

dignity¹ to render himself obnoxious² to such censure." "Do as you please, then," replied Crassus; "but for the present, as it is time, I think we must rise, and take some repose; in the afternoon, if it is then agreeable to you, I will say something on these points, unless perchance you may wish to put me off till to-morrow." They all replied that they were ready to hear him either at once, or in the afternoon if he preferred; as soon however as possible.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

CICERO, in the introduction to this book, laments the sad deaths of Crassus and Antonius. He then proceeds to relate Crassus's further remarks on eloquence, and especially on style and delivery, in which he was thought to excel all other speakers. See *Cic. de Clar. Orat.* c. 38. He shows that an orator should speak correctly, perspicuously, elegantly, and to the purpose. Style is to be ornamented by a tasteful choice of words, and by tropes and figures; and it must have a certain rhythm or harmony. Some observations are added on action and delivery in general. In c. 14 a digression is made on the praises of eloquence, and the combination of a knowledge of philosophy, especially the Academic and Peripatetic, with the study of it.

I. WHEN I proceeded to execute my design, brother Quintus, of relating and committing to writing in this third book, the remarks which Crassus made after the dissertation of Antonius, bitter remembrance renewed in my mind its former concern and regret; for the genius worthy of immortality, the learning, the virtue that were in Lucius Crassus, were all extinguished by sudden death, within ten days from the day which is comprised in this and the former book. When he returned to Rome on the last day of the theatrical entertainments,² he was put into a violent emotion by that oration which was reported to have been delivered in an assembly of the people by Philippus, who, it was agreed, had declared, "that he must look for another council, as he could not

¹ A man who has been censor, as you have been. *Proust.*

² Which accompanied the public games. Compare i. 7.

carry on the government with such a senate ;” and on the morning of the thirteenth of September, both Crassus and a full senate came into the house on the call of Drusus. There, when Drusus had made many complaints against Philippus, he brought formally before the senate the fact that the consul had thrown such grievous obloquy on that order, in his speech to the people. Here, as I have often heard it unanimously said by men of the greatest judgment, although indeed it continually happened to Crassus, whenever he had delivered a speech more exquisite than ordinary, that he was always thought never to have spoken better, yet by universal consent it was then determined, that all other orators had always been excelled by Crassus, but that on that day he had been excelled by himself ; for he deplored the misfortune and unsupported condition of the senate ; an order whose hereditary dignity was then being torn from it by a consul, as by some lawless ruffian, a consul whose duty it was to act the part of a good parent or trusty guardian towards it ; but said that it was not surprising, if, after he had ruined the commonwealth by his own counsels, he should divorce the counsels of the senate from the commonwealth. When he had applied these expressions, which were like firebrands, to Philippus, who was a man of violence, as well as of eloquence, and of the utmost vigour to resist opposition, he could not restrain himself, but burst forth into a furious flame, and resolved to bind Crassus to good behaviour, by forfeiting his securities.¹ On that occasion, many things are reported to have been uttered by Crassus with a sort of divine sublimity, refusing to acknowledge as a consul him who would not allow him to possess the senatorial dignity : *Do you, said he, who, when you thought the general authority of the whole senatorial order entrusted to you as a pledge, yet perfidiously annulled it in the view of the Roman people, imagine that I can be terrified by such petty forfeitures as those ? It is not such pledges that are to be forfeited, if you would bind Lucius Crassus to silence ; for that purpose you must cut out this tongue ; and even if it*

¹ *Pignoribus ablatis*. The senators and others were obliged to attend the senate when they were summoned, and to be submissive to the superior magistrates, or they might be punished by fine and distraint of their property. See Livy, iii. 38 ; xliii. 16 ; Plin. Ep. iv. 29 ; Cic. Phil. i. 5 ; Suet. Jul. c. 17 ; Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 2.

be torn out, the freedom in my very breath will confound your audacity.

II. It appeared that a multitude of other expressions were then uttered by him with the most vehement efforts of mind, thought, and spirits; and that that resolution of his, which the senate adopted in a full house, was proposed by him with the utmost magnificence and dignity of language, *That the counsel and fidelity of the senate had never been wanting to the commonwealth, in order to do justice to the Roman people;* and he was present (as appears from the names entered in the register) at the recording of the resolution. This however was the last swan-like note and speech of that divine orator; and, as if expecting to hear it again, we used, after his death, to go into the senate-house, that we might contemplate the spot on which he had last stood to speak; for we heard that he was seized at the time with a pain in his side while he was speaking, and that a copious perspiration followed; after which he was struck with a chillness, and, returning home in a fever, died the seventh day after of pleurisy. O how fallacious are the hopes of mortals, how frail is our condition, and how insignificant all our ambitious efforts, which are often broken and thrown down in the middle of their course, and overwhelmed as it were in their voyage, even before they gain a sight of the harbour! For as long as the life of Crassus was perplexed with the toils of ambition, so long was he more distinguished for the performance of private duties, and the praises due to his genius, than for any benefit that he reaped from his greatness, or for the dignified rank which he bore in the republic; but the first year which, after a discharge of all the honourable offices of the state, opened to him the entrance to supreme authority by universal consent, overthrew all his hopes, and all his future schemes of life, by death. This was a melancholy occurrence to his friends, a grievous calamity to his country, and a heavy affliction to all the virtuous part of mankind; but such misfortunes afterwards fell upon the commonwealth, that life does not appear to me to have been taken away from Lucius Crassus by the immortal gods as a privation, but death to have been bestowed on him as a blessing. He did not live to behold Italy blazing with war, or the senate overwhelmed with popular odium, or the leading men of the state accused of

the most heinous crimes, or the affliction of his daughter, or the banishment of his son-at-law,¹ or the most calamitous flight of Caius Marius, or that most atrocious of all slaughters after his return, or, finally, that republic in every way disgraced, in which, while it continued most flourishing, he had by far the pre-eminence over all other men in glory.

III. But led away as I am by my reflections to touch upon the power and vicissitudes of fortune, my observations shall not expatiate too widely, but shall be confined almost to the very personages who are contained in this dialogue, which I have begun to detail. For who would not call the death of Lucius Crassus, which has been so often lamented by multitudes, a happy one, when he calls to mind the fate of those very persons who were almost the last that held discourse with him? For we ourselves remember, that Quintus Catulus, a man distinguished for almost every species of merit, when he entreated, not the security of his fortunes, but retreat into exile, was reduced to deprive himself of life. It was then, too, that that illustrious head of Marcus Antonius, by whom the lives of so many citizens had been preserved, was fixed upon the very rostra on which he had so strenuously defended the republic when consul, and which he had adorned with imperial trophies when censor. Not far from his was exposed the head of Caius Julius, (who was betrayed by his Tuscan host,) with that of Lucius Julius his brother ; so that he who did not behold such atrocities may justly be thought to have prolonged his life during the existence of the constitution, and to have expired together with it. He neither beheld his near relation, Publius Crassus, a man of the greatest magnanimity, slain by his own hand, nor saw the image of Vesta sprinkled with the blood of the pontifex, his colleague ; and (such were his feelings towards his country) even the cruel death of Caius Carbo, his greatest enemy, that occurred on the same day, would have caused additional grief to him. He did not behold the horrible and miserable fate of those young men who had devoted themselves to him ; of whom Caius Cotta, whom he had left in a promising condition, was expelled, through popular prejudice, from his office of

¹ His daughter Licinia was married to Publius Scipio, the grandson of Serapion, who was instrumental in the death of Tiberius Gracchus. Cic. Brut. 53. *Ellendt.*

tribune, a few days after the death of Crassus, and, not many months afterwards, driven from the city. And Sulpicius, who had been involved in the same popular fury, attempted in his tribuneship to spoil of all their honours those with whom, as a private individual, he had lived in the greatest familiarity; but when he was shooting forth into the highest glory of eloquence, his life was taken from him by the sword, and punishment was inflicted on his rashness, not without great damage to the republic. I am indeed of opinion that you, Crassus, received as well your birth as your death from the peculiar appointment of divine providence, both on account of the distinction of your life and the season of your death; for, in accordance with your virtue and firmness of mind, you must either have submitted to the cruelty of civil slaughter; or if any fortune had rescued you from so barbarous a death, the same fortune would have compelled you to be a spectator of the ruins of your country; and not only the dominion of ill-designing men, but even the victory of the honourable party, would, on account of the civil massacres intermingled with it, have been an affliction to you.

IV. Indeed, when I reflect, brother Quintus, upon the calamities of these great men, (whose fates I have just mentioned,) and those which we ourselves have felt and experienced from our extraordinary and eminent love for our country, your opinions appear to me to be founded on justice and wisdom, as you have always, on account of such numerous, such violent, and such sudden afflictions as have happened to the most illustrious and virtuous men, dissuaded me from all civil contention and strife. But, because we cannot put affairs into the same state as if nothing had occurred, and because our extreme toils are compensated and mitigated by great glory, let us apply ourselves to those consolations, which are not only pleasant to us when troubles have subsided, but may also be salutary while they continue; let us deliver as a memorial to posterity the remaining and almost the last discourse of Lucius Crassus; and let us express the gratitude to him which he so justly merited, although in terms by no means equal to his genius, yet to the best of our endeavours; for there is not any of us, when he reads the admirably written dialogues of Plato, in almost all of which the character of Socrates is represented, who

does not, though what is written of him is written in a divine spirit, conceive something still greater of him about whom it is written : and it is also my request, not indeed to you, my brother, who attribute to me perfection in all things, but to others who shall take this treatise into their hands, that they would entertain a nobler conception of Lucius Crassus than any that is expressed by me. For I, who was not present at this dialogue, and to whom Caius Cotta communicated only the topics and heads of the dissertation, have endeavoured to shadow forth in the conversation of the speakers those peculiar styles of oratory, in which I knew that each of them was conspicuous. But if any person shall be induced by the common opinion, to think either that Antonius was more jejune, or Crassus more exuberant in style, than they have been respectively described by me, he will be among the number of those who either never heard these great men, or who have not abilities to judge ; for each of them was (as I have explained before) superior to all other speakers, in application, and genius, and learning, as well as excellent in his particular style, so that embellishment in language was not wanting in Antonius, nor redundant in Crassus.

V. As soon therefore as they had withdrawn before noon, and reposed themselves a little, Cotta said that he particularly observed that Crassus employed all the time about the middle of the day in the most earnest and profound meditation ; and that he himself, who was well acquainted with the countenance which he assumed whenever he was going to speak in public, and the nature of his looks when he was fixed in contemplation, and had often remarked them in causes of the greatest importance, came on purpose, while the rest were asleep, into the room in which Crassus had lain down on a couch prepared for him, and that, as soon as he perceived him to be settled in a thoughtful posture, he immediately retired ; and that almost two hours passed in that perfect stillness. Afterwards, when they all, as the day was now verging to the afternoon, waited upon Crassus, Cæsar said, "Well, Crassus, shall we go and take our seats? though we only come to put you in mind of your promise, and not to demand the performance of it." Crassus then replied, "Do you imagine that I have the assurance to think that I can continue longer indebted to such friends as you, especially in

an obligation of this nature?" "What place then will suit you?" said Cæsar; "a seat in the middle of the wood, for that is the most shady and cool?" "Very well," replied Crassus, "for there is in that spot a seat not at all unsuited for this discourse of ours." This arrangement being agreeable to the rest of the company, they went into the wood, and sat down there with the most earnest desire to listen.

Crassus then said, "Not only the influence of your authority and friendship, but also the ready compliance of Antonius, have taken from me all liberty of refusal, though I had an excellent pretext for refusing. In the partition, however, of this dissertation between us, Antonius, when he assumed to himself the part of speaking upon those matters which form the subject of the orator's speech, and left to me to explain how they should be embellished, divided things which are in their nature incapable of separation; for as every speech consists of the matter and the language, the language can have no place if you take away the matter, nor the matter receive any illustration if you take away the language. Indeed, the great men of antiquity, embracing something of superior magnificence in their ideas, appear to me to have seen further into the nature of things than the visual faculties of our minds can penetrate; as they said that all these things, above and below, formed one system, and were linked together in strict union by one and the same power, and one principle of universal harmony in nature; for there is no order of things which can either of itself, if forcibly separated from the rest, preserve a permanent existence, or without which the rest can maintain their power and eternal duration.

VI. "But, if this reasoning appear to be too comprehensive to be embraced by human sense and understanding, yet that saying of Plato is true, and certainly not unknown to you, Catulus, 'that all the learning of these liberal and polite departments of knowledge is linked together in one bond of union; for when the power of that reason, by which the causes and events of things are known, is once thoroughly discerned, a certain wonderful agreement and harmony, as it were, in all the sciences is discovered.' But, if this also appear to be too sublime a thought for us to contemplate who are prostrate on the earth, it, however, certainly is our duty to know and remember

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