M. Tullius Cicero, Letters (ed. Evelyn Shuckburgh)

*Letters to his household* 16.11:

January 12, 49 BCE

During the consulships of C. Claudius Marcellus and L. Cornelius Lentulus Crassus

To Tiro (at Patrae), outside Rome

Cicero and his son, Terentia, Tullia, Quintus and his son, send warm greetings to Tiro. Though I miss your ever-ready help at every turn yet it is not for my sake so much as for yours that I grieve at your illness. But now that the violence of your disease has abated so far as to become a quarten fever--for so Curius writes me word--I hope that with care you will soon become stronger. Only be sure-as becomes a man of your good sense--to think of nothing for the present except how to get well in the best possible way. I know how your regret at being absent worries you, but all difficulties will disappear, if you get well. I would not have you hurry, for fear of your suffering from sea-sickness in your weak state, and finding a winter voyage dangerous. I arrived at the city walls on the 4th of January. Nothing could be more complimentary than the procession that came out to meet me; but I found things in a blaze of civil discord, or rather civil war. I desired to find a cure for this, and, as I think, could have done so; but I was hindered by the passions of particular persons, for on both sides there are those who desire to fight. The long and short of it is that Caesar himself--once our friend--has sent the senate a menacing and offensive despatch,¹ and is so insolent as to retain his army and province in spite of the senate, and my old friend Curio is backing him up. Furthermore, our friend Antonius and Quintus Cassius, having been expelled from the house, though without any violence, left town with Curio to join Caesar, directly the senate had passed the decree ordering "consuls, praetors, tribunes, and us proconsuls to see that the Republic received no damage."² Never has the state been in greater danger: never have disloyal citizens had a better prepared leader. On the whole, however,

¹ Caesar (*Civil War* 1.5) describes it as containing demands of "the mildest possible kind." It was brought by Curio, who, going out of office on the 10th December, had joined Caesar at Ravenna.

² This *senatus consultum ultimum* was passed on the 7th of January, the fifth meeting of the senate of the year. The senate met on the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th; it could not meet on the 3rd and 4th of January, for they were comitia days, or days when the business of assemblies or *comitia* were permitted to be held (Caesar, *Civil War* 1.5). Cicero’s assertion that no violence was done to Cassius and Antony seems to be confirmed by Caesar’s account, who only says that after this decree “they fled immediately from the city.” If any violence had been used, he would certainly have mentioned it as strengthening his case. In the decree the (unusual) mention of proconsuls was in order to include Pompey and Cicero.
preparations are being pushed on with very great activity on our side also. This is being done by the influence and energy of our friend Pompey, who now, when it is too late, begins to fear Caesar. In spite of these exciting incidents, a full meeting of the senate clamoured for a triumph being granted me: but the consul Lentulus, in order to enhance his service to me, said that as soon as he had taken the measures necessary for the public safety, he would bring forward a motion on the subject. I do nothing in a spirit of selfish ambition, and consequently my influence is all the greater. Italy has been marked out into districts, shewing for what part each of us is to be responsible. I have taken Capua. That is all I wanted to tell you. Again and again I urge you to take care of your health, and to write to me as often as you have anyone to whom to give a letter. Good‐bye, good‐bye.