

BOOK XVII

LIBER SEPTIMUS DECIMUS

I

Quod Gallus Asinius et Largius Licinus sententiam M. Ciceronis reprehenderunt ex oratione quam dixit *Pro M. Caelio*; et quid adversus homines stolidissimos pro eadem sententia vere¹ digreque dici possit.

- 1 UT quidam fuerunt monstra hominum, quod de dis immortalibus impias falsasque opiniones prodiderunt, ita nonnulli tam prodigiosi tamque vecordes extiterunt, in quibus sunt Gallus Asinius et Largius Licinus, cuius liber etiam fertur infando titulo *Ciceromastix*, ut scribere ausi sint M. Ciceronem parum integre atque inproprie atque inconsiderate
- 2 locutum. Atque alia quidem quae reprehenderunt
- 3 neque dictu neque auditu digna sunt, sed enim hoc,² in quo sibimet ipsi praeter cetera esse visi sunt verborum pensitatores subtilissimi, cedo, quale id sit consideremus.
- 4 M. Cicero *Pro M. Caelio* ita scribit: "Nam quod obiectum est de pudicitia quodque omnium accusatorum non criminibus, sed vocibus maledictisque celebratum est, id numquam tam acerbe feret M. Caelius, ut eum paeniteat non deformem esse
- 5 natum." Non existumant verbo proprio esse usum, quod ait "paeniteat," atque id prope ineptum etiam

¹ e re, *Skutsch*; mere, δ .

² in hoc, ω ; in *deleted by Hosius*.

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I

That Asinius Gallus and Largius Licinus criticized a saying of Cicero's in the speech which he delivered *For Marcus Caelius*; and what may be said with truth and propriety in defence of that saying, in reply to those most foolish critics.

Just as there have been monsters of men who expressed impious and false opinions about the immortal gods, so there have been some so extravagant and so ignorant that they have dared to say that Marcus Cicero spoke without correctness, propriety, or consideration; among these are Asinius Gallus and Largius Licinus, and the latter's book even bears the outrageous title of *The Scourge of Cicero*. Now the other things that they have censured are certainly not worth hearing or mentioning; but let us consider the value of this stricture of theirs, in which particularly they are, in their own opinion, very keen critics of language.

Marcus Cicero in his speech *For Marcus Caelius*¹ writes as follows: "As to the charge made against his chastity and published by all his accusers, not in the form of actual charges, but of gossip and calumnies, Marcus Caelius will never take that so much to heart, as to repent that he was not born ugly." They think that Cicero has not used the proper word in saying *paeniteat*, or "repent," and they go so far as to add that it is almost absurd; "for," they say,

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- 6 esse dicunt. "Nam 'paenitere,'" inquit, "tum dicere solemus, cum quae ipsi fecimus aut quae de nostra voluntate nostroque consilio facta sunt, ea nobis post incipiunt displicere sententiamque in iis
7 nostram demutamus"; neminem autem recte ita loqui "paenitere sese, quod natus sit" aut "paenitere, quod mortalis sit" aut "quod ex offenso forte vulneratoque corpore dolorem sentiat," quando istiusmodi rerum nec consilium sit nostrum nec arbitrium, sed ea ingratis nostris¹ vi ac necessitate naturae nobis accidant: "Sicut hercle," inquit,
8 "non voluntarium fuit M. Caelio, quali forma nasceretur, cuius eum dixit 'non paenitere,' tamquam in ea causa res esset ut rationem caperet paenitendi."
9 Est haec quidem, quam dicunt, verbi huiusce sententia et "paenitere" nisi in voluntariis rebus non probe dicitur, tametsi antiquiores verbo ipso alio quoque modo usitati sunt et "paenitet" ab eo quod est "paene" et "paenuria" dixerunt. Sed id
10 aliorum pertinet atque alio in loco dicitur. Nunc autem, sub hac eadem significatione quae vulgo nota est, non modo ineptum hoc non est quod M. Cicero dixit, sed festivissimum adeo et facetissimum est. Nam cum adversarii et obtrectatores M.
11 Caeli, quoniam erat pulchro corpore, formam eius et faciem in suspiciones inpudicitiae accerserent, inludens Cicero tam absurdam criminationem, quod formam, quam natura fecerat, vitio darent, eodem ipso errore quem includebat sciens usus est et "non

¹ in nostris, ω; in *deleted by Carrio.*

¹ This promise is not fulfilled.

“we regularly use *paenitere* when things which we ourselves have done, or which have been done in accordance with our wish and design, later begin to displease us and we change our opinion about them.” But that no one correctly says that he “repents being born” or “repents being mortal,” or “because he feels pain from any chance injury or wound inflicted upon his body”; for in such cases there is no design or choice on our part, but such things happen to us against our will by some necessity or force of nature. “In the same way,” they continue, “it was not a matter of choice with Marcus Caelius with what person he was born; yet he says that ‘he did not repent this,’ as if there were in that circumstance ground for a feeling of repentance.”

This is in fact, as they say, the force of that word, and *paenitere* is strictly used of none but voluntary acts, although our forefathers used that same word also in a different sense and connected *paenitet* with the words *paene* (almost) and *paenuria* (want). But that is another question, and will be spoken of in another place.¹ But with regard to the point at issue, giving to *paenitere* this same meaning which is commonly recognized, what Marcus Cicero said is not only not foolish, but in the highest degree elegant and witty. For since the adversaries and detractors of Marcus Caelius, inasmuch as he was of handsome person, made use of his appearance and figure to throw doubt upon his chastity, therefore Cicero, making sport of such an absurd charge as to impute to him as a fault the good looks which nature had given him, has deliberately adopted that very same false charge of which he is making fun, saying: “Marcus Caelius is not sorry

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paenitet," inquit, "M. Caelium, non deformem esse natum," ut vel hac ipsa re, quod ita dicebat, obprobaret adversariis ac per facetias ostentaret facere eos deridiculum, quod proinde Caelio formam crimini darent, quasi arbitrium eius fuisset, quali forma nasceretur.

II

Verba quaedam ex Q. Claudii *Annalium* primo cursim in legendo notata.

- 1 CUM librum veteris scriptoris legebamus, conabamur postea memoriae vegetandae gratia indipisci animo ac recensere quae in eo libro scripta essent in utrasque existimationes laudis aut culpae adnotamentis digna, eratque hoc sane quam utile exercitium ad conciliandas nobis, ubi venisset usus, verborum
- 2 sententiarumque elegantium recordationes. Velut haec verba ex Q. Claudii primo *Annali*, quae meminisse potui, notavi, quem librum legimus biduo proximo superiore.
- 3 "Arma," inquit, "plerique abiciunt atque inermi inlatebrant sese." "Inlatebrant" verbum poeticum visum est, sed non absurdum neque asperum.
- 4 "Ea," inquit, "dum fiunt, Latini subnixo animo ex victoria inertis consilium ineunt." "Subnixo animo"¹ quasi sublimi et supra nixo, verbum bene significans et non fortuitum; demonstratque animi altitudinem fiduciamque, quoniam quibus innitimur, iis quasi erigimur attollimurque.

¹ ex . . . animo, supplied by Hertz from Nonius iv, p. 405, 29; et victoria certi, Canter.

² Frag. 22, Peter².

² Frag. 13, Peter².

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for not having been born ugly"; so that by the very fact of speaking thus he might reproach his accusers and wittily show that they were doing an absurd thing in making Caelius' handsome person an accusation against him, just as if the person with which he was born depended upon his own volition.

II

Certain words from the first book of the *Annals* of Quintus Claudius, noted in a hasty reading.

WHENEVER I read the book of an early writer, I tried afterwards, for the purpose of quickening my memory, to recall and review any passages in the book which were worthy of note, in the way either of praise or censure; and I found it an exceedingly helpful exercise for ensuring my recollection of elegant words and phrases, whenever need of them should arise. For example, in the first book of the *Annals* of Quintus Claudius, which I had read on the preceding two days, I noted these passages:

"The greater number," says he,¹ "threw away their arms and hid themselves unarmed." The verb *inlatebrant*, for "hid themselves," seemed poetic, but neither improper nor harsh.

"While these things were going on," he says,² "the Latins, their spirits raised because of their easy victory, form a plan." *Subnixo animo* is significant and carefully chosen expression with the force of "raised and elevated in spirit"; and it indicates loftiness and confidence of spirit, since we are, as it were, raised and lifted up by that upon which we depend.

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