

leading and most eminent citizens, so that the people may enjoy freedom of choice also in this very privilege of honorably gaining the favor of the members of the nobility. Thus my law grants the appearance of liberty, preserves the influence of the nobility, and removes the causes of class strife.

155. CAMPAIGNING FOR OFFICE

It is generally held that this long letter on canvassing, about a third of which is given here, was addressed to Cicero in late 65 or early 64 B.C., when he was preparing to stand for the consulship, by his brother Quintus. The reader must be cautioned, however, that the commonly accepted date and authorship have frequently been called into question, some arguing that the work may be a clever literary exercise composed a century or so later.

In any case, this letter is a priceless document for its frank picture of the hard realities of a political campaign in the late Republic. Special stress is laid on the necessity of personal spadework in cultivating valuable friendships, "gladhanding" the voters, keeping one's self constantly in the public eye, and being liberal with campaign promises—in short, trying to be all things to all men. These procedures are deprecated, but are defended as an honest man's only way of contending with the prevalent bribery and corruption, and the hostility of the nobility to "new men," as the frank political parlance of republican Rome called those occasional public figures who attained the consulship (and consequent ennoblement of their families) though not members of noble families by origin. In 63 B.C. Cicero was the first "new man" to attain the consulship in over thirty years.

Quintus Cicero, *On Canvassing for the Consulship* i, viii, ix, xi–xiv (abridged)

Consider these three things: what state this is, what you are seeking and who you are. Then every day, as you descend to the Forum, you must say to yourself, "I am a new man; I am standing for the consulship; this is Rome."

The political newness of your name you will overcome to a large extent by your reputation as a speaker. That is an accomplishment which has always carried with it the highest distinction. The man who is considered a worthy advocate for men of consular rank cannot be reckoned unworthy of the consulship. . . .

Next, let the number and quality of your friends be apparent. For you have in your favor what not many new men have had: all the

publicans, nearly all the equestrian order, many faithful municipalities, many individuals of every class who have been defended by you, some private groups, also a large number of young men won over by their pursuit of eloquence, and the diligent daily concourse of your personal friends. Take care to retain all these supporters by reminding them, asking for their votes, and taking all steps to make them understand—those who are under obligation to you—that they will never have another opportunity of showing their gratitude, and those who desire your services, that they will never have another opportunity of placing you in their debt.

Another thing, it seems to me, that can be of great assistance to a new man is the good will of the nobles, especially those of consular rank. It is well to be considered worthy of that rank by those into whose rank and number you wish to enter. You must take pains to solicit the votes of all these men, you must assure and convince them that we have always sided with the *optimates* in politics and have never been supporters of the *populares* [for the *optimates* and *populares* see § 101]; that if we appear to have given utterance to any popular sentiments, we did so with a view to winning the support of Gnaeus Pompey in order to have the most powerful man in the state friendly to our candidacy, or at least not hostile to it. Further, make a special effort to win over the young nobles, and to keep the ones you have won over devoted to you; they will bring you great esteem. You have many such friends; see to it that they know how important you consider them. If you can convert them from passive to active supporters, they will do you the greatest good. . . .

Therefore take care to secure all the centuries¹⁷ by your many varied friendships. First of all, it is obvious you must conciliate the senators and *equites*, and the active and influential men of the other orders. There are many industrious men in the city, many freedmen influential and active in the Forum. Some you can reach in person, some through mutual friends: exercise the greatest diligence, bend every effort to make them your active supporters—court them, assure them, point out that they will be doing you the greatest service. Next, take into account the whole city, all the private groups, country districts, and neighborhoods. If you can win over the leading men in these to your friendship, you will through them easily gain the crowd. After that, see that you imprint on your mind and memory the whole of Italy, divided and catalogued by tribes, so that you may let no municipality, colony, or prefecture, in

17. The consuls were elected by the *comitia centuriata* (§ 27).

short no place at all in Italy exist in which you have not sufficient support. Seek out and discover men in every district, make their acquaintance, solicit them, give them assurances, and see to it that they canvass for you in their neighborhoods and become, as it were, candidates themselves in your cause. They will wish to have you for a friend if they see that their friendship is sought for by you, and you can bring this home to them by suitable address; for men who live in the municipal towns and in the country think themselves friends of ours if they can gain in addition some assistance for themselves from our friendship, they lose no opportunity of earning it. The others, and in particular your rivals, don't even know these men, but you have some acquaintance, and will easily be able to increase it. . . .

The centuries of *equites*, it seems to me, can be much more easily won over by diligence. First, make their acquaintance (they are but few), then court them (they are mostly young men, and youth is much more easily won to friendship), and then you will have with you all of the best of the youth and the most assiduous in kindnesses. . . . And the zeal of the young men in your behalf, in voting, in canvassing, in spreading reports, and in attending you about the city, is of wonderful importance and very honorable.

And speaking of attending you about the city, you must take care to have a daily company of attendants, of every class, order, and age. From their numbers it will be possible to conjecture how much power and support you are likely to have at the election itself. Now, there are three parts to this matter: the first, those who wait upon you at your house in the morning; the second, those who escort you from your house,¹⁸ and the third, those who accompany you about the city. In the case of the first, who are the most ordinary kind of attendants and, in the current fashion, come in great numbers, you must take care to make even this trifling service of theirs appear most acceptable to you. Let those who come to your house know that you notice it: tell it to them often, and to their friends, who will report it to them. In this way, when there are several rival candidates and people see that there is one man who takes especial notice of these acts of attention, they often desert the others and swing over to him. . . . Now as to those who escort you from your house, show them and let them know that you are the more grateful for their attention, since it is greater than that of your morning greeters, and as far as possible come down into the Forum at regular times. A great

18. To the Forum or other place of public business.

company escorting you every day lends great reputation and distinction. The third group of this kind are those who attend you constantly. See to it that those among them who do so of their own volition understand that they are placing you in their perpetual debt by the greatest favor. From those who are under obligation to you, you can simply require this service, that those whose age and business permit be in constant attendance upon you, and those who cannot attend in person assign relatives to this service. . . .

As enough has now been said about contracting friendships, we must proceed to speak of that other branch of a candidate's concerns, his popularity among the common people. That requires calling everyone by his name, flattery, assiduity, courtesy, reputation, and confidence in your political career. As to the first, knowing men's names, let it be evident that you do, and improve so as to be better at it day by day. Nothing seems to me to be so popular or so pleasing. Next, though flattery is not in your nature, convince yourself that you must pretend to practice it naturally, for though character is more important, still in a business of a few months [i.e., an election campaign] pretense can prevail over character. You are not lacking in the complaisance worthy of a good and agreeable person, but you particularly need the gift of flattery, which, though vicious and repulsive in the rest of one's life, is indispensable in an election campaign. Indeed, it is bad only when, by "yessing" a man, it makes him worse; when it renders him more friendly it is not so blamable; but in any case it is indispensable for a candidate, whose expression, countenance, and language must be constantly changed and adapted to the feelings and inclinations of everyone he meets. . . .

Courtesy has a wide range. It appears in a man's family life, which cannot directly reach the multitude, to be sure, but pleases the multitude if praised by his friends. It appears at banquets, which you should take care to have celebrated both by yourself and by your friends on many occasions and for each tribe. It appears in services, which you must offer to all: see that there is ready access to you night and day, and that not only the doors of your house are open, but also your countenance and expression, which are the doors of your mind; and if the latter indicate that your intentions are concealed and hidden, it is little use for your house door to be open. For men like not only to be promised things, especially such things as they ask of a candidate, but to have them promised liberally and honorably. Accordingly, this rule, at least, is easy to practice: always to make it clear that you will be doing eagerly and cheerfully whatever you are going to do. But it is more difficult, and

more suited to the requirements of the occasion than to your nature, to promise what you may not be able to perform, instead of refusing politely.¹⁹ The second is the conduct of a good man, the first of a good campaigner. . . . Gaius Cotta, a past master at canvassing, used to say that he would promise his services to all, so long as nothing contrary to his duty was asked of him, but would really render them only to those on whom he thought they were best bestowed; that he would refuse no one, because it often happened that the man to whom he had given a promise did not avail himself of it, or that he himself had more free time than he had expected; and that the man who only promised what he was sure he could perform would never have a house full of well-wishers. . . . If you make a promise, the thing is still uncertain, is a matter for a future day, and concerns but few people; but if you refuse, you alienate many people definitely and at once. . . .

Lastly, see that your whole campaign is full of pomp, illustrious, splendid, and pleasing to the people, that it has the greatest honor and dignity, so that your rivals may reproach you with no wickedness, lust, or bribery such as they practice. And in this campaign it is necessary to take especial care that people shall have confidence in your political career and an honorable opinion of you. A political career is achieved neither in a campaign nor in the senate nor in the assembly; the things that count are that the senate shall judge that you will be a defender of its authority because you have been so hitherto, that the *equites* (and virtuous and wealthy men in general) shall judge from your past life that you will be a lover of peace and tranquillity, and that the multitude shall judge, from the fact that in your speeches at least you have been a supporter of popular causes in the assembly and in the courts, that you will not be unfriendly to its interests.

These are the thoughts which occurred to me with respect to the first two of the morning meditations that I said you ought to ponder every day as you were descending to the Forum: "I am a new man; I am standing for the consulship." The third point remains, "The city is Rome," a state formed of an assemblage of all nations, a state in which many intrigues, much deceit, many vices of every kind abound, in which the arrogance of many, the contumacy of many, the malevolence of many, the pride of many, the hatred and vexation of many must be endured. I see that it requires great prudence and tact for one, living amid so many and such great vices of men of every sort, to avoid giving

19. The text is corrupt. The translation attempts to give the sense.

offense, to avoid gossip, to avoid treachery; and that there is but one man adapted to such a variety of manners, talk and dispositions. Wherefore, continue constantly to walk in that path in which you have set out: excel in speaking. This is the means by which men are controlled at Rome, won over and kept from hindering or harming you. And since this is the point in which the state is most at fault, that it is apt to forget virtue and worth when bribery intervenes, in this see that you fully realize your own power, i.e., that you are a man who can cause your rivals the greatest fear of the risks of a trial. Let them know that they are being watched and observed by you, and they will fear not only your diligence, authority, and powerful eloquence, but also the zeal of the equestrian order in your behalf. And I wish you to put this to them, not so as to appear to be actually planning prosecution, but merely in order, by alarming them thus, to attain your goal more easily. In a word, strive in this way with all your strength and ability, so that we may obtain what we seek.

156. PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES OF THE SENATE

Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* xiv. vii

Gnaeus Pompey was elected consul for the first time with Marcus Crassus.²⁰ When he was on the point of entering upon the office, being unacquainted with the method of convening and consulting the senate, and of city affairs in general, because of his long military service, he asked his friend Marcus Varro to prepare a handbook of parliamentary practice. . . .²¹

Varro tells there first by what magistrates the senate was customarily convened according to the usage of our forefathers, namely: the dictator, consuls, praetors, tribunes of the plebs, *interrex*, and prefect of the city. No others except these, he said, had the right to submit a decree to the senate for passage, and whenever it happened that all these magistrates were in Rome at the same time, then the first in order in the above list had the prior right of consulting the senate. By exceptional privilege, the military tribunes who had served in place of consuls [see §§ 25, 35], the decemvirs [see §§ 25, 31] who had had consular authority in their

20. They were consuls together in 70 B.C.

21. This handbook was lost, and Gellius quotes the following from a later treatment of the same material by Varro.