourable pride. At this point commences the narrative of Tacitus, and we

[1] "Utilia speciosis præferens, quodque semper eum facientem vidi in omnibus bellis, quæ probanda essent, non quæ utique probarentur sequens."—(ii. 113.)

"Ante conscientiæ quam famæ consultum."—(ii. 115.)

have henceforth to deal with a tissue of systematic detraction, sly insinuation, and open invective unparalleled in political biography. Ninety-nine educated men out of a hundred know nothing of Tiberius but what Tacitus is pleased to tell them. His previous life is a sealed book. But you who have heard what it was, and have already a clear idea of the character of the *man*, *you* I hope will hold fast by your common sense in judging the character of the emperor.

Part II.[1]

"An exemplary life and a reputation that stood deservedly high,"—such is the verdict pronounced by Tacitus himself on the first fifty-six years of Tiberius. That in new circumstances and advancing age a man who had earned such a character might to some extent deteriorate is possible and credible. The mildest temper may be soured by calumny and misfortune. The firmest courage may be shaken by a continual sense of insecurity. An honourable disposition may be grievously perverted by sophisms. But all this within limits. The really great criminals of history have been made of other stuff, and have not deceived the penetration of their contemporaries during half a century. Nor were the circumstances in which Tiberius now found himself so very unlike those which he had already proved. Misfortune had

[1] Considerable additions have been made to this part since it was delivered as a lecture.

beaten on him from his cradle. If as emperor he was haunted by the spectre of assassination, as a subject he had known what it was to live for months in constant expectation of the death-warrant. He had tasted the bitterness of death itself in those four days that preceded his retirement to Rhodes—

> Tænarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis
> Ingressus, Manesque adiit Regemque tremendum.

On the other hand, an arbitrary, tyrannical or sanguinary temper could not but have blazed out during the many years when he had wielded the absolute, irresponsible, and often frightfully abused power of a Roman general in his province. Here is the moral problem we are called on to solve. It is easy, if one is dull, to say that such a life exhibits many virtues and many vices.[1] It is tempting, if one is brilliant, to dispose of it in a cascade of epigrams.[2] This is to restate the problem, not to solve it. Literary men are never disturbed by difficulties and improbabilities so long as their periods are neatly rounded.

[1] Τιβέριος πλείστας μὲν ἀρετὰς πλείστας δὲ κακίας ἔχων. — Dion lviii. 28.

[2] "Egregium vita famaque quoad privatus vel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit: obcultum ac subdolum fingendis virtutibus donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere: idem inter bona malaque mixtus incolumi matre: intestabilis sævitia sed obtectis libidinibus dum Sejanum dilexit timuitve: postremo in scelera simul ac dedecora prorupit, postquam remoto pudore et metu, suo tantum ingenio utebatur."—Tac. Ann. vi. 51.

A moral contradiction has even a relish for them, as affording material for pungent antithesis. But we who simply want to find out how the facts really stand, shall instinctively distrust these sensational pictures. If we can see our way to a probable and consistent theory we shall be satisfied. If not, we will confess that all is darkness. But at any rate we will not go on repeating a tale that is an insult to plain common-sense.

Tiberius had been invested with the tribunitian and proconsular powers during the lifetime of Augustus, and therefore during the last ten years he had been rather his associate in the empire than his heir-apparent. Independently of this advantage, there was no one who could for a moment be put in comparison with him. Tacitus does indeed labour to produce the impression, by insinuation, rather than direct assertion, that the popular choice, had it been free, would have fallen on the young Germanicus. No doubt the gallant and showy qualities of this young man had made him a general favourite. As little doubt that the serious and ascetic manners of Tiberius, his shrinking from all idle display, his avowed preference for old Roman sobriety and discipline, had made him disliked. But when rulers are to be chosen, a people—or rather, those who in such junctures sway the judgment of the people—will not forget the more solid qualifications for

government. And it happens that Tiberius did not assume the full powers of Augustus at once, as he might have done, but waited until they were urged upon him by the Senate. His conduct on this occasion (so hard are some people to be pleased) has been generally set down as hypocrisy. The opportunity is convenient for saying a few words as to his mental peculiarities. He was not a man of thoroughly great and noble mind, like Julius, or Cromwell, or Danton. He had not that self-confidence, that sense of superiority, that noble carelessness of spirit which cannot be troubled by slander and detraction. He was tormented by a perpetual suspicion that he was disliked and underrated by his fellow-citizens. And yet, on the other hand, he knew that he was an able man. He was conscious that he meant well; and he was in a state of chronic indignation against his contemporaries because their affections were evidently bestowed on less worthy objects. But he was not only a sensitive man: he was a proud man. His conscience told him that it was not a noble thing, or a right thing, this fretfulness at popular injustice, this eavesdropping, as it were, to catch the whisper of vulgar criticism. So he laboured to persuade himself that he did not care for it. He started back whenever he found himself doing or saying a popular thing. He found comfort in being able to assure himself that whatever might

be his inner weakness, he had never allowed his action to suffer from it. It is recorded of him that a maxim frequently in his mouth was, *Oderint dum probent*—let them dislike me, provided in their hearts they respect me. And even Tacitus drops the remark that he was ambitious for the approval of posterity rather than of his contemporaries. The words of Velleius, too, will be remembered, that "he cared more for the approval of his own conscience than for what the world might say of him." These writers, however, only half understood Tiberius. If he had really been as indifferent to the opinion of others as they say he was, he would have been a greater and happier man. He is not the only man whom a morbid sensitiveness has driven to assume a cynical exterior.[1]

[1] The features of Tiberius are well known to us. The development of the upper part of the head is truly magnificent. The eyes are, as Suetonius says, "prægrandes," but not prominent. The nose is slightly aquiline, and there is considerable dissimilarity between the two profiles. But what strikes the observer most is the lower part of the face, which betrays that deficiency in confidence and resolution which Tiberius was ever trying to correct. The mouth is small, and almost as beautiful as that of Augustus; the dimpled chin literally insignificant. The face of the fine sitting statue in the Vatican has a very marked and, to my mind, pleasing expression. In the bust in the British Museum we see the same contrast between the upper and lower development, the same peculiar expression, sweet, here, almost to feebleness. But it is in the wonderful colossal head at Naples that we see the Tiberius of Capreæ. I cannot think that it represents him in youth. The upper part of course retains its noble proportions. But

Now when Tiberius showed a certain hesitation in accepting the part which the Senate pressed upon him, Tacitus is quite right in saying that he desired to discover what the principal citizens really thought of it. But the suggestion that he was laying a trap for them is as malevolent as it is unnecessary. Twenty years before, when he saw his own just claims slighted, and the young Agrippas put over his head, he did not stoop to any rivalry with them. He proudly flung up office and retired to Rhodes. And after a long and careful study of his character, I have little doubt that if the Senate had shown any indisposition to trust him with supreme power he would have once more retired from public life. I will go further, and take upon me to say that any one who believes that in A.D. 14 a *coup-d'état* was possible, and that Tiberius, or any one else, could have stepped into the shoes of Augustus in defiance of public opinion, shows a profound ignorance of the political situation at that time. It is clear that no one dreamt of returning to the so-called republican constitution. The great nobles felt towards Augustus and Tiberius as an oligarchy always will feel towards one of its members who has overtopped the rest. The grievance was a personal

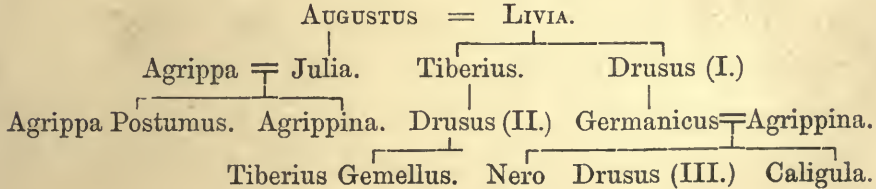
the mouth and chin, originally insignificant, have lost flesh and fallen away. There remains a face wasted with misery, on which are written wrongs, disappointments, and chagrins.

one. Each nobleman chafed at the precedence of the chief of the state because he coveted it for himself. The reigning family came of no royal stock. Their dignity was still green. Augustus and Tiberius were both born simple nobles. The English peerage submits without soreness to the solitary dignity of our present royal family. But if a revolution were to place Lord Russell on the throne, we can understand how a Stanley or a Cavendish would feel towards him. That was how a Piso or Æmilius felt towards Tiberius. What Tiberius had to dread was not any collective action on the part of either people or nobles. The people deliberately preferred imperial government. The nobles knew that it was inevitable. The real danger was of conspiracy among individual nobles, with a view not to overturning the throne, but changing its occupant. Julius had fallen under the daggers of such conspirators. The existence of murderous plots by nobles of the highest rank against Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius is beyond dispute. Tiberius, however, had no reason to apprehend that a single voice would be publicly raised at Rome against his accession, for there was not a single nobleman who could have found a party to support him. It was indeed possible that the army of the Rhine, which had mutinied for increase of pay and other concessions, might proclaim their general, Germanicus, emperor if he

promised to grant their demands. And it is very likely that the lower orders at Rome would have preferred the young prince to the old one. But there is not the smallest evidence that the nobility wished for Germanicus, and it is intrinsically improbable. If there was one thing of which they had a horror, it was military dictation, and they appear to have looked anxiously to Tiberius to quell the mutiny. As for Germanicus himself, he was well satisfied with his position as adopted son of Tiberius, and could not fail to see how necessary it was that the family should stick together. The mutiny, therefore, was quelled, and Tiberius was firmly established on the throne.[1]

Although Tiberius disclaimed all responsibility for the execution of Agrippa Postumus — "the first crime of the new reign," as Tacitus calls it—it was done for his advantage, and whatever blame may attach to it he must bear. The story that Augustus ordered the officer who had charge of the young man to put him to death as soon as he should hear that the throne was vacant, is quite consistent with pro-

[1] Genealogical Table.



bability. We know that he regarded the existence of his grandson as a public and private calamity. The mysterious visit to Planasia of a bed-ridden old man without the knowledge of the wife who nursed him we may safely pronounce a ridiculous fiction.

The remark of Tacitus that Augustus had never had the heart to put to death any of his family proves nothing at all. Moreover, that celebrated emperor, though of enlightened mind and sweet manners, had not such a thing as a heart about him. But from the peculiar language of Tiberius, it seems most probable that the order was sent by Livia while her husband still breathed, and before the arrival of her son. A more important question is, how far it was justifiable. We must remember that an attempt to rescue Agrippa and place him at the head of an insurrection was actually in progress, and only failed by a few hours. As it was, an impostor who personated him caused some commotions. It is often prudent to deal mercifully with ordinary rebels. But no Government, whether republican, oligarchical, or monarchical, can or ought to pardon any one who advances claims purely dynastic. No one worth noticing would now-a-days contend that such claims have any validity against a *de facto* Government; and if they have no validity, then to advance them is a heinous crime, for which death is the only appropriate penalty. Even where there has been much to

excite our sympathy, as in the cases of Lady Jane Grey and the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, the public welfare clearly demanded that the pretender should be put out of the way. The young Agrippa had no title to rule except that he was the nearest male relative of the late chief of the state, in a country where hereditary succession had not been established, and in fact never was established. The historians are unanimous as to his character.[1] In any modern European monarchy, so much have we improved on ancient models, this vicious brute would have been recognised as heir-apparent. But Augustus established another precedent for Roman Imperialism. When Agrippa protested fiercely against the adoption of Tiberius, his grandfather disinherited and banished him, and afterwards, as he continued refractory, caused him to be condemned by a decree of the Senate to military custody for life Those who call his execution a crime had better say at once that Tiberius should have yielded the throne to him. It is worthy of remark that his sister Agrippina does not appear to have resented or regretted the removal of one who

1 "Trucem et ignominia adcensum—rudem bonarum artium et robore corporis stolide ferocem."—Tacitus.

"Ingenium sordidum ac ferox—nihilo tractabiliorem immo indies amentiorem."—Suetonius.

"Mira pravitate animi atque ingeni in præcipitia conversus—crescentibus indies vitiis."—Velleius.

Δουλοπρεπής —Dion.

was no less formidable a rival to Germanicus than to Tiberius.

The relations of Tiberius with Germanicus have been made by Tacitus the chief point of interest during the first five years of the reign. I believe the impression produced on most readers is that Germanicus was such a godlike young person, and his wife Agrippina such a model of a woman, that a melancholy old widower like Tiberius, who had no other claim to govern than a life spent in the service of the state, ought to have shuffled himself away somewhere, and made room for the brilliant young couple. A more perverse view could not be taken. Germanicus was, no doubt, a gallant and amiable man, and it is much to his credit that he seems to have harboured no treasonable or undutiful thought towards his adopted father. But as a general and administrator he was a mistake. It is easy to see, even from the highly-coloured narrative of Tacitus, that his campaigns in Germany were disastrous failures. After the defeat of Varus, the wisest course would have been to wait a few years, and not resume the attempt to conquer the barbarians until they should have been partially civilised by contact with the empire. To harass them with fruitless and destructive raids was only to plunge them deeper into barbarism and prevent commercial intercourse; and to come off second best in such work as Germanicus

generally did, was to destroy all respect for the Roman arms. Tiberius therefore acted wisely in recalling him and sending him to the East, where he could do less mischief. There he died, and his death is attributed to Tiberius. As the crime was supposed to have been effected by enchantment and sorcery, perhaps I need say no more about it.

The whole conduct of Tiberius towards Germanicus, as related by Tacitus himself, is absolutely faultless; the comments and insinuations are unsupported by any facts, and are often demonstrably inconsistent with facts. They should, at least, warn the reader betimes of the animus of the author. One point is somewhat obscure. Why did Tiberius send Piso to Syria? The Pisos were supposed to look with peculiar jealousy on the elevation of the Julian and Claudian houses. This Piso was a violent, haughty man scarcely concealing his disaffection, who, though he could not deny the noble birth of Tiberius, despised the Vipsanian and Pomponian puddle that ran in the veins of his son.[1] He was therefore just the sort of man that Tiberius always avoided sending into the provinces. The suggestion that Piso was selected to be a thorn in the side of Germanicus is too absurd. It would be an instance of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face if ever there was one.

[1] Vix Tiberio concedere; liberos ejus ut multum infra despectare.—Tac. Ann. II. 43.

I would offer an hypothesis, which, whether true or not, at least explains the facts. Plancina, the wife of Piso, was, as we know, a special favourite of the empress-mother, whose wishes Tiberius never thwarted even when he fretted at them. What was more likely than that she insisted on a province for Piso? Tiberius, fearing that Piso, once at the head of legions, would give trouble, sent Germanicus into the East, with extraordinary powers, to keep him in check. Tacitus himself drops the remark that Tiberius thought himself safer when the legions were in the hands of Germanicus and Drusus. On the death of Germanicus, Piso did actually raise a mutiny in Syria. The attitude of Tiberius to Pisō on his trial was eminently dignified and just. He might have gained applause by crushing him on the ridiculous charge of poisoning: he scorned to do so. But the crime of mutiny was clearly proved, and he would not overlook it.

Let me endeavour now to give an idea of the main features of the reign of Tiberius. Julius Cæsar had overthrown the aristocracy as the champion, first of the Roman commonalty, and secondly, of the subject provinces. His successors never forgot that these were the principles on which the throne rested. Vast as the empire was, equal citizenship, with some trifling exceptions, was still confined to the inhabitants of Italy, and did not embrace much more than

four million adult males. The rest of the Roman world was governed by those four millions, and stood to them in just the same relation as the nations of India do to you. Under the senatorial government they had been plundered and harassed with terrible uniformity. The establishment of the empire under Augustus had brought them some relief. To these poor provincials it was like stepping out of hell. But many abuses still remained. The Roman governors were generally of the noble class, and oppression and extortion were still common, though not on such a frightful scale as formerly. Those who attentively consider the reign of Tiberius will see that a great point, if not the central point, of his policy was the promotion of the interests of the provincials. The ordinary reader does not notice these things till they are pointed out to him. For instance, when he reads that upon the destruction of twelve great cities in Asia by earthquake, Tiberius not only remitted the taxes for five years, but contributed large sums from his private fortune to help the inhabitants, he thinks it a proper but very natural measure. It does not occur to him that it was a novelty for a Roman to spend his money on the provinces; that Cato or Cicero would have stood aghast at it, and that it was doubtless loudly condemned by the citizens of Rome, rich and poor alike, who could not understand that provincials existed

for anything else than to pour their wealth into the metropolis.

Again, in the days of the republic, governors of provinces used to be changed at least every three years. The nobles all wanted their turn of plunder. Tiberius made it a practice to retain a governor several years in his post. No doubt this innovation was bitterly resented in aristocratic circles; and Tacitus does, in fact, set it down as one of the delinquencies of Tiberius, and gives malevolent explanations of it. But the provincial historian, Josephus, looks at it very differently, and tells us that Tiberius pursued this policy avowedly with the object of saving the provinces from the keen appetites of new governors.

We find the cities of Asia voting a temple to Tiberius, because he had more than once brought to trial at Rome governors who had been guilty of oppression in the East. We find him refusing to drive a harder bargain with the farmers of taxes, who were thought to be making too good a thing of it, because, he said, they would put the screw on the tax-payers. There were certain provinces still administered by the Senate, and we find them imploring that they might be administered by the Emperor. Thus we can have no doubt that the reign of Tiberius, whatever it was in the metropolis (and to that I will come presently), was in all other

parts of the empire beneficent to an extent hitherto unknown. We get these few glimpses from Tacitus. It makes one indignant that when that writer might have left us the inestimable historical treasure of a complete picture of Imperial administration throughout the Roman world, he should have preferred to fill his pages with the grievances of the nobles, who sat grumbling and plotting at Rome. But what is the testimony of provincial writers? You have heard the remark I quoted from Josephus. More emphatic still is the testimony of Philo, another Jew, writing not during the life of Tiberius, when he might be suspected of flattery, but shortly after his death. He winds up a long description of the general prosperity and happiness under the late reign by declaring that "the Saturnian age of the poets might no longer be regarded as a fiction, so nearly was it revived in the life of that blessed era."[1] Tacitus envies the old historians who chronicled "discordias consulum adversum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatium certamina." Whether one in a hundred of his fellow-subjects would have cared to return to those fine old times is a question which does not seem to have occurred to him. History has always been written (except perhaps in the middle ages, when there was a church,) by the rich or their friends. Rulers who

[1] Quoted at length by Mr. Merivale, v. 382.

have displeased that class have suffered accordingly. But how would contemporary history look if recorded by an Irish peasant or a Spitalfields weaver? Would he see it *en beau?*

While careful not to burden his subjects, Tiberius was eminently economical in his financial management. For instance, he cut down the expenditure on gladiatorial exhibitions, and abstained from encouraging them by his presence. This is set down in the catalogue of his offences by Tacitus, and probably there was not one of his measures which made him so unpopular in Rome. He made it a rule not to give donatives to the armies, a pernicious practice pursued by his predecessor and successors. Yet by punctual payment of their wages he kept them in discipline and obedience. In his own life he continued to set an example of simplicity. While the great nobles were squandering their vast revenues in vulgar ostentation and debauchery, the Emperor lived in the plainest way, with a small household. He economised his private fortune, but, as Tacitus admits, he did not covet that of any one else, and even if a legacy was left him he did not accept it unless he had been on intimate terms with the testator. But though he abhorred wasting money on frivolity, he could be splendidly generous in the right place. His munificence to provincial cities has already been mentioned. Twice in his reign, when large districts of Rome had

been destroyed by fire, he contributed enormous sums from his private fortune to repair the damage.[1] But such munificence brought him no credit in the eyes of the nobility, who were discontented because they could not live upon the public revenue, as in the good old times of the republic. We hear of the grandson of the orator Hortensius, one of the richest nobles of the republic, coming to the Senate and complaining of his poverty, which had been caused by his own dissolute life. The Senate wish him to be relieved, but Tiberius reads him a stern lecture. Tacitus narrates this as an instance of his unfeeling character, and evidently thinks that the money wrung by taxation from the provinces could not be better spent than in pensions to needy noblemen.

We have seen that as a general Tiberius had been indefatigable in attention to his duties. He carried this laborious industry from the camp to the palace. No slave in Rome worked harder than the Emperor. For several years he did not quit Rome, even during the sultry months of autumn, when every one who could afford it rushed to the hills or sea-side, but remained at his post toiling at state business, and

[1] "Erogandæ per honesta pecuniæ cupiens; quam virtutem diu retinuit quum ceteras exueret."—Tac. Ann. i. 75. Tacitus never mentions anything to the credit of Tiberius without carefully poisoning it. The "diu" itself is a *suggestio falsi;* the most splendid instance of the munificence of Tiberius belongs to the last few months of his life.

endeavouring to look after everything himself. Indeed, there is no doubt that he carried this too far, for a really great ruler shows his ability in nothing so much as in knowing how to make other people work for him. Tiberius could not employ the great nobles as his ministers. They were disaffected, and, besides, would have disdained any functions except the government of provinces. His son Drusus (II.) had commanded armies with credit, but seems to have preferred pleasure to business.[1] There was nothing for it, therefore, but to look for a minister in a lower rank of society. Such as a minister was Sejanus, whose name, perhaps, is even more odious than that of his master. The charges made against him are, however, very vague, or when they are precise, they, for the most part, break down. They amount, in fact, to this, that being a middle-class man, he had the audacity to be prime minister, and that he was an enemy of the immaculate Agrippina. Agrippina was an ambitious woman, with a violent temper, and she

[1] Never was son more unlike his father. Drusus was not *méchant*, but he was passionate and domineering, and had an ominous delight in blood (of gladiators, for instance), which cannot be laid to the charge of his father. Tiberius saw these traits in his character, and was disturbed by them. "You shall not," he said to him once in the presence of several persons, "you shall not break the laws or commit outrages while I am alive; and if I find you attempting it, you shall not have the chance of doing so when I am dead and gone,"—a significant threat from such a man, which might have more than one meaning.—Dion, lvii. 13.

made herself the centre of disaffection at Rome. She always treated Tiberius as the murderer of her husband, and often abused him to his face, in the grossest manner.[1] He bore her insolence very patiently, and so far from harbouring ill-will against her children, he treated them as his heirs after the death of his own son Drusus. It is remarkable that one of the most intimate friends of this paragon of propriety, Claudia Pulchra, was a woman of dissolute character, and that her children, whom she professed to educate so carefully, turned out abominably. The eldest son, Nero, was dissolute and seditious. The second, Drusus (III.), is admitted by Tacitus to have been thoroughly bad.[2] The third was the notorious Caligula. All the daughters were stained with vice; one of them, the younger Agrippina, being the most infamous woman of her time. But the reason why that family shines so in the pages of Tacitus, while Tiberius and Sejanus are painted so black, is very simple. That younger Agrippina was a very clever woman, and she wrote memoirs which we know were

[1] The fact is that Agrippina was an intolerable woman. During her life she bullied all her contemporaries, and she has bullied posterity ever since in the pages of Tacitus. No one can look at her statue in the Museum of the Capitol without being satisfied that Germanicus was henpecked. The one virtue she is recorded to have possessed is her "pudicitia impenetrabilis," surely not such a rare merit in a widow with nine children.

[2] "Atrox Drusi ingenium."—Ann. iv. 60.

in the hands of Tacitus, for he quotes them. These memoirs, no doubt, were the main source of the foul stream of calumny which has deluged this reign.[1]

In the twelfth year of his reign Tiberius left Rome, never to return. I believe that he had two reasons for doing so. He brooded indignantly over his own unpopularity. And just at this time he became aware that in the vile gossip of Rome he was accused of horrible licentiousness—he who during a long life had been endeavouring to set an example of stern morality. The fact that these scandalous stories were circulating came out by chance during a trial at which he was present. He was violently excited. He sprang up and claimed to answer such charges on the spot, or to have them investigated by a judicial tribunal; and it was with difficulty that his friends could calm him.[2] I imagine that this incident filled

[1] "Id ego, a scriptoribus annalium non traditum repperi in commentariis Agrippinæ filiæ, quæ Neronis principis mater vitam suam et casus suorum posteris memoravit.—Ann. iv. 53.

[2] Tac. Ann. iv. 42. The behaviour of Tiberius on this occasion is eminently characteristic. His apparent cynical indifference to public opinion was entirely assumed. Conscious of being only too sensitive to critics, he tried to steel himself against it. All through life he mistrusted his natural impulses in this as in other particulars, and drilled himself on a pattern which he considered more noble and manly. The incident at the trial of Votienus took him by surprise, and his elaborate calmness forsook him. But no doubt this momentary weakness (as he would think it) caused him more anguish than the calumnies of Votienus. On a subsequent occasion we find him insisting with ostentatious indiffer-

up the measure of his disgust at his fellow-citizens, and decided him to leave their company for ever. His other reason was certainly the dread of conspiracies and assassination, for he chose the island of Capreæ as his residence, because it had only two landing-places, which made police supervision more easy. The military force at his disposal in Italy was very small, and we know that he desired to be in a place from which he could escape by sea, and reach the army of the Rhine. It certainly is painful to see one who had been confronting danger all his life reduced to this state of anxiety when approaching the age of three-score and ten. But to be surrounded with secret plots, never to know when, how, or from whom you may expect the treacherous blow, will at last unnerve the firmest courage. Because Tiberius escaped such plots it is assumed that he was in no danger; whereas it was probably his precautions which saved him.

Soon after his departure from Rome, he caused Agrippina and her eldest son, Nero, to be arrested. The latter was eventually put to death. Agrippina died in prison two or three years afterwards. That they were bitterly hostile to Tiberius is admitted. How far they had proceeded in the path of treason it is impossible for us now to say, since we have not got Tiberius's version of the facts. The persistent

ence that similar filthy libels should be recited at length, "patientiam libertatis alienæ ostentans et contemptor suæ infamiæ," says Tacitus.

assumption of Tacitus that he had a spite against that family is sufficiently disproved by the fact that he had marked out Nero as his successor, and that he did actually make the third son, Caius, his heir, in preference to his own grandson. He wished to put the young men through a course of training such as he had undergone himself, that they might be fit in time to rule the world. But the odds are heavy against Porphyrogeniti. They were already quarrelling for the throne which they had done nothing to earn. Nero was the idol of his mother. Drusus (III.) was backed by Sejanus. Agrippina, who was burning to be empress-mother,[1] was afraid that Sejanus would induce Tiberius to pass over Nero, and she was therefore caballing and intriguing and courting the populace, not, perhaps, with any definite design of rebelling against the Emperor —if he would only make haste and die—but certainly to overthrow the minister. Her offence, putting it at its lightest, was just that of Elizabeth's favourite, Essex, whose aim was to destroy his personal enemies, and force the queen to recognise James as her successor. Tacitus says that Nero was naturally unassuming, but that he was surrounded by men hungry for power, who persuaded him that both the army and the populace were only waiting for him to declare himself; and he admits that under this bad influence the young man used disloyal language.

[1] "Æqui impatiens, dominandi avida."—Tac. Ann. vi. 25.

Plans of action were actually discussed, for some of the party urged Nero and Agrippina to go to the army of the Rhine, or to harangue the crowd in the Forum. Tacitus may say that these advisers were agents of Sejanus; but that is because he has nothing else to say. Tiberius had tolerated the outrageous calumnies and insults of Agrippina for ten years with imperturbable patience, knowing that female politicians had never been formidable at Rome. But as soon as there was a young man to deal with, the danger became real.[1]

The arrest of Nero and Agrippina was generally attributed to Sejanus, and probably with truth, for Sejanus was now aiming at the throne.[2] He had

[1] The feelings of Tiberius were exactly those of Queen Elizabeth, whose severity to Catherine Grey (certainly not an Agrippina), and machinations against James (even when she meant him to be her successor), were prompted by her knowledge that to recognise an heir would be to sign her own death-warrant. "The like had never been demanded of any prince, to declare an heir-presumptive in his lifetime; she was not so foolish as to hang a winding-sheet before her eyes."—(Froude, vii. 373.) "There were some among them (a deputation of peers) who had placed their swords at her disposal when her sister was on the throne, and had invited her to seize the crown; she knew but too well that if she allowed a successor to be named, there would be found men who would approach him or her with the same encouragement to disturb the peace of the realm."—viii. 315.

[2] It was in itself an honourable ambition, though in the eyes of the aristocracy unpardonable. The intrigue with Livilla during her husband's life, and the murder of Drusus (II.), were probably inventions of his divorced wife, Apicata. (Compare Dion, lviii. 11.) In his

married a niece of Tiberius, and thought his chance no worse than that of Tiberius himself had been under Augustus. But he was too impatient to wait for his master's death, and entered into a formidable conspiracy. The old man, however, was determined not to be robbed of life or sceptre by any one, for which I do not blame him; and he struck down Sejanus, as he had struck down Agrippina.

It may perhaps be thought that I have been a long time coming to the main charge which has been brought against Tiberius—that of cruelty. I assure you I have no intention of shirking it. But as his accusers themselves can only level it at the last few years of his life, I do not know why it should occupy more than the last few minutes of this lecture. Tacitus, by constantly harping upon it, has managed to make it the most prominent feature of his character. In dealing with it I must ask you to remember that we have no contemporary historian to guide us, for Velleius appears to have died in the middle of the reign, and has left only some brief remarks on it, which, so far as they go, are very laudatory, while Josephus and Philo, living in the East, trouble themselves little with what was going on at Rome, except so far as it affects the Jews. We depend on Tacitus

hostility to Agrippina and Nero he was acting in self-defence and in the interest of his master, but his dealings with Drusus (III.) seem inexcusable.

and Suetonius, who both lived many years afterwards, and drew their materials from the memoirs of Agrippina. If, therefore, I can show you from the pages of Tacitus himself that the charge of cruelty, on close examination, shrinks to very small dimensions, I think I have a right to protest against the injustice which will not allow such a life as I have described to weigh in the balance of credibility somewhat heavier than the improbable assertions of studied malevolence.

For this purpose I will divide the reign into two parts. The first consists of the twelve years before Tiberius left Rome, during which he was, according to Tacitus, more directly responsible for what was done than afterwards. Tacitus leaves on his reader the impression that both periods were reigns of terror, no man knowing when his turn would come to be devoured.[1] Everything resembling a state trial is paraded and made the most of.[2] Now, how many

[1] "Non enim Tiberius non adcusatores fatiscebant (seventh year of the reign). His tam assiduis tamque mœstis modica lætitia interjicitur (tenth year). Nos sæva jussa continuas adcusationes fallaces amicitias perniciem innocentium et easdem exitu causas conjungimus, obvia rerum similitudine et satietate (eleventh year)."

[2] That the list of trials given by Tacitus is complete (if not something more), is not only fairly to be presumed from the spirit he shows but is distinctly stated by himself. "Neque sum ignarus a plerisque scriptoribus omissa multorum pericula et pœnas, dum copia fatiscunt, aut, quæ ipsis nimia et mœsta fuerant ne pari tædio lecturos adficerent, verentur. Nobis pleraque digna cognitu obvenere, quamquam ab aliis incelebrata."—Ann. vi. 7.

such cases do you suppose there were in those twelve years, on the showing of Tacitus himself? There were thirty-seven in all. And what sort of cases were they? An analysis of them will surprise you. Twelve were for offences against the Emperor or his family (of which six were stopped by Tiberius, or resulted in acquittal or pardon), six were for extortion or oppression in the provinces, seven for adultery or poisoning, four for false accusation, three for complicity with foreign enemies, two for libel, one for murder, one for corrupt adminstration of justice, one for mutiny. And now, what was the fate of these defendants? Prepare to be astonished still more. Fourteen were banished, six committed suicide before sentence, two were expelled the Senate, of five the prosecution was stopped by Tiberius in his capacity as tribune, three were acquitted, one was pardoned; of five the punishment is not mentioned, but it was probably banishment; and one, just one was executed.[1] This man was tried and condemned

[1] Besides these, there were executed, without trial, the two state prisoners left by Augustus—Agrippa Postumus and Sempronius the paramour of Julia. A pseudo-Agrippa and one Curtisius who was heading a slave insurrection, were taken in arms and put to death by martial law. A decree of the Senate banished all astrologers from Italy, and two of them were put to death. Many of the persons whose cases are enumerated above were charged with several crimes, "majestas" being one; and it is generally, but very unwarrantably, assumed that all these cases are to be regarded as political trials. But it had always been the custom at Rome for the accuser to dilate, not merely on the

by the Senate in the absence of Tiberius from Rome, and executed immediately. When Tiberius returned he blamed the haste of the Senate, praised one senator who had opposed it, and caused a decree to be made that in future ten days should intervene between sentence and execution. I think it must be admitted that the first twelve years, at all events, of this monster, were not only not cruel, but merciful to a degree which is unparalleled in any reign, ancient or modern. It is also worth noticing that the state offenders of Tiberius were not sent to penal servitude, but lived comfortably in their banishment, as we find from a provision that they should not take more than twenty slaves with them. The fact is that the state trials of Tiberius afford the clearest indication of the basis on which his power rested. He crushed a lawless nobility, and dragged to justice

offence which was the immediate cause of the prosecutiou, but on every other charge, strong or weak, which there was the smallest pretext for urging. "Majestas," which we shortly translate "treason," had originally meant any act which damaged the state. A law of Saturninus had extended it to outrages on a tribune. Cicero interpreted it to include removing a public statue. So vague a charge was, therefore, naturally added as a count to every indictment of a public character; but it does not follow that either accuser or judges laid serious stress on it. When Tacitus writes, "Ancharius Priscus Cæsium Cordum proconsulem Cretæ postulaverat repetundis, addito majestatis crimine quod tum omnium accusationum complementum erat," it is absurd to treat Cordus as a political offender. In "republican" times, indeed, he might have plundered Crete with impunity, and in that sense his friends might fairly regard him as a victim of Imperialism.

governors who had been guilty of oppression and outrages in the provinces, and who found sympathy among their own class as similar criminals do now. But he was not "cerdonibus timendus." He had nothing to fear from the great mass of his fellow-citizens. Can the governments of modern Europe say as much?

In the remaining eleven years of the reign we cannot analyse the prosecutions with the same exactness, because part of the narrative of Tacitus is lost. If there was greater severity it was not uncalled for. Those who are incredulous as to the treason of Agrippina and Nero will at least not dispute that the conspiracy of Sejanus was of a most formidable character. Moreover, Tiberius was absent from Rome, and we know that while he had remained in the metropolis his influence had been repeatedly, and we may almost say steadily, exercised to prevent the law being made an instrument of persecution. By whom? it may be asked. It is too commonly forgotten that informers and state trials were no new growth of the empire. The system sprang up under the republic. Every young man, on entering public life, looked about for some one to impeach as a means of bringing himself into public notice. The informer did not employ an advocate as with us. He wanted an opportunity for airing his eloquence—the accomplishment to which all his education had been

directed. Probably there was not a single man of any note who had not in his time been a prosecutor or defendant, or both.[1] A few of the prosecutions for treason were no doubt directed or prompted by Tiberius; but there is not the smallest evidence that he was in any way responsible for the majority of them. The system was a voluntary and self-acting one. The judges were generally the Senate. Now, though the great nobles, as a rule, would have seats in the Senate, it was chiefly filled with supporters of Imperialism. It was like the assembly now sitting in Paris, which, as every one knows, though containing a bitter opposition, is more Napoleonist than Napoleon himself. There was, therefore, a continual tendency to severity quite independently of Tiberius. If it is said that he ought to have checked his partisans, the answer is that in the first half of his reign he did repeatedly check them, and that instances are not wanting in the last half.[2] His

[1] The elder Cato was prosecuted near fifty times, and was himself indefatigable in prosecuting others.—Plutarch, Cato Major, xv. The exemption from punishment of a condemned criminal if he turned informer was the provision of a law carried by Pompeius.—Appian, de Bell. Civ., ii. 24.

[2] For discouragement of informers see Tac. Ann. iii. 19, 37, 51, 56, 70; iv. 36; vi. 30. I may cite Mr. Merivale, who is by no means disposed to deal gently with Tiberius: "Certain it is that the records of the earlier years of the Tiberian despotism abound in evidence of the Emperor's solicitude for the pure administration of justice, and the constant struggle in which he was engaged with the reckless spirit of violence

efforts in that direction may have been much more frequent and energetic than we know of, for Tacitus is not likely to enlarge on them more than he can help. After all, the main question is, Were these condemned people guilty or not? If no one stops to ask it, it is because all the unfavourable criticisms on Tiberius are based on the tacit assumption that he had no right to be where he was, and that conspiracy was rather creditable than otherwise. But those who believe, as I do, that his government rested on the only true basis for any government, namely, the welfare of the community, and the consent of the large majority of the governed, will hold that it was not only his right, but his duty, to lay a heavy hand on the aristocracy if they would not acquiesce.

During the ten years following the departure of Tiberius from Rome, Tacitus records fifty-seven instances of real or supposed offenders against the Emperor. Of these, eighteen seem to have been executed, eighteen committed suicide, eight were acquitted or spared, three were banished, three purchased safety by turning informers, one was expelled the Senate, and of six the fate is not mentioned.[1]

and cruelty of which accusers and judges equally partook. Ultimately his own steadfastness and constancy gave way. He yielded to the orrent which he was no longer able to stem."—v. 173.

[1] Among the fifty-seven cases above mentioned I have included four

Most of them are charged with complicity in the conspiracy of Sejanus. It must be remembered that Sejanus was detested by the aristocracy, and when he fell they thirsted for vengeance on all his friends. If there was any undue severity then it is more fairly chargeable on the Senate than on the Emperor.[1] In addition to the figures given above, Tacitus says that two years after the fall of Sejanus all his friends who remained in prison were put to death, without trial, in one day, and he describes a scene of carnage like a battle-field. Suetonius, evidently alluding to the same occasion, speaks of twenty persons being executed in one day. I suspect they were both copying from some random writer; for we find a brother and uncle of Sejanus alive afterwards, though the former had been guilty of an elaborate insult to Tiberius.

in which the offence is not clearly specified, and possibly was not political. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there is a hiatus of nearly three years in the narrative of Tacitus.

[1] The career and fate of Sejanus strikingly resemble those of a much better man, Thomas Cromwell. Both had incurred the savage hatred of the class into which and above which they had raised themselves. When Tiberius and Henry VIII. saw cause to distrust their ministers they had only to abandon them to the nobles, who rushed on them like a pack of hounds. If, as Tacitus says, the commonalty joined in the hunt, their fury was more transient as it is less intelligible than that of the nobility. "Placitum posthac ut in reliquos Sejani liberos adverteretur; vanescente quamquam plebis ira, ac plerisque per priora subplicia lenitis."—Tac. Ann. v. 9. The word "placitum" fixes this barbarity on the Senate.

There is another topic which cannot be easily handled here, but which it is impossible entirely to pass over. You are probably aware that Tiberius is charged with having lapsed in his later years into the foulest licentiousness. Now this a sort of charge which from its nature is not capable of direct disproof. A writer who falsifies public events generally lays himself open to refutation. But when he makes assertions as to matters which are essentially of a private and secret character, how are we to meet him? We can only appeal to probability. I have shown you what the character of Tiberius was through a long life. A more clearly-marked character is not to be found in history. I ask you, Is it credible that such a man would break out into dissolute habits at the age of sixty-eight? If he did he would be in his grave in a few months, if not weeks. But Tiberius lived ten years at Capreæ. He lived to be seventy-eight, and preserved extraordinary vigour of mind and body to the last day of his life. Any medical man will tell you that this single fact is a more conclusive refutation of these shameful calumnies than a thousand testimonials to character. You may ask me whence these calumnies sprung, and how they obtained currency. Whenever a sovereign retires from publicity, vile scandals of this kind invariably make their appearance. They may be repeated by the popular voice, but it is not the people

which invents them. They are generated in fashionable society, among the idlers and sycophants who hang about courts. On such persons a life of domestic virtue imposes no respect. It adds flavour to the scandal. William III. was a man of finer character than Tiberius, but he resembled him in his unsocial habits and forbidding demeanour, and he did not in his lifetime escape the same foul charges which have clung more persistently to the Roman emperor. In the vile gossip of Jacobite circles Loo was a Capreæ, and Lady Orkney less fastidious than Mallonia.[1] When such tales are improbable in themselves, and come to us through suspicious channels, it is but simple justice to the defenceless dead to reject them, or at least to hold them not proven.

In concluding this lecture let me say that I hope no one will go away with the impression that, because I approve of the government of the Cæsars, I am therefore enamoured of modern Imperialism. The establishment of the empire at Rome was a distinct step in advance. It was the only way in which ancient civilization could be kept together. It was an enormous boon to ninety-nine out of every hundred of the population. Modern Imperialism is retrograde. It prohibits a free press. It refuses the right of public meeting. It fosters the military

[1] Sueton. Tiberius, 44.

spirit. Lastly, it returns to the hereditary principle, which was irrevocably condemned by the immortal French Revolution. It is not so bad as the government of a privileged class. That is all that can be said for it. But no government can meet the wants of modern society unless, whatever be its form, it is in spirit Republican.

NECKER AND CALONNE:

AN OLD STORY.

"Maxime solutum et sine obtrectatore fuit prodere de iis quos mors odio aut gratiæ exemisset."—TACITUS.

IN the spring of 1787 France was within twenty-four months of the Revolution. Great questions, which had been slowly preparing for several centuries, and rapidly ripening during fifteen or twenty years, were on the point of being summarily decided. Privileges criticised, no doubt, but still flourishing in full vigour and activity, tough enough apparently to stand against many a rude shock before they should finally succumb, were within three short years to be not only dead, but beginning to pass out of mind. All thinking men had long foreseen the Revolution—nay, had confidently predicted it. Yet, after all, it took them by surprise. It is easy to calculate how many days or hours you are from Niagara; but the rapids once entered, you may be wrong as to the minutes. And as historical facts cannot be

soberly measured and judged by the man who has witnessed them or lived immediately after them, so is it no less true that the relative proportions of coming events are less distinctly apprehended as they approach and become of practical interest, than when they are first descried on the far horizon by cool speculation.

> "Noi veggiam come quei, che ha mala luce
> Le cose, disse, che ne son lontano;
> Quando s' appressano, o son, tutto è vano
> Nostro intelletto."

France had drifted under the shadow of the Revolution when Louis XVI. opened the Assembly of Notables on the 22nd of February, 1787.

The student who approaches the history of these eventful months, naturally seeks to discover their central point of interest. Of all the great questions awaiting solution, on which was the battle fought? What was the popular cry? Was it in Church or State, in the army or the law, in the tenure of land or the regulation of commerce, that men clamoured most loudly for reform? Nothing of the sort. The issue raised was infinitely simpler. Shall M. de Calonne continue in power, or shall he make way for M. Necker?

Necker was not an untried man. He had presided over the finances in the Maurepas ministry. Maure-

pas is a character we seem to know. "Nimble old man, who for all emergencies has his light jest; and even in the worst confusion will emerge, cork-like, unsunk! Small care to him is Perfectibility, Progress of the Species, and *Astræa Redux;* good only that a man of light wit, verging towards fourscore can, in the seat of authority, feel himself important among men. In courtier dialect he is now named 'the Nestor of France,'—such governing Nestor as France has." Under such a leader an earnest politician had an unsatisfactory time of it. Necker was an exceedingly clever man, and was possessed of many qualities which win, and some that deserve, popularity. He was not a great political economist, like Turgot; but he had a wonderful power of mastering financial details, which was equalled only by his skill in manipulating, or, as some said, in cooking them. The confidence reposed in him by great capitalists was unbounded, and, as is frequently the case with that tribe, blind and childish. They took for granted that he could work miracles, and he was gratified by their superstition. His intellect, not being under the control of a strong and simple character, embarrassed him by its very acuteness. "He viewed," says one who knew him, "every side of a question so elaborately, his prevision was so susceptible and scrupulous, that he could see nothing but difficulties." Even his admirer M. Louis Blanc

allows that he was ever "hesitating between the shame of being useless and the fear of being too bold, undecided and perplexed just because he saw further than others."

Necker's ambition was enormous. Yet it was not exactly that craving for power which is felt by born rulers of men; it was rather a passion for fame, an ardent desire to shine before his contemporaries, to be blessed as the saviour of France. He was earnestly bent on doing good, but not by stealth; and his hunger for popularity seriously marred his statesmanship. While the austere and noble Turgot, in the depth of his love for the oppressed people, was braving its ignorant resentment, Necker was picking up a little applause by cavilling at the great economist in the name of economy. Turgot thought that public opinion stood in sore need of education, and he wished to educate it. Necker worshipped it: "L'un parlait au peuple en législateur, et l'autre en courtisan."[1] When others were in power he was inconsolable. It seemed to him something monstrous and unnatural that any one but M. Necker should flourish like a green bay-tree. "Je ne sais trop pourquoi l'opinion publique n'est plus à mes yeux ce qu'elle était. Le respect que je lui ai religieusement rendu, s'est affaibli quand je l'ai vue soumise aux artifices des méchants." At such seasons his appetite for incense

[1] Droz, vol. i. p. 110.

was in some imperfect degree stayed by the adulation of his domestic circle, where an accomplished and ambitious wife "lui vouait une sorte de culte."[1] But the malicious plots of the court and aristocracy to drive him from power did more than anything else to endear him to the lower orders. They yearned to recompense him for the chagrin which they supposed him to suffer. The language of the popular journals became quite ecstatic; for instance: "Le cœur se serre en pensant à ce qu'il a souffert, à ce qu'il aurait pu souffrir. On cherche dans ses yeux à deviner les mouvements de son âme. C'est un père qui revient au milieu de sa famille, qui le chérit; quoiqu'il n'ait plus rien à craindre, on s'inquiéte encore, on l'interroge pour savoir s'il n'a pas quelque blessure cachée qu'il ne veut pas découvrir de peur d'affliger ses enfants."[2]

The truth is that Necker's egregious vanity did him no harm with the public. When he talked with dignity about "un homme de mon caractère," when he laboured to impress on his chief "quelques unes des grandes idées morales dont mon cœur était animé," when he drew a portrait of the statesman whom France needed, "a man in whom intelligence is combined with firmness, prudence, and virtue," not affecting to conceal that she possessed at least one such treasure,

[1] Droz, vol. i. p. 79.

[2] Journal of Gorsas, quoted by M. Louis Blanc, ii. 467.

the people took him at his own valuation. They greedily devoured his incessant appeals to public opinion, the style of which, though diffuse and hardly rising to eloquence, was lucid and attractive. He occasionally fell into language which some have admired as the genuine outburst of a philanthropic heart, and others have denounced as sentimental claptrap. One rather famous passage may be quoted as a sample:—

"Almost all civil institutions have been made for the possessors of property, One is frightened, on opening the statute-book, at being met everywhere by this fact. One would think that a small number of men had divided the land between themselves, and then proceeded to make laws to unite and guarantee each other against the multitude, as they would make a fence in the woods to defend themselves against wild beasts. And yet it must be said that when laws of property, justice, and liberty have been established, next to nothing has been done for the most numerous class of citizens. What do your laws of property matter to us? they may say. We have no property. Your laws of justice? We have nothing to defend. Your laws of liberty? If we do not work, to-morrow we shall die."[1]

It is all very well to sneer at outbursts of this sort, or to denounce them savagely as unworthy of a statesman, but they tell on the masses. While fastidious or cynical politicians receive a warmly expressed sentiment with shouts of derision, and think reiterated allusions to it an effective way of baiting an opponent, it is being treasured in the hearts of the people.

[1] Sur la législation et le commerce des grains. Conclusion.

Even now there are those who are fascinated by Necker's gushing language. In the eyes of M. Louis Blanc he is a thinker who had calmly judged political economy and found it wanting, and is therefore to be set above Turgot. But Necker was not precisely the man to be in advance of his age. He was far enough from any shade of socialism, and even from a sincere relish for equality, as his later writings abundantly show. The simple truth is that his intellect was rather flabby. Clear-sighted in details, hazy in his conception of general principles, he was eager to strike at this or that abuse, but he shrank with nervous dread from anything like systematic coherent thought in politics. He would assuredly have refused the deductions which seem to M. Louis Blanc to follow so obviously from such a passage as that I have quoted. "Chez Necker," says the judicious and impartial M. Henri Martin, "il faut bien le dire, la protestation en faveur des prolétaires reste à l'état de sentiment." In a word, it was soft stuff. When we read it we must remember that the great financier had already written plays, and was destined to compose not only a "Cours de Morale Religieuse," but a novel with the romantic title, "Suites funestes d'une seule faute."

Necker had resigned in 1781 somewhat hastily, because he found himself thwarted by his colleagues. Fully persuaded that he was indispensable, he made

no doubt that in a few weeks he would come in again on his own terms. His retirement, however, lasted longer than he expected, and in the meantime things moved so fast that, when he did return, it was to face difficulties unprovided for by his counting-house philosophy. France, during the eclipse of her Necker, had been under the treatment of Calonne, and steps had been taken which, good or bad, were irrevocable.

"On the morality of Calonne," says M. Martin, "there is but one opinion; on his capacity there are two." This is a judgment which would have mortified Calonne if he had lived to read it. In the first part of it he would have acquiesced with little concern; but in the second he would have recognised that he was punished *par où il avait péché;* for lack of ability was certainly not the cause of the evil celebrity he has obtained in history. There are statesmen who are too clever by half. In the absence of all sincerity and all genuine conviction their counsel is inevitably turned into foolishness; therefore posterity, undazzled by the momentary glitter, judging and rightly judging them by the ensemble of their policy,—if a series of manœuvres may be dignified by that name,—doubts whether they had any capacity at all,—whether they were not mere mountebanks. Calonne was a man absolutely free from all prejudice or predilection in politics. It was perfectly immaterial to him whether he governed wisely or foolishly, on old principles or

according to new lights, by the favour of the king or by the support of the people. His ambition was not of a lofty kind. It amounted merely to a determination to get to the top of the tree, to be looked up to by good society, to have the power of dispensing favours and distinctions among personages of a more. exalted rank than himself, and he had no objection to govern well if it conduced to that result. To Necker such a position would have given no satisfaction, unless he could feel that he was earning the approbation of good men. Calonne cared little for the approbation of any one so long as he could sit in high places. With him, the end being base, all means were equally eligible, either simultaneously or successively. When he entered on office, he laid down for himself the rule, that the first requisite for success was to inspire confidence. Necker had been able to raise loan after loan, simply because capitalists believed in him. His resignation had been looked on as a public calamity, because it was feared that the capitalists would lend to no one else. Unless Calonne could conquer their confidence, it was impossible that he could remain in office. Many an insolvent banker has kept afloat for years, and perhaps ultimately saved himself, by showing no signs of distress, when the least appearance of economy or retrenchment would have destroyed his credit. Calonne did but pursue this familiar method, not altogether despairing of ultimate success, but

determined, at all events, to hold on as long as he could. No finance minister could play this game of brag at the present day, because public resources and public incumbrances cannot be materially disguised. But French finances under the *ancien régime* were as absolutely a secret as the accounts of a private firm. The publication of Necker's *Compte Rendu* had for the first time thrown some light upon them; but they were still a mystery, and the more so that in that celebrated state-paper Necker had considerably cooked them. The plan of Calonne was therefore not so wild as it seems; the best proof of which is that he *did* restore confidence, and *did* manage to bleed the capitalists to the tune of nineteen millions sterling in three years. But further, he saw that all Necker's popularity with the country had not enabled him to bear up against the dislike of the court; and he was determined not to lose the game for want of support in that quarter. To us it seems a proof of infatuation, that within three years of the Revolution a minister should still have been counting on court favour as an element of solid strength. It is easy to see Calonne's mistake now. But in France, up to that time, court favour had been the surest foundation on which power could be built. The minister was literally the servant of the king. His promotion was notified to him verbally by a simple valet de chambre. "Monsieur So-and-so, the King has made you minister." Calonne

is not to be set down as a fool because he thought such a system might last a few years longer than it did. That sweeping reforms must soon come he saw clearly, more clearly than Necker, who desired them indeed ardently, but always slavishly overrated the strength of the old régime. The confidence of the people and the sovereign once gained, Calonne intended to appropriate some of the plans of the reformers, and, in his unbounded self-reliance, he flattered himself that his cleverness and tact would carry measures which had failed in more awkward hands. He is not the only statesman who has been out in his reckoning, from simple incapacity to comprehend the value of a decent reputation—even to an impostor.

For some time all went well. A knot of serious and earnest men, the partisans of Necker, might protest as they pleased against a worship of successful effrontery, and fret over the lengthened exclusion of their chief from office; but the popularity of the minister was considerable. Money poured in from the innocent capitalists, and was lavished on jobs in the interest of every one who seemed to be in a position to render support of any kind in return.[1] It

[1] "I told our friends at Warrington that there appeared to me to have grown up under the present Government a system of what I called, in regard to the public expenditure, making things pleasant all round. That means going from town to town, granting what this community

is astonishing how easily people come to look upon the interests of the community as identical with their own. We are generally given to understand that Calonne's ministry was an undisguised scramble among the courtiers for the last plunder of the wreck. But it certainly did not appear in that light either to courtiers or people. "I was always certain that man would save France," said a great nobleman, with genuine enthusiasm, "but I never thought he would do it so soon." The capitalists, as we have seen, were satisfied. If there was one province of France where the minister was likely to be ill-received

wants, granting what that community wants, granting what the other community wants, and leaving out of sight that large public which unfortunately has not got the voices and the advocates ready always to defend it against these local and particular claims. I told you a story of a case where a candidate in the Government interest at this moment goes to a constituency, and complains that he could not get a Liberal Government to surrender for £2,500 a debt due to the Government of £20,000, but that when a Conservative Government came in he found there was no difficulty at all in arranging the matter. Therefore he says, 'Return me to Parliament, and not a member of the Liberal party.'" (*Speech of Mr. Gladstone, Times, Oct.* 26, 1868.) "It is far more easy to work the Parliamentary machine by a lavish expenditure of money, than it is to procure, or promote, or insist upon any due system of economy. They make things easy by what is called greasing the wheels. I recollect only last session speaking to a very eminent member of the Conservative side of the House about the policy of the Government, and he said that their policy was to make the thing work by giving a little money all round."—(*Speech of Mr. Bright, Times, Nov.* 11, 1868.)

it was Brittany. Did he give the Bretons a wide berth? Not a bit of it. He made a point of paying them a visit, harangued them with his usual bounce, smartness, and well-simulated candour, and left them shouting "Vive Calonne!" "A feat," says M. Martin, "truly incredible." All the world saw that he was borrowing. But what had Necker done but borrow? Necker's loans had amounted to upwards of seventeen millions sterling in five years. Necker had been valued just because he could raise loans; and now it appeared that Calonne could raise them, if anything, faster.

For three years was this game carried on. M. Louis Blanc believes that Calonne was deliberately making things worse, in order that the privileged classes might be driven into a corner and compelled to submit to reform; and the fact that, after all, he exaggerated the deficit in his statement to the Notables does seem to show that he relied on this means of silencing opposition. Whether he was driven to unfold the second part of his scheme earlier and more abruptly than he had designed, it is impossible to determine. The necessity came; the capitalists took fright; no more money was to be had; and there was nothing for it but to play his trump card at once.

The first thing to be done was to break the disagreeable news to the king. Louis had commenced

his reign with a new-fangled eagerness to be a pattern sovereign. But the good seed lay on stony ground. His fat soul soon wearied of well-doing and settled down to field sports. To this animal Calonne now came with his awkward story. The impending catastrophe, he said, was not of his creating; Necker had bequeathed it to him; the famous *Compte Rendu* had been cooked: the deficit had been steadily growing since the days of Louis XIV.; there was but one remedy—retrenchment. He then proceeded to sketch out a series of reforms of the most sweeping kind, some of them long demanded by enlightened men, others crude, and even whimsical, such as the payment of taxes in kind. The king gasped for breath. "Why," said he, "this is simply Necker over again." But he had not the manliness to send the impudent gambler about his business, and call to his counsels the only man who by special aptitude and deliberate conviction was entitled to preside over such a policy. Calonne persuaded him that there was no reason why that solemn disagreeable Necker should have a monopoly of reform and its credit, and obtained a pledge of the royal support.

The instrument by which the new reforms were to be carried out was worthy of the projector. Calonne was one of those statesman who are cursed with ingenuity, that most fatal of all gifts in politics, where breadth and simplicity can alone avail. The device

of an Assembly of Notables seemed to him peculiarly happy. It was old. It was new. It was startling, It was safe. He could leer with one eye at the ardent champions of reform, while with the other he winked at the alarmed defenders of privilege. He would pack this Assembly by drawing half of it from that stratum of French society which, selfish as it was, had no speculative or sentimental prejudices,—atheist prelates scheming for promotion, and men of fashion, who petted Franklin, dined with D'Holbach, and laughed at the impudent hits of Beaumarchais. On their votes surely a reforming minister might reckon. The other half he would "educate" by assuring them that he was but developing the profoundest principles of the monarchy.

The Notables met, and Calonne hardily addressed himself to his task with the air of a man certain of success. His first stroke was as maladroit as it was coarse. The opening sentence of his harangue informed the Notables that his plans were honoured by the personal approbation of Majesty. Unfortunately the sovereign was not venerated as a conclusive authority in politics, and even a packed Assembly thinks itself good for something else than registering a foregone conclusion. The financial statement was introduced by the minister with matchless audacity. He had studied economy; yes, economy; not, it was true, the niggardly petty cheese-paring, which some

ministers had dignified by that name, but a large and liberal economy which consisted—in short which consisted in swelling the expenditure. But the dismay which the confession of the deficit excited gave place to a stronger feeling when the speaker went on with flippant pomposity to unfold his programme of reform. If he had any admirers left in the Assembly, gaping devotees who had believed to the last that their great medicine-man had some miraculous shift by which he would keep the game alive, here he parted company with them. It was in vain that he replied to attacks with infinite cleverness and assurance, and had a retort ready for every assailant. The Assembly which he had himself devised and summoned into existence, turned upon him, and gave him plainly to understand that, whether his plans were good or bad, whether he was prepared to govern as a Reformer or a Conservative, go he must. Consistent, thoroughgoing partisans of privilege, such as Richelieu and Ségur, denounced him as a traitor for having convoked the Assembly at all; reformers would hear of no minister but the virtuous Necker; the sovereign, of whose personal support he had bragged, threw him over; and Calonne reluctantly bade farewell to office, leaving as the one substantial result of his administration that old landmarks and barriers had been recklessly beaten down by the accredited representative of privilege. The impossibility of letting things

remain as they were, either in Church or State, had been officially proclaimed. In the struggle for place and popularity, all prominent men had recognised reform as a necessity; and however they might repent it, thenceforth there was for them no drawing back. For the people had heard words spoken which it would never again forget.

The fall of Calonne did not immediately realise the hopes of Necker. The court and the privileged classes were not yet prepared to see France ruled by an ex-banker, who did not even prefix the *de* to his name. Sixteen months of Brienne succeeded. Then there was an attempt to induce the great financier to coalesce with Brienne; in other words, to sell his talents and, what was worth more, his popularity to a clique of official hacks who loathed radical reform and would have thwarted him at every step. But it must be said for Necker that he had too much spirit for that. Though dying for office, he was ready to wait a little longer rather than compromise his independence. His native vanity here rose into a proper pride. Laugh at him as we may, the man really did wish to do good, wished it ardently, and he was determined that when next he took office he would not be harnessed with a jibbing team. It was destined that he should not fail for want of his chance. The court surrendered at discretion, and Necker came into power triumphant, unfettered, the idol of the

populace, with every qualification for governing except a strong character and some knowledge of his own intentions.

The great question of the day, the first which the new minister was called on to determine, was the constitution of the States-General which had been promised by the king, and were to meet the next year. Were the representatives of the Third Estate to be equal in number to each of the other two, or to both of them united? Were the three orders to sit in separate chambers or in one—to vote by order or by head? For simplifying finances, for a discriminating reduction or imposition of taxes, for a severe economy, for legislation tending to promote material prosperity, Necker was the very man. There he was on his own ground, and could tread firmly. But he was now confronted with political difficulties of another order, and his defects of mind and character became at once apparent. For his own part, he desired—so far as he knew what he desired—an Assembly which would support Necker. Sometimes he feared that the States-General would be too tame, too easily moulded by the privileged classes. At other times he was filled with nervous apprehension that it would hurry him into reforms of a nature and scope which he had never contemplated, and to the direction of which he felt himself as incompetent as he was disinclined. Being entirely without system in

politics, he had no other guide for his action than public opinion. An English statesman now-a-days, who is similarly unprovided, can get along after a fashion without his nakedness being discovered, because a free press, free public meetings, and representative institutions afford a constant test of public opinion in all its variations. But in France, before the Revolution, public opinion had not organised itself; accurate gauges of it did not exist; and if they had existed, people were not yet trained to read them. The convocation of the States-General was a leap in the dark indeed. Poor Necker, peering around him for the straw to show how the wind blew, could think of no better way of feeling the public mind than calling together once more the selfish, impotent, and ridiculous Assembly devised by Calonne.

The Notables, as might have been foreseen, voted against the doubling of the Third Estate, against vote by head, against redistribution of constituencies. A cry of indignation went up from France. Addresses from municipalities and other corporate bodies poured in. Necker had got his cue. It was with the King in Council that the real decision rested under the old régime. In the council, therefore, Necker set himself to calm the forebodings of privilege.[1] "Do not," he said, "be so jealous of this Third Estate;

[1] Rapport fait au Roi dans son Conseil,—*Œuvres de Necker*, vi. 432.

do not apprehend such terrible things from it. Look at its enthusiastic loyalty towards the present occupant of the throne; it will never think of attacking property or privilege—privilege being a property just as sacred as any other. I do not advocate the double representation because I want it to overbear the other orders by weight of numbers, which I should think very undesirable, but because such a concession to justice will satisfy public opinion. Once these inequalities adjusted, you will find that all three orders have much the same views about legislation. How should it be otherwise when good government is the manifest interest of all classes alike? Remember what weight the privileged classes will continue to have by their wealth and social prestige; besides there are so many subjects on which the deputies of the Third Estate can give us valuable information and advice; but if nothing else weighs with you" (and here Necker's loose sentiment bordered on true insight) "listen to the inarticulate voice of Europe everywhere joining in on the side of justice."

To publish a Report read at the Council of Ministers was an unheard-of proceeding. But with his usual restless itching for compliment, Necker rushed into print, and was thus at the pains to put on record for ever predictions destined to be so signally falsified by the event. For the moment, however, he tasted

triumph. MM. de Nivernois, de Fourgueux, de Luzerne, de Saint Priest, de Villedeuil, de Montmorin —of such world-famous personages, in addition to Necker and good harmless old Malesherbes, was the Council of the King of France composed the year before the Revolution—were convinced or silenced, and the royal decree went forth, conceding the double representation of the Third Estate and redistribution of constituencies. As for the remaining and still more important question of voting by order or by head, Necker characteristically let it alone. He knew, every one knew, that it would arise the first day the States met, that it would not settle itself, that the King would have to pronounce on it, that it would be wiser to pronounce at once than to wait till the orders had quarrelled about it before the eyes of France. Necker never moved in earnest till he had the maximum of force at his back. Moreover, he thought that the Third Estate had perhaps been sufficiently strengthened, for his purpose; if not, he had a weapon in reserve. In the meantime he tacitly allowed it to be inferred that he sympathised with the most liberal view, and he revelled in the sweets of a popularity to which there was no parallel in French history.

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