

have executed that design without any interruption; for in those seasons of astonishment which succeed unexpected events, every intencion becomes practicable: this however did not take effect, and we shall now relate what happened on that occasion.

The senate thought themselves under a necessity of permitting Caesar's funeral obsequies to be performed; and indeed they could not decently forbid them, as they had never declared him a tyrant. Now the Romans, in conformity to a custom established among them, and much boasted of by Polybius, always carried in their funeral processions, the images which represented the ancestors of the deceased, and made an oration over the body. Antony, who charged himself with this last province, unfolded the bloody robe of Caesar to the view of all the people, read to them the particulars of his will, in which he had left them extraordinary legacies, and then wrought them into such violent emotions, that they immediately fired the houses of the conspirators.

Cicero, who governed the senate in this whole affair (a), makes no scruple to acknowledge that it would have been much better to have proceeded with vigour, and even to have exposed themselves to destruction, though indeed it was not probable that such a fate would have attended them; but he alleges for his excuse, that as the senate was then assembled, they had no opportunity in their favour; and he adds, that those who are sensible of the importance even of a moment, in affairs wherein the

afterwards called Vespillo, threw his body into the Tyber.

*Aurel. Victor. de Viris illust.*

(a) Letters to Atticus, lib. xiv. c. 6.