

have done, and to take care that they shall appear to have been done through virtue, and not by chance. Do you, O Romans, since it is now night, worship that Jupiter, the guardian of this city and of yourselves, and depart to your homes; and defend those homes, though the danger is now removed, with guard and watch as you did last night. That you shall not have to do so long, and that you shall enjoy perpetual tranquillity, shall, O Romans, be my care.

THE FOURTH ORATION OF M. T. CICERO AGAINST LUCIUS CATILINE.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE.

THE ARGUMENT.

The night after the events mentioned in the argument to the preceding oration, Cicero's wife Terentia, with the vestal virgins, was performing at home the mystic rites of the Bona Dea, while Cicero was deliberating with his friends on the best mode of punishing the conspirators. Terentia interrupted their deliberations by coming in to inform them of a prodigy which had just happened; that after the sacrifice in which she had been engaged was over, the fire revived spontaneously; on which the vestal virgins had sent her to him, to inform him of it, and to bid him pursue what he was then thinking of and intending for the good of his country, since the goddess had given this sign that she was watching over his safety and glory.

The next day the senate ordered public rewards to the ambassadors and to Vulturcius; and showed signs of intending to proceed with extreme rigor against the conspirators; when, on a sudden, rumors arose of plots having been formed by the slaves of Lentulus and Cethegus for their masters' rescue; which obliged Cicero to double all the guards, and determined him to prevent any repetition of such attempts by bringing before the senate without delay the question of the punishment of the prisoners. On which account he summoned the senate to meet the next morning.

There were many difficulties in the matter. Capital punishments were unusual and very unpopular at Rome. And there was an old law of Porcius Lecca, a tribune of the people, which granted to all criminals who were capitally condemned an appeal to the people; and also a law had been passed, since his time, by Caius Gracchus, to prohibit the taking away the life of any citizen without a formal hearing before the people. And these considerations had so much weight with some of the senators, that they absented themselves from the senate during this debate, in order to have no share in sentencing prisoners of such

high rank to death. The debate was opened by Silanus, the consul elect, who declared his opinion, that those in custody, and those also who should be taken subsequently, should all be put to death. Every one who followed him agreed with him, till Julius Cæsar, the prætor elect (who has been often suspected of having been, at least to some extent, privy to the conspiracy), rose, and in an elaborate speech proposed that they should not be put to death, but that their estates should be confiscated, and they themselves kept in perpetual confinement. Cato opposed him with great earnestness. But some of Cicero's friends appeared inclined to Cæsar's motion, thinking it a safer measure for Cicero himself; but when Cicero perceived this, he rose himself, and discussed the opinions both of Silanus and Cæsar in the following speech, which decided the senate to vote for their condemnation. And as soon as the vote had passed, Cicero went immediately from the senate-house, took Lentulus from the custody of his kinsman Lentulus Spinther, and delivered him to the executioner. The other conspirators, Cethegus, Statilius, Gabinius, &c., were in like manner conducted to execution by the prætors; and Cicero was conducted home to his house in triumph by the whole body of the senate and by the knights, the whole multitude following him, and saluting him as their deliverer.

I. I SEE, O conscript fathers, that the looks and eyes of you all are turned toward me; I see that you are anxious not only for your own danger and that of the republic, but even, if that be removed, for mine. Your good-will is delightful to one amid evils, and pleasing amid grief; but I entreat you, in the name of the immortal gods, lay it aside now, and, forgetting my safety, think of yourselves and of your children. If, indeed, this condition of the consulship has been allotted to me, that I should bear all bitterness, all pains and tortures, I will bear them not only bravely but even cheerfully, provided that by my toils dignity and safety are procured for you and for the Roman people.

I am that consul, O conscript fathers, to whom neither the forum in which all justice is contained, nor the Campus Martius,¹ consecrated to the consular assemblies, nor the senate-house, the chief assistance of all nations, nor my own home, the common refuge of all men, nor my bed devoted to rest, in short, not even this seat of honor, this curule chair, has ever been free from the danger of death, or from plots and treachery. I have been silent about many things, I have borne much, I have conceded much, I have remedied

¹ The *Campus Martius* was consecrated or restored to Mars after the expulsion of the Tarquins; the *comitia centuriata* at which all magistrates were created were held there.

many things with some pain to myself, amid the alarm of you all. Now if the immortal gods have determined that there shall be this end to my consulship, that I should snatch you, O conscript fathers, and the Roman people from miserable slaughter, your wives and children and the vestal virgins from most bitter distress, the temples and shrines of the gods, and this most lovely country of all of us, from impious flames, all Italy from war and devastation; then, whatever fortune is laid up for me by myself, it shall be borne. If, indeed, Publius Lentulus, being led on by soothsayers, believed that his name was connected by destiny with the destruction of the republic, why should not I rejoice that my consulship has taken place almost by the express appointment of fate for the preservation of the republic?

II. Wherefore, O conscript fathers, consult the welfare of yourselves, provide for that of the republic; preserve yourselves, your wives, your children, and your fortunes; defend the name and safety of the Roman people; cease to spare me, and to think of me. For, in the first place, I ought to hope that all the gods who preside over this city will show me gratitude in proportion as I deserve it; and in the second place, if any thing does happen to me, I shall fall with a contented and prepared mind; and, indeed, death can not be disgraceful to a brave man, nor premature to one of consular rank, nor miserable to a wise man. Not that I am a man of so iron a disposition as not to be moved by the grief of a most dear and affectionate brother now present, and by the tears of all these men by whom you now see me surrounded. Nor does my fainting wife, my daughter prostrate with fear, and my little son whom the republic seems to me to embrace as a sort of hostage for my consulship, the son-in-law who, awaiting the end of that day, is now standing in my sight, fail often to recall my mind to my home. I am moved by all these circumstances, but in such a direction as to wish that they all may be safe together with you, even if some violence overwhelms me, rather than that both they and we should perish together with the republic.

Wherefore, O conscript fathers, attend to the safety of the republic; look round upon all the storms which are impending, unless you guard against them. It is not Tiberius Gracchus, who wished to be made a second time a tribune of the people; it is not Caius Gracchus, who endeavored to excite

the partisans of the agrarian law ; it is not Lucius Saturninus, who slew Memmius, who is now in some danger, who is now brought before the tribunal of your severity. They are now in your hands who withstood all Rome, with the object of bringing conflagration on the whole city, massacre on all of you, and of receiving Catiline ; their letters are in your possession, their seals, their handwriting, and the confession of each individual of them ; the Allobroges are tampered with, the slaves are excited, Catiline is sent for ; the design is actually begun to be put in execution, that all should be put to death, so that no one should be left even to mourn the name of the republic, and to lament over the downfall of so mighty a dominion.

III. All these things the witnesses have informed you of, the prisoners have confessed, you by many judgments have already decided ; first, because you have thanked me in unprecedented language, and have passed a vote that the conspiracy of abandoned men has been laid open by my virtue and diligence ; secondly, because you have compelled Publius Lentulus to abdicate the prætorship ; again, because you have voted that he and the others about whom you have decided should be given into custody ; and above all, because you have decreed a supplication in my name, an honor which has never been paid to any one before acting in a civil capacity ; last of all, because yesterday you gave most ample rewards to the ambassadors of the Allobroges and to Titus Vulturcius ; all which acts are such that they, who have been given into custody by name, without any doubt seem already condemned by you.

But I have determined to refer the business to you as a fresh matter, O conscript fathers, both as to the fact, what you think of it, and as to the punishment, what you vote. I will state what it behooves the consul to state. I have seen for a long time great madness existing in the republic, and new designs being formed, and evil passions being stirred up, but I never thought that so great, so destructive a conspiracy as this was being meditated by citizens. Now to whatever point your minds and opinions incline, you must decide before night. You see how great a crime has been made known to you ; if you think that but few are implicated in it you are greatly mistaken ; this evil has spread wider than you think ; it has spread not only throughout Italy, but it

has even crossed the Alps, and creeping stealthily on, it has already occupied many of the provinces; it can by no means be crushed by tolerating it, and by temporizing with it; however you determine on chastising it, you must act with promptitude.

IV. I see that as yet there are two opinions. One that of Decius Silanus, who thinks that those who have endeavored to destroy all these things should be punished with death; the other, that of Caius Cæsar, who objects to the punishment of death, but adopts the most extreme severity of all other punishment. Each acts in a manner suitable to his own dignity and to the magnitude of the business with the greatest severity. The one thinks that it is not right that those, who have attempted to deprive all of us and the whole Roman people of life, to destroy the empire, to extinguish the name of the Roman people, should enjoy life and the breath of heaven common to us all, for one moment; and he remembers that this sort of punishment has often been employed against worthless citizens in this republic. The other feels that death was not appointed by the immortal gods for the sake of punishment, but that it is either a necessity of nature, or a rest from toils and miseries; therefore wise men have never met it unwillingly, brave men have often encountered it even voluntarily. But imprisonment, and that too perpetual, was certainly invented for the extraordinary punishment of nefarious wickedness; therefore he proposes that they should be distributed among the municipal towns. This proposition seems to have in it injustice if you command it, difficulty if you request it; however, let it be so decreed if you like.

For I will undertake, and, as I hope, I shall find one who will not think it suitable to his dignity to refuse what you decide on for the sake of the universal safety. He imposes besides a severe punishment on the burgesses of the municipal town if any of the prisoners escape; he surrounds them with the most terrible guard, and with every thing worthy of the wickedness of abandoned men. And he proposes to establish a decree that no one shall be able to alleviate the punishment of those whom he is condemning by a vote of either the senate or the people. He takes away even hope, which alone can comfort men in their miseries; besides this, he votes that their goods should be confiscated; he leaves life alone to these in-

famous men, and if he had taken that away, he would have relieved them by one pang of many tortures of mind and body, and of all the punishment of their crimes. Therefore, that there might be some dread in life to the wicked, men of old have believed that there were some punishments of that sort appointed for the wicked in the shades below ; because in truth they perceived that if this were taken away death itself would not be terrible.

V. Now, O conscript fathers, I see what is my interest ; if you follow the opinion of Caius Cæsar (since he has adopted this path in the republic which is accounted the popular one), perhaps since he is the author and promoter of this opinion, the popular violence will be less to be dreaded by me ; if you adopt the other opinion, I know not whether I am not likely to have more trouble ; but still let the advantage of the republic outweigh the consideration of my danger. For we have from Caius Cæsar, as his own dignity and as the illustrious character of his ancestors demanded, a vote as a hostage of his lasting good-will to the republic ; it has been clearly seen how great is the difference between the lenity of demagogues, and a disposition really attached to the interests of the people. I see that of those men who wish to be considered attached to the people one man is absent, that they may not seem forsooth to give a vote about the lives of Roman citizens. He only three days ago gave Roman citizens into custody, and decreed me a supplication, and voted most magnificent rewards to the witnesses only yesterday. It is not now doubtful to any one what he, who voted for the imprisonment of the criminals, congratulation to him who had detected them, and rewards to those who had proved the crime, thinks of the whole matter, and of the cause. But Caius Cæsar considers that the Sempronian¹ law was passed about Roman citizens, but that he who is an enemy of the republic can by no means be a citizen ; and moreover that the very proposer of the Sempronian law suffered punishment by the command of the people. He also denies that Lentulus, a briber and a spendthrift, after he has formed such cruel and

¹ The Sempronian law was proposed by Caius Gracchus, b.c. 123, and enacted that the people only should decide respecting the life or civil condition of a citizen. It is alluded to also in the oration *Pro Rabir.* c. 4, where Cicero says, "Caius Gracchus passed a law that no decision should be come to about the life of a Roman citizen without your command," speaking to the *Quirites*.

bitter plans about the destruction of the Roman people, and the ruin of this city, can be called a friend of the people. Therefore this most gentle and merciful man does not hesitate to commit Publius Lentulus to eternal darkness and imprisonment, and establishes a law to all posterity that no one shall be able to boast of alleviating his punishment, or hereafter to appear a friend of the people to the destruction of the Roman people. He adds also the confiscation of their goods, so that want also and beggary may be added to all the torments of mind and body.

VI. Wherefore, if you decide on this you give me a companion in my address, dear and acceptable to the Roman people; or if you prefer to adopt the opinion of Silanus, you will easily defend me and yourselves from the reproach of cruelty, and I will prevail that it shall be much lighter. Although, O conscript fathers, what cruelty can there be in chastising the enormity of such excessive wickedness? For I decide from my own feeling. For so may I be allowed to enjoy the republic in safety in your company, as I am not moved to be somewhat vehement in this cause by any severity of disposition (for who is more merciful than I am?), but rather by a singular humanity and mercifulness. For I seem to myself to see this city, the light of the world, and the citadel of all-nations, falling on a sudden by one conflagration. I see in my mind's eye miserable and unburied heaps of cities in my buried country; the sight of Cethegus and his madness raging amid your slaughter is ever present to my sight. But when I have set before myself Lentulus reigning, as he himself confesses that he had hoped was his destiny, and this Gabinius arrayed in the purple, and Catiline arrived with his army, then I shudder at the lamentation of matrons, and the flight of virgins and of boys, and the insults of the vestal virgins; and because these things appear to me exceedingly miserable and pitiable, therefore I show myself severe and rigorous to those who have wished to bring about this state of things. I ask, forsooth, if any father of a family, supposing his children had been slain by a slave, his wife murdered, his house burned, were not to inflict on his slaves the severest possible punishment, would he appear clement and merciful, or most inhuman and cruel? To me he would seem unnatural and hard-hearted who did not soothe his own pain and anguish by the pain and torture of the criminal. And so we, in the case of these men

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