

**ELEMENTARY CLASSICS;  
SELECT LETTERS OF  
CICERO: EDITED FOR  
THE USE OF SCHOOLS**

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Elementary Classics; Select Letters of Cicero: Edited for the Use of Schools by G. E. Jeans

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**G. E. JEANS**

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## PREFACE.

IN this selection I have used the text of Wessenberg with a few alterations—chiefly the correction of such spellings as *quum* and *coena*; the adoption of a simpler system of punctuation; and the omission of marks of corruption in the text. Letters I. II. XI. XII. XIV. XV. XVII. and XIX. are translated in my *Life and Letters of Cicero* (Macmillan, 1880), where a critical discussion of disputed passages may be found which would be unsuitable here.

The chronological system of arrangement is the only reasonable one in any selection of Cicero's Letters, but it so happens that the two interesting letters which are here the earliest in date are also the hardest. Some masters may therefore find it useful to begin with the third Letter.

The index has been made unusually copious, and it would be well to insist on constant reference to it, as also to one or other of the grammars. I hope the table of dates will be found to supply a sufficient sketch of Cicero's life to make the history intelligible. It is impossible, in my opinion, to write a satisfactory life of him suited to the scale of this little work. G. E. J.

HAILEYBURY COLLEGE, *July 1882.*



## INTRODUCTION.

THE letters of Cicero are among the most important as well as most interesting books which have come down to us from ancient times, for more than one reason.

In the first place, a letter must be generally a *contemporary* account of the events or feelings described in it; and all contemporary accounts are of the utmost value to a historian. It does not follow that what is written about an event at the time is *right*,—often, indeed, it is much more likely to be wrong than what is written afterwards; but whether right or wrong, it is the one really lifelike record.

Secondly, the time at which Cicero lived was one of the most momentous periods in the history of the world—that which contains the death-struggle of the worn-out Republic, and the foundation of the Roman Empire in its stead by the greatest of all conquerors, Julius Caesar. In his youth the terrible struggle of Marius and Sulla had been fought out; in his early manhood Pompeius had been looked on as the coming saviour; during nearly the whole of his public life Caesar had been rising higher and higher above his pigmy fellow-men; and Cicero outlived Caesar just long enough to become the victim of the Triumvirate which paved the way for the Emperor Augustus.

Thirdly, Cicero was in the best possible position for observing facts, though he often drew wrong conclusions from them. For nearly thirty years he was one of the foremost men in Rome, and was, moreover, more than any one else, intimate with leaders of both the great parties. The collection includes letters to or from Caesar and his friends, as well as from Pompeius and the most vehement aristocrats. But the political letters are far less interesting than the more private ones to intimate friends, of whom Cicero had a very large number, and of very different kinds; so that no collection of letters ever made can equal this.

To this should be added that letter-writing—which is almost a lost art in the days of post-cards and telegrams—was perhaps, with the exception of oratory, the style of writing then in the highest state of cultivation at Rome. The great historians and poets were yet to come; philosophic writing was first made graceful by Cicero; but even in this selection the letters of his son and his brother, the description of the battle of Mutina by Galba (xix.), and, above all, the famous letter of Sulpicius (xi.), will show that many others in Rome could in letter-writing rival the great orator himself.

The history of the letters is curious and interesting. About a year before his death Cicero asked Atticus to send some of his to be revised for publication, saying that Tiro had already begun a collection. We have three different sets or collections:—(1), *Ad Quintum Fratrem*, those to and from his brother Quintus, in 3 books, containing 29 letters; (2), *Ad Familiares*, to and from all his friends except Atticus, in 16 books, containing about 370 letters; (3), *Ad Atticum*, 16 books of about 400 letters to Atticus only. It is most probable that the first and second of these collections were edited by Cicero's favourite slave and secretary, Tiro (see Letter vi.), after his master's murder; and that the letters to Atticus were left by Atticus to be published after his death, which occurred in the year of the battle of Actium, 31 B.C.

After being well known and often quoted for about 1200 years, these letters were entirely lost. But the great Italian poet, Petrarch, a devoted admirer of Cicero, found at Verona, in 1345, a MS. containing the letters to Atticus and Quintus; and next year, probably at Vercelli, he, by marvellous good fortune, found the letters "*Ad Familiares*."

Cicero's letters were generally dictated to a secretary. They were written, or rather scratched, with a *stylus* on thin tablets covered with wax, which were then tied together and sealed. The seal, not the writing, was the guarantee for genuineness, as our very word "signature," from *signum*, a seal, shows. A letter generally begins thus:—*Cicero Attico sal.* (= *salutem*), or *s. p. d.* (*salutem plurimam dat*), and often ends with *vale*. When the date is given, which is unfortunately not very common, it is at the end, thus: *Athenis, Frid. Kal. Mart.* The year is never given except by the names of the consuls, and then only rarely, thus: *M. Marcello, S. Sulpicio Coss.* A very formal letter, or one to a lady, generally begins, *s. v. b. e. g. v.* (*si vales bene est, ego quidem valeo*). There was no regular system of post: few but great men ever wrote letters at all, and they employed their own slaves (*tabellarii*); but if the distance was great, several friends would join in sending one messenger.



## EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CICERO.

Age of Cicero.		Date a.c.	See
	Cicero born at Arpinum . . . . .	Jan. 3, 106.	
4.	Quintus Cicero born . . . . .	About 102.	
27.	Marries Terentia . . . . .	" 79.	
28.	Tullia born . . . . .	" 78.	
31.	Quæstor . . . . .	" 75.	
36.	Accuses Verres, ex-governor of Sicily . . . . .	" 70.	
37.	Curule aedile . . . . .	" 69.	
40.	Praetor . . . . .	" 66.	i. introd. xi. 64.
41.	Birth of his son Marcus . . . . .	" 65.	
43.	Consul; conspiracy of Catilina suppressed . . . . .	" 63.	i.
45.	Quarrel with Clodius . . . . .	" 61.	ii. 36-53.
47.	First Triumvirate: Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus . . . . .	" 59.	
48.	Exiled for a year and a half . . . . .	" 58.	xi. 90, note.
53.	Crassus defeated and killed by the Parthians . . . . .	" 53.	
55.	Governor of Cilicia . . . . .	" 51.	viii. introd. ix.
57.	Civil War between Pompeius and Caesar . . . . .	Jan. 49.	
58.	Pompeius defeated at Pharsalus, in Thessaly . . . . .	Aug. 9, 48.	
„	Pompeius murdered in Egypt	Sept. 28, 48.	

## EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CICERO.

Age of Cicero.		Date a.c.	See
60.	Caesar defeats Scipio and Cato at Thapsus, near Carthage	Apr. 4, 46.	x. introd.
„	Cicero divorces Terentia, and marries Publilia . . . . .	46.	xi. introd.
61.	Death of Tullia . . . . .	Feb. 45.	xi. xii. xiii.
„	Caesar defeats the son of Pompeius at Munda, in Spain	Mar. 17, 45.	xv. introd.
62.	Caesar murdered by Brutus, Cassius, and others . . . . .	Mar. 15, 44.	xvii. introd.
62-3.	The Philippic orations against Antonius . . . . .	44-3.	xviii. introd.
63.	The battle of Mutina; death of the two consuls . . . . .	Apr. 15, 43.	xix.
„	The Second Triumvirate: Antonius, Octavianus, and Lepidus . . . . .	Oct. 43.	xix, introd.
„	Cicero murdered at Formiæ by order of Antonius . . . . .	Dec. 7, 43.	„

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