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Cicero: Letters To Atticus: Volume III



Synopsis

The letters contained in this volume begin with one written just after Caesar's final victory over the remains of the Pompeian party at Thapsus in April, 46 B.C., and cover three of the last four years of Cicero's life. When they open, Cicero was enjoying a restful interval after the troublous times of the Civil War. He had made his peace with Caesar and reconciled himself to a life of retirement and literary activity. In the Senate he never spoke except to deliver a speech pleading for the return from exile of his friend Marcellus; and his only other public appearance was to advocate the cause of another friend, Ligarius. In both he was successful; and, indeed, so he seems also to have been in private appeals to Caesar on behalf of friends. But their relations were never intimate,[1] and Cicero appears always to have felt ill at ease in Caesar's society,[2] disliking and fearing him as a possible tyrant or at least an anomaly in a Republican state. He evidently felt, too, some natural qualms at being too much of a turn-coat, as he dissuaded his son from joining Caesar's expedition to Spain at the end of the year on that ground, and persuaded him to go to Athens to study instead.[3] No doubt he considered that it was more consonant with the dignity which he was always claiming for himself to take no part in public affairs at all than to play a secondary part where he had once been first.

Book Information

File Size: 770 KB

Print Length: 754 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: March 9, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01CS8FXZ8

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #3,322,909 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #24

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