

Cataline first distinguished himself as a valient Lieutenant in the army of Sulla. We are told that he indulged in cruelty and debauchery. He did there no more than the majority of soldiers at that day, who were noted for their base morals. His lot was cast in a time when Rome was murmuring under the conflicts of the various factions, led by men who eyed each other with a bitter jealousy engendered during the convulsions in which these had played an active part but twenty years before. The "great Pompey" was absent in the East with an army, while Senate and magistrates at home occupied their time in trivial quarrels,—indifferent to the great interest of the Commonwealth.

"The State is weak as dust:

Rome's broken, helpless, heartsick! Ignorance sits

Above her,—like a vulture o'er a corpse
Soon to be tasted. Time and dull decay
Have let the waters 'round her pillars foot

And it *must* fall. Her boasted strength's a
ghost,

Fearful to dastards;—yet to trenchant swords,
Time as the passing air. A single blow
In this diseased and crumbling fame of Rome
Would break your chains like stubble!"

—Cataline.

Cataline was an active citizen and held many offices, and we have no record but that he fulfilled his questorship and prætorship properly; but upon his return from the pro-prætorship of Africa, in 65 B. C., he was accused of extortion, by one P. Cladius Pulcher, who was himself guilty of nefarious methods of procuring money in Gaul, as well as in Rome, itself. This must have been a mere political move to prevent Cataline from being a candidate for the coming consulship, by casting such a stigma on his name that the Senate should be induced to rule him out. Although he was triumphantly acquitted, it was too late for him to obtain his much coveted position; while the very men who were elected to the consulships that year, P. Cornelius Sulla and P. Antonius Pætus, were themselves soon convicted of bribery, and their places filled by Cott,

and Torquatus. So it seems that Pulcher's attack on Cataline was not so much on the ground of right and justice, as of personal hatred, for his candidates proved themselves as unfit for the office as he represented Cataline to be. Pulcher was evidently a vacillating individual, for soon afterwards he became a bitter enemy to Cicero, himself; probably with an object in view.

Cataline, however, not disheartened, was again candidate for the consulship in 63 B. C., but rumors of a plot against the Republic, in which he was said to be interested, were spread on the eve of election, and injured his chances. He had strong support from many friends, for we read that he was defeated by a very small majority.

Cataline now became thoroughly exasperated, and resolved to overthrow the domineering rule of Rome; using desperate measures if necessary. Had Cataline's broad plans remained undiscovered, had no base traitor whispered the great secret in his mistress' ear,—had but the first blow been struck,—the people, dissatisfied with existing state of affairs, would have rallied by thousands around the standard of the deliverer, and been officered by one of Rome's most noble citizens. Cesar would have become dictator, and History would have been pleased to record the triumph as a glorious rebellion, and Cataline as the deliverer of his country.

As it was, Quinctus Curius either could not or would not pay the sum demanded by Fulvia to keep the matter secret, and so this aristocratic but unscrupulous woman went to Cicero, and for his gold, betrayed the cause. Cicero was thoroughly alarmed, and under the hypocritical guise of a *pater patriæ*, he sought to save his own life by executing Cataline; and with burning words and thundering speeches to stir up not only the Senate but the people in his favor. He was no longer a mere lawyer;—he had become an unscrupulous politician, deep in the rings of Rome. We all know the