

# MARCUS CICERO

DE AMICITIA,  
SCIPIO'S  
DREAM

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*De Amicitia, Scipio's Dream:*

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# Marcus Tullius Cicero

## De Amicitia, Scipio's Dream

### INTRODUCTION

#### DE AMICITIA

The *De Amicitia*, inscribed, like the *De Senectute*, to Atticus, was probably written early in the year 44 B.C., during Cicero's retirement, after the death of Julius Caesar and before the conflict with Antony. The subject had been a favorite one with Greek philosophers, from whom Cicero always borrowed largely, or rather, whose materials he made fairly his own by the skill, richness, and beauty of his elaboration. Some passages of this treatise were evidently suggested by Plato; and Aulus Gellius says that Cicero made no little use of a now lost essay of Theophrastus on Friendship.

In this work I am especially impressed by Cicero's dramatic power. But for the mediocrity of his poetic genius, he might have won pre-eminent honor from the Muse of Tragedy. He here so thoroughly enters into the feelings of Laelius with reference to Scipio's death, that as we read we forget that it is not Laelius himself who is speaking. We find ourselves in

close sympathy with him, as if he were telling us the story of his bereavement, giving utterance to his manly fortitude and resignation and portraying his friend's virtues from the unfading image phototyped on his own loving memory. In other matters too Cicero goes back to the time of Laelius and assumes his point of view assigning to him just the degree of foresight which he probably possessed and making not the slightest reference to the very different aspect in which he himself had learned to regard and was wont to represent the personages and events of that earlier period. Thus while Cicero traced the downfall of the republic to changes in the body politic that had taken place or were imminent and inevitable when Scipio died he makes Laelius perceive only a slight though threatening deflection from what had been in the earlier time [Footnote 1]. So too though Cicero was annoyed more than by almost any other characteristic of his age by the prevalence of the Epicurean philosophy and ascribed to it in a very large degree the demoralization of men in public life with Laelius the doctrines of this school are represented as they must have been in fact as new and unfamiliar. In time Laelius is here made to say not a word which he being the man that he was and at the date assumed for this dialogue might not have said himself; and it may be doubted whether a report of one of his actual conversations would have seemed more truly genuine.

This is a rare gift often sought indeed yet sought in vain not only by dramatists who have very [Footnote 1] *Deflexit jam*

*aliquantul im*] seldom attained it but by authors of a very great diversity of type and culture. One who undertakes to personate a character belonging to an age not his own hardly ever fails of manifest anachronisms. The author finds it utterly impossible to fit the antique mask so closely as not now and then to show through its chinks his own more modern features, while this form of internal evidence never fails to betray an intended forgery however skilfully wrought. On the other hand there is no surer proof of the genuineness of a work purporting to be of an earlier but alleged to be of a later origin than the absence of all tokens of a time subsequent to the earliest date claimed for it. [Footnote: Thus among the many proofs of the genuineness of our canonical Gospels perhaps none is more conclusive than the fact that though evidently written by unskilled men they contain not a trace or token of certain opinions known to have been rife even before the close of the first Christian century; while the (so called) apocryphal Gospels bear, throughout, such vestiges of their later origin as would neutralize the strongest testimony imaginable in behalf of their primitive antiquity.]

In connection with this work it should be borne in mind that the special duties of friendship constituted an essential department of ethics in the ancient world and that the relation of friend to friend was regarded as on the same plane with that of brother to brother. No treatise on morals would have been thought complete had this subject been omitted. Not a few modern writers have attempted the formal treatment of

friendship but while the relation of kindred minds and souls has lost none of its sacredness and value, the establishment of a code of rules for it ignores on the one hand the spontaneity of this relation, and on the other hand, its entire amenableness to the laws and principles that should restrict and govern all human intercourse and conduct.

Shaftesbury, in his 'Characteristics,' in his exquisite vein of irony sneers at Christianity for taking no cognizance of friendship either in its precepts or in its promises. Jeremy Taylor, however, speaks of this feature of Christianity as among the manifest tokens of its divine origin, and Soame Jenyns takes the same ground in a treatise expressly designed to meet the objections and cavils of Shaftesbury and other deistical writers of his time. These authors are all in the right and all in the wrong, as to the matter of fact. There is no reason why Christianity should prescribe friendship which is a privilege, not a duty, or should essay to regulate it, for its only ethical rule of strict obligation is the negative rule which would lay out for it a track that shall never interfere with any positive duty selfward, manward or Godward. But in the life of the Founder of Christianity, who teaches, most of all, by example, friendship has its apogee,—its supreme pre-eminence and honor. He treats his apostles and speaks of and to them, not as mere disciples but as intimate and dearly beloved friends, among these there are three with whom he stands in peculiarly near relations, and one of the three was singled out by him in dying for the most sacred charge that he left on the

earth, while at the same time that disciple shows in his Gospel that he had obtained an inside view so to speak, of his Master's spiritual life and of the profounder sense of his teachings which is distinguished by contrast rather than by comparison from the more superficial narratives of the other evangelists.

But Christianity has done even more than this for friendship. It has superseded its name by fulfilling its offices to a degree of perfectness which had never entered into the ante-Christian mind. Man shrinks from solitude. He feels inadequate to bear the burdens, meet the trials, and wage the conflicts of this mortal life, alone. Orestes always needed and craved a Pylades, but often failed to find one. This inevitable yearning, when it met no human response found still less to satisfy it in the objects of worship. Its gods, though in great part deified men, could not be relied on for sympathy, support or help. The stronger spirits did not believe in them, the feebler looked upon them only with awe and dread. But Christianity, in its anthropomorphism, which is its strongest hold on faith and trust, insures for the individual man in a Divine Humanity precisely what friends might essay to do yet could do but imperfectly for him. It proffers the tender sympathy and helpfulness of Him who bears the griefs and carries the sorrows of each and all; while the near view that it presents of the life beyond death inspires the sense of unbroken union with friends in heaven, and of the fellow-feeling of "a cloud of witnesses" beside. Thus while friendship in ordinary life is never to be spurned when it may be had without sacrifice of principle,

it is less a necessity than when man's relations with the unseen world gave no promise of strength, aid, or comfort.

Experience has deepened my conviction that what is called a free translation is the only fit rendering of Latin into English; that is, the only way of giving to the English reader the actual sense of the Latin writer. This last has been my endeavor. The comparison is, indeed, exaggerated; but it often seems to me, in unrolling a compact Latin sentence, as if I were writing out in words the meaning of an algebraic formula. A single word often requires three or four as its English equivalent. Yet the language is not made obscure by compression. On the contrary, there is no other language in which it is so hard to bury thought or to conceal its absence by superfluous verbiage.

I have used Beier's edition of the *De Amicitia*, adhering to it in the very few cases in which other good editions have a different reading. There are no instances in which the various readings involve any considerable diversity of meaning.

## LAELIUS

Caius Laelius Sapiens, the son of Caius Laelius, who was the life-long friend of Scipio Africanus the Elder, was born B.C. 186, a little earlier in the same year with his friend Africanus the Younger. He was not undistinguished as a military commander, as was proved by his successful campaign against Viriathus, the Lusitanian chieftain, who had long held the Roman armies at

bay, and had repeatedly gained signal advantages over them. He was known in the State, at first as leaning, though moderately and guardedly, to the popular side, but after the disturbances created by the Gracchi, as a strong conservative. He was a learned and accomplished man, was an elegant writer,—though while the Latin tongue retained no little of its archaic rudeness,—and was possessed of some reputation as an orator. Though bearing his part in public affairs, holding at intervals the offices of Tribune, Praetor, and Consul, and in his latter years attending with exemplary fidelity to such duties as belonged to him as a member of the college of Augurs, he yet loved retirement, and cultivated, so far as he was able, studious and contemplative habits. He was noted for his wise economy of time. To an idle man who said to him, "I have sixty years" [*Sexaginta annos habeo.*] (that is, I am sixty years old), he replied, "Do you mean the sixty years which you have not?" His private life was worthy of all praise for the virtues that enriched and adorned it; and its memory was so fresh after the lapse of more than two centuries, that Seneca, who well knew the better way which he had not always strength to tread, advises his young friend Lucilius to "live with Laelius;" [*Vire cum Laelio.*] that is, to take his life as a model.

The friendship of Laelius and the younger Scipio Africanus well deserves the commemoration which it has in this dialogue of Cicero. It began in their boyhood, and continued without interruption till Scipio's death. Laelius served in Africa, mainly

that he might not be separated from his friend. To each other's home was as his own. They were of one mind as to public men and measures, and in all probability the more pliant nature of Laelius yielded in great measure to the stern and uncompromising adherence of Scipio to the cause of the aristocracy. While they were united in grave pursuits and weighty interests, we have the most charming pictures of their rural and seaside life together, even of their gathering shells on the shore, and of fireside frolics in which they forgot the cares of the republic, ceased to be stately old Romans, and played like children in vacation-time.

## FANNIUS

Caius Fannius Strabo in early life served with high reputation in Africa, under the younger Africanus, and afterward in Spain, in the war with Viriathus. Like his father-in-law, he was versed in the philosophy of the Stoic school, under the tuition of Panaetius. He was an orator, as were almost all the Romans who aimed at distinction; but we have no reason to suppose that he in this respect rose above mediocrity. He wrote a history, of which Cicero speaks well, and which Sallust commends for its accuracy; but it is entirely lost, and we have no direct information even as to the ground which it covered. It seems probable, however, that it was a history either of the third of the Punic wars, or of all of them; for Plutarch quotes from him—probably from his History

—the statement that he, Fannius, and Tiberius Gracchus were the first to mount the walls of Carthage when the city was taken.

## SCAEVOLA

Quintus Mucius Scaevola filled successively most of the important offices of the State, and was for many years, and until death, a member of the college of Augurs. He was eminent for his legal learning, and to a late and infirm old age was still consulted in questions of law, never refusing to receive clients at any moment after daylight. But while he was regarded as foremost among the jurists of his time, he professed himself less thoroughly versed in the laws relating to mortgages than two of his coevals, to whom he was wont to send those who brought cases of this class for his opinion or advice. He was remarkable for early rising, constant industry, and undeviating punctuality,—at the meetings of the Senate being always the first on the ground.

No man held a higher reputation than Scaevola for rigid and scrupulous integrity. It is related of him that when as a witness in court he had given testimony full, clear, strong, and of the most damnable character against the person on trial, he protested against the conviction of the defendant on his testimony, if not corroborated, on the principle, held sacred in the Jewish law, that it would be a dangerous precedent to suffer the issue of any case to depend on the intelligence and veracity of a single witness. When, after Marius had been driven from the city, Sulla

asked the Senate to declare him by their vote a public enemy, Scaevola stood in a minority of one; and when Sulla urged him to give his vote in the affirmative, his reply was: "Although you show me the military guard with which you have surrounded the Senate-house, although you threaten me with death, you will never induce me, for the little blood still in an old man's veins, to pronounce Marius—who has been the preserver of the city and of Italy—an enemy."

His daughter married Lucius Licinius Crassus, who had such reverence for his father-in-law, that, when a candidate for the consulship, he could not persuade himself in the presence of Scaevola to cringe to the people, or to adopt any of the usual self-humiliating methods of canvassing for the popular vote.

# SCIPIO'S DREAM

PALIMPSESTS [Footnote: *Rubbed again*,—the parchment, or papyrus, having been first polished for use, and then rubbed as clean as possible, to be used a second time.]—the name and the thing—are at least as old as Cicero. In one of his letters he banters his friend Trebatius for writing to him on a palimpsest,[Footnote: *In palimpsesto*.] and marvels what there could have been on the parchment which he wanted to erase. This was a device probably resorted to in that age only in the way in which rigid economists of our day sometimes utilize envelopes and handbills. But in the dark ages, when classical literature was under a cloud and a ban, and when the scanty demand for writing materials made the supply both scanty and precarious, such manuscripts of profane authors as fell into the hands of ecclesiastical copyists were not unusually employed for transcribing the works of the Christian Fathers or the lives of saints. In such cases the erasion was so clumsily performed as often to leave distinct traces of the previous letters. The possibility of recovering lost writings from these palimpsests was first suggested by Montfaucon in the seventeenth century; but the earliest successful experiment of the kind was made by Bruns, a German scholar, in the latter part of the eighteenth, century. The most distinguished laborer in this field has been Angelo Mai, who commenced his work in 1814 on manuscripts in the

Ambrosian Library at Milan, of which he was then custodian. Transferred to the Vatican Library at Rome, he discovered there, in 1821, a considerable portion of Cicero's *De Republica*, which had been obliterated, and replaced by Saint Augustine's Commentary on the Psalms. This latter being removed by appropriate chemical applications, large portions of the original writing remained legible, and were promptly given to the public.

This treatise Cicero evidently considered, and not without reason, as his master-work. It was written in the prime of his mental vigor, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, after ample experience in the affairs of State, and while he still hoped, more than he feared for the future of Rome. His object was to discuss in detail the principles and forms of civil government, to define the grounds of preference for a republic like that of Rome in its best days, and to describe the duties and responsibilities of a good citizen, whether in public office or in private life. He regarded this treatise, in its ethics, as his own directory in the government of his province of Cilicia, and as binding him, by the law of self-consistency, to unswerving uprightness and faithfulness. He refers to these six books on the Republic as so many hostages [Footnote: *Praedibus*.] for his uncorrupt integrity and untarnished honor, and makes them his apology to Atticus for declining to urge an extortionate demand on the city of Salamis.

The work is in the form of Dialogues, in which, with several interlocutors beside, the younger Africanus and Laelius are the

chief speakers; and it is characterized by the same traits of dramatic genius to which I have referred in connection with the *De Amicitia*.

The *De Republica* was probably under interdict during the reigns of the Augustan dynasty; men did not dare to copy it, or to have it known that they possessed it; and when it might have safely reappeared, the republic had faded even from regretful memory, and there was no desire to perpetuate a work devoted to its service and honor. Thus the world had lost the very one of all Cicero's writings for which he most craved immortality. The portions of it which Mai has brought to light fully confirm Cicero's own estimate of its value, and feed the earnest—it is to be feared the vain—desire for the recovery of the entire work.

Scipio's Dream, which, is nearly all that remains of the Sixth Book of the *De Republica*, had survived during the interval for which the rest of the treatise was lost to the world. Macrobius, a grammarian of the fifth century, made it the text of a commentary of little present interest or value, but much prized and read in the Middle Ages. The Dream, independently of the commentary, has in more recent times passed through unnumbered editions, sometimes by itself, sometimes with Cicero's ethical writings, sometimes with the other fragments of the *De Republica*.

In the closing Dialogue of the *De Republica* the younger Africanus says: "Although to the wise the consciousness of noble deeds is a most ample reward of virtue, yet this divine virtue

craves, not indeed statues that need lead to hold them to their pedestals, nor yet triumphs graced by withering laurels, but rewards of firmer structure and more enduring green." "What are these?" says Laelius. Scipio replies by telling his dream. The time of the vision was near the beginning of the Third Punic War, when Scipio, no longer in his early youth, was just entering upon the career in which he gained pre-eminent fame, thenceforward to know neither shadow nor decline.

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I have used for Scipio's Dream, Creuzer and Moser's edition of the *De Republica*.

# CICERO DE AMICITIA

\* \* \* \* \*

1 Quintus Mucius, the Augur, used to repeat from memory, and in the most pleasant way, many of the sayings of his father-in-law Caius Laelius, never hesitating to apply to him in all that he said his surname of The Wise. When I first put on the robe of manhood [Footnote: In the earliest time a boy put on the *toga virilis* when he had completed his sixteenth year, in Cicero's time pupilage ceased a year earlier and by Justinian's code the period at which it legally ceased was the commencement of the fifteenth year. The Scaevola to whom Cicero was thus taken was Quintus Mucius (Scaevola) the Augur, already named.] my father took me to Scaevola and so commended me to his kind offices, that thenceforward, so far as was possible and fitting I kept my place at the old man's side. [Footnote: It was customary for youth in training for honorable positions in the State to attach themselves especially to men of established character and reputation, to attend them to public places, and to remain near them whenever anything was to be learned from their conversation, their legal opinions, their public harangues, or their pleas before the courts. Distinguished citizens deemed themselves honored by a retinue of such attendants. Cicero,

in the *De Officiis*, says that a young man may best commend himself to the early esteem and confidence of the community by such an intimacy.] I thus laid up in my memory many of his elaborate discussions of important subjects, as well as many of his utterances that had both brevity and point, and my endeavor was to grow more learned by his wisdom. After his death I stood in a similar relation to the high-priest Scaevola, [Footnote: As Cicero says, the most eloquent of jurists, and the most learned jurist among the eloquent. He was at the same time pre-eminent for moral purity and integrity. It was he, who, as Cicero (*De Officiis*, iii. 15) relates, insisted on paying for an estate that he bought a much larger sum than was asked for it, because its price had been fixed far below its actual value.] whom I venture to call the foremost man of our city both in ability and in uprightness. But of him I will speak elsewhere. I return to the Augur. While I recall many similar occasions, I remember in particular that at a certain time when I and a few of his more intimate associates were sitting with him in the semicircular apartment [Footnote: Latin, *hemicyclio*, perhaps, a semicircular seat.] in his house where he was wont to receive his friends, the conversation turned on a subject about which almost every one was then talking, and which you, Atticus, certainly recollect, as you were much in the society of Publius Sulpicius; namely, the intense hatred with which Sulpicius, when Tribune of the people, opposed Quintus Pompeius, then Consul, [Footnote: The quarrel arose from the zealous espousal of the Marian faction by Sulpicius,

who resorted to arms, in order to effect the incorporation of the new citizens from without the city among the previously existing tribes. Hence a series of tumults and conflicts, in one of which a son of Pompeius lost his life.] with whom he had lived in the closest and most loving union,—a subject of general surprise and regret. Having incidentally mentioned this affair, Scaevola proceeded to give us the substance of a conversation on friendship, which Laelius had with him and his other son-in-law, Caius Fannius, the son of Marcus, a few days after the death of Africanus. I committed to memory the sentiments expressed in that discussion, and I bring them out in the book which I now send you. I have put them into the form of a dialogue, to avoid the too frequent repetition of "said I" and "says he," and that the discussion may seem as if it were held in the hearing of those who read it. While you, indeed, have often urged me to write something about friendship, the subject seems to me one of universal interest, and at the same time specially appropriate to our intimacy. I have therefore been very ready to seek the profit of many by complying with your request. But as in the *Cato Major*, the work on Old Age inscribed to you, I introduced the old man Cato as leading the discussion, because there seemed to be no other person better fitted to talk about old age than one who had been an aged man so long, and in his age had been so exceptionally vigorous, so, as we had heard from our fathers of the peculiarly memorable intimacy of Caius Laelius and Publius Scipio, it appeared appropriate to put into the mouth of Laelius

what Scaevola remembered as having been said by him when friendship was the subject in on the authority of men of an earlier generation, and illustrious in their time, seems somehow to be of specially commanding influence on the reader's mind. Thus, as I read my own book on Old Age, I am sometimes so affected that I feel as if not I, but Cato, were talking. But as I then wrote as an old man to an old man about old age, so in this book I write as the most loving of friends to a friend about friendship. [Footnote: In the Latin we have here two remarkable series of assonances, rhythmical to the ear, and though translatable in sense not so in euphony. "Ut tum *senex* ad *senem* de *senectute*, sic hoc libro ad *amicum amicissimus*, de *amicitia* scripsi."] Then Cato was the chief speaker, than whom there was in his time scarcely any one older, and no one his superior in intellect, now Laelius shall hold the first place, both as a wise man (for so he was regarded), and as excelling in all that can do honor to friendship. I want you for the while to turn your mind away from me, and to imagine that it is Laelius who is speaking. Caius Fannius and Quintus Mucius come to their father-in-law after the death of Africanus. They commence the conversation, Laelius answers them. In reading all that he says about friendship, you will recognize the picture of your own friendship for me.

2 FANNIUS It is as you say, [Footnote: The reference is to what Laelius is supposed to have said already. The dialogue, as given here, is made to commence in the midst of a conversation.] Laelius, for there never was a better man, or one more justly

renowned, than Africanus, But you ought to bear it in mind that the eyes of all are turned upon you at this time, for they both call you and think you wise. This distinction has been latterly given to Cato, and you know that in the days of our fathers Lucius Atilius [Footnote: The first Roman known to have borne the surname of Sapiens He was one of the earliest of the juriconsults who took pupils.] was in like manner surnamed The Wise, but both of them were so called for other reasons than those which have given you this name,—Atilius, for his reputation as an adept in municipal law, Cato, for the versatility of his endowments for there were reported to his honor many measures wisely planned and vigorously carried through in the Senate, and many cases skilfully defended in the courts, so that in his old age The Wise was generally applied to him as a surname. But you are regarded as wise on somewhat different grounds, not only for your disposition and your moral worth, but also for your knowledge and learning, and not in the estimation of the common people, but in that of men of advanced culture, you are deemed wise in a sense in which there is reason to suppose that in Greece—where those who look into these things most discriminatingly do not reckon the seven who bear the name as on the list of wise men—no one was so regarded except the man in Athens whom the oracle of Apollo designated as the wisest of men.[Footnote: Socrates.] In fine, you are thought to be wise in this sense, that you regard all that appertains to your happiness as within your own soul, and consider the calamities to which man is liable as of

no consequence in comparison with virtue. I am therefore asked, and so, I believe, is Scaevola, who is now with us, how you bear the death of Africanus; and the question is put to us the more eagerly, because on the fifth day of the month next following, [Footnote: Latin, *proxumis nonis*. The *nones*, the ninth day before the *ides*, fell on the fifth of the month, except in March. May, July, and October, when the *ides* were two days later. We have elsewhere intimation that the Augurs held a meeting for business on the *nones* of each month.] when we met, as usual, in the garden of Decimus Brutus the Augur, to discuss our official business, you were absent, though it was your habit always on that day to give your most careful attendance to the duties of your office.

SCAEVOLA. As Fannius says, Caius Laelius, many have asked me this question. But I answered in accordance with what I have seen, that you were bearing with due moderation your sorrow for the death of this your most intimate friend, though you, with your kindly nature, could not fail to be moved by it; but that your absence from the monthly meeting of the Augurs was due to illness, not to grief.

LAELIUS. You were in the right, Scaevola, and spoke the truth; for it was not fitting, had I been in good health, for me to be detained by my own sad feeling from this duty, which I have never failed to discharge; nor do I think that a man of firm mind can be so affected by any calamity as to neglect his duty. It is, indeed, friendly in you, Fannius, to tell me that better things are said of me than I feel worthy of or desire to have said; but it seems

to me that you underrate Cato. For either there never was a wise man (and so I am inclined to think), or if there has been such a man, Cato deserves the name. To omit other things, how nobly did he bear his son's death! I remembered Paulus, [Footnote: Paulus Aemilius, who lost two sons, one a few days before, the other shortly after, the triumph decreed to him for the conquest of the Macedonian King Perseus.] I had seen Gallus, [Footnote: Gaius Sulpicius Gallus, mentioned as an astronomer by Cicero, *De Officiis*, i. 6, and *De Senectute*, 14.] in their bereavements. But they lost boys; Cato, a man in his prime and respected by all. [Footnote: The younger Cato had won fame as a soldier and distinguished eminence as a jurist. At the time of his death he was praetor elect.] Beware how you place in higher esteem than Cato even the man whom Apollo, as you say, pronounced superlatively wise; for it is the deeds of Cato, the sayings of Socrates, that are held in honor. Thus far in reply to Fannius. As regards myself, I will now answer both of you.

3. Were I to deny that I feel the loss of Scipio, while I leave it to those who profess themselves wise in such matters to say whether I ought to feel it, I certainly should be uttering a falsehood. I do indeed feel my bereavement of such a friend as I do not expect ever to have again, and as I am sure I never had beside. But I need no comfort from without, I console myself, and, chief of all, I find comfort in my freedom from the apprehension that oppresses most men when their friends die, for I do not think that any evil has befallen Scipio. If evil

has befallen, it is to me. But to be severely afflicted by one's own misfortunes is the token of self-love, not of friendship. As for him, indeed who can deny that the issue has been to his pre-eminent glory? Unless he had wished—what never entered into his mind—an endless life on earth what was there within human desire that did not accrue to the man who in his very earliest youth by his incredible ability and prowess surpassed the highest expectations that all had formed of his boyhood, who never sought the consulship, yet was made consul twice, the first time before the legal age,[Footnote: He left the army in Africa B.C. 147 for home to offer himself as a candidate for the aedileship, for which he had just reached the legal age of thirty seven; but such accounts of his ability efficiency, and courage had preceded him and followed him from the army, that he was chosen Consul, virtually by popular acclamation.] the second time in due season as to himself, but almost too late for his country,[Footnote: The war in Spain had been continued for several years, with frequent disaster and disgrace to the Roman army, when Scipio, B.C. 134, was chosen Consul with a special view to this war, which he closed by the capture and destruction of Numantia, inconnection with which, it must be confessed, his record is rather that of a relentless and sanguinary enemy than of a generous and placable antagonist.] who by the overthrow of two cities implacably hostile to the Roman empire put a period, not only to the wars that were but to wars that else must have been? What shall I say of the singular affability of his manners,

of his filial piety to his mother, [Footnote: He was the son of Paulus Aemilius, and the adopted son of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. His mother, divorced for no assignable reason, was left very poor, and her son, on the death of the widow of his adopting father, gave her the entire patrimony that came into his possession.] of his generosity to his sisters, [Footnote: After his mother's death, law and custom authorized him to resume what he had given her, but he bestowed it on his sisters, thus affording them the means of living comfortably and respectably.] of his integrity in his relations with all men? How dear he was to the community was shown by the grief at his funeral. What benefit, then, could he have derived from a few more years? For, although old age be not burdensome,—as I remember that Cato, the year before he died, maintained in a conversation with me and Scipio, [Footnote: The *De Senectute*]  
—it yet impairs the fresh vigor which Scipio had not begun to lose. Thus his life was such that nothing either in fortune or in fame could be added to it, while the suddenness of his death must have taken away the pain of dying. Of the mode of his death it is hard to speak with certainty, you are aware what suspicions are abroad. [Footnote: He retired to his sleeping apartment apparently in perfect health, and was found dead on his couch in the morning, —as was rumored, with marks of violence on his neck. His wife was Sempronia, the sister of the Gracchi whose agrarian schemes he had vehemently opposed. She was suspected of having at least given admission to the assassin, and even her

mother, the Cornelia who has been regarded as unparalleled among Roman women for the virtues appertaining to a wife and mother, did not escape the charge of complicity. Her son Caius was also among those suspected, but the more probable opinion is that Papirius Carbo was alone answerable for the crime. Carbo had been Scipio's most bitter enemy and had endeavoured to inflame the people against him as their enemy.] But this may be said with truth that of the many days of surpassing fame and happiness which Publius Scipio saw in his lifetime, the most glorious was the day before his death when on the adjournment of the Senate he was escorted home by the Conscript Fathers, the Roman people, the men of Latium and the allies, [Footnote: Scipio had at that session of the senate proposed a measure in the utmost degree offensive to Caius Gracchus and his party. The law of Tiberius Gracchus would have disposed, at the hands of the commissioners appointed under it, of large tracts of land belonging to the Italian allies. Scipio's plan provided that such lands should be taken out of the jurisdiction of the commissioners, and that matters relating to them should be adjudged by a different board to be specially appointed—a measure which would have been a virtual abrogation of the agrarian law. On this account he had his honorable escort home, and on this account, in all probability, he was murdered.]—so that from so high a grade of honor he seems to have passed on into the assembly of the gods rather than to have gone down into the underworld.

4 For I am far from agreeing with those who have of late promulgated the opinion that the soul perishes with the body and that death blots out the whole being. [Footnote: The reference here is of course to the Epicurians. This school of philosophy had grown very rapidly, and numbered many disciples when this essay was written; but in the time of Laelius it had but recently invaded Rome, and Amafanius, who must have been his contemporary, was the earliest Roman writer who expounded its doctrine] I on the other hand attach superior value to the authority of the ancients whether that of our ancestors who established religious rites for the dead which they certainly would not have done if they had thought the dead wholly unconcerned in such observances [Footnote: This is sound reasoning as these rites were annually renewed and consisted in great part of the invocation of ancestors—a custom which could not have originated if those ancestors were supposed to be utterly dead. This passage may remind the reader of the answer of Jesus Christ to the Sadducees, who denied that the Pentateuch contained any intimation of immortality. He quotes the passage in which God is represented as saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and adds, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," implying that ancestors whom the writer of that record supposed to be dead could not have been thus mentioned.] or that of the former Greek colonists in this country who by their schools and teaching made Southern Italy [Footnote: Latin *Magna Graecia*

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