

**THE FIRST AND SECOND
PHILIPPIC ORATIONS OF
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO**

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The first and second philippic orations of marcus tullius cicero by John R. King

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OF
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

*A NEW TRANSLATION
MAINLY FROM THE TEXT OF HALM*

BY
JOHN R. KING, M.A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF OXFORD COLLEGE, OXFORD

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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FIRST ORATION.

AFTER the assassination of Julius Cæsar, on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., Marcus Antonius, his colleague in the consulship, at first made overtures of friendship to the conspirators, and it was agreed on the one hand that no notice should be taken of his death; on the other, that all his measures should be ratified. On the day of his funeral, however, Antonius excited the people against the assassins, by dwelling in his funeral oration on the prowess of Cæsar and his generosity towards his fellow-citizens; and popular indignation rose to such a pitch, that the chief conspirators were obliged to flee from Rome.

Antonius, being left master of the position, was at first very moderate in his policy; but gradually he developed plans of avarice and self-aggrandisement, which he promoted to a great extent by forgeries, professing to emanate from Cæsar's papers; while he secured his personal safety by establishing a body-guard, and won the favour of the veterans by a new assignment of lands.

The first serious check to his schemes was given by Gaius Octavius, the future emperor Augustus, the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Cæsar.

On hearing of the dictator's death, he hastened to Italy, and at Brundisium was warmly welcomed by the veterans, to whom he announced himself as Gaius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, thus claiming his adoption by his uncle. After a favourable interview with Cicero, who had left the city shortly after the conspirators, he went to Rome about the beginning of May, and there ingratiated himself with the leading senators, as the direct opponent of Antonius.

By this time Decimus Brutus had retired to his province of Cisalpine Gaul, Trebonius and Cimber to Asia and Bithynia. Marcus Brutus and Cassius were still in Italy, having been deprived of their provinces by Antonius. Cicero, feeling that little could be done till new consuls should enter on office, determined to go to Greece, and actually set sail from Leucopetra. Driven back by stress of weather, and hearing that things were looking brighter at home, he changed his plans, and went back to Rome on August 31. He found that Antonius had summoned a meeting of the senate for September 1, but wishing to watch the course of events, he pleaded indisposition as an excuse for not attending. Antonius took the opportunity of delivering a violent harangue against him, which Cicero, in the consul's absence, answered at another meeting of the senate on the following day. In it his tone is studiously moderate, as though he felt that there was still a possibility of peace; and his criticism is directed rather against the consul's public policy than against his private character.

The speech is the first of a long series directed against Antonius, of which fourteen are extant. Of these, eleven were delivered in the senate, two—the fourth and sixth—at public meetings in the Forum, while the second, the most famous of them all, was never delivered, but published as a pamphlet in the latter part of 44 B.C. The name of *Philippics*, which has been given to these orations, from their supposed resemblance to those of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon, is at least as old as the time of Juvenal. The series not only contains some of Cicero's finest speeches, but has a further interest as showing Cicero's position in the state at the most influential and most honourable period of his life, and as giving us contemporary evidence about a very important crisis in the commonwealth.

M. TULLIUS CICERO'S
FOURTEEN PHILIPPIC ORATIONS.

THE FIRST ORATION.

BEFORE entering, my lords, upon the topics which at the present moment seem to need discussion, I will briefly explain the causes of my leaving Italy, and of my premature return. So long as I could hope that the republic had at length returned to its allegiance and admitted your authority, I resolved that I was bound to remain at home on guard as consular¹ and senator. Nor, indeed, did I either leave the city, or cease to keep a watchful eye upon the state, from the day on which we were convened in the temple of Tellus. In that temple, to the best of my powers, I laid the foundations of peace, and followed the example set by the Athenians of old. I even employed a Greek word, which had been used at Athens in softening down the asperities of civil war; and, under the name of 'amnesty,' proposed that all recollection of our quarrels should be blotted out for ever in oblivion. On that occasion, if the speech of Antonius was noble, his reso- 1.

¹ The word 'consularis,' meaning 'one who had held the office of consul,' has no equivalent in English, and being a term of frequent occurrence, it is thought better to retain it as a technical expression.

lution was superb; it was, in short, through him and his son that peace was established with our most distinguished citizens. And with this beginning all that followed for a time agreed. He invited the leading men in Rome to discussions at his house about the welfare of the state; the reports which he made to the senate were beyond praise; nothing was then found in the papers of Cæsar except what was generally known to be contained in them. He answered any questions which were put to him with unvarying consistency. Are any exiles recalled? 'One,' he said, 'and only one.' Are any exemptions from taxation granted? 'No,' he answered, 'none.' He even wished us to vote for the motion of Servius Sulpicius, my most honourable friend, that from and after the Ides of March no publication should be made of any decree or grant as issuing from Cæsar. I pass over much, that calls for praise, and hasten as my speech prompts me to the crowning act of Antonius. The dictatorship, which had already usurped the unconstitutional power of a monarchy, he abolished utterly as an office in the state. To this proposal we agreed without debate. He had brought with him a form of decree to express his wishes, and on hearing what he had written we supported him with the greatest enthusiasm, and passed a formal vote of thanks to him in most flattering terms.

2. A ray of light appeared to be shed over us when we were freed not only from the despotism which we had actually endured, but from any fear of its recurrence in the future; and he gave no slight pledge to the state of his desire that its constitution should be free, when he utterly abolished the title of dictator, which had often been held under constitutional limitations, because of its recent association with a perpetual dictatorship. A few days later the senate was delivered from the danger of a massacre, and the fugitive slave was executed who had usurped the name of Gaius Marius. All this was done in concert with his colleague; for other things which followed, Dolabella was alone responsible, though I believe that had Antonius

not been absent from Rome he would have joined in carrying them out.

For when Dolabella saw that an evil of indefinite proportions was stealing into the state, and spreading further every day, and that a monument was erected in the Forum by the very men who had solemnised that funeral so unworthy of the name, and that the temples and houses of our citizens were daily being threatened by scoundrels with slaves no better than themselves, then he made such an example both of the wicked and audacious slaves, and even more especially of their profligate and unscrupulous masters, that it seems to me a marvel that the period which followed differed so entirely from that single day. For on June 1, when they had summoned us to meet, a change came over everything. Nothing was done through the agency of the senate; many important measures were carried with the sanction of the people, in that people's absence and against their will. The consuls-elect said they dared not come into the senate. The saviours of their country were exiles from the city, from whose neck they had cast off the yoke of slavery, though all the time the consuls themselves, both at public meetings and in private conversation, were always speaking of them in the highest terms. Those who claimed the name of veterans, whose interests this House had guarded with most jealous care, were excited not to protect what they already possessed, but to entertain hopes of new spoil. And as I preferred hearing of these things to seeing them with my own eyes, and as I was at liberty to use a commission which I held as *legatus*,¹ I left Rome with the intention of being at home again on January 1, which seemed likely to be the earliest day on which a meeting of the senate would be held.

These, my lords, were the reasons why I went abroad. I will now tell you very shortly why I turned back, for that was more remarkable. Having avoided,

3.

¹ *Legatus*, an officer in the suite of a consul or governor of a province, who was at once his confidential adviser and his substitute in case of absence.