Cicero – Letters

The Confessions of Cicero: Petrarch’s Response and Ours
An Introductory Note

To use the word "confessions" in the title for our sessions is already, it seems, to take a Petrarchan point-of-view on what emerges in Cicero’s correspondence. Whatever of his soul – his uncertainties, his hopes, his principles for action – is bared in his letters, yet it can be and often has been recognized that the letters are a rich and fascinating example of the importance and character of letter-writing in Republican Rome. Further, Cicero’s many letters provide much material conducive to insights and understanding not only of the political activist and statesman Cicero but also of the complex divisions and events of the last years of the Republic. The letters can enrich our historical understanding, in an especially concrete and moving way.

Consider the volume and role of the letters in this period. One scholar was led to describe late Republican Rome as marked by an intense "epistolary culture." Letters for all functions and hence of all types are present, from quick exchanges of information to political analyses, to longer discourses, and to exhortations and consolations. Perhaps we have here an anticipation of and parallel to our "e-mail culture" of the present. Another scholar has speculated with good reason that the 800 plus letters that Cicero wrote (in a 900 plus collection of his letters) represent one per cent of the number of letters Cicero wrote in his lifetime. The letters available to us have fittingly been described as of "a volume and quality not to be reached again before Augustine – or even, it has been suggested, Elizabethan England." One commentator even observed that "we know more about the day-to-day Cicero from his twenty-sixth year forward than we can claim to know about most of our contemporaries."

In 1345 Petrarch had discovered the long lost major collection Cicero’s letters, his letters to his close life-long friend Atticus. These were found along with smaller collections of letters to Brutus and to Cicero’s brother Quintus. The other major collection, Ad Familiares, to friends and family, was discovered after Petrarch’s death some 50 years later. We sample all the collections in the reading selected here, but we emphasize the letters to Atticus which were the chief cause of Petrarch’s distress.

It is often helpful to do a little review of the years of late Republic (68 to 43) in which these letters occur, and it can be done by returning to relevant sections of Elizabeth Rawson’s biography of Cicero which I know some of you own or by using a time-line on the events in Cicero’s life at this time. Some of you will be inclined and able to read more widely in the letters and will notice that the translator of most recent editions, including the Loeb volumes of the letters, is D. Shackleton Bailey. He has renumbered the letters in accord with the reediting and reordering he did, but he always includes the older vulgate numbers of Book number and Letter number (e.g. Ad Att. 2.
4) as well as a concordance where you use the old numbering to find his translation. I have duplicated from an older but adequate translation in the common domain and hence am using the vulgate numbering.

Best wishes, drop an e-mail if you encounter any difficulties: Nicgorski.l@nd.edu  wn
In a letter from Marcus Tullius Cicero to his friend, he discusses the importance of maintaining a balanced life. Cicero mentions the need to strike a balance between work and leisure, emphasizing the importance of friendship and the cultivation of the mind. He writes about the virtues of a good life and the need for self-improvement, stating that one should always strive to be a better person. Cicero also reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the importance of making the most of the time we have.
TO ATTICUS
ROME (MAY) 61
You ask me what has happened about the trial, the result of which was so contrary to the general expectation, and at the same time you want to know how I came to make a worse fight of it than usual. I will answer the last first. after the manner of Homer. 29 The fact is that, so long as I had to defend the authority of the senate, 30 I battled with such gallantry and vigour that there were shouts of applause and crowds round me in the house ringing with my praise. Nay, if you ever thought that I showed courage in political business, you certainly would have admired my conduct in that cause. For when the culprit had betaken himself to public meetings, and had made an invidious use of my name, immortal gods! What battles! What havoc! What sallies I made upon Piso, Curio, on the whole of that set! How I fell upon the old men for their instability, on the young for their profligacy! Again and again, so help me heaven! I regretted your absence not only as the supporter of my policy, but as the spectator also of my admirable fighting. However, when Hortensius hit on the idea of a law as to the sacrilege being proposed by the tribune Fufius, in which there was no difference from the bill of the consul except as to the kind of jurymen—on that point, however, the whole question turned—and got it carried by sheer fighting, because he had persuaded himself and others that he could not get an acquittal no matter who were the jurymen, I drew in my sails, seeing the neediness of the jurors, and gave no evidence beyond what was so notorious and well attested that I could not omit it. 31 Therefore, if you ask reason of the acquittal—to return at length to the former of the two questions—it was entirely the poverty and low character of the jury. But that this was possible was entirely the result of Hortensius's policy. In his alarm lest Fufius should veto the law which was to be proposed in virtue of a senatorial decree, he failed to see that it was better that the culprit should be left under a cloud of disgrace and dishonour than that he should be trusted to the discretion of a weak jury. But in his passionate resentment he hastened to bring the case into court, saying that a leaden sword was good enough to cut his throat. But if you want to know the history of the trial, with its incredible verdict, it was such that Hortensius's policy is now blamed by other people after the event, though I disapproved of it from the first. When the rejection of jurors had taken place, amidst loud cheers and counter-cheers—the accuser like a strict censor rejecting the most worthless, the defendant like a kind-hearted trainer of gladiators all the best—as soon as the jury had taken their seats, the loyalists at once began to feel distrust. There never was a seedier lot round a table in a gambling hell. Senators under a cloud, equites out at elbows, tribunes who were not so much made of money as "collectors" of it, according to their official title. 32 However, there were a few honest men in the panel, whom he had been unable to drive off it by rejection, and they took their seats among their uncongenial comrades with gloomy looks and signs of emotion, and were keenly disgusted at having to rub elbows with such rascals. Hereupon, as question after question was referred to the panel in the preliminary proceedings, the severity of the decisions passes belief: there was no disagreement in voting, the defendant carried
none of his points, while the accuser got even more than he asked. He was triumphant. Need I say more? Hortensius would have it that he was the only one of us who had seen the truth. There was not a man who did not think it impossible for him to stand his trial without being condemned a thousand times over. Further, when I was produced as a witness, I suppose you have been told how the shouts of Clodius's supporters were answered by the jury rising to their feet to gather round me, and openly to offer their throats to P. Clodius in my defence. This seemed to me a greater compliment than the well-known occasion when your fellow citizens 33 stopped Xenocrates from taking an oath in the witness-box, or when, upon the accounts of Metellus Numidicus 34 being as usual handed round, a Roman jury refused to look at them. The compliment paid me, I repeat, was much greater. Accordingly, as the jurymen were protecting me as the mainstay of the country, it was by their voices that the defendant was overwhelmed, and with him all his advocates suffered a crushing blow. Next day my house was visited by as great a throng as that which escorted me home when I laid down the consulship. Our eminent Areopagites then exclaimed that they would not come into court unless a guard was assigned them. The question was put to the whole panel: there was only one vote against the need of a guard. The question is brought before the senate: the decree is passed in the most solemn and laudatory terms: the jurymen are complimented: the magistrates are commissioned to carry it out: no one thought that the fellow would venture on a defence. "Tell me, ye Muses, now how first the fire befell!" 35 You know Bald-head, the Nanneian millionaire, 36 that panegyrist of mine, whose complimentary oration I have already mentioned to you in a letter. In two days' time, by the agency of a single slave, and one, too, from a school of gladiators, he settled the whole business—he summoned them to an interview, made a promise, offered security, paid money down. Still farther, good heavens, what a scandal! even favours from certain ladies, and introductions to young men of rank, were thrown in as a kind of pourboire to some of the jurors. Accordingly, with the loyalists holding completely aloof, with the forum full of slaves, twenty-five jurors were yet found so courageous that, though at the risk of their lives, they preferred even death to producing universal ruin. There were thirty-one who were more influenced by famine than fame. On seeing one of these latter Catulus said to him, "Why did you ask us for a guard? Did you fear being robbed of the money?" There you have, as briefly as I could put it, the nature of the trial and the cause of the acquittal.

Next you want to know the present state of public affairs and of my own. That settlement of the Republic—firmly established by my wisdom, as you thought, as I thought by God's— which seemed fixed on a sure foundation by the unanimity of all loyalists and the influence of my consulship—that I assure you, unless some God take compassion on us, has by this one verdict escaped from our grasp: if "verdict" it is to be called, when thirty of the most worthless and dissolute fellows in Rome for a paltry sum of money obliterate every principle of law and justice, and when that which every man—I had almost said every animal—knows to have taken place, a Thalna, a Plautus, and a Spongia, and other scum of that sort decide not to have taken place. However, to console you as to the state of the Republic, rascaldom is not as cheerful and exultant in its victory as the disloyal hoped after the infliction of such a wound upon the Republic. For they fully expected that when religion, morality, the honour of juries, and the prestige of the
senate had sustained such a crushing fall, victorious profligacy and lawless lust would openly
exact vengeance from all the best men for the mortification which the strictness of my consulship
had branded in upon all the worst. And it is once more I—for I do not feel as if I were boasting
vaingloriously when speaking of myself to you, especially in a letter not intended to be read by
others—it was I once more, I say, who revived the fainting spirits of the loyalists, cheering and
encouraging each personally. Moreover, by my denunciations and invectives against those
corrupt jurors I left none of the favourers and supporters of that victory a word to say for
themselves. I gave the consul Piso no rest anywhere, I got him deprived of Syria, which had been
already plighted to him, I revived the fainting spirit of the senate and recalled it to its former
severity. I overwhelmed Clodius in the senate to his face, both in a set speech, very weighty and
serious, and also in an interchange of repartees, of which I append a specimen for your
delecation. The rest lose all point and grace without the excitement of the contest, or, as you
Greeks call it, the ?????. Well, at the meeting of the senate on the 15th of May, being called on for
my opinion, I spoke at considerable length on the high interests of the Republic, and brought in
the following passage by a happy inspiration: "Do not, Fathers, regard yourselves as fallen
utterly, do not faint, because you have received one blow. The wound is one which I cannot
disguise, but which I yet feel sure should not be regarded with extreme fear: to fear would show
us to be the greatest of cowards, to ignore it the greatest of fools. Lentulus was twice acquitted,
so was Catiline, a third such criminal has now been let loose by jurors upon the Republic. You
are mistaken, Clodius: it is not for the city but for the prison that the jurors have reserved you,
and their intention was not to retain you in the state, but to deprive you of the privilege of exile.
Wherefore, Fathers, rouse up all your courage, hold fast to your high calling. There still remains
in the Republic the old unanimity of the loyalists: their feelings have been outraged, their
resolution has not been weakened: no fresh mischief has been done, only what was actually
existing has been discovered. In the trial of one profligate many like him have been
detected."—But what am I about? I have copied almost a speech into a letter. I return to the duel
of words. Up gets our dandified young gentleman, and throws in my teeth my having been at
Baiae. It wasn't true, but what did that matter to him? "It is as though you were to say," replied I,
"that I had been in disguise!" "What business," quoth he, "has an Arpinate with hot baths?" "Say
that to your patron," said I, "who Coveted the watering-place of an Arpinate." 37 For you know
about the marine villa. "How long," said he, "are we to put up with this king?" "Do you mention
a king," quoth I, "when Rex 38 made no mention of you?" He, you know, had swallowed the
inheritance of Rex in anticipation. "You have bought a house," says he. "You would think that he
said," quoth I, "you have bought a jury." "They didn't trust you on your oath," said he. "Yes,"
said I, "twenty-five jurors did trust me, thirty-one didn't trust you, for they took care to get their
money beforehand." Here he was overpowered by a burst of applause and broke down without a
word to say.

My own position is this: with the loyalists I hold the same place as when you left town, with the
stagrag and bobtail of the City I hold a much better one than at your departure. For it does me no
harm that my evidence appears not to have availed. Envy has been let blood without causing
pain, and even more so from the fact that all the supporters of that flagitious proceeding confess that a perfectly notorious fact has been hushed up by bribing the jury. Besides, the wretched starveling mob, the blood-sucker of the treasury, imagines me to be high in the favour of Magnus—and indeed we have been mutually united by frequent pleasant intercourse to such an extent, that our friends the boon companions of the conspiracy, the young chin-tufts, speak of him in ordinary conversation as Gnaeus Cicero. Accordingly, both in the circus and at the gladiatorial games, I received a remarkable ovation without a single cat-call. There is at present a lively anticipation of the elections, in which, contrary to everybody's wishes, our friend Magnus is pushing the claims of Aulus's son; 39 and in that matter his weapons are neither his prestige nor his popularity, but those by which Philip said that any fortress could be taken—if only an ass laden with gold could make its way up into it. Furthermore, that precious consul, playing as it were second fiddle to Pompey, 40 is said to have undertaken the business and to have bribery agents at his house, which I don't believe. But two decrees have already passed the house of an unpopular character, because they are thought to be directed against the consul on the demand of Cato and Domitius 41—one that search should be allowed in magistrates' houses, and a second, that all who had bribery agents in their houses were guilty of treason. The tribune Lurco also, having entered on his office irregularly in view of the Aelian law, has been relieved from the provisions both of the Aelian and Fufian laws, in order to enable him to propose his law on bribery, which he promulgated with correct auspices though a cripple. 42 Accordingly, the comitia have been postponed to the 27th of July. There is this novelty in his bill, that a man who has promised money among the tribes, but not paid it, is not liable, but, if he has paid, he is liable for life to pay 3,000 sesterces to each tribe. I remarked that P. Clodius had obeyed this law by anticipation, for he was accustomed to promise, and not pay. But observe! Don't you see that the consulship of which we thought so much, which Curio used of old to call an apotheosis, if this Afranius is elected, will become a mere farce and mockery? Therefore I think one should play the philosopher, as you in fact do, and not care a straw for your consulships!

You say in your letter that you have decided not to go to Asia. For my part I should have preferred your going, and I fear that there may be some offence 43 given in that matter. Nevertheless, I am not the man to blame you, especially considering that I have not gone to a province myself. I shall be quite Content with the inscriptions you have placed in your 44 Amaltheium, especially as Thyillus has deserted me and Archias written nothing about me. The latter, I am afraid, having composed a Greek poem on the Luculli, is now turning his attention to the Caecilian drama. 45 I have thanked Antonius on your account, and I have intrusted the letter to Mallius I have heretofore written to you more rarely because I had no one to whom I could trust a letter, and was not sure of your address. I have puffed you well. If Cincius should refer any business of yours to me, I will undertake it. But at present he is more intent on his own business, in which I am rendering him some assistance. If you mean to stay any length of time in one place you may expect frequent letters from me: but pray send even more yourself. I wish you would describe your Amaltheium to me, its decoration and its plan; and send me any poems or stories you may have about Amaltheia. 46 I should like to make a copy of it at Arpinum. I will
forward you something of what I have written. At present there is nothing finished.
Letters of Censor to Marcus Tullius Cicero

March 14, 2023

[Handwritten text]

[Paragraphs of text]

[Signature]

[ SEAL ]
come to Rome as soon as possible.

In the meantime I am satisfied with a modest request, though it is what I desire above everything — that you should

when our views are aligned, the Republic's fortunes are secure and prosperous. Caesar is

more than a century since the Romans abandoned the Republic. The Senate is now led by the

the Senate, which was initially session by session, but since it all now seems in

the right hand, having prevented his own being reached. Thus, in the meantime of my steady policy, preserve to the

the House, in which I, on the 1st and 2nd of December, delivered long speeches on the dignity and harmony of the two

Luther's original was delivered long speeches on the dignity and harmony of the two
XXIII (A I, 18)

TO ATTICUS (IN EPIRUS)
ROME, 20 JANUARY 60
Believe me there is nothing at this moment of which I stand so much in need as a man with whom to share all that causes me anxiety: a man to love me; a man of sense to whom I can speak without affectation, reserve, or concealment. For my brother is away—that most open-hearted and affectionate of men. Metellus is not a human being, but "Mere sound and air, a howling wilderness."

"While you, who have so often lightened my anxiety and my anguish of soul by your conversation and advice, who are ever my ally in public affairs, my confidant in all private business, the sharer in all my conversations and projects—where are you? So entirely am I abandoned by all, that the only moments of repose left me are those which are spent with my wife, pet daughter, and sweet little Cicero. For as to those friendships with the great, and their artificial attractions, they have indeed a certain glitter in the outside world, but they bring no private satisfaction. And so, after a crowded morning levée, as I go down to the forum surrounded by troops of friends, I can find no one out of all that crowd with whom to jest freely, or into whose ear I can breathe a familiar sigh. Therefore I wait for you, I long for you, I even urge on you to come for I have many anxieties, many pressing cares, of which I think, if I once had your ears to listen to me, I could unburden myself in the conversation of a single walk. And of my private anxieties, indeed, I shall conceal all the stings and vexations, and not trust them to this letter and an unknown letter-carrier. These, however—for I don't want you to be made too anxious—are not very painful: yet they are persistent and worrying, and are not put to rest by the advice or conversation of any friend. But in regard to the Republic I have still the same courage and purpose, though it has again and again of its own act eluded treatment. I For should I put briefly what has occurred since you left, you would certainly exclaim that the Roman empire cannot be maintained much longer. Well, after your departure our first scene, I think, was the appearance of the Clodian scandal, in which having, as I thought, got an opportunity of pruning licentiousness and keeping our young men within bounds, I exerted myself to the utmost, and lavished all the resources of my intellect and genius, not from dislike to an individual, but from the hope of not merely correcting, but of completely curing the state. The Republic received a crushing blow when this jury was won over by money and the opportunity of debauchery. See what has followed we have had a consul inflicted upon us, whom none except us philosophers can look at without a sigh. What a blow that is! Though a decree of the senate has been passed about bribery and the corruption of juries, no law has been carried; the senate has been harassed to death, the Roman knights alienated. So that one year has undermined two buttresses of the Republic, which owed their existence to me, and me alone; for it has at once destroyed the prestige of the senate and broken up the harmony of the orders. And now enter this precious
year! It was inaugurated by the suspension of the annual rites of Iuventas; 2 for Memmius initiated M. Lucullus's wife in some rites of his own! Our Menelaus, being annoyed at that, divorced his wife. Yet the old Idaean shepherd had only injured Menelaus; our Roman Paris thought Agamemnon as proper an object of injury as Menelaus. 3 Next there is a certain tribune named C. Herennius, whom you, perhaps, do not even know—and yet you may know him, for he is of your tribe, and his father Sextus used to distribute money to your tribesmen—this person is trying to transfer P. Clodius to the plebs, and is actually proposing a law to authorize the whole people to vote in Clodius's affair in the campus. 4 I have given him a characteristic reception in the senate, but he is the thickest-skinned fellow in the world. Metellus is an excellent consul, and much attached to me, but he has lowered his influence by promulgating (though only for form's sake) an identical bill about Clodius. But the son of Aulus, 5 God in heaven! What a cowardly and spiritless fellow for a soldier! How well he deserves to be exposed, as he is, day after day to the abuse of Palicanus! 6 Farther, an agrarian law has been promulgated by Flavius, a poor production enough, almost identical with that of Plotius. But meanwhile a genuine statesman is not to be found, even "in a dream." The man who could be one, my friend Pompey—for such he is, as I would have you know—defends his two penny embroidered toga 7 by saying nothing. Crassus never risks his popularity by a word. The others you know without my telling you. They are such fools that they seem to expect that, though the Republic is lost, their fish-ponds will be safe. There is one man who does take some trouble, but rather, as it seems to me, with consistency and honesty, than with either prudence or ability—Cato. He has been for the last three months worrying those unhappy publicani, who were formerly devoted to him, and refuses to allow of an answer being given them by the senate. And so we are forced to suspend all decrees on other subjects until the publicani have got their answer. For the same reason I suppose even the business of the foreign embassies will be postponed. You now understand in what stormy water we are and as from what I have written to you in such strong terms you have a view also of what I have not written, come back to me, for it is time you did. And though the state of affairs to which I invite you is one to be avoided, yet let your value for me so far prevail, as to induce you to come there even in these vexatious circumstances. For the rest I will take care that due warning is given, and a notice put up in all places, to prevent you being entered on the census as absent; and to get put on the census just before the lustration is the mark of your true man of business. 8 So let me see you at the earliest possible moment. Farewell.

20 January in the Consulship of Q. Metellus and L. Afranius.
XXV (A I, 20)

TO ATTICUS (IN EPIRUS)
ROME, 13 MAY 60

On my return to Rome from my villa at Pompeii on the 12th of May, our friend Cincius handed me your letter dated 13th February. It is this letter of yours which I will now proceed to answer. And first let me say how glad I am that you have fully understood my appreciation of you; 23 and next how excessively rejoiced I am that you have been so extremely reasonable in regard to those particulars in which you thought 24 that I and mine had behaved unkindly, or with insufficient consideration for your feelings: and this I regard as a proof of no common affection, and of the most excellent judgment and wisdom. Wherefore, since you have written to me in a tone so delightful, considerate, friendly and kind, that I not only have no call to press you any farther, but can never even hope to meet from you or any other man with so much gentleness and good nature, I think the very best course I can pursue is not to say another word on the subject in my letters. When we meet, if the occasion should arise, we will discuss it together. As to what you say about politics, your suggestions indeed are both affectionate and wise, and the course you suggest does not differ substantially from my own policy—for I must neither budge an inch from the position imposed upon me by my rank, nor must I without forces of my own enter the lines of another, while that other, whom you mention in your letter, has nothing large-minded about him, nothing lofty, —nothing which is not abject and time-serving. However, the course I took was, after all, perhaps not ill-calculated for securing the tranquillity of my own life; but, by heaven, I did greater service to the Republic than, by suppressing the attacks of the disloyal, I did to myself, when I brought conviction home to the wavering mind of a man of the most splendid fortune, influence and popularity, and induced him to disappoint the disloyal and praise my acts. Now if I had been forced to sacrifice consistency in this transaction, I should not have thought anything worth that price; but the fact is that I have so worked the whole business, that I did not seem to be less consistent from my complacency to him, but that he appeared to gain in character by his approbation of me. In everything else I am so acting, and shall continue so to act, as to prevent my seeming to have done what I did do by mere chance. My friends the loyalists, the men at whom you hint, and that "Sparta" which you say has fallen to my lot, 25 I will not only never desert, but even if I am deserted by her, I shall still stand by my ancient creed. However,
please consider this, that since the death of Catulus I am holding this road for the loyalists without any garrison or Company. For as Rhinton, I think, says: "Some are stark naught, and some care not at all."

"26 However, how our friends the fish-breeders 27 envy me I will write you word another time, or will reserve it till we meet. But from the senate-house nothing shall ever tear me: either because that course is the right one, or because it is most to my interests, or because I am far from being dissatisfied with the estimation in which I am held by the senate. As to the Sicyonians, as I wrote to you before, 28 there is not much to be hoped for in the senate. For there is no one now to lay a complaint before it. Therefore, if you are waiting for that, you will find it a tedious business. Fight some other way if you can. At the time the decree was passed no one noticed who would be affected by it, and besides the rank and file of the senators voted in a great hurry for that clause. For cancelling the senatorial decree the time is not yet ripe, because there are none to complain of it, and because also many are glad to have it so, some from spite, some from a notion of its equity. Your friend Metellus is an admirable consul: I have only one fault to find with him—he doesn't receive the news from Gaul of the restoration of peace with much pleasure. He wants a triumph, I suppose. I could have wished a little less of that sort of thing: in other respects he is splendid. But the son of Aulus behaves in such a way, that his consulship is not a consulship but a stigma on our friend Magnus. Of my writings I send you my consulship in Greek completed. I have handed that book to L. Cossinius. My Latin works I think you like, but as a Greek you envy this Greek book. If others write treatises on the subject I will send them to you, but I assure you that, as soon as they have read mine, somehow or other they become slack. To return to my own affairs, L. Papirius Paetus, an excellent man and an admirer of mine, has presented me with the books left him by Servius Claudius. As your friend Cincius told me that I could take them without breaking the lex Cincia, 29 I told him that I should have great pleasure in accepting them, if he brought them to Italy. Wherefore, as you love me, as you know that I love you, do try by means of friends, clients, guests, or even your freedmen or slaves, to prevent the loss of a single leaf. For I am in urgent need of the Greek books which I suspect, and of the Latin books which I know, that he left: and more and more every day I find repose in such studies every moment left to me from my labours in the forum. You will, I say, do me a very great favour, if you will be as zealous in this matter as you ever are in matters in which you suppose me to feel strongly; and Paetus's own affairs I recommend to your kindness, for which he thanks you extremely. A prompt visit from yourself is a thing which I do not merely ask for, I advise it.
XXVIII (A II, 3)

TO ATTICUS (ON HIS WAY TO ROME)
ROME (DECEMBER) 60
First, I have good news for you, as I think. Valerius has been acquitted. Hortensius was his counsel. The verdict is thought to have been a favour to Aulus's son; and Epicrates," 58 I suspect, has been up to some mischief. I didn't like his boots and his white leggings. 59 What it is I shall know when you arrive. When you find fault with the narrow windows, let me tell you that you are criticising the Cyropaedeia. 60 For when I made the same remark, Cyrus used to answer that the views of the gardens through broad lights were not so pleasant. For let a be the eye, β the object seen, d and e the rays ... you see the rest. 61 For if sight resulted from the impact of images, 62 the images would be in great difficulties with a narrow entrance: but, as it is, that "effusion" of rays gets on quite nicely. If you have any other fault to find you won't get off without an answer, unless it is something that can be put right without expense.
I now come to January and my "political attitude," in which, after the manner of the Socrates, I shall put the two sides; at the end, however, as they were wont to do, the one which I approve. It is, indeed, a matter for profound reflection. For I must either firmly oppose the agrarian law—which will involve a certain struggle, but a struggle full of glory—or I must remain altogether passive, which is about equivalent to retiring to Solonium 63 or Antium; or, lastly, I must actually assist the bill, which I am told Caesar fully expects from me without any doubt.
For Cornelius has been with me (I mean Cornelius Balbus, 64 Caesar's intimate), and solemnly assured me that he meant to avail himself of my advice and Pompey's in everything, and intended to endeavour to reconcile Crassus with Pompey. 65 In this last course there are the following advantages: a very close union with Pompey, and, if I choose, with Caesar also; a reconciliation with my political enemies, peace with the common herd, ease for my old age. But the conclusion of the third book of my own poem has a strong hold on me: " Meanwhile the tenor of thy youth's first spring,
Which still as consul thou with all thy soul
And all thy manhood heldest, see thou keep,
And swell the chorus of all good men's praise.
" 66 These verses Calliope herself dictated to me in that book, which contains much written in an "aristocratic" spirit, and I cannot, therefore, doubt that I shall always hold that " The best of omens is our country's cause.
" 67 But let us reserve all this for our walks during the Compitalia. 68 Remember the day before the Compitalia. I will order the bath to be heated, and Terentia is going to invite Pomponia. We will add your mother to the party. Please bring me Theophrastus de Ambitione from my brother's library.
XXXI (A II, 5)

TO ATTICUS (AT ROME)
ANTIUM (APRIL) 59
I wish very much, and have long wished, to visit Alexandria, and at the same time to get away from here, where people are tired of me, and return when they have begun to feel my loss—but at such a time and at the bidding of such statesmen! 6 "I fear to face the men of Troy And Trojan matrons with their trailing robes." 7 For what would my friends the Optimates say—if there are such persons left? That I had accepted a bribe to change my views? "Polydamas the first would lay the charge." I mean my friend Cato, who is as good as a hundred thousand in my eyes. What, too, will history say of me six hundred years hence? I am much more afraid of that than of the petty gossip of the men of today. But, I think, I had better lie low and wait. For if it is really offered to me, I shall be to a certain extent in a position of advantage, and then will be the time to weigh the matter. There is, upon my word, a certain Credit even in refusing. Wherefore, if Theophanes 8 by chance has consulted you on the matter, do not absolutely decline. What I am expecting to hear from you is, what Arrius says, and how he endures being left in the lurch, 9 and who are intended to be consuls—is it Pompey and Crassus, or, as I am told in a letter, Servius Sulpicius with Gabinius?—and whether there are any new laws or anything new at all; and, since Nepos 10 is leaving Rome, who is to have the augurship—the one bait by which those personages could catch me! You see what a high price I put on myself! Why do I talk about such things, which I am eager to throw aside, and to devote myself heart and soul to philosophy. That, I tell you, is my intention. I could wish I had done so from the first. Now, however, that I have found by experience the hollowness of what I thought so splendid, I am thinking of doing business exclusively with the Muses. In spite of that, please give me in your next some more definite information about Curtius and who is intended to fill his place, and what is doing about P. Clodius, and, in fact, take your time and tell me everything as you promise; and pray write me word what day you think of leaving Rome, in order that I may tell you where I am likely to be and send me a letter at once on the subjects of which I have written to you. I look forward much to hearing from you.
XLIV (A II, 18)

TO ATTICUS (ON HIS WAY TO EPIRUS)
ROME JUNE 59

I have received several letters from you, which showed me with what eagerness and anxiety you desired to know the news. We are bound hard and fast on every side, and are no longer making any difficulty as to being slaves, but fearing death and exile as though greater evils, though they are in fact much smaller ones. Well, this is the position—one unanimously groaned over, but not relieved by a word from anyone. The object, I surmise, of the men in power is to leave nothing for anyone to lavish. The only man who opens his mouth and openly disapproves is the young Curio. He is loudly cheered, and greeted in the forum in the most complimentary manner, and many other tokens of goodwill are bestowed on him by the loyalists; while Fufius 1 is pursued with shouts, jeers, and hisses. From such circumstances it is not hope but indignation that is increased, for you see the citizens allowed to express their sentiments, but debarred from carrying them out with any vigour. And to omit details, the upshot is that there is now no hope, I don't say of private persons, but even of the magistrates being ever free again. Nevertheless, in spite of this policy of repression, conversation, at least in society and at dinner tables, is freer than it was. Indignation is beginning to get the better of fear, though that does not prevent a universal feeling of despair. For this Campanian law 2 contains a cause imposing an oath to be taken by candidates in public meeting, that they will not suggest any tenure of public land other than that provided in the Julian laws. All the others take the oath without hesitation: Laterensis 3 is considered to have shown extraordinary virtue in retiring from his canvass for the tribuneship to avoid the oath. But I don't care to write any more about politics. I am dissatisfied with myself, and cannot write without the greatest pain. I hold my own position with some dignity, considering the general repression, but considering my achievements in the past, with less courage than I should like. I am invited by Caesar in a very gentlemanly manner to accept a legation, to act as legatus to himself, and even an "open votive legation" is offered me. But the latter does not give sufficient security, since it depends too much on the scrupulousness of Pulchellus 4 and removes me just when my brother is returning; 5 the former offers better security and does not prevent my returning when I please. I am retaining the latter, but do not think I shall use it. However, nobody knows about it. I don't like running away; I am itching to fight. There is great warmth of feeling for me. But I don't say anything positive: you will please not to mention it. I am, in fact, very anxious about the manumission of Statius and some other things, but I have become hardened by this time. I could wish, or rather ardently desire, that you
were here: then I should not want advice or consolation. But anyhow, be ready to fly hither directly I call for you.
LXXII (A III, 15)

TO ATTICUS (AT ROME)
THESSALONICA, 17 AUGUST 58

ON the 13th of August I received four letters from you: one in which you urge me in a tone of reproach to be less weak; a second, in which you say that Crassus's freedman has told you about my anxiety and leanness; a third, in which you describe the proceedings in the senate; a fourth on the subject of Varro's assurances to you as to the friendly feelings of Pompey. To the first my answer is this: though I do grieve, yet I keep all my mental faculties, and it is precisely that which vexes me—I have no opportunity and no one with whom to employ so sound an intellect. For if you cannot find yourself separated from one individual like myself without sorrow, what do you think must be my case, who am deprived both of you and of everyone else? And if you, while still in possession of all your rights, miss me, to what an extent do you think those rights are missed by me? I will not enumerate the things of which I have been despoiled, not only because you are not ignorant of them, but also lest I should reopen my own sorrow. I only assert this, that never did anyone in an unofficial position possess such great advantages, or fall into such great miseries. Moreover, lapse of time not only does not soften this grief, it even enhances it. For other sorrows are softened by age, this one cannot but be daily increased both by my sense of present misery and the recollection of my past life. For it is not only property or friends that I miss, but myself. For what am I? But I will not allow myself either to wring your soul with my complaints, or to place my hands too often on my wounds. For as to your defence of those whom I said had been jealous of me, and among them Cato, I indeed think that lie was so far removed from that crime, that I am above all things sorry that the pretended zeal of others had more influence with me than his honesty. As for your excuses for the others, they ought to be excused in my eyes if they are so in yours. But all this is an old story now. Crassus's freedman, I think, spoke without any real sincerity. In the senate you say that the debate was satisfactory. But what about Curio? Hasn't he read that speech? I can't make out how it got into circulation! But Axius, in describing the proceedings of the same day, does not speak so highly of Curio. 33 But he may be omitting something; I know you have certainly not written anything except what actually occurred. Varro's talk gives me some hope of Caesar, and would that Varro himself would throw himself into the cause! Which he certainly will do both of his own accord and under pressure from you For myself if fortune ever grants me the enjoyment of you all and of my country I will at least take care that you shall above all the rest of my friends, have cause to be glad and I will so discharge all the duties of affection and friendship, which (to confess the truth) have not heretofore been conspicuous that you shall regard me as restored to yourself as much as to my brother and my children. If I have in any way sinned in my conduct to you, or rather since I have done so pardon me For I have sinned more grievously against myself. And I do not write this to
you because I know you not to feel deeply for my misfortune: but certainly if it had been a matter of obligation with you, and had always been so, to love me as much as you do and have done, you would never have allowed me to lack that judgment with which you are so well supplied, 34 nor would you have allowed me to be persuaded that the passing of the bill for the "colleges" was to our advantage. 35 But you did nothing but weep over my sorrow, as though you were my second self. This was indeed a sign of your affection: but what might have been done, if I had earned it at your hands—the spending by you of days and nights in thinking out the Course I ought to have pursued—that was omitted, owing to my own culpable imprudence, not yours. Now if, I don't say you only, but if there had been anyone to urge me, when alarmed at Pompey's ungenerous answer, 36 not to adopt that most degrading course—and you are the person that, above all others, could have done it—I should either have died honourably, or we should have been living today triumphant. In this you must forgive me. For I find much greater fault with myself, and only call you in question afterwards, as at once my second self and the sharer in my error; and, besides, if I am ever restored, our mistake will seem still less in my eyes, and to you at least I shall be endeared by your own kindness, since there is none on my side. 37 There is something in the suggestion you mentioned as having been made in your conversation with Culleo as to a privilegeum, 38 but by far the better course is to have the law repealed. For if no one vetoes it, what course can be safer? But if anyone is found to prohibit its passing, he will be equally able to veto a decree of the senate. Nor is there need for the repeal of anything else. For the previous law did not touch me: and if, on its publication, I had chosen to speak in its favour, or to ignore it, as it ought to have been ignored, it could not have done me any harm at all. 39 It was at this point first that my judgment failed to assist me, nay, even did me harm.

Blind, blind, I say, was I in laying aside my senator's toga, and in entreaty the people; it was a fatal step to take before some attack had been begun upon me by name. 40 But I am harping on the past: it is, however, for the purpose of advising you, if any action is to be taken, not to touch that law, in which there are many provisions in the interests of the people. But it is foolish for me to be laying down rules as to what you are to do and how. I only wish that something may be done! And it is on that point that your letter displays much reserve: I presume, to prevent my being too much agitated by despair. For what action do you see possible to be taken, or in what way? Through the senate? But you yourself told me that Clodius had fixed upon the doorpost of the senate-house a certain clause in the law, "that it might neither be put to the house nor mentioned." 41 How could Domitianus, 42 therefore, say that he would bring it before the house? How came it about also that Clodius held his tongue, when those you mention in your letter both spoke on the subject and demanded that a motion should be brought in? But if you go to the people—can it be carried except with the unanimous approval of the tribunes? What about my property? What about my house? Will it be possible to have it restored? Or, if that cannot, how can I be? Unless you see these difficulties on the way to be solved, what is the hope to which you invite me? But if, again, there is no hope, what sort of life is there for me? So I await at Thessalonica the gazette of the proceedings of the 1st of August, in accordance with which I shall decide whether to take refuge on your estate, in order at once to avoid seeing people I don't want to see, to see you, according to your letter, and to be nearer at hand in case of any motion
being made (and this I understand is in accordance with your view and that of my brother Quintus), or to depart for Cyzicus. Now, my dear Pomponius, since you imparted to me none of your wisdom in time to save me, either because you had made up your mind that I had judgment enough of my own, or that you owed me nothing beyond being by my side; and since, betrayed, beguiled, and hurried into a snare as I was, I neglected all my defences, abandoned and left Italy, which was everywhere on the qui vive to defend me, and surrendered myself and mine into the hands of enemies while you looked on and said nothing, though, even if you were not my superior in mental power, you were at least in less of a fright: now, if you can, raise the fallen, and in that way assist me But if every avenue is barred, take care that I know that also, and cease at length either to scold me or to offer your kindly-meant consolations. If I had meant to impeach your good faith, I should not have chosen your roof, of all others, to which to trust myself: it is my own folly that I blame for having thought that your love for me was exactly what I could have wished it to be: 43 for if that had been so, you would have displayed the same good faith, but greater circumspection; at least, you would have held me back when plunging headlong into ruin, and would not have had to encounter the labours which you are now enduring in saving the wrecks of my fortunes. Wherefore do be careful to look into, examine thoroughly, and write fully everything that occurs, and resolve (as I am sure you do) that I shall be some one, since I cannot now be the man I was and the man I might have been; and lastly, believe that in this letter it is not you, but myself that I have accused. If there are any people to whom you think that letters ought to be delivered in my name, pray compose them and see them delivered.

17 August.
view to future hope. You will find Sestius most friendly to us, and I believe that Lentulus, the coming consul, will also be so for your sake. However, deeds are not so easy as words. You will see what is wanted and what the truth is. On the whole, supposing that no one takes advantage of your unprotected position and our common calamity, it is by your means, or not at all, that something may be effected. But even if your enemies have begun to annoy you, don't flinch: for you will be attacked by legal process, not by swords. However, I hope that this may not occur. I beg you to write me back word on all subjects, and to believe that though I have less spirit and resource than in old times, I have quite as much affection and loyalty.
LXXI (q fr i, 4)

TO HIS BROTHER QUINTUS (AT ROME)

Thessalonica, August

b.c. 58, æt. 48

I beg you, my dear brother, if you and all my family have been ruined by my single misfortune, not to attribute it to dishonesty and bad conduct on my part, rather than to short-sightedness and the wretched state I was in. I have committed no fault except in trusting those whom I believed to be bound by the most sacred obligation not to deceive me, or whom I thought to be even interested in not doing so. All my most intimate, nearest and dearest friends were either alarmed for themselves or jealous of me: the result was that all I lacked was good faith on the part of my friends and caution on my own. But if your own blameless character and the compassion of the world prove sufficient to preserve you at this juncture from molestation, you can, of course, observe whether any hope of restoration is left for me. For Pomponius, Sestius, and my son-in-law Piso have caused me as yet to stay at Thessalonica, forbidding me, on account of certain impending movements, to increase my distance. But in truth I am awaiting the result more on account of their letters than from any firm hope of my own. For what can I hope with an enemy possessed of the most formidable power, with my detractors masters of the state, with friends unfaithful, with numbers of people jealous? However, of the new tribunes there is one, it is true, most warmly attached to me—Sestius—and I hope Curius, Milo, Fadius. Fabricius; but still there is Clodius in violent opposition, who even when out of office will be able to stir up the passions of the mob by the help of that same gang, and then there will be found some one also to veto the bill.

Such a state of things was not put before me when I was leaving Rome, but I often used to be told that I was certain to return in three days with the greatest éclat. "What made you go, then?" you will say. What, indeed! Many circumstances concurred to throw me off my balance—the defection of Pompey, the hostility of the consuls, and of the prætors also, the timidity of the publicani, the armed bands. The tears of my friends prevented me seeking refuge in death, which would certainly have been the best thing for my honour, the best escape from unbearable sorrows. But I have written to you on this subject in the letter I gave to Phaetho. Now that you have been plunged into griefs and troubles, such as no one ever was before, if the compassion of the world can lighten our common misfortune, you will, it seems, score a success beyond belief! But if we are both utterly ruined—ah me!—I shall have been the absolute destruction of my whole family, to whom I used to be at least no discredit! But pray, as I said in a previous letter to you, look into the business, test it thoroughly, and write to me with the candour which our situation demands, and not as your affection for me would dictate. I shall retain my life as long as I shall think that it is in your interest for me to do so, or that it ought to be preserved with a
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< Letters to Atticus

To Atticus in Asia, from Rome, October 54 BC

As it is, to tell you my opinion of affairs, we must put up with it. You ask me how I have behaved. With firmness dignity. "What about Pompey," you will say, "how did he take it?" With great consideration, and with the conviction he must have some regard for my position, until a satisfactory atonement had been made to me. "How, then," you will say, "was the acquittal secured?" It was a case of mere dummies, and incredible incompetence on the part of the accusers—that is to say, of L. Lentulus, son of Lucius, who, according to the universal murmur, acted collusively. In next place, Pompey was extraordinarily urgent; and the jurors were a mean set of fellows. Yet, in spite of everything there were thirty-two votes for conviction, thirty-eight for acquittal. There are the other prosecutions hanging over his head: he is by no means entirely free yet. You will say, "Well, then, how do you bear it?" With the best air possible, heaven! and I really do plume myself on my behaviour. We have lost, my dear Pomponius, not only all the healthy and blood of our old constitution, but even its colour and outward show. There is no Republic to give a moment's pleasure or a feeling of security. "And is that, then," you will say, "a satisfaction to you?" Precisely that. For I recall a fair course the state had for a short time, while I was at the helm, and what a return has been made me! It does not give me a pang that one man absorbs all power. The men to burst with envy are those who were indignant at my having had some power. There are many things which console me, without my departing an inch from my regular position; and returning to the life best suited to my natural disposition—to letters and the studies that I love. My labour in pleading console by my delight in oratory. I find delight in my town house and my country residences. I do not recall the height from which I have fallen, but the humble position from which I have risen. As long as I have my brother and you with me, let those fellows be hanged, drawn, and quartered for all I care: I can play the philosopher with you. That part of the soul, in which in old times irritability had its home, has grown completely callous. I find no pleasure in anything that is not private and domestic. You will find me in a state of magnificent repose, to which nothing contributes more than the prospect of your return. For there is no one in the wide world whose feelings are so much in sympathy with my own; now let me tell you the rest. Matters are drifting on to an interregnum; and there is a dictatorship in the air, in fact a general deal of talk about it, which did Gabinius also some service with timid jurors. All the candidates for the consulship are charged with bribery. You may add to them Gabinius, on whom L. Sulla had served notice, feeling certain that he was a hopeless position—Torquatus having, without success, demanded to have the prosecution. But they will all be acquitted and henceforth no one will be condemned for any thing except homicide. This last charge is warmly pressed, and accordingly informers are busy. M. Fulvius Nobilior has been convicted. Many others have had the wit to abstain from even putting in an appearance. Is there any more news? Yes! After Gabinius's acquittal another panel of jurors, in a fit of irritation, an hour later condemned Antiochus Gabinius, some fellow from the studio of Sopolis, a freedman and ordinary officer of Gabinius, under the lex Papia. Consequently he at once remarked, "So the Republic will not acquit me under the law of treason as it did you!" Pomptinus wants to celebrate a triumph on the 2nd of November. He is openly opposed by the praetors Cato and Servilius and the tribune Q. Mucius. For they say that no law for his imperium was carried, and this one too was carried, by heaven, in a stupid way. But Pomptinus will have the consul Appius on his side. Cato, however, declares that he shall never triumph so long as he is alive. I think this affair, like many of the same sort, will come to nothing. Appius thinks of going to Cilicia without a law, and at his own expense.

I received a letter on the 24th of October from my brother and from Caesar, dated from the nearest coasts of Britain the 26th of September. Britain done with ... hostages taken no booty ... a tribute, however, imposed; they were on the point of bringing back the army. Q. Pilius has just set out to join Caesar. If you have any love for me or your family any truth in you, or even if you have any taste left, and any idea of enjoying all your blessings, it is really time for you to be on your way home, and, in fact, almost here. I vow I cannot get on without you. And what wonder that I can't get without you, when I miss Dionysius so much? The latter, in fact, as soon as the day comes, both I and my young Cicero will demand of you. The last letter I had from you was dated Ephesus, 9th of August.
TO ATTICUS (AT ROME)
CILICIA, AUGUST 51
Though the letter-carriers of the publicani are starting while I am actually travelling and on the road, and though I am still engaged on my progress, yet I thought I must snatch a moment to prevent your thinking me forgetful of your charge. So I have sat down actually on the road to write you in brief what follows, which really calls for a somewhat lengthy essay. Let me tell you, then, that with the highest possible reputation I entered, on the 31st of July, into a province in a state of desolation and lasting ruin; that I stayed three days at Laodicea, three at Apamea, the same at Synnada. 1 It was the same tale everywhere: they could not pay the poll-tax: everybody's securities were sold: groans, lamentations, from the towns: acts of savagery worthy of some wild beast, rather than of a man. In short, they are absolutely weary of their life. 2 However, the wretched towns are somewhat relieved by my costing them nothing, nor my legates, nor quaestor, nor anyone. Let me tell you that I not only refuse to accept hay, which is customarily furnished under the Julian law, but that no one of us accepts even firewood, or anything else, except four beds and a roof to cover us; in many districts we do not accept even a roof, but remain, as a rule, under canvas. Accordingly, we are greeted by extraordinary throngs from farms, villages, houses, every sort of place. By Hercules, on my mere arrival, the justice, purity, and merciful heart of your Cicero seems to give them new life: so far has he surpassed everyone's hopes. Appius, as soon as he heard of my arrival, hurried to the most distant part of the province, right up to Tarsus: there he is holding sessions. About the Parthian not a word: but, nevertheless, some who come from those parts announce that some cavalry of ours have been cut to pieces. Bibulus even now is not so much as thinking of approaching his province. People say that he is acting thus because he wishes to leave it somewhat later. 3 We are making all haste to the camp, which is two days' journey away.
CCVIII (A V, 17)

TO ATTICUS (AT ROME)
LYCAONIA, AUGUST 51
I have received a packet of letters from Rome without one from you, for which, granting you to be well and in Rome, I imagine the fault to be Philotimus's, not yours. I dictate this letter sitting in my carriage, on my way to the camp, from which I am two days' journey distant. In a few days' time I am going to have men on whom I can rely to take letters. Accordingly, I reserve myself for that. However, I will just say, though I should prefer your hearing this from others—I am so conducting myself in the province that no farthing is spent on anyone. This is owing also to the careful conduct of legates, tribunes, and prefects. For one and all entertain a surprising desire to vie with each other in maintaining my reputation. My friend Lepta is wonderful in that respect. But at present I am in a hurry: I will write everything in full to you in a few days. The younger Deiotarus I who has received the title of king from the senate, has taken my son and nephew with him to his own dominions. So long as I am in the summer camp, I thought that the safest place for the boys. Sestius has written me an account of his conversation with you about my domestic anxiety, which is a very serious one, and of what your opinion is. Pray throw yourself into that matter, and write me word what can be done and what you think. He also told me that Hortensius had said something or other about the extension of my provincial government. He promised me at Cumae that he would most energetically plead for my being kept here only a year. If you have any affection for me, strengthen this position. I cannot tell you how against the grain my absence from you is. At the same time, too, I hope that my present reputation for justice and purity will be all the more conspicuous if I quit the province early. This is what happened to Scaevola, 2 who governed Asia only nine months. Our friend Appius, as soon as he saw that I was on the point of arriving, left Laodicea and went as far as Tarsus. There he is holding an assize, though I am actually in the province. However, I do not make any fuss about this slight upon myself; for I have enough to do in healing the wounds which have been inflicted upon the province. This I am taking care to do with as little reflection upon him as possible: but I should like you to tell our friend Brutus 3 that it was not very polite of him to remove to the farthest possible distance on my arrival.
II
CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

I arrived at Brundisium on the 24th of November Brundisium, after enjoying your proverbial luck at sea: so fair for Nov. 26, B.C. me "blew from Epirus the softest of breezes, Onchesmities." There, that verse with its spondaic ending you can pass off for your own on any of our new school of poets you like. Your health causes me great anxiety; for I see from your letter that you really suffer. But, knowing your spirit, I strongly suspect there is something serious which compels you to give in and nearly causes a breakdown, although your Pamphilus tells me that one fit of quartan has passed, and that a second and lighter attack is coming on. But Terentia (who reached Brundisium's gates as I reached the harbour, and met me in the forum) told me that L. Pontius had informed her at Trebula that the second attack also had abated. If that is so, my utmost hopes are realized, and I expect that consummation has been attained by your caution and moderate habits.

I come to your letters, which have reached me in shoals, each more delightful than the last—I mean those in your own handwriting. I like Alexis' hand; it so closely resembles your own script; but there is one thing I do not like about it—it shows that you are ill. Talking of Alexis, I left Tiro sick at Patrae; he is, as you know, a young man, and you may add, if you like, an honest fellow. Nothing

1Catullus, Cinna, and the other imitators of Alexandrine poetry.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 2

could be better than Tiro. So I miss him terribly, and, though he did not seem very bad, still I am anxious, and build great hopes on the care of M'. Curius, about which Tiro has written and many people have told me. Curius himself was aware of your desire that he should win my esteem: and I am greatly charmed with him. Indeed he is one of nature's gentlemen, whom it is easy to like. I carry home his will sealed with the seals of three of my family and of the praetor's staff. In the presence of witnesses he made you heir to a tenth of his estate and me to a fortieth. 1 At Actium in Corecyra Alexio made me a splendid present. Q. Cicero could not be stopped from seeing the river Thyamis. I am glad you take delight in your baby daughter, and have satisfied yourself that a desire for children is natural. 2 For, if it is not, there can be no natural tie between man and man; remove that tie, and social life is destroyed. “Heaven bless the consequence,” says Carneades naughtily, but with more wisdom than our philosophers Lucius and Patron, who in sticking to selfish hedonism and denying altruism, and saying that man must be virtuous for fear of the consequences of vice and not because virtue is an end in itself, fail to see that they are describing a type not of goodness but of craftiness. But these points, I think, are handled in the volumes 3 you have encouraged me by praising.

I return to business. How I looked for the letter

1 Monetary fractions are generally expressed by parts of the as; but here the denarius is used as the standard. The libella was one-tenth and the teruncius one-fortieth of a denarius.
2 With φυσικὴν the substantive ὑπῆρχε must be understood.
3 De Republica.
you said was entrusted to Philoxenus! For it was to
contain news of Pompey's talk at Naples. Patron
handed it to me at Brundisium. It was at Corcyra,
I fancy, he had taken charge of it. Nothing could be
more delightful. It touched on politics, the great man's
opinion of my honour, the kindliness he displayed
in his remarks about my triumph. But the most de-
lightful item of all was the intelligence that you had
called on him to find out his feeling towards me. This,
I repeat, was what I found most delightful. As for
a triumph, I had no desire for one up to the time
Bibulus sent his shameless despatches and got a
thanksgiving voted in the most complimentary way.
Now, if he had done what he professed to have done,
I should have been glad and supported the honour;
but, as it is, it is a disgrace to us—to both of us: for
I include you in the business—that I, on whose army
his army relied, should not get the same rewards as
a man who never set foot outside the city gates so
long as there was an enemy this side of Euphrates.
Therefore I shall make every effort, and, as I hope,
shall succeed. If you were well, some points would
have been settled already; but I hope you will soon
be well.

For that twopenny debt to Numerius I am much
bounden to you. I long to know what Hortensius
has done about my triumph and what Cato is doing.
Cato's behaviour to me was shamefully spiteful. He
gave me a character for rectitude, equity, clemency,
and good faith, for which I did not ask; what I did
want, that he denied me. Accordingly in his letter of
congratulation and lavish assurances, how Caesar
exults over the wrong Cato did me by his deep in-
gratitude! Yet Cato voted Bibulus a twenty days'
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 2-3

festival. Forgive me, I cannot and I will not bear it.

I long to answer all your letters; but there is no need, for soon I shall see you. Still I must tell you about Chrysippus—the conduct of that other fellow, a mere mechanic, excites my surprise less, though it could not have been more scandalous. But Chrysippus, whom I was always glad to see and held in honour, because he had a smattering of culture, fancy him deserting my son without my knowledge! I can put up with other things, though I hear of plenty, I can even put up with embezzlement; but I cannot put up with his flight. It is the most scandalous thing I ever heard of. So I have taken a leaf from Drusus’ book, when, in his praetorship, as the story goes, a man, who had been manumitted, refused to take the oaths he had promised: and I have denied that those fellows ever were freed by me, especially as there were no legal witnesses to the transaction. Take it any way you will: I will abide by your decision.

The only one of your letters, which I have not answered, is the most eloquent of them all, dealing with the country’s peril. I have no answer to make: I am very much upset. But the Parthians, whose sudden retreat left Bibulus half dead with fright, have taught me not to be much alarmed at anything.

III

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

On the 6th of December I came to Aeculanum, Trebula, and there I read your letter, which Philotimus handed Dec. 9, to me. I was pleased at the first glance to see it was B.C. 50

\[c2\]
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 7

VII
CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

"Dionysius, an excellent fellow—as I too have Formiae, found him—a good scholar and your very stanch Dec. 18-21, friend, arrived in Rome on the 16th of December, and b.c. 50 gave me a letter from you." That's all you say about Dionysius in your letter. You do not add "and he expressed his gratitude to you." Yet certainly he ought to have done so, and, if he had, you would have added it with your usual good nature. I cannot make a volte face about him, owing to the character I gave him in the former letter. Let us call him then an honest fellow. He has done me one kindness at any rate in giving me this further chance to know him thoroughly. Philogenes is correct in what he wrote: he duly settled his debt. I wanted him to use the money as long as he could; so he has used it for 14 months. I hope Pomptinus is getting well. You mention his entrance into town. I am somewhat anxious as to what it means: he would not have entered the city except for some good reason. As the 2nd of January is a holiday, I don't wish to reach Pompey's Alban villa on that date for fear I should be a nuisance to his household. I shall go there on the 3rd, and then visit the city on the 4th. I forget on what day the fever will attack you again; but I would not have you stir to the damage of your health.

As for my triumph, unless Caesar has been secretly intriguing through his tribune partisans, all else seems smooth and easy. My mind is absolutely at ease, and I regard the whole business with indifference, especially as many people tell me that Pompey and his advisers
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 7

have determined to send me to Sicily, because I still have military powers. That is a muddle-headed plan. For neither has the House decreed, nor the people authorized me to have military power in Sicily. If the state delegates the appointment to Pompey, why should he send me rather than any unofficial person? So, if this military power is going to be a nuisance, I shall get rid of it by entering the first city gate I see. As for your news that there is a wonderful interest in my arrival and that none of the "right or right enough party" doubt as to my future action, I don't understand your phrase "the right party." I don't know of such a party, that is if we look for a class; of course there are individuals. But in political splits it is classes and parties we want. Do you think the Senate is "right," when it has left our provinces without military rule? For Curio could never have held out, if there had been negotiations with him—a proposal rejected by the House, which left Caesar without a successor. Is it the tax-collectors, who have never been loyal and are now very friendly with Caesar? Or is it the financiers or the farmers, whose chief desire is peace? Do you suppose they will fear a king, when they never declined one so long as they were left in peace? Well then, do I approve of the candidature of a man who keeps his army beyond the legal term? No, not even of his candidature in absence. But when the one privilege was granted, the other went with it. Do I then approve of the extension of his military power for ten years, and that carried as it was carried? Then I should have to approve of my own banishment, the throwing away of the Campanian land on the people, the adop-

'Abdera was the classical Gotham.
tion of a patrician by a plebeian, of that gentleman of Gades by the man of Mytilene. And I should have to approve of the wealth of Labienus and Mamurra and the gardens and Tusculan estate of Balbus. But the source of all these evils is one. We ought to have resisted him when he was weak: that would have been easy. Now there are eleven legions, cavalry as much as he wants, the northern tribes across the Po, the city riff-raff, all the tribunes of the people, the young profligates, a leader of such influence and daring. We must either fight him or allow his candidature according to the law. “Fight,” say you, “rather than be slaves.” The result will be proscription if beaten and slavery even if one wins. “What shall I do then?” What the cattle do, who when scattered follow flocks of their own kind. As an ox follows the herd, so shall I follow the “right party,” or whoever are said to be the “right party,” even if they rush to destruction. The best course in our straits is clear to me. No one can tell the issue of war: but every one can tell that, if the right party are beaten, Caesar will not be more merciful than Cinna in slaying the nobility, nor more moderate than Sulla in robbing the rich. I have discussed la haute politique long enough, and I would do so longer, had not my lamp gone out. The end is “Your vote, Marcus Tullius.” I vote with Pompey, that is with Titus Pomponius.

Please remember me to Alexis, a very clever boy, unless perhaps in my absence he has become a man, as he threatened to do.

1 Balbus of Gades was adopted by Theophranes of Mytilene, who had himself received the citizenship from Pompey.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 8-9

an army; and he fancies that when Caesar hears of the energetic preparations against him, he will give up the idea of the consulship this year, and prefer to keep his army and his province. Still, if Caesar should play the fool, Pompey has an utter contempt for him, and firm confidence in his own and the state's resources. Well, although the "uncertainty of war" came constantly into my mind, I was relieved of anxiety as I listened to a soldier, a strategist, and a man of the greatest influence discoursing in a statesmanlike way on the risks of a hollow peace. We had before us a speech of Antony made on the 21st of December, which attacked Pompey from boyhood, complained about the condemnation of certain people and threatened war. Pompey's comment was "What do you suppose Caesar will do, if he becomes master of the state, when a wretched, insignificant subordinate dares to talk in this strain?" In a word, he appeared not only not to seek peace, but even to fear it. But I fancy the idea of leaving the city shakes his resolution. What annoys me most is that I have to pay up to Caesar, and devote to the purpose what I should have used for my triumph. It is bad form to owe money to a political opponent. But this and many other topics can wait till we meet.

IX

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

You ask if you are going to get a letter from me Formiae, every day. Every day, if I can find a messenger. Dec. 26 or True I am at hand myself. Well, I will stop writing 27, B.C. 50
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 9

when I arrive. I see I have missed one of your letters: my friend L. Quinctius was wounded and robbed near the tomb of Basilus, while he was bringing it. So you must see if there was any news in it I ought to have, and you shall solve me this inevitable problem of politics to boot. It may be necessary for us to admit Caesar as a candidate while he keeps his army, be it by the favour of the House or the tribunes. Or we may have to persuade him to take office on condition of giving up his province and his troops. Or, if he will not yield to persuasion on that point, we may refuse to admit him as a candidate at the election, and he may endure the treatment and keep his province. Or, if he employs the tribunes to interfere, yet keeps the peace, a political deadlock may be brought about. Or, if he uses force, because we reject him as a candidate, we may have to fight and he may begin at once before we are ready, or when his friends fail to get his candidature allowed at the elections in accordance with his legal privilege. He may resort to arms solely on account of his rejection as a candidate, or for a further reason, if a tribune through using obstructionist tactics or an appeal to popular feeling incur a censure or a limitation of power or suspension or expulsion from office, or if some tribune fly to him with a tale of expulsion. War begun, we must either hold the city or abandon it and cut him off from food and supplies. Of these evils some one must be borne: consider which in your opinion is the lightest. Of course you will say, "Induce him to give up his army and so take the consulship." True there can be no objection to that, if he will condescend, and I wonder he does not, if he cannot get his candidature sup-
ported while he keeps his army. But for us some think that nothing could be worse than Caesar in office. You may say, "Better so, than with an army." Certainly: but Pompey thinks that very "so" fatal, and there is no remedy for it. "We must submit to Caesar's will." But imagine him in office again after your experience of his former tenure. You will reflect that, weak as he was, he was too strong for the constitution. What about him now? And now, if Caesar is consul, Pompey will remain in Spain. What a plight! since the worst of all is the very alternative which we cannot refuse him, and the one which, if he takes it, will of itself win him the favour of the right party. This course it is said he will not accept; let us put it out of court. Which is the worst of the remaining alternatives? To concede his impertinent demand, as Pompey terms it? Impertinent it is indeed. You have had a province for ten years, not allotted by the Senate, but by yourself through force and insubordination. This term, not a legal term, but a term of your own will and pleasure—or say, this legal term—comes to an end. The House passes a decree for the appointment of a successor. You object and cry, "Consider my candidature." Consider our case. Are you to dare the House and keep your army longer than the nation sanctions? "You must fight or yield." Then as Pompey says, let us hope for victory, or death with freedom. If we must fight, the time depends on chance, the plan of campaign on circumstances. So I do not trouble you on that point. But make any suggestion you can on my remarks. Day and night I am tormented.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 14-15

is uneasy as to our forces. I am wanted at Capua to assist the levy. The settlers in Campania are hanging back. As for Caesar's professional fighting men at Capua, about whom I misinformed you on the authority of A. Torquatus, Pompey has very cleverly distributed them two a-piece to heads of families. There were 5,000 heavy armed gladiators in the school. They were said to meditate a sortie. Pompey's was a wise provision for the safety of the state.

As for my women-folk, among whom is your sister, I entreat you to consider the propriety of their stay at Rome, when the other ladies of their rank have departed. I wrote to them and to you on this point previously. Please urge them to leave the city, especially as I have those estates on the sea-coast, which is under my care, so that they can live there without much inconvenience, considering the state of affairs. For, if I give offence by the conduct of my son-in-law (though I am not his keeper), the fact that my women-folk stay in Rome after others have left makes matters worse. I should like to know what you and Sextus think about leaving town, and to have your opinion of matters in general. As for me, I cease not to advocate peace. It may be on unjust terms, but even so it is more expedient than the justest of civil wars. However, I can but leave it to fate.

XV

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

Since I left Rome I have not yet let a day pass Capua, Jan. without dropping you a line; not that I had any 36, b.c. 49

69
particular news, but I wanted to talk with you in my absence. When we cannot talk face to face, there is nothing I like better.

I reached Capua yesterday, the 25th, where I met the consuls and many fellow-members. All hope that Caesar will abide by his conditions, accepting the withdrawal of his garrisons: only Favonius objects to his dictating to us. But no one listened to him. For even Cato now prefers slavery to war: but he wants to be in the House when the terms are debated, if Caesar can be induced to withdraw his garrisons. So he does not care to do what would be most useful, and go to Sicily: and he wants to be in the House, where I fear he will cause trouble. The Senate definitely decreed that Postumius should set out for Sicily at once and succeed Furfanius. Postumius replied he would not go without Cato; he has a great idea of his own value and influence in the House. So choice fell on Fannius; he is dispatched to Sicily with military power. In our debates there is great difference of opinion. Most declare that Caesar will not stick to his compact, and that his demands were only introduced to hinder our preparations for war. I fancy, however, that he will withdraw his garrisons. For he will win his point, if he is elected consul, and win it with less scandal than by his first course. But the blow must be borne. We are sinfully unready in men and money: for we have left him not only our private purses in the city, but the state funds in the treasury. Pompey along with Labienus has set out for Appius' legions. I want your views on this. I think of returning to Formiae at once.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VII. 23

XXIII

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

On the evening of the 9th of February, I got a Formiae, the letter from Philotimus, declaring that Domitian has a evening of reliable force, the cohorts from Picenum under the Feb. 9 or the command of Lentulus and Thermus have joined morning of his army, Caesar can be cut off and fears the con- Feb. 10, tingency, and the hopes of loyalists at Rome have been restored, and those of the other party dashed. I am afraid this may be a dream; but still the news revived M’. Lepidus, L. Torquatus and C. Cassius the tribune of the plebs—for they are with me, that is at Formiae. I fear the truer version may be that we are now all practically prisoners, that Pompey is leaving Italy, pursued it is said by Caesar. What a bitter thought! Caesar pursue Pompey! What, to slay him? Woe is me! And we do not all throw our bodies in the way! You too are sorry about it. But what can we do? We are beaten, ruined and utterly captive.

Still the perusal of Philotimus’ letter has caused me to change my plan about the women-folk. I wrote you I was sending them back to Rome: but it has come into my mind that there would be a deal of talk, that I had now come to a decision on the political situation; and that in despair of success the return of the ladies of my house was as it were one step towards my own return. As for myself, I agree with you that I should not commit myself to the danger and uncertainty of flight, seeing that it would avail nothing to State or Pompey, for whom I would dutifully and gladly die. So I shall stay, though life —.
staying with me. I acquiesced, sorry to lose a master for my boys; but glad to be rid of an ungrateful fellow. I wanted you to know what happened and my opinion of his conduct.

XI
CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.
As you suppose, I am in great anxiety of mind: *Formiae*, but it is not so great as you may imagine. I am rid *Feb. 27*, of care, as soon as resolve is fixed or thought proves b.c. 49 futile. Still I may lament my lot as I do all day long. But I fear, since lamentation is idle, I disgrace my philosophy and my works. So I spend my time considering the character of the ideal statesman, who is sketched clearly enough, you seem to think, in my books on the Republic. You remember then the standard by which our ideal governor was to weigh his acts. Here are Scipio's words, in the 5th book, I think it is: "As a safe voyage is the aim of the pilot, health of the physician, victory of the general, so the ideal statesman will aim at happiness for the citizens of the state to give them material security, copious wealth, wide-reaching distinction and untarnished honour. This, the greatest and finest of human achievements, I want him to perform." Pompey never had this notion and least of all in the present cause. Absolute power is what he and Caesar have sought; their aim has not been to secure the happiness and honour of the community. Pompey has not abandoned Rome, because it was impossible to defend, nor Italy on forced compulsion; but it was his idea from the first to plunge the world into war, to stir up barbarous princes, to bring savage tribes into
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VIII. 11

Italy under arms, and to gather a huge army. A sort of Sulla's reign has long been his object, and is the desire of many of his companions. Or do you think that no agreement, no compromise between him and Caesar was possible? Why, it is possible to-day: but neither of them looks to our happiness. Both want to be kings.

At your request I have given an outline of my views; for you wanted an expression of my opinion on these troubles. So I play the prophet, my dear Atticus, not at random like Cassandra whom no one believed, but with imaginative insight. "Now on the great sea" my prophecy runs like the old tag: such an Iliad of woe hangs over us. The case of us, who stay at home, is worse than that of those who have gone with Pompey, for they have only one to fear, while we have both. You ask then, why I stay. Well, in compliance with your request, or because I could not meet Pompey on his departure, or because it was the more honourable course. I say you will see poor Italy trodden down next summer or in the hands of their slaves drawn from every quarter of the globe. It will not be a proscription (in spite of the talk and threats we hear of at Luceria) which we shall have to dread, but general destruction. So huge are the forces that will join in the struggle. That is my prophecy. Perhaps you looked for consolation. I see none: we have reached the limit of misery, ruin and disgrace.

You inquire what Caesar said in his letter. The usual thing, that my inaction pleases him, and he begs me to maintain it. Balbus the younger brought the same message by word of mouth. Balbus was travelling to Lentulus the consul with letters from Caesar, and
promises of reward, if he would go back to Rome. Reckoning the days, however, I fancy Lepidus will cross the sea, before Balbus can meet him.

I send copies of Pompey’s two dispatches to me. Please note his careless style and my careful answer. I am waiting to see the result of this dash of Caesar’s on Brundisium through Apulia. I should like a repetition of the Parthian incident. As soon as I get any news, I will write. Please send me the talk of the loyalists who are said to be numerous at Rome. I know you do not go out, but talk must reach your ears. I remember a book being given to you by Demetrius of Magnesia. It was dedicated to you, and bore the title On Concord. I should be glad if you would let me have it. You see the part I am studying.

THE GREETINGS OF CN. MAGNUS PROCONSUL TO CICERO THE IMPERATOR.

Q. Fabius came to me on the 10th of February. Luceria, He announces that L. Domitius with his twelveFeb. 10, cohorts and fourteen cohorts brought by Vibullius is on the march towards me; that he intended to leave Corfinium on the 9th of February and that C. Hirrus with five cohorts follows behind. I think you should come to me at Luceria, for here I imagine will be your safest refuge.

1I.e. a sudden retreat. Cf. vi, 6.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VIII. 13-14

but their lands, their little homesteads and their tiny hoards. And see how public opinion has changed. They fear the man they once trusted, and adore the man they once dreaded. It pains me to think of the mistakes and wrongs of ours that are responsible for this reaction. I wrote you what I thought would be our fate, and I now await a letter from you.

XIV
CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

I have no doubt my daily letter must bore you, *Formiae, March 2* b.c. 49.

If I should employ special messengers to convey my chatter to you without reason, I should be a fool: but I cannot refrain from entrusting letters to folk who are bound for Rome, especially when they are members of my household. Believe me, too, when I seem to talk with you, I have some little relief from sorrow, and, when I read a letter from you, far greater relief. I am quite aware that there has been no time, since fear drove me to flight, when silence and no letters would have been more appropriate, for the good reason that there is no fresh news at Rome, nor here—two or three days' journey nearer Brundisium. The issue of this first campaign will turn entirely on the action at Brundisium: and I am on thorns to hear the result. However, all will be known by the 7th. On the noon of the day (that is the 21st of February), on the morning of which Pompey left Canusium, I see that Caesar set out from Corfinium. But Caesar marches in such a way, and so spurs his men with largess, that I fear he may reach Brundisium sooner than we
LETTERS TO ATTICUS VIII. 14

want. You may wonder why I forestall disagreeable tidings which will be known in three days' time. I have no reason, except, as I said before, that I love to talk to you; and at the same time I want you to know that what I had counted my fixed resolve is shaken. The precedents you quote with approval don't quite fit my case. They are those of men who have never distinguished themselves by great political action, and are not looked up to for any act of merit. Nor, let me tell you, have I any praise for those who have crossed the sea to make preparations for war—unbearable as things here were. For I foresee how great and calamitous that war will be. I am influenced only by one man, whom I think I ought to accompany in flight, and help in the restoration of the constitution. I may seem variable; but I talk with you as I talk with myself, and there is no one who, in such a crisis, does not view matters in many lights. Moreover, I want to get your opinion, to encourage me, if you have not changed it, or otherwise to win my assent. It is particularly necessary for me to know in my dilemma what course Domitius and my friend Lentulus will take.

As for Domitius I hear many reports: at one time that he is at Tibur out of sorts, at another that he has consorted with the Lepidi in their march to Rome. That I see is untrue. For Lepidus says that he is following a hidden path, but whether to hide or reach the sea even he does not know. Lepidus has no news about his son either. He adds a provoking detail, that Domitius has failed to get back a large sum of money which he had at Corfinium. Of Lentulus I have no news. Please make inquiries on these points and inform me.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS IX. 2-2a

from you, still I suppose I ought to answer the shorter note, which you sent on the 4th on the eve of your attack. You say you are glad that I have stayed in Italy, and you write that you abide by your former view. But an earlier letter led me to think you had no doubt I ought to go, if Pompey embarked with a good following and the consuls crossed too. Have you forgotten this, or have I failed to understand you, or have you changed your mind? But I shall either learn your opinion from the letter I now await: or I shall extract another letter from you. From Brundisium so far there is no news.

IIa

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

What a difficult and calamitous business! Nothing Formiae, passed over in the advice you give, nothing revealed March 8, as to your real opinion! You are glad that I am not b.c. 49 with Pompey, and yet you lay down how wrong it would be for me to be present when he is criticized: it were shameful to approve his conduct. Agreed. Should I then speak against him? "Heaven forbid," you say. So, what can happen, if one way lies crime, and the other punishment? You advise me to get from Caesar leave of absence and permission to retire. Must I then beg and pray? That would be humiliating: and suppose I fail? You say the matter of my triumph will not be prejudiced. But what if I am hampered by that very thing? Accept it? What dishonour! Refuse it? Caesar will think that I am repudiating him entirely, more even than when I declined a place among his twenty land commissioners." And it is his way, when he excuses himself

1 The vigintiviri for the distribution of Campanian land in 59 b.c. Cf. II, 19.
to throw on me all the blame for that period, and to say I was so bitter an enemy that I would not even take an office from him. How much more will this annoy him! Why, as much more as this honour is greater than that, and he himself is stronger. As for your remark that you have no doubt I am in bad odour with Pompey at this present time, I see no reason why it should be so, especially at this time. Pompey did not tell me his plans till after the loss of Corfinium, and he cannot complain of my not going to Brundisium, when Caesar was between me and Brundisium. Besides he knows that complaint on his part is stopped. He is of opinion that I saw clearer than he did about the weakness of the municipal towns, the levies, peace, the city, the public funds, occupying Pisenum. If however I do not go to him, when I can, he will certainly be angry. From that I shrink—not for fear of harm he may do me (for what can he do? And who

"Would be a slave but he who fears to die?" ¹)

but because I shrink from being charged with ingratitude. So I trust my arrival will be, as you say, welcome to him, whenever I go. As for your remark "If Caesar's conduct be more temperate, you will weigh your advice more carefully," how can Caesar keep himself from a destructive policy? It is forbidden by his character, his previous career, the nature of his present enterprise, his associates, the material strength or even the moral firmness of the loyalist party.

I had scarcely read your letter, when up comes Curtius Postumus hurrying off to Caesar, talking of nothing but fleets and armies; "Caesar is wresting

¹ From an unknown play of Euripides.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS IX. 2a-3

the Spains from Pompey, occupying Asia, Sicily, Africa, Sardinia, and forthwith pursuing Pompey into Greece." So I must set out to take part not so much in a war as in a flight. For I can never put up with the talk of your friends, whoever they are, for certainly they are not what they are called, loyalists. Still that is just what I want to know, what they do say, and I beg you earnestly to inquire and inform me. So far I know nothing of what has happened at Brundisium. When I know, I shall form my plans according to circumstances and the moment; but I shall use your advice.

III

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

The son of Domitius went through Formiae on the Formiae, 8th of March hastening to his mother at Naples, March 9, and, when my slave Dionysius inquired particularly b.c. 49 from him about his father, he sent me a message that he was outside the city. But I had heard that he had gone either to Pompey or to Spain. What the fact is, I should much like to know, for it has a bearing on the point I am now considering: if it is certain that Domitius has found no means of departure, Pompey may understand that my own departure from Italy is difficult, seeing that it is now beset with troops and garrisons, and especially in the winter season. For, were it a more convenient time of year, one could even cross the southern sea. Now there is no choice but the Adriatic, to which passage is barred. So please inquire both about Domitius and about Lentulus.

From Brundisium no news has come yet, and to-day
LETTERS TO ATTICUS IX. 3-4

is the 9th of March. I expect Caesar reached Brundisium to-day or yesterday. He stayed at Arpi on the 1st. If you choose to listen to Postumus, Caesar meant to pursue Pompey; for, by calculating the state of the weather and the days, he concluded that Pompey had crossed the sea. I thought that Caesar would be unable to get crews, but Postumus was quite sure about that, and the more so because ship-owners had heard of Caesar's liberality. But it cannot be long now before I hear the full story of what has happened at Brundisium.

IV

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

Though now I rest only so long as I am writing to Formiae, you or reading your letters, still I am in want of March 13, subject matter, and feel sure that you are in the same position, for the present crisis debars us from the free and easy topics of friendly correspondence, and the topics connected with the present crisis we have already exhausted. However, not to succumb entirely to low spirits, I have taken for myself certain theses, so to speak, which deal with la haute politique and are applicable to the present crisis, so that I may keep myself from querulous thoughts and may practise the subject. Here are some:

Whether one should remain in one's country, even under a tyranny. Whether any means are lawful to
LETTERS TO ATTICUS IX. 4

abolish a tyranny, even if they endanger the existence of the State. Whether one ought to take care that one who tries to abolish it may not rise too high himself. Whether one ought to assist one’s country, when under a tyranny, by seizing opportunities and by argument rather than by war. Whether one is doing one’s duty to the State, if one retires to some other place and there remains inactive, when there is a tyranny; or whether one ought to run every risk for liberty. Whether one ought to invade the country and besiege one’s native town, when it is under a tyranny. Whether one ought to enrol oneself in the ranks of the loyalists, even if one does not approve of war as a means of abolishing tyranny. Whether one ought in political matters to share the dangers of one’s benefactors and friends, even if one does not believe their general policy to be wise. Whether one who has done good service for his country, and by it has won ill-treatment and envy, should voluntarily put himself into danger for that country, or may at length take thought for himself and his dear ones and avoid struggles against the powers that be.

By employing myself with such questions and discussing the pros and cons in Greek and Latin, I divert my thoughts a little from my troubles and at the same time consider a subject which is very pertinent. But I fear you may find me a nuisance. For, if the bearer makes proper headway, it will reach you on the very day you have your attack of ague.
V

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

On your birthday you wrote me a letter full of Formiae, advice, full of great kindness and of great wisdom. March 10, Philotimus delivered it to me the day after he got it b.c. 49 from you. The points you discuss are very difficult—the route to the upper sea, a voyage by the lower sea, departure to Arpinum, lest I should seem to have avoided Caesar, remaining at Formiae, lest I should appear to have put myself forward to congratulate him; but the most miserable thing of all will be to see what I tell you must very shortly be seen.

Curtius Postumus was with me. I wrote you how tiresome he was. Quintus Fufius also came to see me—what an air! what assurance!—hastening to Brundisium denouncing Pompey’s wrong-doings and the careless folly of the House. When I cannot stand this under my own roof, how shall I be able to endure Curtius in the Senate? But suppose I put up with all this in good humour, what of the question “Your vote, M. Tullius?” What will come of it? I pass over the cause of the Republic, which I consider lost, both from the wounds dealt it and the cures prepared for them; but what am I to do about Pompey? It is no use denying that I am downright angry with him. For I am always more affected by the causes of events than by the events themselves. Therefore considering our incomparable woes, or rather concluding that they have happened by his doing and his mistakes, I am more angry with Pompey than with Caesar himself. Just as our ancestors
LETTERS TO ATTICUS IX. 5

thought that the day of the battle of Alia was blacker than the day of the capture of Rome, because the capture was but the consequence of the battle (and so the former day is still a black letter day and the latter is commonly unknown), so I too was angry in recalling his errors of the last ten years, which included the year of my affliction, when he gave me no help, to put it mildly, and recognizing his foolhardiness, sloth and carelessness at the present time. But all this I have forgotten. It is his kindness I think of, and I think of my own honour too. I understand, later indeed than I could have wished, from the letters and conversation of Balbus, but I see plainly, that the sole object is, and has been from the beginning, the death of Pompey. So I say the same as Achilles to his mother, when she said "For after Hector's death thy doom is fixed," and he replied, "Then let me die, since I have failed to save my friend."

And in my case it is not only a friend but a benefactor, a man so great and championing so great a cause. Indeed I hold that life should be paid for the kindnesses that he has done me. But in your loyal party I have no confidence: nor I do even acknowledge any allegiance to them now. I see how they surrender and will surrender themselves to Caesar. Do you think that those decrees of the towns about Pompey's health were anything compared with their congratulatory addresses to Caesar? You will say, "They are terrorized." Yes, but they themselves declare that they were terrorized on the former occasion. But let us see what has happened at Brundisium. Perhaps from that may spring different plans and a different letter.
IIIa

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

On the 7th of April I dictate this letter, the Arcanum, second on the same day, and yesterday I dispatched April 7, a longer one in my own handwriting. It is said you have been seen in the Regia,¹ and I don’t blame you, since I laid myself open to the same blame. But I await a letter from you. I don’t see what news I can expect; but still, even if there is none, I wish you would just tell me that.

Caesar has written to excuse me for not coming to Rome, and says that he takes it in good part. I am not concerned at his saying that Titinius and Servius have complained to him for not allowing them the same privilege as he did to me. What fools they are! They send their sons to besiege Pompey, and themselves hesitate to enter the House. However, I send you a copy of Caesar’s letter.

IV

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

I have received a lot of letters from you on the Cumae, same day, all of them written with care and one, April 14, which is as big as a book, worth reading several times, as I am doing. Your labour has not been in vain: you have gratified me very much. And so I beseech you continue to write as often as you can, so long as it is possible, that is, so long as you know where I am. And as for our daily lamentations let us make an end of them once for all, if we can, or at

¹ The official residence of Caesar as Pontifex maximus.
any rate moderate them, which we certainly can. For I have given up thinking of the dignity, the honours and the position I have lost: I think of what I have attained, what I have done, the glory of my career, in short what a difference there is even in our present straits between me and those through whom I have lost all. They are the people who thought they could not attain their extravagant desires without expelling me from the State: and you see now what has come of their coalition in a criminal conspiracy.

The one burns with a madman’s lust for crime, which does not cool one whit, but rather increases day by day. He has just driven Pompey from Italy, now on one side of the world he is pursuing him, on the other he is trying to rob him of his province: and he no longer refuses, nay, he practically demands, to be called a tyrant, as he is. The other, who once would not even give me a helping hand, when I threw myself at his feet, declaring he could do nothing against Caesar’s will, now, having slipped from the grasp of his father-in-law’s mailed hand, is preparing war by land and sea. The war is not unjust on his part, nay, it is even righteous and necessary; but, unless he conquers, it will be fatal to his fellow-countrymen; and, even if he does conquer, it will be disastrous. These are our great men; but I do not hold their achievements one whit superior to mine, nor even their fortune, though they may seem to have basked in fortune’s smiles while I have met her frowns. For who can be happy, when he has caused his country to be deserted or enslaved? And if, as you admonish me, I was right in saying in those books of mine that nothing is good, save
LETTERS TO ATTICUS X. 4

what is honourable, and nothing bad, save what is dishonourable, then certainly both of them are most miserable, since both of them have thought less of their country's safety and dignity than of their own high place and private interests. My conscience then is clear and helps to support me, when I think that I have always rendered my country good service, when I could, and assuredly have never harboured any but loyal thoughts, and that the State has been wrecked by the very storm which I foresaw fourteen years ago. With a clear conscience then I shall depart, though the parting will cost me a bitter pang: nor shall I go so much for my own sake or for my brother's—our day is done—as for our children, to whom I think at times we ought to have secured at least a free country. For one of them I feel the most poignant grief—not so much because he is my son, as because he is exceedingly dutiful—while the other unfortunately has turned out the bitterest disappointment of my life. He has been spoiled, I suppose, by our indulgence, and has gone to lengths that I dare not name. I am waiting for your letter too; for you promised to write more fully when you had seen him himself. All my humouring of him has been accompanied by considerable strictness: and I have had to put my foot down not over one fault of his or a small one, but over many grave faults. But his father's kindness should surely have been repaid by affection rather than by such cruel disregard. For we were more annoyed at his sending letters to Caesar than we let you see, but I think we made his life a burden to him. I dare not describe this recent journey of his and his hypocritical pretence of filial duty: I only know that, after he met Hirtius,
LETTERS TO ATTICUS X. 4

he was summoned to Caesar's presence, and discussed the difference between my views and his own and my plan of leaving Italy. Even that I write with hesitation. But it is no fault of mine: it is his disposition which must cause us anxiety. That is what currupted Curio and Hortensius' son, not their fathers' fault.

My brother is prostrate with grief, though he does not fear for his own life so much as for mine. It is to him, to him more than me, I want you to offer consolation, if you can. The best consolation would be that what we have heard was false or exaggerated. If it was true, I fail to see what will come of this runaway existence. For if the constitution were still intact, I should know what to do both in the way of severity and in the way of kindness. Now, under the sway of some passion, be it wrath or sorrow or fear, I have written more bitterly than either your affection for him or mine warrants. If what I have said is true, you will pardon me: if it is false, I shall be only too glad to have the error removed. However it may be, you must not blame his uncle or his father.

When I had got so far, I received a message from Curio that he was coming to see me. He came to his place here yesterday evening, that is on the 13th. If any point worth mentioning to you occurs in our conversation, I will add it to this letter.

Curio passed by my house, and sent a message saying he was coming very soon. Then he hurried off to make a speech at Puteoli. He made his speech, returned and stayed a very long time. How disgusting! You know the sort of man he is: he hid nothing. In the first place he is quite sure that all
LETTERS TO ATTICUS X. 4

those condemned by Pompey's law are going to be recalled: and so he is going to make use of their services in Sicily. He had no doubt about Caesar getting the two Spains and said he would start from them with an army to wherever Pompey might be. Pompey's death would be the end of the war. Caesar had been carried away by anger into wishing to have the tribune Metellus killed and he had had a narrow shave. If it had happened, there would have been an enormous massacre. Many had spoken in favour of a massacre: and Caesar himself was not by nature and inclination averse to cruelty, but he thought mild measures would win popularity. But, if he lost popular favour, he would be cruel. He had been put out when he found that he had offended the populace itself by seizing the treasury: and so, though he had fully made up his mind to harangue the people before leaving, he had not ventured to do so, and had gone off in a very disturbed state of mind. But when I asked Curio what he looked forward to, what end, and what constitution, he confessed openly that there was no hope left. He was afraid of Pompey's fleet, and, if it put to sea, he should desert Sicily. I asked, what was the meaning of his six lictors, why their staves were laurelled, if the Senate gave them to him, and why there were six, if Caesar gave them. ¹ He said, "I wanted to snatch a vote from the House for them (for it could not be done openly): but Caesar hates the Senate like poison, and declares that all such authority will

¹ Six lictors were the regular number for the praetor of Sicily; but their staves would not be laurelled as Curio had not won a victory over a public enemy. If appointed a legatus to Caesar he might have had proconsular powers and twelve lictors.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS X. 4

proceed from him." "But why six?" "Because I
didn't want twelve, though I could have had them."
I said: "I wish I had asked for what I hear Philippus
has got from him: but I was afraid to ask, as he got
nothing from me." He replied: "He would willingly
have given you permission. But take it that you
did get it. I will write to him just as you wish, and
say we have spoken about the matter. What does
it matter to him where you are, as you do not attend
the House? If you were not in Italy at this very
moment, it would not damage his cause in the least."
I responded that I was looking for a retired and
solitary retreat, especially because I still had my
lictors in attendance. He agreed with me. "How
about this then," said I. "My way through to
Greece lies through your province, as the Adriatic is
guarded." "There is nothing I should like better," he
said, and added many very handsome remarks.
So something has come of it: I could sail not only in
safety, but openly.

The rest he put off for the next day: I will write and
tell you if there is anything worth mentioning. But
there are some things I omitted to ask: whether
Caesar was going to wait for an interregnum, or
what he meant by saying that he had been offered
the consulship but had refused it for the next year.
And there are other points I must ask about. Finally
he swore—though to be sure he makes no bones
about swearing—that Caesar was very friendly to
me. I expressed my doubt. He said he had heard
from Dolabella. I asked what he said, and he
declared he said Caesar had thanked him warmly for
wanting me to go to Rome, and not only approved
but showed pleasure. Of course I felt relieved.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS X. 4-5

The suspicion of domestic treachery and of the talk with Hirtius has been removed. How I hope young Quintus is worthy of his family, and how I keep urging myself to note the points in his favour! But need he have visited Hirtius? There is something in the tale, but I hope it may not prove of much consequence. Still I wonder he is not back yet. But we shall see about this.

Please introduce Terentia to the Oppii: for there is only one danger in Rome now. As for me, give me the benefit of your advice as to whether I am to go to Regium on foot or to embark straight from here, and on all the other points too, as I am staying here. I shall have something to write as soon as I have seen Curio. Please keep me posted up in news about Tiro's condition, as you have done.

V

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

About the whole of my plans I have written to Cumae, you before, as I think, exactly. Of the day I can April 16, say no more for certain than this, that it will not b.c. 49 be before the new moon. Curio's conversation on the next day had practically the same gist, except that he showed still more frankly that he could not see an end to this state of things.

As for your commission about the control of Quintus, you are asking for the moon. However I

1 The Oppii were moneylenders, and, if the reading unum is right, Cicero must mean that lack of obtaining ready money was the only danger in Rome.

2 Cf. the answer of the Delphic oracle to a Spartan envoy in Herodotus i, 66, Ἀρκαδίαν μὴ άλλεις, μέγα μὴ αλλεῖς, οὔτοι δῶσω, "Thou askest for Arcadia. 'Tis much thou askest for. I will not give it."
LETTERS TO ATTICUS XI. 6-7

I never had any doubt. For despair of his success had so completely taken possession of the minds of all the kings and peoples, that I thought this would happen to him, wherever he might go. I cannot help feeling sorry for his fate, for I knew him to be a man of honour and high moral principle. Am I to condole with you about Fannius? He used to speak virulently of you for staying in Rome. L. Lentulus, you know, had promised himself Hortensius’ house, Caesar’s gardens, and a place at Baiae. Precisely the same is taking place on this side too, except that on the other there was no limit. For they counted every one who stayed in Italy as an enemy. But I would rather speak of this sometime when I am less worried.

I hear my brother Quintus has set out for Asia to make his peace. About his son I have heard nothing; but ask Diochares, Caesar’s freedman, who brought those letters from Alexandria. I have not seen him. He is said to have seen Quintus either on the way, or was it already in Asia? I am looking forward to a letter from you, as the occasion demands. Please try to get it conveyed to me as soon as possible.

November 27.

VII

CICERO TO ATTICUS, GREETING.

I am much obliged to you for your letter, in which Brundisium, you have recorded carefully everything you think Dec. 17, concerns me. So you say that they approve both of B.C. 48 my actions, and of my keeping my lictors, as Sestius is allowed to keep his: though in his case I think it is not so much a question of being allowed to keep
them as of their being assigned to him by Caesar himself. For I am told he repudiates all the decrees of the Senate which were passed after the departure of the tribunes. So, if he wants to be consistent, he will be able to approve my lictors.

However, what is the use of talking about lictors, when I have almost been ordered to leave Italy. For Antony has sent me a copy of a letter from Caesar, in which he said he had heard that Cato and L. Metellus had come to Italy and intended to live openly at Rome: that he did not like, for fear it might cause some disturbance: and that none may enter Italy, until he has himself investigated their case. He put the point very strongly. So Antony wrote asking my pardon, and saying he could not help obeying the letter. Then I sent L. Lamia to him to point out that Caesar had told Dolabella to write and tell me to come to Italy as soon as possible: and that it was on the strength of that letter that I had come. Then Antony issued an edict excepting myself and Laelius by name. I wish he had not done that: he might have made an exception without mentioning names.

What a heap of troubles and how serious too! And you are doing your best to make them lighter, and with some success—indeed that you try so hard to relieve me is some relief in itself. I hope you won’t find it a burden to do so as often as possible. But you will succeed in your object best, if you can convince me that I have not entirely lost the good opinion of the loyal party. Yet what can you do in that matter? Nothing of course. But, if anything gives a chance, that is what will best console me. I see that at present it is impossible:
but if anything does turns up, as in this present case. It used to be said that I ought to have gone with Pompey: but now his death tends to absolve me from blame for neglecting my duty in that case. But where I am thought to have been most lacking is in not going to Africa. My view was that barbarian auxiliaries drawn from a most deceitful race were not the proper persons to defend the State, especially against an army which had won so many victories. That view may not meet with approval; for I hear that many patriots have arrived in Africa, and I know there were some there before. This is a point that really bothers me: and here again I must trust to luck, that there may be some of them, or, if such a thing is possible, all of them, who put safety first. For, if they hold fast and succeed, you can see what a position I shall be in. You will say “How about it, if they are defeated?” That is a more honourable blow. This is what tortures me. However, you have not told me why you do not prefer Sulpicius’ policy to mine. It may not be so glorious as Cato’s: but it is at any rate free from danger and regret. The last case is that of those who stayed in Achaia. Even they are in a better position than I am, because there are many of them together, and, when they do come to Italy, they will go straight home. Please continue your efforts to ameliorate my position and to win over as many people as possible to approval.

You explain why you do not come. Yes, I know your reasons and think it is to my interest that you should stay where you are, for one thing that you may be able to carry out any necessary negotiations about me with the proper persons, as you have done.
LETTERS TO ATTICUS XI. 7

And in the first place I should like to call your attention to this point. I think there are many who have reported or will report to Caesar either that I am repenting of my policy or that I do not approve of recent events. Though both are true, they say it out of spite against me, not because they have seen it to be so. Everything rests on the support of Balbus and Oppius, and on their confirming Caesar’s good will to me by sending him frequent letters. Please do your best to bring this about. The other reason why I prefer you not to leave is that you say Tullia begs for your assistance. What a misfortune? What can I say? What can I even wish? I will cut the matter short, for tears spring to my eyes at once. I give you a free hand: do you look to it. Only take care that nothing is done under the present circumstances to offend the great man. I crave your pardon. Tears and sorrow prevent me from dwelling any longer on this topic. I will only add that nothing makes me feel more grateful to you than your love for her.

You are quite right to send letters for me to anyone to whom you think it necessary. I have met a man who saw young Quintus at Samos and his father at Sicyon. They will easily obtain their pardon. I only hope, that, as they will see Caesar first, they will think fit to further my case with him, as much as I should have furthered theirs, if I had been able.

You ask me to take it in good part, if there is anything in your letters that wounds my feelings. I promise you to take it in the best possible part, and I beg you to write everything quite openly, as you do, and to do so as often as possible. Farewell.

Dec. 17.
DCCLXVII (A XVI, 5)

TO ATTICUS (AT ROME)
PUTEOLI, 9 JULY 44

BRUTUS is anxious for a letter from you. I told him about the Tereus of Accius, 1 though he had heard it before. He thought that it was the Brutus. But, after all, some whisper of a report had reached him that at the opening of the Greek games the attendance had been small, at which for one I was not surprised. For you know my opinion of Greek games. 2 But now listen to what is of more importance than everything else. Young Quintus stayed with me several days, and if I had wished it would have been quite willing to stay longer. But as far as his visit went you could hardly believe how much delighted I was with him in every particular, but especially in the point in which he used most to disappoint me. For he has become such an entirely changed man—partly by certain writings of mine on which I am now engaged, and partly by my constantly talking to him and impressing my maxims upon him—that he is really going to be all that I wish in politics. After having not only declared this to me, but also thoroughly convinced me of it, he implored me at great length to guarantee to you that he would in the future be worthy of you and of us. And he didn't ask you to believe this at once, but that you should only restore your affection to him when you had seen it with your own eyes. Had he not convinced me of this, and had I not made up my mind that what I am saying might be relied upon, I would not have done what I am going to tell you. I took the young man with me to see Brutus. The latter was so convinced of what I am telling you, that he took upon himself to believe in him independently, and would have none of me as guarantee. He praised him and spoke of you in the most friendly tone, and dismissed him with embraces and kisses. Wherefore, though I have more reason to congratulate you than to prefer any request to you, yet I do also request you that if there appeared to be certain irregularities in his conduct heretofore, owing to the weakness of youth, you should believe that he has now rid himself of them, and should trust me when I say that your influence will contribute much, or I should rather say more than anything else, to make his decision permanent.

Though I made frequent hints to Brutus about our sailing together, he didn't seem to catch at the suggestion as eagerly as I had expected. I thought him in an uneasy frame of mind, and indeed he was so especially about the games. But when I had got back to my villa Gnaeus Lucceius, who sees a good deal of Brutus, told me that he was hesitating a great deal as to his departure, not from any change of policy, but because he was waiting to see if anything turned up. So I am doubting whether I shall direct my steps to Venusia and there wait to hear about the legions: 4 and if they do not come, as some expect—go on to Hydruntum: 5 but if neither port is safe—come back to where I am. Do you think I am joking? Upon my life you are the only tie that keeps me here. For take a careful view of the situation: but do it before I have cause to blush for my
conduct. Ah! Lepidus's notice of his inauguration days is just like him, and just suits with my plan of return. 6 Your letter conveys a strong motive for my starting for Greece. And oh, that I might find you there! But it must be as you think most to your advantage. I am anxious for a letter from Nepos. Can he really want my books, when he thinks the subjects on which I plume myself not worth reading? Yes—as you say: "in form and face Ajax the flower of all the Grecian host
Next to the flawless son whom Thetis bore.
" 7 You are the "flawless" one—he is one of the "immortals." There is no collection of my letters in existence: but Tiro has something like seventy. Moreover, there are some to be got from you. I ought to look through and correct them. They shall not be published till I have done so. 8 Brundisium, at which latter Atticus warned him he might meet the legions of Antony. Neutrum, i.e., neither Brundisium nor Hydruntum.
CLXXIV (f ii, 4)

TO C. SCRIBONIUS CURIO (IN ASIA)

Rome (? May)

b.c. 53, aet. 53

You are aware that letters are of many kinds; but there is one kind which is undeniable, for the sake of which, indeed, the thing was invented, namely, to inform the absent of anything that is to the interest of the writer or recipient that they should know. You, however, certainly don't expect a letter of that kind from me. For of your domestic concerns you have members of your family both to write and to act as messengers. Besides, in my personal affairs there is really nothing new. There are two other kinds of letters which give me great pleasure: the familiar and sportive, and the grave and serious. Which of these two I ought least to employ I do not understand. Am I to jest with you by letter? Upon my word, I don't think the man a good citizen who could laugh in times like these. Shall I write in a more serious style? What could be written of seriously by Cicero to Curio except public affairs? And yet, under this head, my position is such that I neither dare write what I think, nor choose to write what I don't think. Wherefore, since I have no subject left to write about, I will employ my customary phrase, and exhort you to the pursuit of the noblest glory. For you have a dangerous rival already in the field, and fully prepared, in the extraordinary expectation formed of you; and this rival you will vanquish with the greatest ease, only on one condition—that you make up your mind to put out your full strength in the cultivation of those qualities, by which the noble actions are accomplished, upon the glory of which you have set your heart. In support of this sentiment I would have written at greater length had not I felt certain that you were sufficiently alive to it of your own accord; and I have touched upon it even thus far, not in order to fire your ambition, but to testify my affection.
TO M. CAELIUS RUFUS (AT ROME)
ATHENS, 6 JULY 51
What! Do you suppose that I meant you to send me an account of gladiatorial matches, of postponements of trials, of robberies by Chrestus, and such things as, when I am at Rome, nobody ventures to retail to me? See what a high opinion I have of you—and not, indeed, undeservedly, for I have never yet known anyone with keener political instincts—I don't care for your writing to me even the daily occurrences in the most important affairs of the state, unless there is something specially affecting myself. Other people will write about them; many will convey news of them: common report itself will bring many of them to my ears. Therefore it is not things past or present that I expect from you, but things to come—for you are a man who sees far in front of you—so that, having got a view of the ground plan of the Republic from your pen, I may satisfy myself as to what the future building is to be. As yet, however, I have no fault to find with you; for it is impossible for you to see farther than any one of us, and especially myself, who have spent several days with Pompey in conversation exclusively political, which neither can nor ought to be committed to writing. Only take this as certain, that Pompey is an admirable citizen, and prepared in courage and wisdom alike to meet every contingency that needs to be provided against in the political situation. Wherefore devote yourself to him: he will receive you, believe me, with open arms. For he takes the same view, as we ever do, as to who are good and bad citizens. After spending exactly ten days in Athens, and having seen a great deal of our friend Caninius Gallus, [Note]

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I am starting on my journey today, the 6th of July, the day on which I send you this letter. All interests of mine I desire to have the benefit of your greatest attention, but nothing more so than that the time of my provincial government should not be extended. That is all in all to me. When, how, and by whose means this is to be worked, you will settle best for yourself.
TO SERVIIUS SULPICIUS RUFUS (AT ROME)

CUMAE, 28 APRIL 49

I received your letter on the 28th of April, while at my Cuman villa. As soon as I had read it I perceived that Philotimus, considering that he had, as you say, received verbal instructions from you on every point, had made a great mistake in not having come to me personally, but sending your letter, which I understood to have been the shorter because you had imagined that he would deliver it. However, after I had read your letter, your wife Postumia and our dear Servius called on me. Their opinion was that you should come to Cumae, and they even urged me to write and tell you so. You ask what my advice is: it is of such a nature, that it is easier to adopt it myself than to give it to another. What measure could I venture to urge on a man possessed of your supreme influence and knowledge of affairs? If we ask what is most right, the answer is plain: if what is expedient, it is doubtful. But if we are the men we really ought to be-holding, that is, the faith that nothing is expedient except what is right and virtuous—there can be no doubt as to what we ought to do. You express your opinion that my case is closely connected with

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yours. Well, at least we both made the same mistake, though with the very best intentions. For both of us continually advised a peaceful solution; and since nothing was more to Caesar’s advantage, we thought that we were obliging him by supporting peace. How grossly mistaken we have been, and to what a pass things have come, you now see. Nor do you only perceive what is actually going on and what has gone on, but also what the course of affairs and the ultimate result will be. Therefore you must either approve the measures now being taken, or be a party to them in spite of disapproving them. The one alternative in my eyes is discreditable, the other is dangerous as well. I can only come, therefore, to one conclusion—that I ought to quit the country. All that I have, I think, to consider in so departing is the method to adopt, and the country to which to go. Surely there never were circumstances of greater distress, or even a question more difficult to settle. For no decision is possible that does not fall foul of some great difficulty. For you, my opinion is—if you will agree with me—that, if you have made up your mind as to what you think you ought to do, in a way which separates your plan from mine, you should save yourself the trouble of the journey here but if there is anything you wish to impart to me, I shall expect you. Of course, I should like you to come as soon as you can conveniently to yourself, as I perceived was the wish both of Servius and Postumia. Farewell.
TO TITIUS
(ROME) 46
Though of all the world I am by far the least fitted to offer you [Note] consolation, because your sorrow has caused me so much pain that I needed consolation myself; yet since my sorrow was farther removed from the acuteness of the deepest grief than your own, I have resolved that our close connexion and my warm feelings for you make it

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incumbent on me not to be so long silent in what causes you such deep mourning, but to offer some reasonable consolation such as may suffice to lighten, if it could not wholly heal your sorrow. Now there is a source of consolation-hackneyed indeed to the last degree—which we ought ever to have on our lips and in our hearts: we should remember that we are men, born under the conditions which expose our life to all the missiles of fortune; and we must not decline life on the conditions under which we were born, nor rebel so violently under mischances which we are unable to avoid by any precautions; and by recalling what has happened to others we should reflect that nothing strange has betided us. But neither these, nor other sources of consolation, which have been employed by the greatest philosophers and have been recorded in literature, ought, it seems, to be of so much avail, as the position of the state itself and the disruption of these evil times, which make those the happiest who have never had children, and those who have lost them at such a crisis less miserable than if they had done so when the Republic was in a good state, or indeed had any existence at all. But if your own loss affects you, or if you mourn at the thought of your own position, I do not think that you will find that grief easy to remove in its entirety. If on the other hand what wrings your heart is grief for the miserable fate of those who have fallen—a thought more natural to an affectionate heart—to say nothing of what I have repeatedly read and heard, that there is no evil in death, after which if any sensation remains it is to be regarded as immortality rather than death, while if it is all lost, it follows that nothing must be regarded as misery which is not felt-yet this much I can assert, that confusions are brewing, disasters preparing and threatening the Republic, such that whoever has left them cannot possibly, as it seems to me, be in the wrong. For what place is there now, I don't say for conscience, uprightness, virtue, right feeling, and good qualities, but for bare freedom and safety? By Heaven, I have never been told of any young man or boy having died in this most unhealthy and pestilent year, who did not seem to me to be rescued by the immortal gods from the miseries of this world and from a most intolerable condition of life. Wherefore, if this one idea can be
removed from your mind, so as to convince you that no evil has happened to those you loved, your grief will have been very much lessened. For there will then only be left that single strain of sorrow which will not be concerned with them, but will have reference to yourself alone: in regard to which it is not consonant with a high character and wisdom such as you have displayed from boyhood, to show excessive sorrow for a misfortune that has befallen you, when it does not at all involve misery or evil to those whom you have loved. In fact, the qualities you have displayed both in private and public business entail the necessity of preserving your dignity and supporting your character for consistency. For that which length of time is sure to bring us of itself—which removes the bitterest sorrows by the natural process of decay—we ought to anticipate by reflexion and wisdom. Why, if there never was a woman so weak-minded on the death of her children, as not sooner or later to put a period to her mourning, certainly we men ought to anticipate by reflexion what lapse of time is sure to bring, and not to wait for a cure from time, when we can have it on the spot from reason. If I have done you any good by this letter, I think that I have accomplished a desirable object: but if by chance it has been of no avail, I hold that I have done the duty of one who wishes you all that is best and loves you very dearly. Such a one I would have you think that I have been, and believe that I shall be to you in the future.
5.19
CCCLXXXIX (F V, 19)

TO L. MESCINIUS RUFUS
CUMAE, APRIL (END)

Though I never doubted your great affection for me, yet I learn it better every day of my life, and I never forget what you once said in a letter, that you would be more zealous in shewing me attention than you had been in the province (though, to my mind, nothing could exceed your loyalty in

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the province), in proportion as your judgment could now be more independent. Accordingly, your former letter gave me great pleasure, because it shewed me that my arrival was affectionately looked forward to by you, and that, when things turned out differently from what you had expected, you were greatly rejoiced at the line I took. So, also, this last letter is extremely valuable to me from the expression at once of your judgment and your affection: of your judgment, because I learn that, as all gallant and good men are bound to do, you hold nothing to be expedient except what is right and virtuous; of your affection, because you promise to stand by me, whatever course of policy I shall adopt. Nothing could be more gratifying to me, nor, as I think, more honourable to yourself. My own course has long been decided. I have not written to tell you of it before, not because you were one to be kept in the dark, but because the communication of a policy at such a time seems in a certain sense to be an exhortation to duty, or rather a summons to share in either danger or labour. Seeing, however, that your goodwill, kindness, and affection for me are what they are, I gladly embrace such a heart. But I do so on this condition, for I will not abandon my habitual modesty in asking favours: if you do what you profess, I shall be grateful; if not, I shall pardon you, and consider that you were unable to deny the latter to your fears, the former to me. For it is in sober earnest an extremely difficult case. The right thing to do is clear: as to the expedient thing, though it is obscure, yet, if we are the men we ought to be, that is, worthy of our philosophical studies, we cannot entertain a doubt that the most advantageous course is the course of strictest honour. Wherefore, if you determine to
join me, come at once. But if you wish to act with me and to go to the same place, but cannot do so just yet, I will keep you fully informed on every point. Whichever way you decide I shall look upon you as my friend, but as the closest possible friend if you decide on the course which I desire.
CXXVI (f.vii, 1)

TO M. MARIUS (AT CUMÆ)

Rome (October?)

b.c. 55, æt. 51

If some bodily pain or weakness of health has prevented your coming to the games, I put it down to fortune rather than your own wisdom: but if you have made up your mind that these things which the rest of the world admires are only worthy of contempt, and, though your health would have allowed of it, you yet were unwilling to come, then I rejoice at both facts—that you were free from bodily pain, and that you had the sound sense to disdain what others causelessly admire. Only I hope that some fruit of your leisure may be forthcoming, a leisure, indeed, which you had a splendid opportunity of enjoying to the full, seeing that you were left almost alone in your lovely country. For I doubt not that in that study of yours, from which you have opened a window into the Stabian waters of the bay, and obtained a view of Misenum, you have spent the morning hours of those days in light reading, while those who left you there were watching the ordinary farces[561] half asleep. The remaining parts of the day, too, you spent in the pleasures which you had yourself arranged to suit your own taste, while we had to endure whatever had met with the approval of Spurius Mæcius.[562] On the whole, if you care to know, the games were most splendid, but not to your taste. I judge from my own. For, to begin with, as a special honour to the occasion, those actors had come back to the stage who, I thought, had left it for their own. Indeed, your favourite, my friend Æsop, was in such a state that no one could say a word against his retiring from the profession. On the beginning to recite the oath his voice failed him at the[Pg 259] words "If I knowingly deceive." Why should I go on with the story? You know all about the rest of the games, which hadn't even that amount of charm which games on a moderate scale generally have: for the spectacle was so elaborate as to leave no room for cheerful enjoyment, and I think you need feel no regret at having missed it. For what is the pleasure of a train of six hundred mules in the "Clytemnestra," or three thousand bowls in the "Trojan Horse," or gay-coloured armour of infantry and cavalry in some battle? These things roused the admiration of the vulgar; to you they would have brought no delight. But if during those days you listened to your reader Protagenes, so long at least as he read anything rather than my speeches, surely you had far greater pleasure than any one of us. For I don't suppose you wanted to see Greek or Oscan plays, especially as you can see Oscan farces in your senate-house over there, while you are so far from liking Greeks, that you generally won't even go along the Greek road to your villa. Why, again, should I suppose you to care about missing the athletes, since you disdained the gladiators? in which even Pompey himself confesses that he lost his trouble and his pains. There remain the two wild-beast hunts, lasting five days,
magnificent—nobody denies it—and yet, what pleasure can it be to a man of refinement, when either a weak man is torn by an extremely powerful animal, or a splendid animal is transfixed by a hunting spear? Things which, after all, if worth seeing, you have often seen before; nor did I, who was present at the games, see anything the least new. The last day was that of the elephants, on which there was a great deal of astonishment on the part of the vulgar crowd, but no pleasure whatever. Nay, there was even a certain feeling of compassion aroused by it, and a kind of belief created that that animal has something in common with mankind.[563] However, for my part, during this day, while the theatrical exhibitions were on, lest by chance you should think me too blessed, I almost split my lungs in defending your friend Caninius Gallus.[564] But if the people were as in[Pg 260]dulgent to me as they were to Æsop, I would, by heaven, have been glad to abandon my profession and live with you and others like us. The fact is I was tired of it before, even when both age and ambition stirred me on, and when I could also decline any defence that I didn't like; but now, with things in the state that they are, there is no life worth having. For, on the one hand, I expect no profit of my labour; and, on the other, I am sometimes forced to defend men who have been no friends to me, at the request of those to whom I am under obligations. Accordingly, I am on the look-out for every excuse for at last managing my life according to my own taste, and I loudly applaud and vehemently approve both you and your retired plan of life: and as to your infrequent appearances among us, I am the more resigned to that because, were you in Rome, I should be prevented from enjoying the charm of your society, and so would you of mine, if I have any, by the overpowering nature of my engagements; from which, if I get any relief—for entire release I don't expect—I will give even you, who have been studying nothing else for many years, some hints as to what it is to live a life of cultivated enjoyment. Only be careful to nurse your weak health and to continue your present care of it, so that you may be able to visit my country houses and make excursions with me in my litter. I have written you a longer letter than usual, from superabundance, not of leisure, but of affection, because, if you remember, you asked me in one of your letters to write you something to prevent you feeling sorry at having missed the games. And if I have succeeded in that, I am glad: if not, I yet console myself with this reflexion, that in future you will both come to the games and come to see me, and will not leave your hope of enjoyment dependent on my letters.[565]

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CXXV
CDLXII (F VII, 3)

TO M. MARIUS (AT POMPEII)
ROME (LATE IN MAY) 46
Very often, as I reflect upon the miseries in which we have all alike been living these many years past, and, as far as I can see, are likely to be living, I am wont to recall that time when we last met: nay, I remember the exact day. Having arrived at my Pompeian villa on the evening of the 12th of May, in the consulship of Lentulus and Marcellus, [Note] you came to see me in a state of anxiety. What was making you uneasy was your reflexion both on my duty and my danger. If I remained in Italy, you feared my being wanting to my duty: if I set out to the camp, you were agitated by the thought of my danger. At that time you certainly found me so unnerved as to be unable to unravel the tangle and see what was best to be done. Nevertheless, I preferred to be ruled by honour and reputation, rather than to consider the safety of my life. Of this decision I afterwards repented,

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not so much on account of the danger I incurred, as because of the many fatal weaknesses which I found on arrival at my destination. In the first place, troops neither numerous nor on a proper war footing; in the second place, beyond the general and a few others—I am speaking of the men of rank—the rest, to begin with, greedy for plunder in conducting the war itself, and moreover so bloodthirsty in their talk, that I shuddered at the idea of victory itself: and, lastly, immense indebtedness on the part of the men of the highest position. In short, there was nothing good except the cause.

Despairing of victory when I saw these things, I first began advising a peace, which had always been my policy; next, finding Pompey vehemently opposed to that idea, I proceeded to advise him to protract the war. Of this he at times expressed approval, and seemed likely to adopt the suggestion; and he perhaps would have done so, had it not been that as a result of a certain engagement [Note] he began to feel confidence in his soldiers. From that day forth that eminent man ceased to be anything of a general. He accepted battle against the most highly seasoned legions with an army of raw recruits and hastily collected men. Having been shamefully beaten, with the loss also of his camp, he fled alone.
This I regarded as the end of the war, as far as I was concerned, nor did I imagine that, having been found unequal to the struggle while still unbeaten, we should have the upper hand after a crushing defeat. I abandoned a war in which the alternatives were to fall on the field of battle, or to fall into some ambush, or to come into the conqueror's hands, or to take refuge with Iuba, or to select some place of residence as practically an exile, or to die by one's own hand. At least there was no other alternative, if you had neither the will nor the courage to trust yourself to the victor. Now, of all these alternatives I have mentioned, none is more endurable than exile, especially to a man with clean hands, when no dishonour attaches to it: and I may also add, when you lose a city, in which there is nothing that you can look at without pain. For my part, I preferred to remain with my own family—if a man may nowadays call anything

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his own—and also on my own property. What actually happened I foretold in every particular. I came home, not because that offered the best condition of life, but that after all, if some form of a constitution remained, I might be there as though in my own country, and if not, as though in exile. For inflicting death on myself there seemed no adequate reason: many reasons why I should wish for it. For it is an old saying, "When you cease to be what once you were, there is no reason why you should wish to live." But after all it is a great consolation to be free of blame, especially as I have two things upon which to rely for support-acquaintance with the noblest kind of learning and the glory of the most brilliant achievements: of which the former will never be torn from me while I live, the latter not even after my death.

I have written these things to you somewhat fully, and have bored you with them, because I knew you to be most devoted both to myself and to the Republic. I wished you to be acquainted with my entire views, that in the first place you might know that it was never a wish of mine that any one individual should have more power than the Republic as a whole; but that, when by some one's fault a particular person did become so powerful as to make resistance to him impossible, I was for peace: that when the army was lost, as well as the leader in whom alone our hopes had been fixed, I wished to put an end to the war for the rest of the party also: and, when that proved impossible, that I did so for myself. But that now, if our state exists, I am a citizen of it; if it does not, that I am an exile in a place quite as suited for the position, as if I had betaken myself to Rhodes or Mytilene.

I should have preferred to discuss this with you personally, but as the possibility of that was somewhat remote, I determined to make the same statement by letter, that you might have something to say, if you ever fell in with any of my critics. For there are men who, though my death would have been utterly useless to the state, regard it as a crime that I am still alive, and who I am certain think that those who perished were not numerous enough. Though, if these persons had listened to me, they would now, however unfair the terms of peace, have been living in honour; for while inferior in arms they would have been superior in the merits of their
cause. Here's a letter somewhat more wordy than perhaps you would have wished; and that I shall hold to be your opinion, unless you send me a still longer one in reply. If I can get through with some business which I wish to settle, I shall, I hope, see you before long.
Cicero, Epistulae ad Brutum (English) (XML Header) [genre: prose] [word count] [Cic. ad Brut.].

<<Cic. ad Brut. 1.8 Cic. ad Brut. 1.9 (Latin) >>Cic. ad Brut. 1.10

Click a word to see morphological information.

1.9 DCCCXCVII (BRUT. 1, 9)

TO M. IUNIUS BRUTUS (IN MACEDONIA)
ROME (8 JUNE) 43 —: on the occasion of Cotta's death

I would have performed the function, which you performed in my own time of mourning, and have written you a letter of consolation, had I not known that you did not stand in need of those remedies in your sorrow with which you relieved mine. And I should hope that you will now more easily heal your own wound than you then could mine. [Note] It is, moreover, quite unlike a man as great as you are not to be able to do himself what he has enjoined on another. For myself, the arguments which you had collected, as well as your personal influence, deterred me from excessive indulgence in grief; for when I seemed to you to be bearing my sorrow with less firmness than was becoming to a man, and especially one accustomed to console others, you wrote upbraiding me in sharper terms than were usual with you. Accordingly, putting a high value on your opinion, and having a wholesome awe of it, I pulled myself together and regarded what I had learnt, read, and been taught as being the weightier by the addition of your authority. And at that time, Brutus, I owed nothing except to duty and nature: you now have to regard the people and the stage—to use a common expression. For since the eyes not only of your army, but of all the citizens, and I ought almost to say of all the world, are fixed on you, it is not at all seemly that the man who makes us all braver should himself seem weakened in mind. To sum up: you have met with a sorrow—for you

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have lost a thing unparalleled in the world—and you must needs suffer from so severe a wound, lest the fact of having no sense of sorrow should be a greater misfortune than sorrow itself: but that you should do so in moderation is advantageous to others, necessary for yourself. I would have written at greater length, had not even this been already too much. We are expecting you and your army; without which—
even if everything else succeeds to our wishes—we seem likely to be scarcely as free as we could desire. On the whole political situation I will write at greater length, and perhaps with more certainty, in the letter which I think of handing to our friend Vetus. [Note]

Cicero, Epistulae ad Brutum (English) (XML Header) [genre: prose] [word count] [Cic. ad Brut.].

<<Cic. ad Brut. 1.8 Cic. ad Brut. 1.9 (Latin) >>Cic. ad Brut. 1.10