

Who discovered his violence and unbridled ferocity.  
Which has often happened not only to individuals, but also to most powerful nations.

In the whole world.

Because he inflicted the annoyances of his old age on your families.

IX. Cicero, in his treatise on the Commonwealth, says, "As Menelaus of Lacedæmon had a certain agreeable sweetness of eloquence." And in another place he says, "Let him cultivate brevity in speaking."

By the evidence of which arts, as Tully says, it is a shame for the conscience of the judge to be misled. For he says, "And as nothing in a commonwealth ought to be so uncorrupt as a suffrage and a sentence, I do not see why the man who perverts them by money is worthy of punishment, while he who does so by eloquence is even praised. Indeed, I myself think that he who corrupts the judge by his speech does more harm than he who does so by money, because no one can corrupt a sensible man by money, though he may by speaking."

And when Scipio had said this, Mummius praised him greatly, for he was extravagantly imbued with a hatred of orators.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH BOOK.

IN this last book of his Commonwealth, Cicero labors to show that truly pious philanthropical and patriotic statesmen will not only be rewarded on earth by the approval of conscience and the applause of all good citizens, but that they may expect hereafter immortal glory in new forms of being. To illustrate this, he introduces the "Dream of Scipio," in which he explains the resplendent doctrines of Plato respecting the immortality of the soul with inimitable dignity and elegance. This *Somnium Scipionis*, for which we are indebted to the citation of Macrobius, is the most beautiful thing of the kind ever written. It has been intensely admired by all European scholars, and will be still more so. There are two translations of it in our language; one attached to Oliver's edition of Cicero's Thoughts, the other by Mr. Danby, published in 1829. Of these we have freely availed ourselves, and as freely we express our acknowledgments.

## BOOK VI.

### SCIPIO'S DREAM.

I. THEREFORE you rely upon all the prudence of this rule, which has derived its very name (*prudentia*) from foreseeing (*a providendo*). Wherefore the citizen must so prepare himself as to be always armed against those things which trouble the constitution of a state. And that

dissension of the citizens, when one party separates from and attacks another, is called sedition.

And in truth in civil dissensions, as the good are of more importance than the many, I think that we should regard the weight of the citizens, and not their number.

For the lusts, being severe mistresses of the thoughts, command and compel many an unbridled action. And as they cannot be satisfied or appeased by any means, they urge those whom they have inflamed with their allurements to every kind of atrocity.

II. Which indeed was so much the greater in him because though the cause of the colleagues was identical, not only was their unpopularity not equal, but the influence of Gracchus was employed in mitigating the hatred borne to Claudius.

Who encountered the number of the chiefs and nobles with these words, and left behind him that mournful and dignified expression of his gravity and influence.

That, as he writes, a thousand men might every day descend into the forum with cloaks dyed in purple.

[*The next paragraph is unintelligible.*]

For our ancestors wished marriages to be firmly established.

There is a speech extant of Lælius with which we are all acquainted, expressing how pleasing to the immortal gods are the \* \* \* and \* \* \* of the priests.

III. Cicero, writing about the Commonwealth, in imitation of Plato, has related the story of the return of Er the Pamphylian to life; who, as he says, had come to life again after he had been placed on the funeral pile, and related many secrets about the shades below; not speaking, like Plato, in a fabulous imitation of truth, but using a certain reasonable invention of an ingenious dream, cleverly intimating that these things which were uttered about the immortality of the soul, and about heaven, are not the inventions of dreaming philosophers, nor the incredible fables which the Epicureans ridicule, but the conjectures of wise men. He insinuates that that Scipio who by the subjugation of Carthage obtained Africanus as a surname for his family, gave notice to Scipio the son of Paulus of the treachery which threatened him from his relations, and the course of fate, because by the necessity of numbers he was confined in the period of a perfect life, and he says that he in the fifty-sixth year of his age \* \* \*

IV. Some of our religion who love Plato, on account of his admirable kind of eloquence, and of some correct opinions which he held, say that he had some opinions similar to my own touching the resurrection of the dead, which subject Tully touches on in his treatise on the Commonwealth, and says that he was rather jesting than intending to say that was true. For he asserts that a man returned to life, and related some stories which harmonized with the discussions of the Platonists.

V. In this point the imitation has especially preserved the likeness of the work, because, as Plato, in the conclusion of his volume, represents a certain person who had returned to life, which he appeared to have quitted, as indicating what is the condition of souls when stripped of the

body, with the addition of a certain not unnecessary description of the spheres and stars, an appearance of circumstances indicating things of the same kind is related by the Scipio of Cicero, as having been brought before him in sleep.

VI. Tully is found to have preserved this arrangement with no less judgment than genius. After, in every condition of the Commonwealth, whether of leisure or business, he has given the palm to justice, he has placed the sacred abodes of the immortal souls, and the secrets of the heavenly regions, on the very summit of his completed work, indicating whither they must come, or rather return, who have managed the republic with prudence, justice, fortitude, and moderation. But that Platonic relater of secrets was a man of the name of Er, a Pamphylian by nation, a soldier by profession, who, after he appeared to have died from wounds received in battle, and twelve days afterward was about to receive the honors of the funeral pile with the others who were slain at the same time, suddenly either recovering his life, or else never having lost it, as if he were giving a public testimony, related to all men all that he had done or seen in the days that he had thus passed between life and death. Although Cicero, as if himself conscious of the truth, grieves that this story has been ridiculed by the ignorant, still, avoiding giving an example of foolish reproach, he preferred speaking of the relater as of one awakened from a swoon rather than restored to life.

VII. And before we look at the words of the dream we must explain what kind of persons they are by whom Cicero says that even the account of Plato was ridiculed, who are not apprehensive that the same thing may happen to them. Nor by this expression does he wish the ignorant mob to be understood, but a kind of men who are ignorant of the truth, though pretending to be philosophers with a display of learning, who, it was notorious, had read such things, and were eager to find faults. We will say, therefore, who they are whom he reports as having levelled light reproaches against so great a philosopher, and who of them has even left an accusation of him committed to writing, etc. The whole faction of the Epicureans, always wandering at an equal distance from truth, and thinking everything ridiculous which they do not understand, has ridiculed the sacred volume, and the most venerable mysteries of nature. But Colotes, who is somewhat celebrated and remarkable for his loquacity among the pupils of Epicurus, has even recorded in a book the bitter reproaches which he aims at him. But since the other arguments which he foolishly urges have no connection with the dream of which we are now talking, we will pass them over at present, and attend only to the calumny which will stick both to Cicero and Plato, unless it is silenced. He says that a fable ought not to have been invented by a philosopher, since no kind of falsehood is suitable to professors of truth. For why, says he, if you wish to give us a notion of heavenly things and to teach us the nature of souls, did you not do so by a simple and plain explanation? Why was a character invented, and circumstances, and strange events, and a scene of cunningly adduced falsehood arranged, to pollute the very door of the investigation of truth by a lie? Since these things, though they are said of the Platonic Er, do also attack the rest of our dreaming Africanus.

VIII. This occasion incited Scipio to relate his dream, which he declares that he had buried in silence for a long time. For when Lælius was complaining that there were no statues of Nasica erected in any public place, as a reward for his having slain the tyrant, Scipio replied in these words: "But although the consciousness itself of great deeds is to wise men the most ample reward of virtue, yet that divine nature ought to have, not statues fixed in lead, nor triumphs with withering laurels, but some more stable and lasting kinds of rewards." "What are they?" said Lælius. "Then," said Scipio, "suffer me, since we have now been keeping holiday for three days, \* \* \* etc." By which preface he came to the relation of his dream; pointing out that those were the more stable and lasting kinds of rewards which he himself had seen in heaven reserved for good governors of commonwealths.

IX. When I had arrived in Africa, where I was, as you are aware, military tribune of the fourth legion under the consul Manilius, there was nothing of which I was more earnestly desirous than to see King Masinissa, who, for very just reasons, had been always the especial friend of our family. When I was introduced to him, the old man embraced me, shed tears, and then, looking up to heaven, exclaimed—I thank thee, O supreme Sun, and ye also, ye other celestial beings, that before I depart from this life I behold in my kingdom, and in this my palace, Publius Cornelius Scipio, by whose mere name I seem to be reanimated; so completely and indelibly is the recollection of that best and most invincible of men, Africanus, imprinted in my mind.

After this, I inquired of him concerning the affairs of his kingdom. He, on the other hand, questioned me about the condition of our Commonwealth, and in this mutual interchange of conversation we passed the whole of that day.

X. In the evening we were entertained in a manner worthy the magnificence of a king, and carried on our discourse for a considerable part of the night. And during all this time the old man spoke of nothing but Africanus, all whose actions, and even remarkable sayings, he remembered distinctly. At last, when we retired to bed, I fell into a more profound sleep than usual, both because I was fatigued with my journey, and because I had sat up the greatest part of the night.

Here I had the following dream, occasioned, as I verily believe, by our preceding conversation; *for it frequently*

happens that the thoughts and discourses which have employed us in the daytime produce in our sleep an effect somewhat similar to that which Ennius writes happened to him about Homer, of whom, in his waking hours, he used frequently to think and speak.

Africanus, I thought, appeared to me in that shape, with which I was better acquainted from his picture than from any personal knowledge of him. When I perceived it was he, I confess I trembled with consternation; but he addressed me, saying, Take courage, my Scipio; be not afraid, and carefully remember what I shall say to you.

XI. Do you see that city Carthage, which, though brought under the Roman yoke by me, is now renewing former wars, and cannot live in peace? (and he pointed to Carthage from a lofty spot, full of stars, and brilliant, and glittering)—to attack which city you are this day arrived in a station not much superior to that of a private soldier. Before two years, however, are elapsed, you shall be consul, and complete its overthrow; and you shall obtain, by your own merit, the surname of Africanus, which as yet belongs to you no otherwise than as derived from me. And when you have destroyed Carthage, and received the honor of a triumph, and been made censor, and, in quality of ambassador, visited Egypt, Syria, Asia, and Greece, you shall be elected a second time consul in your absence, and, by utterly destroying Numantia, put an end to a most dangerous war.

But when you have entered the Capitol in your triumphal car, you shall find the Roman Commonwealth all in a ferment, through the intrigues of my grandson Tiberius Gracchus.

XII. It is on this occasion, my dear Africanus, that you show your country the greatness of your understanding, capacity, and prudence. But I see that the destiny, however, of that time is, as it were, uncertain; for when your age shall have accomplished seven times eight revolutions of the sun, and your fatal hours shall be marked out by the natural product of these two numbers, each of which is esteemed a perfect one, but for different reasons, then shall the whole city have recourse to you alone, and place its hopes in your auspicious name. On you the senate,

all good citizens, the allies, the people of Latium, shall cast their eyes; on you the preservation of the State shall entirely depend. In a word, *if you escape the impious machinations of your relatives*, you will, in quality of dictator, establish order and tranquillity in the Commonwealth.

When on this Lælius made an exclamation, and the rest of the company groaned loudly, Scipio, with a gentle smile, said, I entreat you, do not wake me out of my dream, but have patience, and hear the rest.

XIII. Now, in order to encourage you, my dear Africanus, continued the shade of my ancestor, to defend the State with the greater cheerfulness, be assured that, for all those who have in any way conduced to the preservation, defence, and enlargement of their native country, there is a certain place in heaven where they shall enjoy an eternity of happiness. For nothing on earth is more agreeable to God, the Supreme Governor of the universe, than the assemblies and societies of men united together by laws, which are called states. It is from heaven their rulers and preservers came, and thither they return.

XIV. Though at these words I was extremely troubled, not so much at the fear of death as at the perfidy of my own relations, yet I recollected myself enough to inquire whether he himself, my father Paulus, and others whom we look upon as dead, were really living.

Yes, truly, replied he, they all enjoy life who have escaped from the chains of the body as from a prison. But as to what you call life on earth, that is no more than one form of death. But see; here comes your father Paulus towards you! And as soon as I observed him, my eyes burst out into a flood of tears; but he took me in his arms, embraced me, and bade me not weep.

XV. When my first transports subsided, and I regained the liberty of speech, I addressed my father thus: Thou best and most venerable of parents, since this, as I am informed by Africanus, is the only substantial life, why do I linger on earth, and not rather haste to come hither where you are?

That, replied he, is impossible: unless that God, whose temple is all that vast expanse you behold, shall free you

from the fetters of the body, you can have no admission into this place. Mankind have received their being on this very condition, that they should labor for the preservation of that globe which is situated, as you see, in the midst of this temple, and is called earth.

Men are likewise endowed with a soul, which is a portion of the eternal fires which you call stars and constellations; and which, being round, spherical bodies, animated by divine intelligences, perform their cycles and revolutions with amazing rapidity. It is your duty, therefore, my Publius, and that of all who have any veneration for the Gods, to preserve this wonderful union of soul and body; nor without the express command of Him who gave you a soul should the least thought be entertained of quitting human life, lest you seem to desert the post assigned you by God himself.

But rather follow the examples of your grandfather here, and of me, your father, in paying a strict regard to justice and piety; which is due in a great degree to parents and relations, but most of all to our country. Such a life as this is the true way to heaven, and to the company of those, who, after having lived on earth and escaped from the body, inhabit the place which you now behold.

XVI. This was the shining circle, or zone, whose remarkable brightness distinguishes it among the constellations, and which, after the Greeks, you call the Milky Way.

From thence, as I took a view of the universe, everything appeared beautiful and admirable; for there those stars are to be seen that are never visible from our globe, and everything appears of such magnitude as we could not have imagined. The least of all the stars was that removed farthest from heaven, and situated next to the earth; I mean our moon, which shines with a borrowed light. Now, the globes of the stars far surpass the magnitude of our earth, which at that distance appeared so exceedingly small that I could not but be sensibly affected on seeing our whole empire no larger than if we touched the earth, as it were, at a single point.

XVII. And as I continued to observe the earth with great attention, How long, I pray you, said Africanus,

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