

**THE LETTERS OF MARCUS
TULLIUS CICERO TO
SEVERAL OF HIS FRIENDS.
IN FIVE VOLUMES. VOL. V**

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The Letters of Marcus Tullius Cicero to Several of His Friends. In Five Volumes. Vol. V by
Marcus Tullius Cicero & William Melmoth

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OF
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO
TO
SEVERAL OF HIS FRIENDS.

WITH REMARKS,
BY
WILLIAM MELMOTH, Esq.
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

*Quo fit ut omnis
Fotiva pateat veluti descripta tabella,
Vita sentis.*———*HORAT.*

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LETTERS
OF
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO
TO
SEVERAL OF HIS FRIENDS.

BOOK THIRTEENTH—CONTINUED.

LETTER XI.

[A. U. 710.]

ASINIUS POLLIO * TO CICERO.

You must not wonder that you have heard nothing from me, in relation to public affairs, since

* Asinius Pollio was, in every respect, one of the most accomplished persons among his contemporaries. His extensive genius was equal to all the nobler branches of polite literature, and he gave the most applauded proofs of his talents as a poet, an orator, and an historian. He united the most lively and pleasing vein of wit and pleasantry, with all

the breaking out of the war. Our couriers have always found it difficult to pass unmolested through the forest of Castulo; * but it is now more than ever infested with robbers. These banditti, however, are by no means the principal obstruction to our intercourse with Rome, as the mails are perpetually searched and detained by the soldiers that are posted for that purpose, by both parties, in every quarter of the country. Accordingly, if I had not received letters by a ship, which lately arrived in this river, † I should have been utterly ignorant of

that strength and solidity of understanding which is necessary to render a man of weight in the more serious and important occasions of life; in allusion to which uncommon assemblage of qualities, it was said of him, that he was a *man omnium Acorum*. It is to be regretted, that a character so truly brilliant on the intellectual side, should shine with less lustre in a moral view. It is evident, however, from the present epistle, that, in taking part with Cæsar against Pompey, private considerations were of more force with him than public utility, and determined him to support a cause which his heart condemned. This letter was written from the farther Spain; of which province, Cæsar, a short time before his death, had appointed Pollio governor.

* A city anciently of great note; at present it is only a small village, called *Cæstoria*, in the province of New Castile, in Spain.

† The Guadalquivir, upon which the city of Corduba, from whence this letter is dated, was situated.

what has been transacted in your part of the world. But now that a communication by sea is thus opened between us, I shall frequently, and with great pleasure, embrace the opportunity of corresponding with you.

Believe me, there is no danger of my being influenced by the persuasions of the person you mention. * As much as the world abhors him, he is far from being detested to that degree which I know he deserves; and I have so strong an aversion to the man, that I would upon no consideration bear a part in any measures wherein he is concerned. † Inclined both by my temper and my studies to be the friend of tranquillity and freedom, I frequently and bitterly lamented our late unhappy civil wars. But as the formidable enemies which I had among both parties, rendered it altogether unsafe for me to remain neuter, so I would not take up arms on that side where I knew I should be perpetually ex-

* Antony, as Manntius conjectures, though some of the commentators, with greater probability, suppose that he means Lepidus.—*Vid. Epist. Famil. x. 11. & 15.*

† Nothing could be more insincere, it should seem, than these professions, as it is probable that Pollio was at this time determined to join Antony. It is certain, at least, that he did so soon afterwards, and carried with him the troops under his command.—*Patercul. li. 69.*

posed to the insidious arts of my capital adversary.* But though my inclinations were not with the party I joined, my spirit, however, would not suffer me to stand undistinguished among them; in consequence of which, I was forward to engage in all the dangers of the cause I had espoused. With respect to Cæsar himself, I will confess, that I loved him with the highest and most inviolable affection; and, indeed, I had reason. For notwithstanding his acquaintance with me commenced so late as when he was in the height of his power, yet he admitted me into the same share of his friendship, as if I had been in the number of those with whom he had lived in the longest intimacy. Nevertheless, as often as I was at liberty to follow my own sentiments, I endeavoured that my conduct should be such as every honest man must approve; and whenever I was obliged to execute the orders I received, it was in a manner that evidently discovered how much my actions were at variance with my heart. The unjust odium, however, that I incurred by these unavoidable compliances, might well teach me the true value of liberty, and how wretched a condition

* The person hinted at is perhaps Cato; as Pollio had early distinguished his enmity towards that most illustrious of Romans, by a public impeachment. *Vid. Diel. de Cens. Corrupt. Eloquent.* 34.