



SALLUST

***CONSPIRACY
OF CATILINE AND
THE JURGURTHINE WAR***



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CONSPIRACY OF CATILINE AND THE JUGURTHINE WAR

**LITERALLY TRANSLATED WITH
EXPLANATORY NOTES BY THE REV.
JOHN SELBY WATSON, M.A.**

CONSPIRACY OF CATILINE.

THE ARGUMENT.

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I. It becomes all men, who desire to excel other animals, [1] to strive, to the utmost of their power,[2] not to pass through life in obscurity, [3] like the beasts of the field,[4] which nature has formed groveling[5] and subservient to appetite.

All our power is situate in the mind and in the body.[6] Of the mind we rather employ the government;[7] of the body the service.[8] The one is common to us with the gods; the other with the brutes. It appears to me, therefore, more reasonable[9]to pursue glory by means of the intellect than of bodily strength, and, since the life which we enjoy is short, to make the remembrance of us as lasting as possible. For the glory of wealth and beauty is fleeting and perishable; that of intellectual power is illustrious and immortal.[10]

Yet it was long a subject of dispute among mankind, whether military efforts were more advanced by strength of body, or by force of intellect. For, in affairs of war, it is

necessary to plan before beginning to act,[11] and, after planning, to act with promptitude and vigor.[12] Thus, each[13] being insufficient of itself, the one requires the assistance of the other.[14]

II. In early times, accordingly, kings (for that was the first title of sovereignty in the world) applied themselves in different ways;[15] some exercised the mind, others the body. At that period, however,[16] the life of man was passed without covetousness;[17] every one was satisfied with his own. But after Cyrus in Asia[18] and the Lacedaemonians and Athenians in Greece, began to subjugate cities and nations, to deem the lust of dominion a reason for war, and to imagine the greatest glory to be in the most extensive empire, it was then at length discovered, by proof and experience,[19] that mental power has the greatest effect in military operations. And, indeed,[20] if the intellectual ability[21] of kings and magistrates[22] were exerted to the same degree in peace as in war, human affairs would be more orderly and settled, and you would not see governments shifted from hand to hand,[23] and things universally changed and confused. For dominion is easily secured by those qualities by which it was at first obtained. But when sloth has introduced itself in the place of industry, and covetousness and pride in that of moderation and equity, the fortune of a state is altered together with its morals; and thus authority is always transferred from the less to the more deserving.[24]

Even in agriculture,[25] in navigation, and in architecture, whatever man performs owns the dominion of intellect. Yet many human beings, resigned to sensuality

and indolence, un-instructed and unimproved, have passed through life like travellers in a strange country[26]; to whom, certainly, contrary to the intention of nature, the body was a gratification, and the mind a burden. Of these I hold the life and death in equal estimation[27]; for silence is maintained concerning both. But he only, indeed, seems to me to live, and to enjoy life, who, intent upon some employment, seeks reputation from some ennobling enterprise, or honorable pursuit.

But in the great abundance of occupations, nature points out different paths to different individuals. III. To act well for the Commonwealth is noble, and even to speak well for it is not without merit[28]. Both in peace and in war it is possible to obtain celebrity; many who have acted, and many who have recorded the actions of others, receive their tribute of praise. And to me, assuredly, though by no means equal glory attends the narrator and the performer of illustrious deeds, it yet seems in the highest degree difficult to write the history of great transactions; first, because deeds must be adequately represented[29] by words; and next, because most readers consider that whatever errors you mention with censure, are mentioned through malevolence and envy; while, when you speak of the great virtue and glory of eminent men, every one hears with acquiescence[30] only that which he himself thinks easy to be performed; all beyond his own conception he regards as fictitious and incredible[31].

I myself, however, when a young man[32], was at first led by inclination, like most others, to engage in political affairs[33]; but in that pursuit many circumstances were

unfavorable to me; for, instead of modesty, temperance, and integrity[34], there prevailed shamelessness, corruption, and rapacity. And although my mind, inexperienced in dishonest practices, detested these vices, yet, in the midst of so great corruption, my tender age was insnared and infected[35] by ambition; and, though I shrunk from the vicious principles of those around me, yet the same eagerness for honors, the same obloquy and jealousy[36], which disquieted others, disquieted myself.

IV. When, therefore, my mind had rest from its numerous troubles and trials, and I had determined to pass the remainder of my days unconnected with public life, it was not my intention to waste my valuable leisure in indolence and inactivity, or, engaging in servile occupations, to spend my time in agriculture or hunting[37]; but, returning to those studies[38] from which, at their commencement, a corrupt ambition had allured me, I determined to write, in detached portions[39], the transactions of the Roman people, as any occurrence should seem worthy of mention; an undertaking to which I was the rather inclined, as my mind was uninfluenced by hope, fear, or political partisanship. I shall accordingly give a brief account, with as much truth as I can, of the Conspiracy of Catiline; for I think it an enterprise eminently deserving of record, from the unusual nature both of its guilt and of its perils. But before I enter upon my narrative, I must give a short description of the character of the man.

V. Lucius Catiline was a man of noble birth[40], and of eminent mental and personal endowments; but of a vicious and depraved disposition. His delight, from his youth, had

been civil commotions, bloodshed, robbery, and sedition[41]; and in such scenes he had spent his early years.[42] His constitution could endure hunger, want of sleep, and cold, to a degree surpassing belief. His mind was daring, subtle, and versatile, capable of pretending or dissembling whatever he wished.[43] He was covetous of other men's property, and prodigal of his own. He had abundance of eloquence,[44] though but little wisdom. His insatiable ambition was always pursuing objects extravagant, romantic, and unattainable.

Since the time of Sylla's dictatorship,[45] a strong desire of seizing the government possessed him, nor did he at all care, provided that he secured power[46] for himself, by what means he might arrive at it. His violent spirit was daily more and more hurried on by the diminution of his patrimony, and by his consciousness of guilt; both which evils he had increased by those practices which I have mentioned above. The corrupt morals of the state, too, which extravagance and selfishness, pernicious and contending vices, rendered thoroughly depraved,[47] furnished him with additional incentives to action.

Since the occasion has thus brought public morals under my notice, the subject itself seems to call upon me to look back, and briefly to describe the conduct of our ancestors[48] in peace and war; how they managed the state, and how powerful they left it; and how, by gradual alteration, it became, from being the most virtuous, the most vicious and depraved.

VI. Of the city of Rome, as I understand,[49] the founders and earliest inhabitants were the Trojans, who, under the

conduct of Aeneas, were wandering about as exiles from their country, without any settled abode; and with these were joined the Aborigines,[50] a savage race of men, without laws or government, free, and owning no control. How easily these two tribes, though of different origin, dissimilar language, and opposite habits of life, formed a union when they met within the same walls, is almost incredible.[51] But when their state, from an accession of population and territory, and an improved condition of morals, showed itself tolerably flourishing and powerful, envy, as is generally the case in human affairs, was the consequence of its prosperity. The neighboring kings and people, accordingly, began to assail them in war, while a few only of their friends came to their support; for the rest, struck with alarm, shrunk from sharing their dangers. But the Romans, active at home and in the field, prepared with alacrity for their defense.[52] They encouraged one another, and hurried to meet the enemy. They protected, with their arms, their liberty, their country, and their homes. And when they had at length repelled danger by valor, they lent assistance to their allies and supporters, and procured friendships rather by bestowing[53] favors than by receiving them.

They had a government regulated by laws. The denomination of their government was monarchy. Chosen men, whose bodies might be enfeebled by years, but whose minds were vigorous in understanding, formed the council of the state; and these, whether from their age, or from the similarity of their duty, were called FATHERS.[54] But afterward, when the monarchical power, which had been

originally established for the protection of liberty, and for the promotion of the public interest, had degenerated into tyranny and oppression, they changed their plan, and appointed two magistrates,[55] with power only annual; for they conceived that, by this method, the human mind would be least likely to grow overbearing for want of control.

VII. At this period every citizen began to seek distinction, and to display his talents with greater freedom; for, with princes, the meritorious are greater objects of suspicion than the undeserving, and to them the worth of others is a source of alarm. But when liberty was secured, it is almost incredible[56] how much the state strengthened itself in a short space of time, so strong a passion for distinction had pervaded it. Now, for the first time, the youth, as soon as they were able to bear the toil of war,[57] acquired military skill by actual service in the camp, and took pleasure rather in splendid arms and military steeds than in the society of mistresses and convivial indulgence. To such men no toil was unusual, no place was difficult or inaccessible, no armed enemy was formidable; their valor had overcome every thing. But among themselves the grand rivalry was for glory; each sought to be first to wound an enemy, to scale a wall, and to be noticed while performing such an exploit. Distinction such as this they regarded as wealth, honor, and true nobility.[58] They were covetous of praise, but liberal of money; they desired competent riches but boundless glory. I could mention, but that the account would draw me too far from my subject, places in which the Roman people, with a small body of men, routed vast armies

of the enemy; and cities, which, though fortified by nature, they carried by assault.

VIII. But, assuredly, Fortune rules in all things. She makes every thing famous or obscure rather from caprice than in conformity with truth. The exploits of the Athenians, as far as I can judge, were very great and glorious,[59] something inferior to what fame has represented them. But because writers of great talent flourished there, the actions of the Athenians are celebrated over the world as the most splendid achievements. Thus, the merit of those who have acted is estimated at the highest point to which illustrious intellects could exalt it in their writings.

But among the Romans there was never any such abundance of writers;[60] for, with them, the most able men were the most actively employed. No one exercised the mind independently of the body: every man of ability chose to act rather than narrate,[61] and was more desirous that his own merits should be celebrated by others, than that he himself should record theirs.

IX. Good morals, accordingly, were cultivated in the city and in the camp. There was the greatest possible concord, and the least possible avarice. Justice and probity prevailed among the citizens, not more from the influence of the laws than from natural inclination. They displayed animosity, enmity, and resentment only against the enemy. Citizens contended with citizens in nothing but honor. They were magnificent in their religious services, frugal in their families, and steady in their friendships.

By these two virtues, intrepidity in war, and equity in peace, they maintained themselves and their state. Of their

exercise of which virtues, I consider these as the greatest proofs; that, in war, punishment was oftener inflicted on those who attacked an enemy contrary to orders, and who, when commanded to retreat, retired too slowly from the contest, than on those who had dared to desert their standards, or, when pressed by the enemy,[62] to abandon their posts; and that, in peace, they governed more by conferring benefits than by exciting terror, and, when they received an injury, chose rather to pardon than to revenge it.

X. But when, by perseverance and integrity, the republic had increased its power; when mighty princes had been vanquished in war;[63] when barbarous tribes and populous states had been reduced to subjection; when Carthage, the rival of Rome's dominion, had been utterly destroyed, and sea and land lay every where open to her sway, Fortune then began to exercise her tyranny, and to introduce universal innovation. To those who had easily endured toils, dangers, and doubtful and difficult circumstances, ease and wealth, the objects of desire to others, became a burden and a trouble. At first the love of money, and then that of power, began to prevail, and these became, as it were, the sources of every evil. For avarice subverted honesty, integrity, and other honorable principles, and, in their stead, inculcated pride, inhumanity, contempt of religion, and general venality. Ambition prompted many to become deceitful; to keep one thing concealed in the breast, and another ready on the tongue;[64] to estimate friendships and enmities, not by their worth, but according to interest; and to carry rather a specious countenance than an honest

heart. These vices at first advanced but slowly, and were sometimes restrained by correction; but afterward, when their infection had spread like a pestilence, the state was entirely changed, and the government, from being the most equitable and praiseworthy, became rapacious and insupportable.

XI. At first, however, it was ambition, rather than avarice, [65] that influenced the minds of men; a vice which approaches nearer to virtue than the other. For of glory, honor, and power, the worthy is as desirous as the worthless; but the one pursues them by just methods; the other, being destitute of honorable qualities, works with fraud and deceit. But avarice has merely money for its object, which no wise man has ever immoderately desired. It is a vice which, as if imbued with deadly poison, enervates whatever is manly in body or mind.[66] It is always unbounded and insatiable, and is abated neither by abundance nor by want.

But after Lucius Sylla, having recovered the government[67] by force of arms, proceeded, after a fair commencement, to a pernicious termination, all became robbers and plunderers;[68] some set their affections on houses, others on lands; his victorious troops knew neither restraint nor moderation, but inflicted on the citizens disgraceful and inhuman outrages. Their rapacity was increased by the circumstance that Sylla, in order to secure the attachment of the forces which he had commanded in Asia,[69] had treated them, contrary to the practice of our ancestors, with extraordinary indulgence, and exemption from discipline; and pleasant and luxurious quarters had

easily, during seasons of idleness, enervated the minds of the soldiery. Then the armies of the Roman people first became habituated to licentiousness and intemperance, and began to admire statues, pictures, and sculptured vases; to seize such objects alike in public edifices and private dwellings;[70] to spoil temples; and to cast off respect for every thing, sacred and profane. Such troops, accordingly, when once they obtained the mastery, left nothing to be vanquished. Success unsettles the principles even of the wise, and scarcely would those of debauched habits use victory with moderation.

XII. When wealth was once considered an honor, and glory, authority, and power attended on it, virtue lost her influence, poverty was thought a disgrace, and a life of innocence was regarded as a life of ill-nature.[71] From the influence of riches, accordingly, luxury, avarice, and pride prevailed among the youth; they grew at once rapacious and prodigal; they undervalued what was their own, and coveted what was another's; they set at naught modesty and continence; they lost all distinction between sacred and profane, and threw off all consideration and self-restraint.

It furnishes much matter for reflection,[72] after viewing our modern mansions and villas extended to the size of cities, to contemplate the temples which our ancestors, a most devout race of men, erected to the gods. But our forefathers adorned the fanes of the deities with devotion, and their homes with their own glory, and took nothing from those whom they conquered but the power of doing harm; their descendants, on the contrary, the basest of mankind, [73] have even wrested from their allies, with the most

flagrant injustice, whatever their brave and victorious ancestors had left to their vanquished enemies; as if the only use of power were to inflict injury.

XIII. For why should I mention those displays of extravagance, which can be believed by none but those who have seen them; as that mountains have been leveled, and seas covered with edifices,[74] by many private citizens; men whom I consider to have made a sport of their wealth, [75] since they were impatient to squander disreputably what they might have enjoyed with honor.

But the love of irregular gratification, open debauchery, and all kinds of luxury,[76] had spread abroad with no less force. Men forgot their sex; women threw off all the restraints of modesty. To gratify appetite, they sought for every kind of production by land and by sea; they slept before there was any inclination for sleep; they no longer waited to feel hunger, thirst, cold,[77] or fatigue, but anticipated them all by luxurious indulgence. Such propensities drove the youth, when their patrimonies were exhausted, to criminal practices; for their minds, impregnated with evil habits, could not easily abstain from gratifying their passions, and were thus the more inordinately devoted in every way to rapacity and extravagance.

XIV. In so populous and so corrupt a city, Catiline, as it was very easy to do, kept about him, like a body-guard, crowds of the unprincipled and desperate. For all those shameless, libertine, and profligate characters, who had dissipated their patrimonies by gaming,[78] luxury, and sensuality; all who had contracted heavy debts, to purchase

immunity for their crimes or offenses; all assassins[79] or sacrilegious persons from every quarter, convicted or dreading conviction for their evil deeds; all, besides, whom their tongue or their hand maintained by perjury or civil bloodshed; all, in fine, whom wickedness, poverty, or a guilty conscience disquieted, were the associates and intimate friends of Catiline. And if any one, as yet of unblemished character, fell into his society, he was presently rendered, by daily intercourse and temptation, similar and equal to the rest. But it was the young whose acquaintance he chiefly courted; as their minds, ductile and unsettled from their age, were easily ensnared by his stratagems. For as the passions of each, according to his years, appeared excited, he furnished mistresses to some, bought horses and dogs for others, and spared, in a word, neither his purse nor his character, if he could but make them his devoted and trustworthy supporters. There were some, I know, who thought that the youth, who frequented the house of Catiline, were guilty of crimes against nature; but this report arose rather from other causes than from any evidence of the fact[80].

XV. Catiline, in his youth, had been guilty of many criminal connections, with a virgin of noble birth[81], with a priestess of Vesta[82], and of many other offenses of this nature, in defiance alike of law and religion. At last, when he was smitten with a passion for Aurelia Orestilla[83], in whom no good man, at any time of her life, commended any thing but her beauty, it is confidently believed that because she hesitated to marry him, from the dread of having a grown-up step-son[84], he cleared the house for their nuptials by

putting his son to death. And this crime appears to me to have been the chief cause of hurrying forward the conspiracy. For his guilty mind, at peace with neither gods nor men, found no comfort either waking or sleeping; so effectually did conscience desolate his tortured spirit.[85] His complexion, in consequence, was pale, his eyes haggard, his walk sometimes quick and sometimes slow, and distraction was plainly apparent in every feature and look.

XVI. The young men, whom, as I said before, he had enticed to join him, he initiated, by various methods, in evil practices. From among them he furnished false witnesses, [86] and forgers of signatures; and he taught them all to regard, with equal unconcern, honor, property, and danger. At length, when he had stripped them of all character and shame, he led them to other and greater enormities. If a motive for crime did not readily occur, he incited them, nevertheless, to circumvent and murder inoffensive persons[87] just as if they had injured him; for, lest their hand or heart should grow torpid for want of employment, he chose to be gratuitously wicked and cruel.

Depending on such accomplices and adherents, and knowing that the load of debt was every where great, and that the veterans of Sylla,[88] having spent their money too liberally, and remembering their spoils and former victory, were longing for a civil war, Catiline formed the design of overthrowing the government. There was no army in Italy; Pompey was fighting in a distant part of the world;[89] he himself had great hopes of obtaining the consulship; the senate was wholly off its guard;[90] every thing was quiet

and tranquil; and all those circumstances were exceedingly favorable for Catiline.

XVII. Accordingly, about the beginning of June, in the consulship of Lucius Caesar[91] and Caius Figulus, he at first addressed each of his accomplices separately, encouraged some, and sounded others, and informed them, of his own resources, of the unprepared condition of the state, and of the great prizes to be expected from the conspiracy. When he had ascertained, to his satisfaction, all that he required, he summoned all whose necessities were the most urgent, and whose spirits were the most daring, to a general conference.

At that meeting there were present, of senatorial rank, Publius Lentulus Sura,[92] Publius Autronius,[93] Lucius Cassius Longinus,[94] Caius Cethegus,[95] Publius and Servius Sylla[96] the sons of Servius Sylla, Lucius Vargunteius,[97] Quintus Annius,[98] Marcus Porcius Laeca, [99] Lucius Bestia,[100] Quintus Curius;[101] and, of the equestrian order, Marcus Fulvius Nobilior,[102] Lucius Statilius,[103] Publius Gabinius Capito,[104] Caius Cornelius; [105] with many from the colonies and municipal towns, [106] persons of consequence in their own localities. There were many others, too, among the nobility, concerned in the plot, but less openly: men whom the hope of power, rather than poverty or any other exigence, prompted to join in the affair. But most of the young men, and especially the sons of the nobility, favored the schemes of Catiline; they who had abundant means of living at ease, either splendidly or voluptuously, preferred uncertainties to certainties, war to peace. There were some, also, at that time, who believed

that Marcus Licinius Crassus[107] was not unacquainted with the conspiracy; because Cneius Pompey, whom he hated, was at the head of a large army, and he was willing that the power of any one whomsoever should raise itself against Pompey's influence; trusting, at the same time, that if the plot should succeed, he would easily place himself at the head of the conspirators.

XVIII. But previously[108] to this period, a small number of persons, among whom was Catiline, had formed a design against the state: of which affair I shall here give as accurate account as I am able. Under the consulship of Lucius Tullus and Marcus Lepidus, Publius Autronius and Publius Sylla,[109] having been tried for bribery under the laws against it,[110] had paid the penalty of the offense. Shortly after Catiline, being brought to trial for extortion, [111] had been prevented from standing for the consulship, because he had been unable to declare himself a candidate within the legitimate number of days.[112] There was at that time, too, a young patrician of the most daring spirit, needy and discontented, named Cneius Piso,[113] whom poverty and vicious principles instigated to disturb the government. Catiline and Autronius,[114] having concerted measures with this Piso, prepared to assassinate the consuls, Lucius Cotta and Lucius Torquatus, in the Capitol, on the first of January,[115] when they, having seized on the fasces, were to send Piso with an army to take possession of the two Spains.[116] But their design being discovered, they postponed the assassination to the fifth of February; when they meditated the destruction, not of the consuls only, but of most of the senate. And had not Catiline, who was in front

of the senate-house, been too hasty to give the signal to his associates, there would that day have been perpetrated the most atrocious outrage since the city of Rome was founded. But as the armed conspirators had not yet assembled in sufficient numbers, the want of force frustrated the design.

XIX. Some time afterward, Piso was sent as quaestor, with Praetorian authority, into Hither Spain; Crassus promoting the appointment, because he knew him to be a bitter enemy to Cneius Pompey. Nor were the senate, indeed, unwilling[117] to grant him the province; for they wished so infamous a character to be removed from the seat of government; and many worthy men, at the same time, thought that there was some security in him against the power of Pompey, which was then becoming formidable. But this Piso, on his march toward his province, was murdered by some Spanish cavalry whom he had in his army. These barbarians, as some say, had been unable to endure his unjust, haughty, and cruel orders; but others assert that this body of cavalry, being old and trusty adherents of Pompey, attacked Piso at his instigation; since the Spaniards, they observed, had never before committed such an outrage, but had patiently submitted to many severe commands. This question we shall leave undecided. Of the first conspiracy enough has been said.

XX. When Catiline saw those, whom I have just above mentioned,[118] assembled, though he had often discussed many points with them singly, yet thinking it would be to his purpose to address and exhort them in a body, retired with them into a private apartment of his house, where, when all

witnesses were withdrawn, he harangued them to the following effect:

"If your courage and fidelity had not been sufficiently proved by me, this favorable opportunity[119] would have occurred to no purpose; mighty hopes, absolute power, would in vain be within our grasp; nor should I, depending on irresolution or fickle-mindedness, pursue contingencies instead of certainties. But as I have, on many remarkable occasions, experienced your bravery and attachment to me, I have ventured to engage in a most important and glorious enterprise. I am aware, too, that whatever advantages or evils affect you, the same affect me; and to have the same desires and the same aversions, is assuredly a firm bond of friendship.

"What I have been meditating you have already heard separately. But my ardor for action is daily more and more excited, when I consider what our future condition of life must be, unless we ourselves assert our claims to liberty. [120] For since the government has fallen under the power and jurisdiction of a few, kings and princes[121] have constantly been their tributaries; nations and states have paid them taxes; but all the rest of us, however brave and worthy, whether noble or plebeian, have been regarded as a mere mob, without interest or authority, and subject to those, to whom, if the state were in a sound condition, we should be a terror. Hence, all influence, power, honor, and wealth, are in their hands, or where they dispose of them: to us they have left only insults,[122] dangers, persecutions, and poverty. To such indignities, O bravest of men, how long will you submit? Is it not better to die in a glorious attempt,

than, after having been the sport of other men's insolence, to resign a wretched and degraded existence with ignominy?

"But success (I call gods and men to witness!) is in our own hands. Our years are fresh, our spirit is unbroken; among our oppressors, on the contrary, through age and wealth a general debility has been produced. We have therefore only to make a beginning; the course of events[123] will accomplish the rest.

"Who in the world, indeed, that has the feelings of a man, can endure that they should have a superfluity of riches, to squander in building over seas[124] and leveling mountains, and that means should be wanting to us even for the necessaries of life; that they should join together two houses or more, and that we should not have a hearth to call our own? They, though they purchase pictures, statues, and embossed plate; [125] though they pull down now buildings and erect others, and lavish and abuse their wealth in every possible method; yet can not, with the utmost efforts of caprice, exhaust it. But for us there is poverty at home, debts abroad; our present circumstances are bad, our prospects much worse; and what, in a word, have we left, but a miserable existence?

"Will you not, then, awake to action? Behold that liberty, that liberty for which you have so often wished, with wealth, honor, and glory, are set before your eyes. All these prizes fortune offers to the victorious. Let the enterprise itself, then, let the opportunity, let your poverty, your dangers, and the glorious spoils of war, animate you far more than my words. Use me either as your leader or your fellow-

soldier; neither my heart nor my hand shall be wanting to you. These objects I hope to effect, in concert with you, in the character of consul; unless, indeed, my expectation deceives me, and you prefer to be slaves rather than masters."

XXI. When these men, surrounded with numberless evils, but without any resources or hopes of good, had heard this address, though they thought it much for their advantage to disturb the public tranquillity, yet most of them called on Catiline to state on what terms they were to engage in the contest; what benefits they were to expect from taking up arms; and what support and encouragement they had, and in what quarters. [126] Catiline then promised them the abolition of their debts;[127] a proscription of the wealthy citizens;[128] offices, sacerdotal dignities, plunder, and all other gratifications which war, and the license of conquerors, can afford. He added that Piso was in Hither Spain, and Publius Sittius Nucerinus with an army in Mauritania, both of whom were privy to his plans; that Caius Antonius, whom he hoped to have for a colleague, was canvassing for the consulship, a man with whom he was intimate, and who was involved in all manner of embarrassments; and that, in conjunction with him, he himself, when consul, would commence operations. He, moreover, assailed all the respectable citizens with reproaches, commended each of his associates by name, reminded one of his poverty, another of his ruling passion, [129] several others of their danger or disgrace, and many of the spoils which they had obtained by the victory of Sylla. When he saw their spirits sufficiently elevated, he charged

them to attend to his interest at the election of consuls, and dismissed the assembly.

XXII. There were some, at the time, who said that Catiline, having ended his speech, and wishing to bind his accomplices in guilt by an oath, handed round among them, in goblets, the blood of a human body mixed with wine; and that when all, after an imprecation, had tasted of it, as is usual in sacred rites, he disclosed his design; and they asserted[130] that he did this, in order that they might be the more closely attached to one another, by being mutually conscious of such an atrocity. But some thought that this report, and many others, were invented by persons who supposed that the odium against Cicero, which afterward arose, might be lessened by imputing an enormity of guilt to the conspirators who had suffered death. The evidence which I have obtained, in support of this charge, is not at all in proportion to its magnitude.

XXIII. Among those present at this meeting was Quintus Curius,[131] a man of no mean family, but immersed in vices and crimes, and whom the censors had ignominiously expelled from the senate. In this person there was not less levity than impudence; he could neither keep secret what he heard, not conceal his own crimes; he was altogether heedless what he said or what he did. He had long had a criminal intercourse with Fulvia, a woman of high birth; but growing less acceptable to her, because, in his reduced circumstances, he had less means of being liberal, he began, on a sudden, to boast, and to promise her seas and mountains;[132] threatening her, at times, with the sword, if she were not submissive to his will; and acting, in his

general conduct, with greater arrogance than ever.[133] Fulvia, having learned the cause of his extravagant behavior, did not keep such danger to the state a secret; but, without naming her informant, communicated to several persons what she had heard and under what circumstances, concerning Catiline's conspiracy. This intelligence it was that incited the feelings of the citizens to give the consulship to Marcus Tullius Cicero.[134] For before this period, most of the nobility were moved with jealousy, and thought the consulship in some degree sullied, if a man of no family,[135] however meritorious, obtained it. But when danger showed itself, envy and pride were laid aside. XXIV. Accordingly, when the comitia were held, Marcus Tullius and Caius Antonius were declared consuls; an event which gave the first shock to the conspirators. The ardor of Catiline, however, was not at all diminished; he formed every day new schemes; he deposited arms, in convenient places, throughout Italy; he sent sums of money borrowed on his own credit, or that of his friends, to a certain Manlius, [136] at Faesulae,[137] who was subsequently the first to engage in hostilities. At this period, too, he is said to have attached to his cause great numbers of men of all classes, and some women, who had, in their earlier days, supported an expensive life by the price of their beauty, but who, when age had lessened their gains but not their extravagance, had contracted heavy debts. By the influence of these females, Catiline hoped to gain over the slaves in Rome, to get the city set on fire, and either to secure the support of their husbands or take away their lives.

XXV. In the number of those ladies was Sempronia,[138] a woman who had committed many crimes with the spirit of a man. In birth and beauty, in her husband and her children, she was extremely fortunate; she was skilled in Greek and Roman literature; she could sing, play, and dance,[139] with greater elegance than became a woman of virtue, and possessed many other accomplishments that tend to excite the passions. But nothing was ever less valued by her than honor or chastity. Whether she was more prodigal of her money or her reputation, it would have been difficult to decide. Her desires were so ardent that she oftener made advances to the other sex than waited for solicitation. She had frequently, before this period, forfeited her word, forsworn debts, been privy to murder, and hurried into the utmost excesses by her extravagance and poverty. But her abilities were by no means despicable;[140] she could compose verses, jest, and join in conversation either modest, tender, or licentious. In a word, she was distinguished[141] by much refinement of wit, and much grace of expression.

XXVI. Catiline, having made these arrangements, still canvassed for the consulship for the following year; hoping that, if he should be elected, he would easily manage Antonius according to his pleasure. Nor did he, in the mean time remain inactive, but devised schemes, in every possible way, against Cicero, who, however, did not want skill or policy to guard, against them. For, at the very beginning of his consulship, he had, by making many promises through Fulvia, prevailed on Quintus Curius, whom I have already mentioned, to give him secret information of

Catiline's proceedings. He had also persuaded his colleague, Antonius, by an arrangement respecting their provinces, [142] to entertain no sentiment of disaffection toward the state; and he kept around him, though without ostentation, a guard of his friends and dependents.

When the day of the comitia came, and neither Catiline's efforts for the consulship, nor the plots which he had laid for the consuls in the Campus Martius,[143] were attended with success, he determined to proceed to war, and resort to the utmost extremities, since what he had attempted secretly had ended in confusion and disgrace.[144]

XXVII. He accordingly dispatched Caius Manlius to Faesulae, and the adjacent parts of Etruria; one Septimius, of Carinum,[145] into the Picenian territory; Caius Julius into Apulia; and others to various places, wherever he thought each would be most serviceable.[146] He himself, in the mean time, was making many simultaneous efforts at Rome; he laid plots for the consul; he arranged schemes for burning the city; he occupied suitable posts with armed men; he went constantly armed himself, and ordered his followers to do the same; he exhorted them to be always on their guard and prepared for action; he was active and vigilant by day and by night, and was exhausted neither by sleeplessness nor by toil. At last, however, when none of his numerous projects succeeded,[147] he again, with the aid of Marcus Porcius Laeca, convoked the leaders of the conspiracy in the dead of night, when, after many complaints of their apathy, he informed them that he had sent forward Manlius to that body of men whom he had prepared to take up arms; and others of the confederates