CICERO

AND HIS FRIENDS

A STUDY OF ROMAN SOCIETY IN THE TIME OF CAESAR

BY

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day of sincerity and remorse. If he was sometimes too hesitating and feeble, he always ended by defending what he regarded as the cause of justice and right, and when that cause had been for ever conquered, he rendered it the last service it could claim from its defenders, he honoured it by his death.

II

CICERO'S PRIVATE LIFE

I

THOSE who have read Cicero's correspondence with Atticus, and know what place questions of money occupy in these private communications, will not be surprised that I begin the study of his private life by endeavouring to estimate the amount of his fortune. The men of those days were as much concerned about money as the men of to-day, and it is perhaps in this that these two periods, which men have so often taken pleasure in comparing, most resemble each other.

It would be necessary to have at hand the account-books of Eros, Cicero's steward, in order to set down with exactness the expenses of his household. All that we know with certainty on this subject is, that his father left him a very moderate fortune only, and that he increased this greatly, while we cannot say precisely to how much it amounted. His enemies were in the habit of exaggerating it in order to throw suspicion on the means by which it had been acquired, and it is indeed probable that if we knew the total it would appear to us considerable; but we must take care not to judge of it according to the ideas of our own time. Wealth is not an absolute thing; a man is rich or poor according to

the position in which he lives, and it is possible that what would be wealth in one place would scarcely be a competency elsewhere. Now we know that at Rome wealth was far from being so evenly distributed as it is among us. Forty years before the consulship of Cicero, the tribune Philip said that, in that immense city, there were not two thousand persons who had a patrimony;[1] but these possessed all the public wealth. Crassus asserted that, in order to call himself rich, it was necessary for a man to be able to support an army out of his revenues, and we know that he was in a position to do so without inconvenience. Milo contrived to get into debt in a few years to the amount of more than seventy million sesterces (£560,000). Caesar, while still a private person, expended, at one time, one hundred and twenty million sesterces (£960,000) in order to make a present of a new Forum to the Roman people. This outrageous extravagance implies immense fortunes. In comparison with these, we can understand that Cicero's, which scarcely sufficed for the purchase of a house on the Palatine, and which the adornment of his Tusculan villa almost exhausted, must have appeared very moderate.

In what manner had he gained it? It is not without interest to know this in order to reply to the ill-natured reports that his enemies circulated. He says somewhere that the means by which a fortune was honestly made at Rome were commerce, contracting for public works and farming the taxes;[2] but these means, very convenient for people in haste to enrich themselves, could only be used by

[1] *De offic.* ii. 21: Things had not changed when Cicero was consul. We see that his brother, in a letter that he addressed to him then, says that there were few knights in Rome, *pauci equites*, that is, few men possessing more than £3200.

[2] *Parad.* 6. *Qui honeste rem quaerunt mercaturis faciendis, operis dandis publicis sumendis*, etc.

those who had no political ambition; they excluded from public honours, and consequently did not suit a man who aspired to govern his country. We do not see, either, that he acted like Pompey, who invested his funds in an important bank and shared in the profits; at least there remains no trace in his letters of undertakings of this nature. Nor could he think of making money out of his works. It was not the custom then for an author to sell his works to a bookseller; or rather, the trade of a bookseller, as we understand it now, scarcely existed. Usually those who wished to read or possess a book borrowed it of the author or of his friends, and had it copied by their slaves. When they had more copyists than they needed for their own use, they made them work for the public and sold the copies they did not want; but the author had nothing to do with the profits they drew from them. And finally, public offices could not have enriched Cicero; we know that they were less a means of making money than an occasion of expense and ruin, either by the price it was sometimes necessary to pay for them, or by the games and entertainments that were expected from those who had obtained them. It was only in the government of provinces that immense gains were made. It was on these gains that the ambitious nobles usually counted to repair the waste of their fortunes that the luxury of their private life and the profusion of their public life had caused. Now Cicero deprived himself of this opportunity by yielding to his colleague Antony the province that, according to custom, he ought to have governed after his consulship. It has been suspected, indeed, that he then made with him some bargain by which he reserved to himself a share in the handsome profits that he relinquished. If this bargain existed, which is doubtful, it is certain it was not kept. Antony pillaged

his province, but he pillaged it for himself alone, and Cicero drew nothing from it. Twelve years later, without having desired it, he was appointed pro-consul of Cilicia. We know that he remained there only a year, and that, without doing any illegal act, and while securing the happiness of his subjects, he contrived to take back two million two hundred thousand sesterces (£17,600), which gives us an idea of what might be gained in the provinces when they were pillaged without scruple. Besides, this money did not profit Cicero; he lent part of it to Pompey, who did not return it, and it is probable that the civil war caused him to lose the rest, since he found himself without means at its close. We must seek, then, elsewhere for the origin of his fortune. If he had lived in our days we should have no trouble in learning whence it came. It would be sufficiently explained by his ability as an advocate. With an eloquence such as his, he would not fail now-a-days to enrich himself quickly at the bar; but at that time there was a law forbidding orators to accept any fee or present from those for whom they had pleaded (*lex Cincia, de donis et muneribus*). Although it was the work of a tribune, who had made it, says Livy, in the interest of the people,[1] it was at bottom an aristocratic law. By not allowing the advocate to draw a legitimate profit from his talent, it kept away from the bar those who had nothing, and reserved the exercise of this profession for the rich as a privilege, or rather it prevented it becoming really a profession. I think, however, that this law was always very imperfectly obeyed. As it could not provide against everything, it was scarcely possible for it to prevent the gratitude of clients finding some ingenious method to escape its severity. If they were really determined to pay in some manner for the services which they

[1] *Hist.* xxxiv. 4.

had received, it seems to me that the law could only with difficulty prevent it. In Cicero's time, they did not fail to violate it openly. Verres told his friends that he had divided the money he brought back from Sicily into three parts; the most considerable was to corrupt his judges, the second to pay his advocates, and he contented himself with the third.[1] Cicero, who on this occasion laughed at Verres' advocate, Hortensius, and at the sphynx that he had received on account, took care not to imitate him. His brother affirms that up to the time when he was a candidate for the consulship he had never asked anything from his clients.[2] Nevertheless, whatever scruples we may suppose him to have had, it is very difficult to admit that he had never profited by their good-will. No doubt he refused the presents that the Sicilians wished to make him when he had avenged them on Verres; perhaps it would not have been prudent to accept them after such a notorious trial, which had drawn all eyes upon him, and made him powerful enemies; but some years afterwards I see that he allowed himself to accept the present made him by his friend Papirius Poetus, for whom he had just pleaded.[3] It consisted of some fine Greek and Latin books, and Cicero loved nothing so much as books. I notice also that when he had need of money, which happened sometimes, he preferred to apply to rich men whom he had defended. These were less harsh and more patient creditors to him than others, and it was natural that he should profit by their influence after having aided them by his eloquence. He tells us himself that he bought the house of Crassus with the money of his friends. Among them, P. Sylla, for whom he had just pleaded, alone lent him two million sesterces (£16,000).

[1] *In Verrem, act. prim.* 14.
[2] *De petit cons.* 5 and 9.
[3] *Ad Att.* i. 20.

When he was attacked for this in the senate, Cicero got out of it with a joke; which proves that the *lex Cincia* was no longer much respected, and that those who infringed it had no great fear of being prosecuted.[1] It is very possible, then, that those nobles whose honour or fortune he had saved, that those towns or provinces that he had protected against greedy governors, that those foreign princes whose interests he had defended in the senate, above all, those rich societies of farmers of the taxes, through whose hands passed all the money that the world sent to Rome, and whom he served so vigorously by his reputation or his eloquence, had often sought and sometimes found an opportunity of testifying their gratitude. This generosity appears to us now-a-days so natural that we should scarcely blame Cicero for not having always rejected it; but we may be sure that, if he sometimes thought that he might accept it, he always did so with more moderation and reserve than the greater number of his contemporaries.

We know one of the most usual forms, and, as it seems, one of the most legal by which this generosity showed itself. It was the custom at Rome to pay, after death and by will, all debts of gratitude and affection contracted during life. This was a means that offered itself to the client of discharging his obligations to the advocate who had defended him, and it does not appear that the *lex Cincia* threw any obstacle in the way. We have nothing like it among ourselves. At that time, the father of a family who had natural heirs might withdraw from his fortune any amount that he wished, and give his relations, his friends, and all who had been useful or agreeable to him, a good share of his estate. This custom had become an abuse. Fashion and vanity had come to have a large share in it.

[1] A. Gell. xii. 12.

A man wished to appear to have many friends by inscribing the names of many persons in his will, and naturally the most illustrious were inscribed by preference. Sometimes people were brought together in it who seldom met anywhere else, and who must have been surprised to find themselves there. Cluvius, a rich banker of Puteoli, left his estate to Cicero and Caesar after Pharsalia.[1] The architect Cyrus placed among his heirs both Clodius and Cicero, that is to say, the two persons who most heartily detested each other in Rome.[2] This architect, no doubt, regarded it as an honour to have friends among all parties. It even happened that a man set down in his will people whom he had never seen. Lucullus augmented his immense wealth by bequests which unknown persons left him while he governed Asia. Atticus received a good number of legacies from people of whom he had never heard, and who only knew him by reputation. How much more then must a great orator like Cicero, to whom so many were under obligation, and of whom all Romans were proud, have been often the object of this posthumous liberality! We see in his letters that he was the heir of many persons who do not seem to have held a large place in his life. In general, the amounts left to him are not very large. One of the largest is that which he inherited from his old master the Stoic Diodotus, whom he had kept at his house till his death.[3] In recompense of this long-continued affection, Diodotus left him all his savings as a philosopher and teacher. They amounted to a hundred thousand sesterces (£800). The union of all these small legacies no doubt made up a considerable sum. Cicero himself values it at more than twenty million sesterces (£160,000).[4] It seems to me, therefore, that there is no

[1] *Ad Att.* xiii. 45 *et seq.*
[2] *Pro Mil.* 18.
[3] *Ad Att.* ii. 20.
[4] *Philipp.* ii. 16.

doubt that these legacies, with the presents he may have received from the gratitude of his clients, were the chief sources of his wealth.

This wealth was composed of property of different kinds. He possessed, firstly, houses in Rome. Besides that which he inhabited on the Palatine, and that which he had from his father at Carinae, he had others in Argiletum and on the Aventine which brought him in an income of eighty thousand sesterces (£640).[1] He possessed numerous villas in Italy. We know of eight very important ones belonging to him,[2] without reckoning those small houses (*diversoria*) that the nobles bought along the principal roads to have somewhere to rest when they went from one domain to another. He had also sums of money of which he disposed in different manners, as we see in his correspondence. We cannot estimate this part of his wealth with exactness; but according to the practice of the rich Romans of that time, it may be affirmed that it was not less than his houses or estates. One day when he is asking Atticus to buy him some gardens that he wishes, he says to him, in an offhand way, that he thinks he may have about six hundred thousand sesterces (£4800) in his own hands.[3] We have here perhaps one of the most curious differences that distinguish that state of society from ours. Now-a-days scarcely any but bankers by profession handle such considerable sums of money. Our aristocracy has always affected to look down upon questions of finance. The Roman aristocracy, on the

[1] *Ad Att.* xvi. 1.

[2] His villa at Tusculum particularly had cost him very dear. What proves it to have been of great value is that on his return from exile the senate allowed him 500,000 sesterces (£4000) to repair the damage it had suffered in his absence, and that he thought they were far from having given him enough.

[3] *Ad Att.* xii. 25.

contrary, understood them well, and thought much about them. Their great wealth was used to further political ambition, and they did not hesitate to risk a part of it to gain adherents. The purse of a candidate for public honours was open to all who could be of use to him. He gave to the poorest, he lent to others, and sought to form with them bonds of interest which would attach them to his cause. Success usually followed those who had put the greatest number of men under obligations. Cicero, although less rich than the majority of them, imitated them. In his letters to Atticus he is almost always writing about bills and dates of maturity, and we see in them that his money circulated on all sides. He is in constant business relations, and as we should now say, has a running account with the greatest personages. Sometimes he lends to Caesar, and sometimes borrows of him. Among his numerous debtors are found persons of all ranks and fortunes, from Pompey to Hermogenes, who seems to have been a simple freedman. Unfortunately, counting them all, his creditors are still more numerous. Notwithstanding the example and advice of Atticus, he ill understood how to manage his fortune. He constantly had costly fancies. He would have at any price statues and pictures to adorn his galleries and give them the appearance of the gymnasia of Greece. He ruined himself to embellish his country houses. Generous out of season, we see him lending to others when he is constrained to borrow for himself. It is always when he is deepest in debt that he has the greatest desire to buy some new villa. He does not hesitate, then, to apply to all the bankers of Rome; he goes to see Considius, Axius, Vectenus, Vestorius; he would even try to soften Caecilius, the uncle of his friend Atticus, if he did not know that he was inflexible. Nevertheless he bears his troubles with a light heart. The prudent Atticus

tells him in vain that it is disgraceful to be in debt; but as he shares this disgrace with a great many people it seems light, and he is the first to joke about it. One day he told one of his friends that he was so much in debt that he would willingly enter into some conspiracy, if any one would receive him, but that since he had punished Catiline's he inspired no confidence in others;[1] and when the first day of the month arrives, when payments become due, he is content to shut himself up at Tusculum and leave Eros or Tiro to argue with the creditors.

These embarrassments and troubles, of which his correspondence is full, make us think, almost in spite of ourselves, of certain passages in his philosophical works which appear rather surprising when we compare them with his mode of living, and which may easily be turned against him. Is it really this thoughtless prodigal, always ready to spend without consideration, who exclaimed one day in a tone of conviction that moves us: "Ye immortal gods, when will men understand what treasures are found in economy!"[2] How dared this ardent lover of works of art, this impassioned friend of magnificence and luxury, how dared he treat as madmen people who love statues and pictures too well, or build themselves magnificent houses? He stands self-condemned, and I do not wish to entirely absolve him; but while we pronounce on him a severe sentence, let us remember the times in which he lived, and let us think of his contemporaries. I will not compare him with the worst men, his superiority would be too evident; but among those who are regarded as the most honourable, he still holds one of the foremost places. He did not owe his wealth to usury like Brutus and his friends; he did not augment it by that sordid avarice with which Cato is reproached; he did

[1] *Ad fam.* v. 6. [2] *Parad.* 6.

not pillage the provinces like Appius or Cassius; he did not consent like Hortensius to take his share of this pillage. We must then acknowledge that, notwithstanding the blame we may lay upon him, he was more scrupulous and disinterested in money matters than others. In the main, his irregularities only injured himself,[1] and if he had too much taste for ruinous prodigality, at least he did not have recourse to scandalous gains in order to satisfy it. These scruples honour him so much the more as they were then very rare, and few people have passed, without stain, through that greedy and corrupt society in the midst of which he lived.

II.

He does not deserve less praise for having been honourable and regular in his family life. These were virtues of which his contemporaries did not set him an example.

It is probable that his youth was austere.[2] He had firmly resolved to become a great orator, and that was not to be done without trouble. We know from himself how hard the apprenticeship to oratory then was. "To succeed in it, he tells us, a man must renounce all pleasures, avoid all amusements, say farewell to recreation, games, entertainments, and almost to intercourse with one's friends."[3] This was the price he paid for his success. The ambition by which

[1] It is not probable that Cicero wronged his creditors like Milo, who only gave them 4 per cent. When he left Rome after the death of Caesar, Cicero wrote to Atticus that the money that was owing him would suffice to pay his debts; but as at that moment money was scarce and debtors held off, he ordered him to sell his goods, if necessary, and added: "Consult only my reputation." *Ad Att.* xvi. 2.

[2] *Ad fam.* ix. 26: *Me nihil istorum ne juvenem quidem movit unquam.*

[3] *Pro Caelio*, 19.

he was devoured preserved him from the other passions, and sufficed him. His youth was completely taken up with study. When once these early years were passed the danger was less; the habit of work that he had formed, and the important affairs in which he was engaged might suffice to preserve him from all dangerous impulses. Writers who do not like him have vainly tried to find in his life traces of that licentiousness which was so common around him. The most ill-disposed, like Dio,[1] banter him about a clever woman, named Caerellia, whom he somewhere calls his intimate friend.[2] She was so in fact, and it appears that she was not wanting in influence over him. His correspondence with her was preserved and published. This correspondence was, it is said, rather free in tone, and seemed at first to give some occasion to the malicious; but it must be remarked, that Caerellia was much older than he; that, far from being a cause of dissension in his household, we only see her intervening to reconcile him with his wife,[3] in fact that their acquaintance seems to have begun in a common liking for philosophy;[4] a sedate origin which does not forebode unpleasing consequences. Caerellia was a learned lady whose conversation must have been very pleasing to Cicero. Her age, her education which was not that of ordinary women, put him at ease with her, and, as he was naturally quick at repartee, as, once excited by the animation of conversation, he could not always govern and restrain his wit, and as, besides, by patriotism as by taste, he put nothing above that free and daring gaiety of which Plautus seemed to him the model, it may have happened that he wrote to her without ceremony those pleasantries "more spicy than those of the Attic

[1] *Dio Cass.* xlvi. 18.
[2] *Ad fam.* xiii. 72.
[3] *Ad Att.* xiv. 19.
[4] *Ibid.* xiii. 21.

writers, and yet truly Roman."[1] Later, when these rustic and republican manners were no longer in fashion, when, under the influence of the gradually developing court life, the rules of politeness were being refined, and manners were becoming more ceremonious, the freedom of these remarks no doubt shocked some fastidious minds, and may have given rise to ill-natured remarks. For our own part, of all that correspondence of Cicero which is now lost, the letters to Caerellia are those perhaps that we most regret. They would have shown us better than all the rest the habits of society, and the life of the fashionable world at that time.

It is thought that he was about thirty when he married. It was towards the end of Sulla's rule, at the time of his first oratorical successes. His wife, Terentia, belonged to a rich and distinguished family. She brought him in dowry, according to Plutarch,[2] 120,000 drachmae (£4440), and we see that she possessed houses in Rome, besides a forest near Tusculum.[3] It was an advantageous marriage for a young man just beginning political life with more talent than fortune. Cicero's correspondence does not give a very good impression of Terentia. We imagine her as an economical and orderly, but sharp and disagreeable housewife, with whom it was difficult to live at ease. She did not agree very well with her brother-in-law Quintus, and still less with Pomponia her sister-in-law, who, however, did not agree with anybody. She had that influence over her husband that a determined and obstinate woman always has over a careless and irresolute mind. For a long time Cicero left her absolute mistress of the household, he

[1] *Ad fam.* ix. 15: *Non attici, sed salsiores quam illi Atticorum, romani veteres atque urbani sales.*
[2] Plut. *Cic.* 8.
[3] *Ad Att.* ii. 4.

was very glad to shift on to somebody else those occupations that did not suit him. She was not without influence on his political life. She advised him to take energetic measures at the time of the great consulship, and later she embroiled him with Clodius, from dislike to Clodia, whom she suspected of wishing to allure him. As no gain came amiss to her, she succeeded in entangling him in some financial affairs, that Atticus himself, who was not over scrupulous, did not think very honourable; but there her power ended. She seems to have remained a stranger, and perhaps to have been indifferent to her husband's literary glory. In none of Cicero's works, in which the names of his daughter, his brother, and his son recur so frequently, is there any mention of his wife. Terentia had no influence on his mind. He never confided to her his private opinions on the most serious affairs of life; he never admitted her to share in his opinions and beliefs. We have a curious proof of this in his correspondence. Terentia was devout, and devout to excess. She consulted soothsayers, she believed in prodigies, and Cicero did not take the trouble to cure her of this eccentricity. He seems even, somewhere, to make a singular distribution of labours between her and himself; he shows her respectfully serving the gods, while he is occupied in working for men.[1] Not only did he not disturb her devotion, but he showed a consideration for her which surprises us. When he was about to start for Pompey's camp, he wrote to her: "At last I am free from that uneasiness and suffering that I experienced, and which caused you so much concern. The day after my departure I recognized the cause. During the night I threw off pure bile, and felt myself relieved as if

[1] *Ad fam.* xiv. 4: *Neque Dii, quos tu castissime coluisti, neque homines, quibus ego semper servivi*, etc.

some god had been my doctor. Evidently it was Apollo and Aesculapius. I beg you to return thanks to them with your usual piety and zeal."[1] This is strange language in the mouth of that sceptic who wrote the treatise *On the Nature of the Gods;* but Cicero was, no doubt, one of those people, like Varro and many others, who while they make little use themselves of religious practices, think that they are not bad for the common people and for women. There has survived a whole book of letters from Cicero to Terentia, which contains the history of his household. What strikes one on opening it is that, as we get further on, the letters become shorter, the last are no more than short notes. And not only does the length of the letters diminish, but their tone is no longer the same, and marks of affection become more and more rare. We may then conclude that this affection was not of the kind that increases with time; that common life, which strengthens true personal unions, enfeebled this one. Instead of being strengthened, it was worn out by length of time. The earlier letters show an incredible passion, and this in spite of the fact that Cicero had been married nearly twenty years; but he was then very unfortunate, and it seems that misfortune makes people more tender, and that families feel the need of drawing closer when heavy blows fall on them. Cicero had just been condemned to exile. He departed very sorrowfully from Rome, where he knew that his house was burnt, his friends persecuted, his family ill-treated. Terentia had behaved very energetically, she had suffered for her husband, and suffered with courage. On learning the manner in which she had been treated, Cicero wrote to her despairingly: "How wretched I am! And must a woman so virtuous, so honourable, so gentle, so devoted,

[1] *Ad fam.* xiv. 7.

be thus tormented for my sake!"[1] "Be assured, he tells her elsewhere, that I have nothing dearer than you. At this moment I think I see you, and cannot restrain my tears!"[2] He added with still more effusion, "Oh, my life, I would wish to see you again, and die in your arms!"[3] The correspondence then ceases for six years. It re-commences at the time Cicero left Rome, to go and govern Cilicia, but the tone is very much changed. In the single letter remaining to us of this date, affection is replaced by business. It has to do with a legacy that had fallen in very opportunely for Cicero's fortunes, and of the means of turning it to the best account. It is true he still calls Terentia his very dear and much-desired wife, *suavissima atque optatissima*, but these words have the appearance of polite phrases. However, he shows a great desire to see her again, and asks her to come as far as she can and wait for him.[4] She went as far as Brundusium, and, by a lucky chance, she entered the town at the same time that her husband arrived in the harbour; they met and embraced on the Forum. It was a happy moment for Cicero. He returned with the title of *imperator* and the hope of a triumph; he found his family united and joyous. Unfortunately the civil war was just about to break out. During his absence parties had broken with each other; they were about to come to blows, and immediately after his arrival Cicero was obliged to make choice between them, and to take his side. This war not only injured his political position, it was fatal to his private happiness. When the correspondence recommences, after Pharsalia, it becomes extremely matter-of-fact. Cicero returns to Italy, and lands again at Brundusium, no longer triumphant and

[1] *Ad fam.* xiv. 1. [2] *Ibid.* xiv. 3.
[3] *Ibid.* xiv. 4. [4] *Ibid.* xiv. 5.

happy, but vanquished and desperate. This time he does not wish to see his wife again, although he never had more need of consolation. He keeps her at a distance, and that without much ceremony. "If you come, he tells her, I do not see how you can be useful to me."[1] What makes this answer more cruel is, that, at the same time, he sent for his daughter, and consoled himself with her conversation. As to his wife she gets nothing more from him than short notes, and he has the courage to tell her that he does not make them longer because he has nothing to say.[2] At the same time he refers her to Lepta, Trebatius, Atticus, and Sicca, to learn what decisions he has taken. This shows clearly enough that she no longer enjoyed his confidence. The only mark of interest he still gives her is to ask her, from time to time, to take care of her health, a superfluous recommendation, since she lived more than a hundred years! The last letter he addressed to her is just what a man would write to his steward to give an order. "I expect to be at Tusculum the 7th or 8th of the month, he says; be careful to prepare everything. I shall, perhaps, have several persons with me, and very likely we shall remain some time. Let the bath be ready, and let nothing be wanting that is necessary to comfort and health."[3] A few months afterwards, the separation which this tone foreshadows, took place between the couple. Cicero divorced Terentia after more than thirty years of marriage, and when they had children and grandchildren.

What motives drove him to this disagreeable extremity? Probably we do not know them all. Terentia's disagreeable temper must have often caused those little quarrels in the household which, repeated continually, end by wearing out the most steadfast affection. About the time that Cicero

[1] *Ad fam.* xiv. 12. [2] *Ibid.* xiv. 17. [3] *Ibid.* xiv. 20.

was recalled from exile, and a very few months after he had written those passionate letters of which I have spoken, he said to Atticus: "I have some domestic troubles of which I cannot write to you," and added, so that he might be understood: "My daughter and my brother love me still."[1] We must think that he had good reason to complain of his wife, to leave her thus out of the list of persons by whom he thought himself loved. It has been suspected that Terentia was jealous of the affection Cicero showed to his daughter. This affection was somewhat excessive and so exclusive as possibly to wound her, and she was not a woman to endure this without complaint. We may believe that these dissensions prepared and led up to the divorce, but they were not the final cause of it. The motive was more prosaic and vulgar. Cicero justified it by the waste and misuse of his money by his wife, and several times he accused her of having ruined him for her own benefit. One of the most curious characteristics of that age was that the women appear as much engaged in business and as interested in speculations as the men. Money is their first care. They work their estates, invest their funds, lend and borrow. We find one among Cicero's creditors, and two among his debtors. Only, as they could not always appear themselves in these financial undertakings, they had recourse to some obliging freedman, or some shady business man, who watched their interests and profited by their gains. Cicero, in his speech for Caecina, coming across a character of this sort, whose business was to devote themselves to the fortune of women, and often to make their own at their expense, depicts him in these terms: "There is no man one finds oftener in ordinary life. He is the flatterer of women, the advocate of widows, a pettifogging lawyer by profession, a

[1] *Ad Att.* iv. 1.

lover of quarrels, a constant attendant at trials, ignorant and stupid among men, a clever and learned lawyer among women, expert in alluring by the appearance of a false zeal and a hypocritical friendship, eager to render services sometimes useful but rarely faithful."[1] He was a marvellous guide for women tormented with the desire of making a fortune; so Terentia had one of these men about her, her freedman, Philotimus, a clever man of business, but not very scrupulous, who had succeeded at this trade, since he was rich and himself possessed slaves and freedmen. In early days Cicero often made use of him, doubtless at the request of Terentia. It was he who got for him at a low price some of the property of Milo when he was exiled. It was a profitable piece of business, but not in very good taste, and Cicero, who felt it to be so, speaks of it with some shame. On his departure for Cilicia he left the administration of part of his property to Philotimus, but he was not long in repenting of it. Philotimus, like the steward of a great house, paid less attention to his master's interests than to his own. He kept for himself the profits he had made on the property of Milo, and on Cicero's return presented him an account in which he figured as his creditor for a considerable amount. "He is a marvellous thief!"[2] said Cicero, in a rage. At this time his suspicions did not go beyond Philotimus; when he returned from Pharsalia he saw clearly that Terentia was his accomplice. "I have found my household affairs, said he to a friend, in as bad a state as those of the republic."[3] The distress in which he found himself at Brundusium made him distrustful. He looked more closely into his accounts, a thing that was not usual with him, and it was not difficult for him to discover that Terentia had often

[1] *Pro Caecin.* 5. [2] *Ad Att.* vii. 1, 3. [3] *Ad fam.* iv. 14.

deceived him. At one time she had retained sixty thousand sesterces[1] (£480) out of her daughter's dowry. This was a handsome profit, but she was not negligent of small gains. Her husband caught her one day pocketing two thousand sesterces (£16) out of a sum he had asked her for.[2] This rapacity completed the irritation of Cicero, whom other causes no doubt had soured and hurt for a long time. He resigned himself to the divorce, but not without sorrow. We do not break with impunity the bonds that habit, in the absence of affection, ought to draw closer. At the moment of separation, after so many happy days have been passed together, so many ills supported in common, there must always be some memory which troubles us. What adds to the sadness of these painful moments is, that when we wish to withdraw and isolate ourselves in our sorrow, business people arrive; we must defend our interests, reckon and discuss with these people. These discussions, which had never suited Cicero, made him then suffer more than usual. He said to the obliging Atticus, when asking him to undertake them for him: "The wounds are too recent, I could not touch them without making them bleed."[3] And as Terentia continued making difficulties, he wished to put an end to the discussion by giving her all she asked. "I would rather," he wrote, "have cause to complain of her than become discontented with myself."[4]

We can well understand that the wags did not fail to make merry on the subject of this divorce. It was a just retaliation after all, and Cicero had too often laughed at others to expect to be spared himself. Unfortunately he gave them, a short time after, a new opportunity of amusing

[1] *Ad Att.* xi. 2.
[2] *Ibid.* xii 22
[3] *Ibid.* xi. 24.
[4] *Ibid.* xii. 21.

themselves at his expense. Notwithstanding his sixty-three years he thought of marrying again, and he chose a very young girl, Publilia, whom her father, when dying, confided to his guardianship. A marriage between guardian and ward is a real stage marriage, and the guardian generally has the worst of it. How did it happen that Cicero, with his experience of the world and of life, allowed himself to be drawn into this imprudent step? Terentia, who had to revenge herself, repeated everywhere that he had fallen violently in love with this young girl; but his secretary, Tiro, asserted that he had only married her in order to pay his debts with her fortune, and I think we must believe Tiro, although it is not usual that, in this kind of marriage, the elder is also the poorer. As might be foreseen, trouble was not long in appearing in the household. Publilia, who was younger than her step-daughter, did not agree with her, and, it appears, could not conceal her joy when she died. This was an unpardonable crime in Cicero's eyes, and he refused to see her again. It is strange that this young woman, far from accepting with pleasure the liberty that he wished to restore to her, made great efforts to re-enter the house of this old man who divorced her,[1] but he was inflexible. This time he had had enough of marriage, and it is said that, when his friend Hirtius came to offer him the hand of his sister, he refused her, under the pretence that it is difficult to attend at the same time to a wife and to philosophy. It was a wise answer, but he would have done well to have thought of it sooner.

[1] *Ad Att.* xii. 32.

III.

Cicero had two children by Terentia. His daughter Tullia was the elder. He had brought her up in his own way, initiating her into his studies, and giving her the taste for those intellectual things that he loved so much himself, and which, it appears, his wife did not care for. "I find in her, he said, my features, my words, my mind;"[1] accordingly he loved her tenderly. While she was still very young her father could not refrain from making allusion in one of his pleadings to the affection he had for her.[2] This affection, certainly the deepest he ever felt, was the great anxiety of his life. A sadder fate than that of this young woman it is impossible to imagine. Married at thirteen to Piso, then to Crassipes, and separated from them by death and divorce, she re-married for the third time while her father was absent governing Cilicia. Suitors were numerous, even among young men of illustrious family, and it was not only the renown of the father-in-law that attracted them, as we might think. He tells us that they supposed he would return from his government very rich. By marrying his daughter these young men thought to make an advantageous match which would allow them to pay their debts.[3] Among them were the son of the consul Sulpicius and Tiberius Nero, who was the father of Tiberius and Drusus. Cicero favoured the latter, who even went to Cilicia to seek his consent, but his wife and daughter, to whom on leaving he had given the right of choosing, decided without him for Cornelius Dolabella. He was a young man of high family, a friend of Curio, of Caelius and Antony, who till then had lived like them, that

[1] *Ad Quint.* i. 3. [2] *In Verr. act. sect.* i. 44.
[3] *Ad Att.* vii. 4.

is to say in risking his reputation and wasting his fortune; he was, besides, a man of wit and fashion. This husband was not much to the taste of Atticus; but it seems that Terentia was gained over by his great name, and perhaps Tullia was not insensible to his fine manners. At first the marriage seemed a happy one. Dolabella charmed his mother-in-law and his wife by his good-nature and kindness. Cicero himself, who had been at first surprised at the haste with which the affair had been carried through, thought that his son-in-law had a good deal of wit and refinement. "For the rest, he added, we must be resigned."[1] He referred to the frivolous and dissipated habits that Dolabella did not give up notwithstanding his marriage. He had promised to reform, but kept his promise badly, and, however willingly Cicero would have shut his eyes to his dissoluteness, ended by making resignation very difficult. He continued to live like the youth of that time, making an uproar in the streets at night under the windows of fashionable women, and his debaucheries seemed scandalous in a city accustomed to debauch. He attached himself to a fashionable woman, celebrated by her amorous adventures, Caecilia Metella, wife of the consular Lentulus Sphinther. She was the same woman who afterwards ruined the son of the great tragic actor Æsopus, that madman who, not knowing what to invent to ruin himself most quickly, had the strange caprice, at a dinner that he gave to his mistress, to dissolve and swallow a pearl worth a million sesterces[2] (£8000). With a woman like Metella, Dolabella soon squandered his fortune, he then dissipated his wife's, and not content with betraying and ruining her, threatened to divorce her when she dared to complain. It seems that Tullia loved him very much, and for a long time resisted those who advised

[1] *Ad Att.* vii. 3. [2] Horace, *Sat.* II. 3, 239.

a divorce. Cicero blames, somewhere, what he calls his daughter's[1] folly, but she had at last to decide for this after fresh outrages, and leave her husband's house to return to her father's. She was enceinte. The confinement that followed in these painful circumstances carried her off at Tusculum at the age of thirty-one.

Cicero was inconsolable for her death, and his grief at losing her was certainly the greatest of his life. As his affection for his daughter was well known, letters came to him from all sides, of the sort that usually console those only who have no need of consolation. The philosophers, to whom his name gave credit, tried by their exhortations to make him support his loss more courageously. Caesar wrote to him from Spain, where he had just vanquished Pompey's sons. The greatest personages of all parties, Brutus, Lucceius, Dolabella himself, shared his sorrow; but none of these letters must have touched him more sensibly than that which he received from one of his old friends, Sulpicius, the great lawyer, who at that time governed Greece. Fortunately it has been preserved. It is worthy of the great man who wrote it and of him to whom it was addressed. The following passage has often been quoted: "I must tell you a reflection that has consoled me, perhaps it will succeed in diminishing your affliction. On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from Aegina towards Megara, I began to look at the country surrounding me. Megara was in front of me, Aegina behind, the Piraeus on the right, Corinth on the left. Formerly these were very flourishing cities, now they are but scattered ruins. At this sight I said to myself: How dare we, poor mortals that we are, complain of the death of our friends, whose life nature has made so short, when we see at one glance the mere corpses

[1] *Ad Att.* xi. 25.

of so many great cities lying around!"[1] The thought is new and grand. This lesson drawn from the ruins, this manner of drawing moral ideas from nature, this grave melancholy mingled with the contemplation of a fine landscape, are sentiments little known to pagan antiquity. This passage seems inspired by the spirit of Christianity. We should say it was written by a man familiar with the sacred writings, and "who was already sitting, with the prophet, on the ruins of desolate cities." This is so true that Saint Ambrose, wishing to write a letter of condolence, imitated this one, and it was thought, quite naturally, to be Christian. Cicero's reply was not less noble. We see in it a most touching picture of his sadness and isolation. After having described the sorrow he felt at the fall of the republic, he adds: "My daughter at least was left me. I had a place to which to retire and rest. The charm of her conversation made me forget my cares and sorrows; but the dreadful wound I received in losing her has re-opened in my heart all those wounds that I thought closed. Formerly I retired into my family to forget the misfortunes of the state, but can the state now offer me any remedy to make me forget the misfortunes of my family? I am obliged to shun, at the same time, both my home and the Forum, for my home no longer consoles me for the trouble the republic causes me, and the republic cannot fill the void that I find in my home."[2]

Tullia's sad fate, and the grief that her death caused her father, attract us towards her. When we see her lamented so much we wish to know her better. Unfortunately, not a single letter of hers remains in Cicero's correspondence; when he lavishes compliments on her mind, we are obliged to take it upon trust, and a father's compliments are always

[1] *Ad fam.* iv. 5. [2] *Ad Att.* iv. 6.

open to suspicion. From what we know, we can easily admit that she was an accomplished woman; *lectissima femina*, is the praise Antony, who did not like her family, gives her.[1] We should like to know, however, how she bore the education that her father gave her. We rather mistrust this sort of education, and we cannot help fearing that Tullia suffered somewhat from it. The very manner in which her father bewailed her is, to our way of thinking, prejudicial to her memory. In composing on her death, that treatise "On Consolation" which was filled with her praises, he has not, perhaps, done her a great service. A young woman so unfortunate deserved an elegy; a philosophic treatise seems to weigh on her memory. Is it not possible that her father rather spoilt her in wishing to make her too learned? It was quite the custom at that time. Hortensius had made his daughter an orator, and it is asserted that, one day, she pleaded an important case better than a good advocate. I suspect that Cicero wished to make his a philosopher, and I am afraid he succeeded only too well. Philosophy presents many dangers for a woman, and Madame de Sévigné had not much reason to congratulate herself on having put her daughter under the system of Descartes. That dry and pedantic figure is not calculated to make us like women philosophers.

Philosophy succeeded still less with Cicero's son Marcus than with his daughter. His father was completely mistaken about his tastes and abilities, which is not very extraordinary, for parental tenderness is often more warm than enlightened. Marcus had only the instincts of a soldier, Cicero wished to make him a philosopher and an orator, but he lost his labour. These instincts, repressed for a moment, always broke out again with added force. At eighteen, Marcus

[1] *Ad Att.* x. 8.

lived like all the young men of that time, and it was necessary to remonstrate with him on his expenditure. He was bored with the lessons of his master, Dionysius, and with the rhetoric that his father tried to teach him. He wished to set out for the Spanish war with Caesar. Instead of listening to him, Cicero sent him to Athens to finish his education. He had an establishment like a nobleman's son They gave him freedmen and slaves that he might make as good a figure as the young Bibulus, Acidinus and Messala who studied with him. About a hundred thousand sesterces (£800) were assigned to him for his annual expenses, which seems a reasonable allowance for a student in philosophy; but Marcus went away in a bad humour, and his stay at Athens did not have the results that Cicero expected. No longer under his father's eyes he indulged his tastes without restraint. Instead of following the lectures of the rhetoricians and philosophers, his time was taken up with good dinners and noisy entertainments. His life was so much the more dissolute as, to all appearance, he was encouraged in his dissipation by his master himself, the rhetorician Gorgias. This rhetorician was a thorough Greek, that is to say, a man ready to do anything to make his fortune. In studying his pupil he saw that he should gain more by flattering his vices than by cultivating his good qualities, and he accordingly flattered his vices. In this school, Marcus, instead of paying attention to Plato and Aristotle, as his father recommended him, acquired the taste for Falernian and Chian wine, a taste that continued with him. The only reputation that he was proud of afterwards was that of being the hardest drinker of his time; he sought and obtained the glory of conquering the triumvir Antony, who enjoyed a great reputation in this line, that he was very proud of. This was his way of avenging his father, whom Antony had put to death.

Later, Augustus, who wished to pay the son the debt he had contracted with his father, made him a consul, but did not succeed in breaking him of his habits of debauchery, for the sole exploit that we are told of him is, that one day, when he was drunk, he threw his glass at Agrippa's head.[1]

We can understand what sorrow Cicero must have felt when he learnt of his son's early dissoluteness. I suppose he hesitated to believe it for a long time, for he liked to delude himself about his children. So when Marcus, lectured by all the family, dismissed Gorgias and promised to behave better, his father, who was very willing to be deceived, was eager to believe it. From this time we see him constantly engaged in begging Atticus not to let his son want for anything, and in studying the letters he receives from him to try and discover some progress. There remains just one of these letters of Marcus of the time when he seems to return to better habits. It was addressed to Tiro, and is full of protestations of repentance. He acknowledges himself so humiliated, so tormented by all his faults, "that not only his soul detests them, but he cannot bear to hear of them." To convince him thoroughly of his sincerity he draws the picture of his life; it is impossible to imagine one better occupied. He passes his days and almost his nights with the philosopher Cratippus, who treats him like a son. He keeps him to dinner in order to deprive himself of his society as little as possible. He is so charmed with the learned conversation of Bruttius that he wishes to have him near him, and pays his board and lodging. He declaims in Latin, he declaims in Greek with the most learned rhetoricians. He only visits well-informed men; he only sees learned old men, the wise Epicrates, the venerable Leonidas, all the Areopagus in fact, and this edifying narration ends

[1] Plin. *Hist. nat.* xiv. 22.

with these words: "Above all, take care to keep in good health, that we may be able to talk science and philosophy together."[1]

It is a very pleasing letter, but in reading it a certain suspicion comes into our mind. These protestations are so exaggerated that we suspect Marcus had some design in making them, especially when we remember that Tiro possessed the confidence of his master, and disposed of all his liberalities. Who knows if these regrets and high-sounding promises did not precede and excuse some appeal for funds?

It must be said in favour of Marcus that, after having grieved his father by his dissipation, at least he consoled his last moments. When Brutus passed through Athens, calling to arms the young Romans who were there, Marcus felt his soldierly instincts revive. He remembered that at seventeen he had successfully commanded a cavalry corps at Pharsalia, and he was one of the first to respond to the call of Brutus. He was one of his most skilful, most devoted and most courageous lieutenants, and often deserved his praise. "I am so pleased, wrote Brutus to Cicero, with the valour, activity and energy of Marcus, that he seems always to recall to me the father whose son he has the honour to be."[2] We can well understand how pleased Cicero must have been with this testimony. It was while rejoicing over this awakening of his son that he wrote and dedicated to him his treatise *De Officiis*, which is perhaps his finest work, and which was his last farewell to his family and his country.

[1] *Ad fam.* xvi. 21.

[2] *Brut. ad Cic.* ii. 3.

IV.

This study of Cicero's family life is not yet complete; there remain a few details to add. We know that a Roman family was not only composed of the persons united by relationship, but that it also comprised the slaves. Servant and master were then more closely connected than they are now, and they had more community of life. In order to know Cicero thoroughly, then, in his family, we must say a few words about his relations with his slaves.

In theory, he did not hold opinions upon slavery different from those of his time. Like Aristotle, he accepted the institution, and thought it legitimate. While proclaiming that a man has duties to fulfil towards his slaves, he did not hesitate to admit that they must be held down by cruelty when there was no other means of managing them;[1] but in practice he treated them with great mildness. He attached himself to them so far as to weep for them when he had the misfortune to lose them. This, probably, was not usual, for we see that he almost begs pardon for it of his friend Atticus. "My mind is quite troubled, he writes to him; I have lost a young man named Sositheus, who was my reader, and I am more grieved perhaps than I ought to be at the death of a slave."[2] I only see one, in all his correspondence, with whom he seems to be very angry; this was a certain Dionysius whom he sought for even in the depths of Illyria, and whom he wished to have again at any price;[3] but Dionysius had stolen some of his books, and this was a crime that Cicero could not forgive. His slaves also loved him very much. He boasts of the fidelity they showed towards him in his misfortunes, and we know that

[1] *De offic.* ii. 7. [2] *Ad Att.* i. 12.
[3] *Ad fam.* xiii. 77.

at the last moment they would have died for him if he had not prevented them.

We know better than the rest one of them, who had a greater share in his affection, namely, Tiro. The name he bears is Latin, which makes us suspect that he was one of those slaves born in the master's house (*vernae*), who were looked upon as belonging to the family more than the rest, because they had never left it. Cicero became attached to him early, and had him carefully instructed. Perhaps he even took the trouble to finish his education himself. He calls himself, somewhere, his teacher, and likes to rally him about his way of writing. He had a very lively affection for him, and at last could not do without him. He played a great part in Cicero's house, and his powers were very various. He represented in it order and economy, which were not the ordinary qualities of his master. He was the confidential man through whose hands all financial matters passed. On the first of the month he undertook to scold the debtors who were in arrears, and to get too pressing creditors to have patience; he revised the accounts of the steward Eros, which were not always correct; he went to see the obliging bankers whose credit supported Cicero in moments of difficulty. Every time there was some delicate commission to be executed he was applied to, as for instance when it was a question of demanding some money of Dolabella without displeasing him too much. The care he gave to the most important affairs did not prevent him being employed on the smallest. He was sent to overlook the gardens, spur on the workmen, superintend the building operations: the dining-room, even, fell within his province, and I see that he is entrusted with the sending out the invitations to a dinner, a thing not always without its difficulties, for one must only bring together guests who are

mutually agreeable, "and Tertia will not come if Publius is invited."[1] But it is as secretary, especially, that he rendered Cicero the greatest services. He wrote almost as quickly as one speaks, and he alone could read his master's writing, that the copyists could not decipher. He was more than a secretary for him, he was a confidant, and even a collaborator. Aulus Gellius asserts that he helped him in the composition of his works,[2] and the correspondence does not belie this opinion. One day when Tiro had remained ill in some country house, Cicero wrote to him that Pompey, who was then on a visit to him, asked him to read him something, and that he had answered that all was mute in the house when Tiro was not there. "My literature, he added, or rather ours, languishes in your absence. Come back as quickly as possible to re-animate our muses."[3] At this time Tiro was still a slave. It was not till much later, about the year 700, that he was manumitted. Every one about Cicero applauded this just recompense for so many faithful services. Quintus, who was then in Gaul, wrote expressly to his brother to thank him for having given him a new friend. In the sequel, Tiro bought a small field, no doubt out of his master's bounty, and Marcus, in the letter he wrote him from Athens, rallies him pleasantly on the new tastes this acquisition will develop in him. "Now you are a landowner! says he, you must leave the elegance of the town and become quite a Roman peasant. How much pleasure I have in contemplating you from here under your new aspect! I think I see you buying agricultural implements, talking with the farmer, or saving seeds for your garden in a fold of your robe at dessert!"[4] But, proprietor

[1] *Ad fam.* xvi. 22.
[2] A. Gell. vii. 3.
[3] *Ad fam.* xvi. 10.
[4] *Ibid.* xvi. 21.

and freedman, Tiro was no less at his master's service than when he was a slave.

His health was poor, and not always sufficiently attended to. Everybody liked him, but under this pretext everybody made him work. They seemed to agree in abusing his good-nature, which they knew to be inexhaustible. Quintus, Atticus, and Marcus insisted upon his constantly giving them news of Rome and of Cicero. Tiro so readily took his share of each addition to the business that came upon his master, that at last he fell ill. He fatigued himself so much during Cicero's governorship of Cilicia that, on the return journey, he had to be left at Patras. Cicero very much regretted the separation from him, and to testify the sorrow he felt at leaving him, he wrote to him as often as three times in the same day. The care that Cicero took on every occasion of this delicate and precious health was extreme; he became a doctor in order to cure him. One day, when he had left him indisposed at Tusculum, he wrote to him: "Take care of your health, which you have heretofore neglected in order to serve me. You know what it demands: a good digestion, no fatigue, moderate exercise, amusement, and keeping the body open. Come back a good-looking fellow, I shall like you all the better for it, you and Tusculum."[1] When the illness was graver the advice was given at greater length. All the family joined in writing, and Cicero, who held the pen, said to him, in the name of his wife and children: "If you love us all, and particularly me who have brought you up, you will only think of re-establishing your health. . . . I beg you not to regard expense. I have written to Curius to give you all that you want, and to pay the doctor liberally that he may be more attentive. You have rendered me numberless

[1] *Ad fam.* xvi. 18.

services at home, at the Forum, at Rome, in my province, in my public and private affairs, in my studies and my literary work; but you will put the finishing touch if, as I hope, I see you again in good health."[1] Tiro repaid this affection by an indefatigable devotedness. With his feeble health, he lived more than a hundred years, and we may say that all this long life was employed in his master's service. His zeal did not flag when he had lost him, and his time was taken up with him to his last moments. He wrote his biography, he brought out his unpublished works; that nothing should be lost, he collected his smallest notes and witty sayings, of which, it is said, he made a somewhat too large collection, for his admiration did not allow him to distinguish, and he published some excellent editions of his speeches, which were still consulted in the time of Aulus Gellius.[2] These assuredly were services for which Cicero, who thought so much of his literary glory, would have most heartily thanked his faithful freedman.

There is one reflection that we cannot help making when we study the relations of Tiro with his master, and that is, that ancient slavery, looked at from this point of view, and in the house of such a man as Cicero, appears less repulsive. It was evidently much softened at this time, and letters have a large share in this improvement. They had diffused a new virtue among those who loved them, one whose name often recurs in Cicero's philosophical works, namely, humanity, that is to say, that culture of mind that softens the heart. It was by its influence that slavery, without being attacked in principle, was profoundly modified in its effects. This change came about noiselessly. People did not try to run counter to dominant prejudices; up to Seneca's time they did not insist on establishing the right

[1] *Ad fam.* xvi. 3, 4.

[2] A. Gell. xiii. 20.

of the slave to be reckoned among men, and he continued to be excluded from the grand theories that were made upon human brotherhood; but in reality no one profited more than he by the softening of manners. We have just seen how Cicero treated his slaves, and he was not exceptional. Atticus acted like him, and this humanity had become a sort of point of honour, on which this society of polished and lettered people prided themselves. A few years later, Pliny the younger, who also belonged to this society, speaks with a touching sadness of the sickness and death of his slaves. "I know well, he says, that many others only regard this kind of misfortune as a simple loss of goods, and in thinking thus they consider themselves great and wise men. For myself, I do not know if they are as great and wise as they imagine, but I do know that they are not men."[1] These were the sentiments of all the distinguished society of that time. Slavery, then, had lost much of its harshness towards the end of the Roman republic and in the early times of the empire. This improvement, which is usually referred to Christianity, was much older than it, and we must give the credit of it to philosophy and letters.

Besides the freedmen and slaves, who formed part of the family of a rich Roman, there were other persons who were attached to it, although less closely, namely, the clients. Doubtless the ancient institution of clientage had lost much of its grave and sacred character. The time had gone by when Cato said that the clients should take precedence of kinsmen and neighbours in the house, and that the title of patron came immediately after that of father. These ties were much slackened,[2] and the obligations they

[1] Plin. *Epist.* viii. 16.

[2] Virgil, however, always faithful to ancient traditions, places, in

imposed had become much less rigid. Almost the only one still respected was the necessity the clients were under of going to salute the patron early in the morning. Quintus, in the very curious letter that he addressed to his brother on the subject of his candidature for the consulship, divides them into three classes: first, those who content themselves with the morning visit; these are, in general, lukewarm friends or inquisitive observers who come to learn the news, or who even sometimes visit all the candidates that they may have the pleasure of reading in their faces the state of their hopes; then, those who accompany their patron to the Forum and form his train while he takes two or three turns in the basilica, that everybody may see that it is a man of importance who arrives; and lastly, those who do not leave him all the time he is out of doors, and who conduct him back to his house as they had gone to meet him there. These are the faithful and devoted followers, who do not haggle about the time they give, and whose unwearied zeal obtains for the candidate the dignities he desires.[1]

When a man had the good fortune to belong to a great family, he possessed by inheritance a ready-made clientage. A Claudius or a Cornelius, even before he had taken the trouble to oblige anybody, was sure to find his hall half filled every morning with people whom gratitude attached to his family, and he produced a sensation in the Forum by the number of those who accompanied him the day he went there to plead his first cause. Cicero had not this advantage; but, although he owed his clients to himself alone, they were none the less very numerous. In that

Tartarus, the patron who had deceived his client beside the son who had struck his father.

[1] *De petit. cons.* 9.

time of exciting struggles, when the quietest citizens were exposed every day to the most unreasonable accusations, many people were forced to have recourse to him to defend them. He did so readily, for he had no other means of making a clientage than by giving his services to a great many. It was this, perhaps, that made him accept so many bad cases. As he arrived at the Forum almost alone, without that train of persons whom he had obliged, which gave public importance, it was necessary for him not to be too particular in order to form and increase it. Whatever repugnance his honest mind may have felt on taking up a doubtful case, his vanity could not resist the pleasure of adding another person to the multitude of those who accompanied him. There were, in this crowd, according to his brother, citizens of every age, rank, and fortune. Important personages no doubt were mingled with those insignificant folks who usually formed this kind of retinue. Speaking of a tribune of the people, Memmius Gemellus, the protector of Lucretius, he calls him his client.[1]

It was not only at Rome that he had clients and persons who were under obligation to him; we see by his correspondence that his protection extended much further, and that people wrote to him from all parts demanding his services. The Romans were then scattered over the entire world; after having conquered it they busied themselves in making the greatest possible profit out of it. In the track of the legions and almost at their heels, a swarm of clever and enterprising men settled on the just conquered provinces to seek their fortunes there; they knew how to adapt their skill to the resources and needs of each country. In Sicily and in Gaul they cultivated vast estates, and speculated in wines and corn; in Asia, where there were so many cities

[1] *Ad fam.* xiii. 19.

opulent or involved in debt, they became bankers, that is to say, they furnished them, by their usury, a prompt and sure means of ruining themselves. In general, they thought of returning to Rome as soon as their fortune was made, and in order to return the sooner, they sought to enrich themselves as quickly as possible. As they were only encamped, and not really settled in the conquered countries, as they found themselves there without ties of affection and without root, they treated them without mercy and made themselves detested. They were often prosecuted before the tribunals and had great need of being defended, and so they sought to procure the support of the best advocates, above all that of Cicero, the greatest orator of his time. His talent and his credit were not too great to extricate them from the discreditable affairs in which they were mixed up.

If we wish to become well acquainted with one of those great merchants of Rome, who, by their character and their fate, sometimes resemble the speculators of our days, we must read the speech that Cicero delivered in defence of Rabirius Postumus. He there narrates the whole story of his client. It is a lively story, and it is not without interest to sum it up in order to know what those Roman business men, who so often had recourse to his eloquence, were like. Rabirius, the son of a rich and acute farmer of taxes, was born with the spirit of enterprise. He did not confine himself to a single branch of commerce, for he was one of those of whom Cicero said that they knew all the roads by which money could come in, *omnes vias pecuniae norunt*.[1] He transacted all kinds of business, and with equally good fortune; he undertook much himself, and often shared in the enterprises of others. He farmed the public taxes; he lent to private persons, to the provinces and to kings. As

[1] *Ad Quint.* i. 1.

generous as he was rich, he made his friends profit by his good fortune. He created employment for them, gave them an interest in his business, and a share in the profits.

His popularity therefore was very great at Rome; but, as sometimes happens, his prosperity ruined him. He had lent a good deal of money to Ptolemy Auletes, King of Egypt, who probably gave him good interest. This king having got himself expelled by his subjects, Rabirius was induced to make him fresh advances in order to recover the money that was at stake. He pledged his own fortune and even that of his friends to provide for his expenses; he defrayed the cost of the magnificent royal *cortège* when Ptolemy went to Rome to demand the support of the senate, and, what must have cost him still more, gave him the means of gaining over the most influential senators. Ptolemy's business appeared safe. As people hoped much from the gratitude of the king, the most important personages strove for the honour or rather the profit of reinstating him. Lentulus, then proconsul of Cilicia, contended that they could not refuse it to him; but at the same time Pompey, who received the young prince at his house at Alba, demanded it for himself. This rivalry caused everything to miscarry. The opposing interests counteracted each other, and in order not to cause jealousy by letting one man profit by this fortunate opportunity, the senate would not grant it to anybody. It is said that Rabirius, who knew the Romans well, then gave the king the bold advice to apply to one of those adventurers of whom Rome was full and who flinched from nothing for money. A former tribune, Gabinius, governed Syria. He was promised 10,000 talents (£2,200,000) if he would openly disobey the decree of the senate. It was a large sum; Gabinius accepted the bargain, and his troops brought Ptolemy back

to Alexandria. As soon as Rabirius knew that he was re-established he hastened to meet him. To make more sure of recovering his money, he consented to become his overseer of the revenue (*diaecetes*), or as we should now say, his minister of finance. He wore the Greek mantle, to the great scandal of strict Romans, and put on the insignia of his office. He had only accepted it with the idea that he should never be better paid than if he paid himself, through his own hands. This is what he tried to do, and it appears that in raising the money promised to Gabinius he also cautiously took enough to repay himself; but the people, who were being ruined, complained, and the king, to whom Rabirius had become intolerable now that he had no longer need of him, and who was no doubt delighted to find a convenient means of getting rid of a creditor, threw him into prison and even threatened his life. Rabirius fled from Egypt as soon as he could, happy to have left only his fortune there. He had only one resource left. At the same time that he administered the king's finances, he had bought on his own account Egyptian merchandise, paper, flax, glass, and had laden several vessels which unloaded at Puteoli with considerable ostentation. The report of this reached Rome, and, as people there were used to the lucky adventures of Rabirius, rumour took pleasure in exaggerating the number of the vessels and the value of their cargo. It was even said, in an undertone, that there was among these ships a smaller one that was not shown, no doubt because it was full of gold and precious objects. Unfortunately for Rabirius there was no truth in all these tales. The little ship only existed in the imagination of news-mongers, and the goods that the others carried being sold at a loss, he was quite ruined. His disaster made a sensation at Rome, and was the talk of a whole season.

The friends he had so generously obliged deserted him; public opinion, which up to that time had been so favourable to him, turned against him. The most indulgent called him a fool, the most violent accused him of feigning poverty and of withholding a part of his fortune from his creditors. It is certain, however, that he had nothing, and only lived on the bounty of Caesar, one of that small number who remained true to him in his misfortune. Cicero did not forget him either. He remembered that, at the time of his exile, Rabirius had put his fortune at his disposal and paid men to accompany him, and therefore he hastened to plead for him when it was proposed to include him in the prosecution of Gabinius, and he succeeded at least in preserving his honour and liberty.

One trait is missing in this description. Cicero tells us in his speech that Rabirius was only moderately educated. He had done so many things in his life that he had not had time to think of learning, but this was not usual; we know that many of his colleagues, notwithstanding their not very literary occupations, were none the less witty and lettered men. Cicero, recommending a merchant of Thespiae to Sulpicius, tells him: "He has a taste for our studies."[1] He looked upon Curius of Patras as one of those who had best preserved the turn of the ancient Roman humour. "Make haste and come back to Rome, he wrote him, lest the seed of our native humour be lost."[2] Those knights who associated themselves in powerful companies and farmed the taxes, were also men of wit and men of the best society. Cicero, who came from their ranks, had connection with almost all of them; but it seems that he was more especially connected with the company that farmed

[1] *Ad fam.* xiii. 22. [2] *Ibid.* vii. 31.

the pasturages of Asia, and he says that it put itself under his protection.

This protection was also extended to people who were not Romans by birth. Foreigners, we can well understand, regarded it as a great honour and security to be in any way connected with an illustrious personage in Rome. They could not be his clients, they wished to become his hosts. At a time when there were so few convenient hotels in the countries one passed through, it was necessary, when you wished to travel, to have obliging friends who would consent to receive you. In Italy, rich people bought little houses where they passed the night on the roads they were accustomed to travel; but, elsewhere, they journeyed from one host to another. To shelter a rich Roman in this way was often a heavy expense. He always had a large train with him. Cicero tells us that he met P. Vedius in the depths of Asia "with two chariots, a carriage, a litter, horses, numerous slaves, and, besides, a monkey on a little car, and a number of wild asses."[1] Vedius was a comparatively unknown Roman. One may judge of the suite that a proconsul and a praetor had when they went to take possession of their provinces! However, although their passage exhausted the house that received them, this ruinous honour was solicited because numberless advantages were found in securing their support. Cicero had hosts in all the great cities of Greece and Asia, and they were almost always the principal citizens. Kings themselves like Deiotarus and Ariobarzanes considered themselves honoured by this title. Important cities, Volaterrae, Atella, Sparta, Paphos frequently claimed his protection and rewarded it with public honours. He counted entire provinces, nations almost, among his clients, and after the affair of Verres, for

[1] *Ad Att.* vi. 1.

instance, he was the defender and patron of Sicily. This custom survived the republic, and in the time of Tacitus orators of renown had still among their clients provinces and kingdoms. It was the only mark of real distinction that remained to eloquence.

These details, it seems to me, complete our knowledge of what the life of an important person was at that time. As long as we are satisfied with studying the few persons who compose what we should now-a-days call his family, and only see him with his wife and children, his life very much resembles our own. The sentiments which are the foundation of human nature have not changed, and they always lead to very nearly the same results. The cares which troubled Cicero's domestic hearth, his joys and misfortunes, are much like ours; but as soon as we leave this limited circle, when we replace the Roman among the crowd of his servants and familiar friends, the difference between that society and ours becomes manifest. Now-a-days life has become more plain and simple. We have no longer those immense riches, those extensive connections, nor that multitude of people attached to our fortunes. What we call a great retinue would scarcely have sufficed for one of those clerks of the farmers of the revenue who went to collect the taxes in some provincial town. A noble, or even a rich Roman knight, did not content himself with so little. When we think of those armies of slaves they gathered together in their houses and on their estates, of those freedmen who formed a sort of court around them, of that multitude of clients who encumbered the streets of Rome through which they passed, of those hosts they had throughout the world, of those cities and realms that implored their protection, we can better understand the authority of their speech, the haughtiness of their bearing, the breadth of their eloquence,

the gravity of their deportment, the feeling of personal importance which they threw into all their actions and speeches. It is here, above all, that the perusal of Cicero's letters renders us a great service. They give us a notion of lives lived on a scale such as we no longer know, and thus help us to understand better the society of that time.

ATTICUS

Of all Cicero's correspondents, none kept up a longer or more regular intercourse with him than Atticus. Their friendly relations lasted without interruption and without a shadow till their death. They corresponded during the shortest absences, and, when it was possible, more than once a day. These letters, sometimes short to communicate a passing reflection, sometimes long and studied, when events were graver, playful or serious according to circumstances, that were written in haste wherever the writers happened to be, these letters reflect the whole life of the two friends. Cicero characterized them happily when he said "They were like a conversation between us two." Unfortunately, at present, we hear only one of the speakers and the conversation has become a monologue. In publishing his friend's letters Atticus took good care not to add his own. No doubt he did not wish his sentiments to be read too openly, and his prudence sought to withhold from the public the knowledge of his opinions and the secrets of his private life; but in vain he sought to hide himself, the voluminous correspondence that Cicero kept up with him was sufficient to make him known, and it is easy to form from it an exact idea of the person to whom it is addressed. This person is assuredly one of the most curious of an important epoch, and deserves that we should take the trouble to study him with some care.