ment of this design* served only to stimulate his daring and malignant spirit to enterprises of greater danger and atrocity. Lost in character, drowned in debt, and thence unable to find any other resource for the support of his vices and debaucheries, he now formed the desperate scheme of extirpating the whole body of the senate, of assassinating all the magistrates of the commonwealth, and satiating his avarice and ambition by the command of the republic and the plunder of the city.

Catiline gained to his interest the profligate of all ranks and denominations; knights, patricians, and senators, who were desperate bankrupts, and some high-born women of intriguing and abandoned character, helped to increase his party. To facilitate the execution of his designs, he once more solicited the consulship, but was again disappointed, from the known infamy of his character. The illustrious Cicero was elected to that office. Happy for the republic that in those perilous times she had this great man for her guardian and protector! He had for his colleague Caius Antonius, a weak and indolent man, who left to him all the burden, and consequently all the honor, of the administration.

In the meantime, Catiline had brought his plot to maturity. Troops were levied, arms provided, a distinct department and function was assigned to each of the principal conspirators, and a day was fixed for the commencement of operations in the heart of Rome. The city was to be set fire to in a hundred different quarters at once; the consuls were to be assassinated; and an immense list was prepared of the chief citizens who were doomed to instantaneous destruction. A plot of this nature, in which so many were concerned, could not long be kept secret. Fulvia, a woman of loose character, the mistress of one of the conspirators, probably gained by the spies of Cicero, gave notice to the consuls of the whole plan of the conspiracy. The senate passed that powerful decree which armed the consuls with dictatorial authority for the safety of the republic;† and Cicero under this ample warrant might, perhaps, without challenge of exceeding his powers, have seized the traitor, and put him instantly to death. But he wished to discover his numerous accomplices, and thus effectually to extinguish the conspiracy. We are astonished when we read that animated oration of Cicero, the first against Catiline; and know that the traitor had the audacity to sit in the senate-house while it was delivered, and while every man of worth or regard for character deserted the bench on which he sat, and left him a spectacle to the whole assembly. We are equally astonished when we learn that he was suffered still to remain at liberty; nay, to leave

* Of this first conspiracy of Catiline, the accounts of the Roman historians are extremely imperfect and confused.

† Dent operam consules ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat.

Rome and to appear at the head of an army in open rebellion. But it was one peculiarity of the Roman constitution, during the republic, that the laws did not allow the detention of accused persons in order to trial. A citizen, accused of whatever crime, continued at full liberty till judgment was pronounced against him, and might, if he foresaw the issue of the trial, withdraw himself from Rome as a voluntary exile.

A remarkable circumstance, showing the extent of this formidable conspiracy, was now brought to light. The ambassadors of the Allobroges having fruitlessly applied to the Roman senate for a redress of grievances, Publius Lentulus, the prætor, gave them assurance in private, of protection and favor, provided they would return to their province, and dispose their countrymen to arm in support of a powerful party, which, he affirmed, would soon have the command of the republic. Of this negotiation Cicero received intelligence. The consul, with infinite prudence, instructed his informant to encourage the correspondence between Lentulus and the ambassadors, and to urge the latter to demand from Lentulus a list of the names of all his partisans, in order to show to their countrymen the number and power of those friends on whose protection they might depend, if they armed in support of this great revolution in the state. Lentulus fell into the snare that was laid for him. He gave a list of the names of all concerned in the conspiracy of Catiline to the ambassadors, who, setting out upon their journey, were waylaid, and their despatches seized by order of the consul. Cicero had now in his hands the most complete evidence against the whole of the conspirators. Assembling the senate, he produced first the written evidence, consisting of letters, under the hands of the chief partisans of Catiline, together with lists of arms, and the places where they were deposited; as well as separate instructions for the ready coöperation of the different leaders in their distinct departments of the plot. The deputies of the Allobroges were produced before the senate, and made no scruple to confirm the proof arising from those documents.

It remained for the senate to determine what course was to be pursued with these detected traitors; and the difference of opinion which prevailed on that subject afforded a strong criterion of the alarming extent of this atrocious design, and the influence of those who secretly favored it. Silanus, the consul elect, proposed an immediate sentence of death on the whole of the conspirators. His opinion was powerfully combated by Julius Cæsar, who maintained that the confiscation of their estates, and the committal of their persons in charge to some of the best affected of the Italian communities, was as effectual a curb to their designs, and more agreeable to law than capital punishment. Cicero, without delivering any opinion, painted in strong colors the necessity of an immediate and powerful antidote to prevent the utter ruin of the

state, and declared that he would execute the orders of the senate, whatever they should be, at the hazard of his own life. Cato closed the debate by observing that the vote of that night would seal the fate of Rome, and convince her intestine enemies whether their party or the guardians of the republic were to prevail in this awful conflict. He concluded by voting for the immediate execution of all the conspirators already in custody, and a vigorous effort for the extermination of the rebel and his army then in the field. This opinion prevailed, and was immediately carried into effect. Lentulus and his accomplices were the same day, without form of trial, strangled in prison by the consul's warrant.

An army, headed by Antonius, now took the field against Catiline. He came up with him in the neighborhood of Fesulæ. The rebel made a desperate defence; but, overpowered by numbers, he threw himself, with frantic courage, into the midst of the enemy, and died a better death than his crimes merited.

Among the many who had incurred some suspicion of sharing in the guilty designs of Catiline was Julius Cæsar. This young man, the son-in-law of Cinna, was of a most illustrious patrician family. The companions of his youth had known him only as a fop and a debauchee; but pleasure and effeminacy were the assumed disguises of a daring and ambitious spirit. Sylla, who was an excellent judge of human nature, had even penetrated into his real character, and numbered him among the proscribed. "There is many a Marius (said he) in the person of that young man." Cæsar, aware of the dangerous consequences of these suspicions, quitted Rome, and did not return thither till after Sylla's death. He became more circumspect in his conduct, and learned the better to conceal his designs, till the proper opportunity of bringing them into action. Meantime he courted the people, and was high in their favor before he accepted any office in the state. His largesses had gained a great party to his interest, though they ruined his private fortune; and when he was created Ædile, it was generally believed he was in indigent circumstances; yet the games and spectacles which he exhibited surpassed every thing hitherto seen in magnificence.

At the time when Pompey returned from his Asiatic expedition, Cæsar held the office of prætor. The ambitious spirit of Pompey could brook neither a superior nor an equal. Crassus, a man of mean talents, but of a restless and ambitious spirit, had, by means of his enormous wealth, gained a very considerable party to his interest; for money at Rome could always insure popularity, and thus render even the weakest of men formidable to the liberties of their country. Thus, with the greatest inequality of talents, Pompey and Crassus were rivals in the path of ambition; and Cæsar, who at this time aspired to the consulate, and was well aware that, by courting exclusively either of these rivals, he infallibly made the other his enemy, showed the reach of his political genius by artfully effecting a reconciliation between them, and thus securing the friendship of both. Cato foresaw the fatal consequences of this union of interests, which was termed the *Triumvirate*, and he openly prognosticated the ruin of the republic. In the meantime Cæsar, by their joint interest, obtained the consulate, and greatly increased his popularity by procuring a new agrarian law to be passed, which authorized the division of certain lands in Campania among 20,000 of the poorer citizens, who had at least three children.

It is not a little surprising that a measure of this kind, so contrary to all good policy, should be so frequently proposed and adopted in the Roman commonwealth. On this subject the reflections of Dr. Ferguson are most judicious:—"In great and populous cities, indigent citizens are ever likely to be numerous, and would be more so if the idle and profligate were taught to hope for bounties and gratuitous provisions to quiet their clamors and to suppress their disorders. If men were to have estates in the country because they are factious and turbulent in the city, it is evident that public lands, and all the resources of the most prosperous state, would not be sufficient to supply their wants. Commissioners appointed for the distribution of such public favors would be raised above the ordinary magistrates, and above the laws of their country. They might reward their own creatures, and keep the citizens in general in a state of dependence on their will. The authors of such proposals, while they are urging the state and the people to ruin, would be considered as their only patrons and friends. 'It is not the law I dread,' said Cato; 'it is the reward expected for obtaining it.'"* These reflections are so obviously the dictates of good sense, that even the wildest demagogue must admit their force: and hence we are furnished with a just criterion to appreciate the real characters of the proposers of such measures, and to unmask the mock patriotism of such men as Cassius, the Gracchi, and Julius Cæsar.

Cæsar, in order to strengthen his interest with Pompey, gave him his daughter in marriage. He had now attained to that height of consideration with the people, that the senate was completely intimidated, and durst not oppose him; a strong proof of which was given by the passing of a law by which the senators took a solemn oath not to oppose any measure that should be determined in a popular assembly during his consulate. He gave the government of the provinces to his chief partisans, and took for himself those of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul and Illyria for five years, together with the command of four legions. The legion consisted at this time of about 4,000 men.

Among the men whom Cæsar most dreaded was Cicero. He

* Ferguson's Rom. Rep., vol. ii. p. 411. 8vo. edit.

knew him to be a true patriot, a real friend of his country and its constitution, and therefore an enemy to all usurpation of a preponderating power in the state.* He therefore beheld in him the greatest obstacle to his own ambitious designs, and resolved to accomplish his ruin. Cicero was aware of his own danger, and therefore had for some time declined all share in the offices of state; while his high character and eminent public services procured him the esteem of every man of virtue. But such were not the prevailing party in the republic, either in point of influence or numbers; for the populace ever bestowed their favor on those who best paid their court, and ministered most largely to their avarice and love of pleasure. Clodius, a mortal enemy of Cicero, was pitched on by Cæsar as his fittest instrument to accomplish the ruin of this illustrious man. By Cæsar's influence, Clodius was chosen one of the tribunes of the people, and was no sooner in office than he proposed various laws which tended to ingratiate himself with the people, and at the same time secure the favor of the chiefs of the republic. He procured the passing of an act for remitting the debts due by the poorer class for corn bought from the public granaries; and another for the restoring and increasing the number of public corporations, which had been abolished on account of the turbulence and faction of which they were the seminaries. He gained much influence with the senate by a regulation for abridging the power of the censors in purging that order; and finally he proposed a law which made it a high offence to condemn or put to death any citizen before he had been judged by the people. This important law was evidently levelled at Cicero, who, by his authority as consul, warranted indeed by a decree of the senate, had condemned Catiline's accomplices to death—a measure which the necessity of the times and the imminent peril of the republic had justified in the opinion of all good men.

Cicero, with all his high qualities, was of a weak and pusillanimous spirit. Instead of manfully endeavoring to avail himself of the great and essential services which he had rendered his country, sufficient to insure him the support of every good citizen, in

* The first occasion on which Cicero distinguished himself as an orator, was one of great difficulty and delicacy, the defence of Roscius, who, during the time of Sylla's horrible proscriptions, had been robbed of his whole fortune by some of his wicked relations, who had put to death his father under the pretended authority of that proscription, though in reality his name was not in the list of victims. A favorite of Sylla, named Chrysogonus, had shared this infamous plunder, and, to secure his possession, accused the son of being the murderer of his father. Such was, at this time, the dread of offending Sylla, that none of the old advocates or orators would undertake the defence of this injured man. Cicero, then in his twenty-seventh year, nobly stood forth as his defender; and, with admirable skill and address, prevailed in obtaining justice for his client, without incurring the resentment of that man who was the protector of his oppressors. The reputation of the pleader rose from that moment to the highest pitch, and he was regarded as the first orator of the age.

averting or opposing this adverse current which threatened his destruction, he meanly sunk under the apprehension of its force. His resolution entirely forsook him. He clothed himself in a mourning habit, as did most of the equestrian order to which he belonged; and he presented himself in the assembly of the people, in the abject character of a suppliant whose life and fortunes were entirely at their disposal. He claimed the friendship of Pompey, to whom he had done essential services; but he shamefully abandoned him. Cato, the real friend of Cicero, and who would have generously supported him at all hazards, was purposely invested with a commission to reduce the island of Cyprus, in order to remove him from Rome at this critical moment when the fate of his friend was in dependence. Before leaving the city, he is said to have counselled Cicero to yield to the necessity of circumstances, and betake himself to voluntary banishment from his ungrateful country.

After some ineffectual endeavors to try the attachment of his former friends, which only ended in fresh mortification, Cicero followed the counsel of Cato. He set off in the middle of the night, and embarked at Brundisium for Macedonia, on his way to Thessalonica, where he had fixed the scene of his exile. Here he betrayed in a lamentable degree the weakness of his mind. The letters which he wrote to Atticus, it has been well observed, "resemble more the wailings of an infant, or the strains of a tragedy composed to draw tears, than the language of a man supporting the cause of integrity in the midst of unmerited trouble."* "I wish I may see the day (he thus writes to his friend) when I shall be disposed to thank you for having prevented me from resorting to a voluntary death; for I now bitterly regret that I yielded in that matter to your entreaty. What species of misfortune have I not endured? Did ever any one fall from so high a state, in so good a cause, with such abilities and knowledge, and with such a share of the public esteem? Cut off in such a career of glory, deprived of my fortune, torn from my children, debarred the sight of a brother dearer to me than myself—but my tears will not allow me to proceed." In contemplating such a picture, the historian I have just quoted truly says, "It appears from this and many other scenes of the life of this remarkable man, that though he loved virtuous actions, yet his virtue was accompanied with so unsuitable a thirst of the praise to which it entitled him, that his mind was unable to sustain itself without this foreign assistance; and when the praise to which he aspired for his consulate was changed into obloquy and scorn, he seems to have lost the sense of good or evil in his own conduct and character." How different this conduct from the sentiments he had expressed as a philosopher, in his beautiful

* Ferguson's Rom. Rep. vol. ii. p. 448.

treatise *De Finibus*, l. i.: "Succumbere doloribus, eosque humili animo imbecilloque ferre, miserum est: ob eamque debilitatem animi, multi parentes, multi amicos, nonnulli patriam, plerique autem seipsos penitus perdiderunt."* But speculative and practical philosophy are widely different.

Cicero's departure from Rome was regarded as a full justification of that sentence of banishment which Clodius immediately caused to be passed against him as an enemy of the republic, accompanied with a decree for confiscating his whole estates, and demolishing and razing to the ground his elegant palaces and villas. Such were the rewards of that true patriot whom, a few months before, his country had justly hailed as its preserver from utter destruction! But popular opinion is ever apt to pass from one extreme to another; and the latter part of the life of Cicero was a perpetual alternation of triumph and disgrace.

We have remarked that, in the divisions of the provinces between Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus, the first of these had for his share those extensive territories on both sides of the Alps, distinguished by the names of Gallia Cisalpina and Transalpina. Of these he obtained the government for five years, and in that period he carried to its highest pitch the military glory of the republic, and his own reputation as a consummate general. The Helvetians, leaving their own territory, had attempted to obtain a settlement within the Roman Province. Cæsar, in the first year of his government, utterly defeated these invaders, and drove them back to their native seats with the loss of near 200,000 slain in the field. The Germans under Ariovistus, who had attempted a similar invasion, were repelled with immense slaughter, their leader narrowly escaping in a small boat across the Rhine. The Belgæ, the Nervii, the Celtæ, the Suevi, Menapii, and other warlike nations, were all successively brought under subjection. In the fourth year of his command he invaded Britain. The motive to this enterprise was purely ambition, although the pretext was that the Britons were the aggressors by sending supplies to the hostile tribes of Gaul. Cæsar landed near Deal, and found a much more formidable opposition than he had expected, the natives displaying considerable military skill with the most determined courage. The Romans, indeed, gained some advantages; but Cæsar soon becam sensible that the conquest of the island required a much greater force than had yet been brought against it, and was not to be achieved in a single campaign. The approach of winter in the country of an enemy whose spirit seemed to be roused to the most desperate resistance, gave him some alarm for the safety of his army; and, therefore, binding the conquered parts of the country

* "To yield to misfortunes, and bear them weakly, is miserable. By such infirmity of mind, many have brought ruin on their relations and friends, some even on their country, but more on themselves."

to terms of submission, he thought it prudent to re-embark his legions, and, after settling them in winter-quarters in Gaul, returned himself to Italy, to attend to the concerns of the capital, where the splendor of his foreign campaigns had highly increased his popularity.

His great acquisition of fame had now sensibly obscured the glory of Pompey, whose influence was visibly on the decline. To strengthen himself by the interest and by the talents of Cicero, whom he had before so meanly abandoned, he now procured the recall of that illustrious exile, and the repeal of the sentence of confiscation which had deprived him of his whole property. Cicero returned to his country after an absence of sixteen months. His journey from Brundisium to Rome was a triumphal procession. All Italy, as he said himself, seemed to flock together to hail his auspicious return; that single day made his glory immortal.* He was loaded with honors; and his houses and villas, which had been razed to the ground, were rebuilt with increased magnificence at the expense of the public.

By the influence of Cicero, Pompey regained for a while his popularity. The triumvirate, though secretly animated with mutual jealousy, still continued to support each other in their power. Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls; the former having, for five years, the government of Spain, and the latter that of Syria, Greece, and Egypt. They had unlimited power to levy troops, and to exact whatever pecuniary supplies they found necessary, from the tributary princes and states under their government. Crassus, insatiable in accumulating wealth, plundered the Eastern provinces without mercy; but having engaged in an inconsiderate expedition against the Parthians, he was totally defeated, his whole army cut to pieces, and he himself and his son were slain in the field.

Cæsar in the meantime was prosecuting his military operations in Gaul, and seemed to take no concern in the affairs of Rome; yet, in reality, his influence there now regulated every measure of importance. His partisans, to whom he remitted large sums of money, overruled all proceedings in the comitia, and carried whatever measures of a public nature he chose to direct as instrumental to his own views. Pompey was not blind to these views; and the apparent union and cordiality which they yet affected to maintain was any thing but real. We shall soon see an open rupture, and a contention for undivided sovereignty, whose issue must decide the fate of the commonwealth.

* "Meus quidem reditus is fuit, ut a Brundisio usque ad Romam agmen perpetuum totius Italiæ viderem. Unus ille dies mihi quidem instar immortalitatis fuit."