

We may see, in the letters (*a*) of some great men of that time, though they passed under Cicero's name, because most of them were written by himself, into what dejection and despair persons of the first rank in the republic were sunk by this sudden revolution, which divested them of their honours, and even their employments; when the senate having no longer any functions to perform, that reputation they had acquired through all the world was now to be dispensed from the cabinet of one man. This state of affairs appears in a much better light in those letters, than in any relations of historians, and they are the most masterly representation of the ingenuous turn of mind of a set of people united by a common affliction, and give us a complete portrait of an age wherein a false politeness had not infected all society with insincerity and untruth. In a word, they are not written, like our modern letters, with a view to deceive, but are the faithful intercourse of friends who communicated all they knew.

It was hardly possible for Caesar, in his situation, to preserve his life: the generality of the conspirators against him were of his party (*b*), or had received many great obligations from him, and the reason of their intention to assassinate him, is very natural; they had gained signal advantages by his conquest, but the more their fortune improved, the greater was their share of the common calamity; and to those who have not any thing they can pro-

(*a*) See the letters of Cicero and Servius Sulpicius.

(*b*) Decimus Brutus, Caius Casca, Trebonius, Tullius Cimber, Minutius Bassillus, were Caesar's friends. Appian. de bello civili. l. ii.