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L. ANNAEUS SENECA

MINOR DIALOGUES

TOGETHER WITH THE DIALOGUE

ON CLEMENCY

TRANSLATED BY

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PREFACE.

I can say little by way of preface to Seneca's "Minor Dialogues" which I have not already expressed in my preface to "De Beneficiis," except that the "Minor Dialogues" seem to me to be composed in a gloomier key than either the "De Beneficiis" or "De Clementia," and probably were written at a time when the author had already begun to experience the ingratitude of his imperial pupil. Some of the Dialogues are dated from Corsica, Seneca's place of exile, which he seems to have found peculiarly uncomfortable, although he remarks that there are people who live there from choice. Nevertheless, mournful as they are in tone, these Dialogues have a certain value, because they teach us what was meant by Stoic philosophy in the time of the Twelve Caesars. I have only to add that the value of my work has been materially enhanced by the kindness of the Rev. Professor J. E. B. Mayor, who has been good enough to read and correct almost all the proof sheets of this volume.

AUBREY STEWART.

London, 1889.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Of Providence 1

On the Firmness of the Wise Man 22

Of Anger. I. 48

" II. 76

" III. 115

Of Consolation. To Marcia 162

Of a Happy Life 204

Of Leisure 240

Of Peace of Mind 250

Of the Shortness of Life 288

Of Consolation. To Helvia 320

" To Polybius 353

Of Clemency. I. 380

" II. 415

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO LUCILIUS.

“WHY, WHEN A PROVIDENCE EXISTS, ANY MISFORTUNES BEFALL GOOD MEN;” OR, “OF PROVIDENCE”

I. You have asked me, Lucilius, why, if the world be ruled by providence, so many evils befall good men? The answer to this would be more conveniently given in the course of this work, after we have proved that providence governs the universe, and that God is amongst us: but, since you wish me to deal with one point apart from the

whole, and to answer one replication before the main action has been decided, I will do what is not difficult, and plead the cause of the gods. At the present time it is superfluous to point out that it is not without some guardian that so great a work maintains its position, that the assemblage and movements of the stars do not depend upon accidental impulses, or that objects whose motion is regulated by chance often fall into confusion and soon stumble, whereas this swift and safe movement goes on, governed by eternal law, bearing with it so many things both on sea and land, so many most brilliant lights shining in order in the skies; that this regularity does not belong to matter moving at random, and that particles brought together by chance could not arrange themselves with such art as to make the heaviest weight, that of the earth, remain unmoved, and behold the flight of the heavens as they hasten round it, to make the seas pour into the valleys and so temper the climate of the land, without any sensible increase from the rivers which flow into them, or to cause huge growths to proceed from minute seeds. Even those phenomena which appear to be confused and irregular, I mean showers of rain and clouds, the rush of lightning from the heavens, fire that pours from the riven peaks of mountains, quakings of the trembling earth, and everything else which is produced on earth by the unquiet element in the universe, do not come to pass without reason, though they do so suddenly: but they also have their causes, as also have those things which excite our wonder by the strangeness of their position, such as warm springs amidst the waves of the sea, and new islands that spring up in the wide ocean. Moreover, any one who has watched how the shore is laid bare by the retreat of the sea into itself, and how within a short time it is again covered, will believe that it is in obedience to some hidden law of change that the waves are at one time contracted and driven inwards, at another burst forth and regain their bed with a strong current, since all the while they wax in regular proportion, and come up at their appointed day and hour greater or less, according as the moon, at whose pleasure the ocean flows, draws them. Let these matters be set aside for discussion at their own proper season, but I, since you do not doubt the existence of providence but complain of it, will on that account more readily reconcile you to gods who are most excellent to excellent men: for indeed the nature of things does not ever permit good to be injured by good. Between good men and the gods there is a friendship which is brought about by virtue— friendship do I say? nay, rather relationship and likeness, since the good man differs from a god in time alone, being his pupil and rival and true offspring, whom his glorious parent trains more severely than other men, insisting sternly on virtuous conduct, just as strict fathers do. When therefore you see men who are good and acceptable to the gods toiling, sweating, painfully struggling upwards, while bad men run riot and are steeped in pleasures, reflect that modesty pleases us in our sons, and forwardness in our house-born slave-boys; that the former are held in check by a somewhat stern rule, whereas the boldness of the latter is encouraged. Be thou sure that God acts in like manner: He does not pet the good man: He tries him, hardens him, and fits him for Himself.

II. Why do many things turn out badly for good men? Why, no evil can befall a good man: contraries cannot combine. Just as so many rivers, so many showers of rain from the clouds, such a number of medicinal springs, do not alter the taste of the sea, indeed, do not so much as soften it, so the pressure of adversity does not affect the mind of a brave man; for the mind of a brave man maintains its balance and throws its own complexion over all that takes place, because it is more powerful than any external circumstances. I do not say that he does not feel them, but he conquers them, and on occasion calmly and tranquilly rises superior to their attacks, holding all misfortunes to be trials of his own firmness. Yet who is there who, provided he be a man and have honourable ambition, does not long for due employment, and is not eager to do his duty in spite of danger? Is there any hard-working man to whom idleness is not a punishment? We see athletes, who study only their bodily strength, engage in contests with the strongest of men, and insist that those who train them for the arena should put out their whole strength when practising with them: they endure blows and maltreatment, and, if they cannot find any single person who is their match, they engage with several at once: their strength and courage droop without an antagonist: they can only prove how great and how mighty it is by proving how much they can endure. You should know that good men ought to act in like manner, so as not to fear troubles and difficulties, nor to lament their hard fate, to take in good part whatever befalls them, and force it to become a blessing to them. It does not matter what you bear, but how you bear it. Do you not see how differently fathers and mothers indulge their children? how the former urge them to begin their tasks betimes, will not suffer them to be idle even on holidays, and exercise them till they perspire, and sometimes till they shed tears—while their mothers want to cuddle them in their laps, and keep them out of the sun, and never wish them to be vexed, or to cry, or to work. God bears a fatherly mind towards good men, and loves them in a manly spirit. “Let them,” says He, “be exercised by labours, sufferings, and losses, that so they may gather true strength.” Those who are surfeited with ease break down not only with labour, but with mere motion and by their own weight. Unbroken prosperity cannot bear a single blow; but he who has waged an unceasing strife with his misfortunes has gained a thicker skin by his sufferings, yields to no disaster, and even though he fall yet fights on his knee. Do you wonder that God, who so loves the good, who would have them attain the highest goodness and pre-eminence, should appoint fortune to be their adversary? I should not be surprised if the gods sometimes experience a wish to behold great men struggling with some misfortune. We sometimes are delighted when a youth of steady courage receives on his spear the wild beast that attacks him; or when he meets the charge of a lion without flinching; and the more eminent the man is who acts thus,[1] the more attractive is the sight: yet these are not matters which can attract the attention of the gods, but are mere pastime and diversions of human frivolity. Behold a sight worthy to be viewed by a god interested in his own work, behold a pair[2] worthy of a god, a brave man matched with evil fortune, especially if he himself has given the challenge. I say, I do not know what nobler spectacle Jupiter could find on

earth, should he turn his eyes thither, than that of Cato, after his party had more than once been defeated, still standing upright amid the ruins of the commonwealth. Quoth he, “What though all be fallen into one man’s power, though the land be guarded by his legions, the sea by his fleets, though Caesar’s soldiers beset the city gate? Cato has a way out of it: with one hand he will open a wide path to freedom; his sword, which he has borne unstained by disgrace and innocent of crime even in a civil war, will still perform good and noble deeds; it will give to Cato that freedom which it could not give to his country. Begin, my soul, the work which thou so long hast contemplated, snatch thyself away from the world of man. Already Petreius and Juba have met and fallen, each slain by the other’s hand—a brave and noble compact with fate, yet not one befitting my greatness: it is as disgraceful for Cato to beg his death of any one as it would be for him to beg his life.”

It is clear to me that the gods must have looked on with great joy, while that man, his own most ruthless avenger, took thought for the safety of others and arranged the escape of those who departed, while even on his last night he pursued his studies, while he drove the sword into his sacred breast, while he tore forth his vitals and laid his hand upon that most holy life which was unworthy to be defiled by steel. This, I am inclined to think, was the reason that his wound was not well-aimed and mortal: the gods were not satisfied with seeing Cato die once: his courage was kept in action and recalled to the stage, that it might display itself in a more difficult part: for it needs a greater mind to return a second time to death. How could they fail to view their pupil with interest when leaving his life by such a noble and memorable departure? Men are raised to the level of the gods by a death which is admired even by those who fear them.

III. However, as my argument proceeds, I shall prove that what appear to be evils are not so; for the present I say this, that what you call hard measure, misfortunes, and things against which we ought to pray, are really to the advantage, firstly, of those to whom they happen, and secondly, of all mankind, for whom the gods care more than for individuals; and next, that these evils befall them with their own good will, and that men deserve to endure misfortunes, if they are unwilling to receive them. To this I shall add, that misfortunes proceed thus by destiny, and that they befall good men by the same law which makes them good. After this, I shall prevail upon you never to pity any good man; for though he may be called unhappy, he cannot be so.

Of all these propositions that which I have stated first appears the most difficult to prove. I mean, that the things which we dread and shudder at are to the advantage of those to whom they happen. “Is it,” say you, “to their advantage to be driven into exile, to be brought to want, to carry out to burial their children and wife, to be publicly disgraced, to lose their health?” Yes! if you are surprised at these being to any man’s advantage, you will also be surprised at any man being benefited by the knife and cautery, or by hunger and thirst as well. Yet if you consider that some men, in

order to be cured, have their bones scraped, and pieces of them extracted, that their veins are pulled out and that some have limbs cut off, which could not remain in their place without ruin to the whole body, you will allow me to prove to you this also, that some misfortunes are for the good of those to whom they happen, just as much, by Hercules, as some things which are praised and sought after are harmful to those who enjoy them like indigestions and drunkenness and other matters which kill us through pleasure. Among many grand sayings of our Demetrius is this, which I have but just heard, and which still rings and thrills in my ears: “No one,” said he, “seems to me more unhappy than the man whom no misfortune has ever befallen.” He never has had an opportunity of testing himself; though everything has happened to him according to his wish, nay, even before he has formed a wish, yet the gods have judged him unfavourably; he has never been deemed worthy to conquer ill fortune, which avoids the greatest cowards, as though it said, “Why should I take that man for my antagonist? He will straightway lay down his arms: I shall not need all my strength against him: he will be put to flight by a mere menace: he dares not even face me; let me look around for some other with whom I may fight hand to hand: I blush to join battle with one who is prepared to be beaten.” A gladiator deems it a disgrace to be matched with an inferior, and knows that to win without danger is to win without glory. Just so Fortune; she seeks out the bravest to match herself with, passes over some with disdain, and makes for the most unyielding and upright of men, to exert her strength against them. She tried Mucius fire, Fabricius by poverty, Rutilius by exile, Regulus by torture, Socrates by poison, Cato by death: it is ill fortune alone that discovers these glorious examples. Was Mucius unhappy, because he grasped the enemy’s fire with his right hand, and of his own accord paid the penalty of his mistake? because he overcame the King with his hand when it was burned, though he could not when it held a sword? Would he have been happier, if he had warmed his hand in his mistress’s bosom? Was Fabricius unhappy, because when the state could spare him, he dug his own land? because he waged war against riches as keenly as against Pyrrhus? because he supped beside his hearth off the very roots and herbs which he himself, though an old man, and one who had enjoyed a triumph, had grubbed up while clearing his field of weeds? What then? would he have been happier if he had gorged himself with fishes from distant shores, and birds caught in foreign lands? if he had roused the torpor of his queasy stomach with shellfish from the upper and the lower sea? if he had piled a great heap of fruits round game of the first head, which many huntsmen had been killed in capturing? Was Rutilius unhappy, because those who condemned him will have to plead their cause for all ages? because he endured the loss of his country more composedly than that of his banishment? because he was the only man who refused anything to Sulla the dictator, and when recalled from exile all but went further away and banished himself still more. “Let those,” said he, “whom thy fortunate reign catches at Rome, see to the Forum drenched with blood,[3] and the heads of Senators above the Pool of Servilius—the place where the victims of Sulla’s proscriptions were stripped—the bands of assassins roaming at large through the city, and many thousands of Roman citizens slaughtered in one place,

after, nay, by means of a promise of quarter. Let those who are unable to go into exile behold these things." Well! is Lucius Sulla happy, because when he comes down into the Forum room is made for him with sword-strokes, because he allows the heads of consulars to be shown to him, and counts out the price of blood through the quaestor and the state exchequer? And this, this was the man who passed the Lex Cornelia! Let us now come to Regulus: what injury did fortune do him when she made him an example of good faith, an example of endurance? They pierce his skin with nails: wherever he leans his weary body, it rests on a wound; his eyes are fixed for ever open; the greater his sufferings, the greater is his glory. Would you know how far he is from regretting that he valued his honour at such a price? heal his wounds and send him again into the senate-house; he will give the same advice. So, then, you think Maecenas a happier man, who when troubled by love, and weeping at the daily repulses of his ill-natured wife, sought for sleep by listening to distant strains of music? Though he drug himself with wine, divert himself with the sound of falling waters, and distract his troubled thoughts with a thousand pleasures, yet Maecenas will no more sleep on his down cushions than Regulus on the rack. Yet it consoles the latter that he suffers for the sake of honour, and he looks away from his torments to their cause: whilst the other, jaded with pleasures and sick with over-enjoyment, is more hurt by the cause of his sufferings than by the sufferings themselves. Vice has not so utterly taken possession of the human race that, if men were allowed to choose their destiny, there can be any doubt but that more would choose to be Reguluses than to be Maecenases: or if there were any one who dared to say that he would prefer to be born Maecenas than Regulus that man, whether he says so or not, would rather have been Terentia (than Cicero).

Do you consider Socrates to have been badly used, because he took that draught which the state assigned to him as though it were a charm to make him immortal, and argued about death until death itself? Was he ill treated, because his blood froze and the current of his veins gradually stopped as the chill of death crept over them? How much more is this man to be envied than he who is served on precious stones, whose drink a creature trained to every vice, a eunuch or much the same, cools with snow in a golden cup? Such men as these bring up again all that they drink, in misery and disgust at the taste of their own bile, while Socrates cheerfully and willingly drains his poison. As for Cato, enough has been said, and all men must agree that the highest happiness was reached by one who was chosen by Nature herself as worthy to contend with all her terrors: "The enmity," says she, "of the powerful is grievous, therefore let him be opposed at once by Pompeius, Caesar, and Crassus: it is grievous, when a candidate for public offices, to be defeated by one's inferiors; therefore let him be defeated by Vatinius: it is grievous to take part in civil wars, therefore let him fight in every part of the world for the good cause with equal obstinacy and ill-luck: it is grievous to lay hands upon one's self, therefore let him do so. What shall I gain by this? That all men may know that these things, which I have deemed Cato worthy to undergo, are not real evils."

IV. Prosperity comes to the mob, and to low-minded men as well as to great ones; but it is the privilege of great men alone to send under the yoke[4] the disasters and terrors of mortal life: whereas to be always prosperous, and to pass through life without a twinge of mental distress, is to remain ignorant of one half of nature. You are a great man; but how am I to know it, if fortune gives you no opportunity of showing your virtue? You have entered the arena of the Olympic games, but no one else has done so: you have the crown, but not the victory: I do not congratulate you as I would a brave man, but as one who has obtained a consulship or praetorship. You have gained dignity. I may say the same of a good man, if troublesome circumstances have never given him a single opportunity of displaying the strength of his mind. I think you unhappy because you never have been unhappy: you have passed through your life without meeting an antagonist: no one will know your powers, not even you yourself. For a man cannot know himself without a trial: no one ever learnt what he could do without putting himself to the test; for which reason many have of their own free will exposed themselves to misfortunes which no longer came in their way, and have sought for an opportunity of making their virtue, which otherwise would have been lost in darkness, shine before the world. Great men, I say, often rejoice at crosses of fortune just as brave soldiers do at wars. I remember to have heard Triumphus, who was a gladiator[5] in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, complaining about the scarcity of prizes; “What a glorious time,” said he, “is past.” Valour is greedy of danger, and thinks only of whither it strives to go, not of what it will suffer, since even what it will suffer is part of its glory. Soldiers pride themselves on their wounds, they joyously display their blood flowing over their breastplate.[6] Though those who return unwounded from battle may have done as bravely, yet he who returns wounded is more admired. God, I say, favours those whom He wishes to enjoy the greatest honours, whenever He affords them the means of performing some exploit with spirit and courage, something which is not easily to be accomplished: you can judge of a pilot in a storm, of a soldier in a battle. How can I know with how great a spirit you could endure poverty, if you overflow with riches? How can I tell with how great firmness you could bear up against disgrace, dishonour, and public hatred, if you grow old to the sound of applause, if popular favour cannot be alienated from you, and seems to flow to you by the natural bent of men’s minds? How can I know how calmly you would endure to be childless, if you see all your children around you? I have heard what you said when you were consoling others: then I should have seen whether you could have consoled yourself, whether you could have forbidden yourself to grieve. Do not, I beg you, dread those things which the immortal gods apply to our minds like spurs: misfortune is virtue’s opportunity. Those men may justly be called unhappy who are stupified with excess of enjoyment, whom sluggish contentment keeps as it were becalmed in a quiet sea: whatever befalls them will come strange to them. Misfortunes press hardest on those who are unacquainted with them: the yoke feels heavy to the tender neck. The recruit turns pale at the thought of a wound: the veteran, who knows that he has often won the victory after losing

blood, looks boldly at his own flowing gore. In like manner God hardens, reviews, and exercises those whom He tests and loves: those whom He seems to indulge and spare, He is keeping out of condition to meet their coming misfortunes: for you are mistaken if you suppose that any one is exempt from misfortune: he who has long prospered will have his share some day; those who seem to have been spared them have only had them put off. Why does God afflict the best of men with ill-health, or sorrow, or other troubles? Because in the army the most hazardous services are assigned to the bravest soldiers: a general sends his choicest troops to attack the enemy in a midnight ambuscade, to reconnoitre his line of march, or to drive the hostile garrisons from their strong places. No one of these men says as he begins his march, “The general has dealt hardly with me,” but “He has judged well of me.” Let those who are bidden to suffer what makes the weak and cowardly weep, say likewise, “God has thought us worthy subjects on whom to try how much suffering human nature can endure.” Avoid luxury, avoid effeminate enjoyment, by which men’s minds are softened, and in which, unless something occurs to remind them of the common lot of humanity, they lie unconscious, as though plunged in continual drunkenness. He whom glazed windows have always guarded from the wind, whose feet are warmed by constantly renewed fomentations, whose dining-room is heated by hot air beneath the floor and spread through the walls, cannot meet the gentlest breeze without danger. While all excesses are hurtful, excess of comfort is the most hurtful of all; it affects the brain; it leads men’s minds into vain imaginings; it spreads a thick cloud over the boundaries of truth and falsehood. Is it not better, with virtue by one’s side, to endure continual misfortune, than to burst with an endless surfeit of good things? It is the overloaded stomach that is rent asunder: death treats starvation more gently. The gods deal with good men according to the same rule as schoolmasters with their pupils, who exact most labour from those of whom they have the surest hopes. Do you imagine that the Lacedaemonians, who test the mettle of their children by public flogging, do not love them? Their own fathers call upon them to endure the strokes of the rod bravely, and when they are torn and half dead, ask them to offer their wounded skin to receive fresh wounds. Why then should we wonder if God tries noble spirits severely? There can be no easy proof of virtue. Fortune lashes and mangles us: well, let us endure it: it is not cruelty, it is a struggle, in which the oftener we engage the braver we shall become. The strongest part of the body is that which is exercised by the most frequent use: we must entrust ourselves to fortune to be hardened by her against herself: by degrees she will make us a match for herself. Familiarity with danger leads us to despise it. Thus the bodies of sailors are hardened by endurance of the sea, and the hands of farmers by work; the arms of soldiers are powerful to hurl darts, the legs of runners are active: that part of each man which he exercises is the strongest: so by endurance the mind becomes able to despise the power of misfortunes. You may see what endurance might effect in us if you observe what labour does among tribes that are naked and rendered stronger by want. Look at all the nations that dwell beyond the Roman Empire: I mean the Germans and all the nomad tribes that war against us along the Danube. They suffer from

eternal winter, and a dismal climate, the barren soil grudges them sustenance, they keep off the rain with leaves or thatch, they bound across frozen marshes, and hunt wild beasts for food. Do you think them unhappy? There is no unhappiness in what use has made part of one's nature: by degrees men find pleasure in doing what they were first driven to do by necessity. They have no homes and no resting-places save those which weariness appoints them for the day; their food, though coarse, yet must be sought with their own hands; the harshness of the climate is terrible, and their bodies are unclothed. This, which you think a hardship, is the mode of life of all these races: how then can you wonder at good men being shaken, in order that they may be strengthened? No tree which the wind does not often blow against is firm and strong; for it is stiffened by the very act of being shaken, and plants its roots more securely: those which grow in a sheltered valley are brittle: and so it is to the advantage of good men, and causes them to be undismayed, that they should live much amidst alarms, and learn to bear with patience what is not evil save to him who endures it ill.

V. Add to this that it is to the advantage of every one that the best men should, so to speak, be on active service and perform labours: God has the same purpose as the wise man, that is, to prove that the things which the herd covets and dreads are neither good nor bad in themselves. If, however, He only bestows them upon good men, it will be evident that they are good things, and bad, if He only inflicts them upon bad men. Blindness would be execrable if no one lost his eyes except those who deserve to have them pulled out; therefore let Appius and Metellus be doomed to darkness. Riches are not a good thing: therefore let Elius the pander possess them, that men who have consecrated money in the temple, may see the same in the brothel: for by no means can God discredit objects of desire so effectually as by bestowing them upon the worst of men, and removing them from the best. "But," you say, "it is unjust that a good man should be enfeebled, or transfixed, or chained, while bad men swagger at large with a whole skin." What! is it not unjust that brave men should bear arms, pass the night in camps, and stand on guard along the rampart with their wounds still bandaged, while within the city eunuchs and professional profligates live at their ease? what? is it not unjust that maidens of the highest birth should be roused at night to perform Divine service, while fallen women enjoy the soundest sleep? Labour calls for the best man: the senate often passes the whole day in debate, while at the same time every scoundrel either amuses his leisure in the Campus Martius, or lurks in a tavern, or passes his time in some pleasant society. The same thing happens in this great commonwealth (of the world): good men labour, spend and are spent, and that too of their own free will; they are not dragged along by fortune, but follow her and take equal steps with her; if they knew how, they would outstrip her. I remember, also, to have heard this spirited saying of that stoutest-hearted of men, Demetrius. "Ye immortal Gods," said he, "the only complaint which I have to make of you is that you did not make your will known to me earlier; for then I would sooner have gone into that state of life to which I now have been called. Do you wish to take my children? it was for you that I brought them up. Do you wish

to take some part of my body? take it: it is no great thing that I am offering you, I shall soon have done with the whole of it. Do you wish for my life? why should I hesitate to return to you what you gave me? whatever you ask you shall receive with my good will: nay, I would rather give it than be forced to hand it over to you: what need had you to take away what you did? you might have received it from me: yet even as it is you cannot take anything from me, because you cannot rob a man unless he resists."

I am constrained to nothing, I suffer nothing against my will, nor am I God's slave, but his willing follower, and so much the more because I know that everything is ordained and proceeds according to a law that endures for ever. The fates guide us, and the length of every man's days is decided at the first hour of his birth: every cause depends upon some earlier cause: one long chain of destiny decides all things, public or private. Wherefore, everything must be patiently endured, because events do not fall in our way, as we imagine, but come by a regular law. It has long ago been settled at what you should rejoice and at what you should weep, and although the lives of individual men appear to differ from one another in a great variety of particulars, yet the sum total comes to one and the same thing: we soon perish, and the gifts which we receive soon perish. Why, then, should we be angry? why should we lament? we are prepared for our fate: let nature deal as she will with her own bodies; let us be cheerful whatever befalls, and stoutly reflect that it is not anything of our own that perishes. What is the duty of a good man? to submit himself to fate: it is a great consolation to be swept away together with the entire universe: whatever law is laid upon us that thus we must live and thus we must die, is laid upon the gods also: one unchangeable stream bears along men and gods alike: the creator and ruler of the universe himself, though he has given laws to the fates, yet is guided by them: he always obeys, he only once commanded. "But why was God so unjust in His distribution of fate, as to assign poverty, wounds, and untimely deaths to good men?" The workman cannot alter his materials: this is their nature. Some qualities cannot be separated from some others: they cling together; are indivisible. Dull minds, tending to sleep or to a waking state exactly like sleep, are composed of sluggish elements: it requires stronger stuff to form a man meriting careful description. His course will not be straightforward; he must go upwards and downwards, be tossed about, and guide his vessel through troubled waters: he must make his way in spite of fortune: he will meet with much that is hard which he must soften, much that is rough that he must make smooth. Fire tries gold, misfortune tries brave men. See how high virtue has to climb: you may be sure that it has no safe path to tread.

"Steep is the path at first: the steeds, though strong,

Fresh from their rest, can hardly crawl along;

The middle part lies through the topmost sky,

Whence oft, as I the earth and sea descry,

I shudder, terrors through my bosom thrill.

The ending of the path is sheer down hill,

And needs the careful guidance of the rein,

For ever when I sink beneath the main,

Old Tethys trembles in her depths below

Lest headlong down upon her I should go."[7]

When the spirited youth heard this, he said, "I have no fault to find with the road: I will mount it, it is worth while to go through these places, even though one fall." His father did not cease from trying to scare his brave spirit with terrors:—

"Then, too, that thou may'st hold thy course aright,

And neither turn aside to left nor right.

Straight through the Bull's fell horns thy path must go.

Through the fierce Lion, and the Archer's bow."

After this Phaethon says:—

"Harness the chariot which you yield to me,

I am encouraged by these things with which you think to scare me: I long to stand where the Sun himself trembles to stand." It is the part of grovellers and cowards to follow the safe track; courage loves a lofty path.

VI. "Yet, why does God permit evil to happen to good men?" He does not permit it: he takes away from them all evils, such as crimes and scandalous wickedness, daring thoughts, grasping schemes, blind lusts, and avarice coveting its neighbour's goods. He protects and saves them. Does any one besides this demand that God should look after the baggage of good men also? Why, they themselves leave the care of this to God: they scorn external accessories. Democritus

forswore riches, holding them to be a burden to a virtuous mind: what wonder then, if God permits that to happen to a good man, which a good man sometimes chooses should happen to himself? Good men, you say, lose their children: why should they not, since sometimes they even put them to death? They are banished: why should they not be, since sometimes they leave their country of their own free will, never to return? They are slain: why not, since sometimes they choose to lay violent hands on themselves? Why do they suffer certain miseries? it is that they may teach others how to do so. They are born as patterns. Conceive, therefore, that God says:—"You, who have chosen righteousness, what complaint can you make of me? I have encompassed other men with unreal good things, and have deceived their inane minds as it were by a long and misleading dream: I have bedecked them with gold, silver, and ivory, but within them there is no good thing. Those men whom you regard as fortunate, if you could see, not their outward show, but their hidden life, are really unhappy, mean, and base, ornamented on the outside like the walls of their houses: that good fortune of theirs is not sound and genuine: it is only a veneer, and that a thin one. As long, therefore, as they can stand upright and display themselves as they choose, they shine and impose upon one; when something occurs to shake and unmask them, we see how deep and real a rottenness was hidden by that factitious magnificence. To you I have given sure and lasting good things, which become greater and better the more one turns them over and views them on every side: I have granted to you to scorn danger, to disdain passion. You do not shine outwardly, all your good qualities are turned inwards; even so does the world neglect what lies without it, and rejoices in the contemplation of itself. I have placed every good thing within your own breasts: it is your good fortune not to need any good fortune. 'Yet many things befall you which are sad, dreadful, hard to be borne.' Well, as I have not been able to remove these from your path, I have given your minds strength to combat all: bear them bravely. In this you can surpass God himself; He is beyond suffering evil: you are above it. Despise poverty; no man lives as poor as he was born: despise pain; either it will cease or you will cease: despise death; it either ends you or takes you elsewhere: despise fortune; I have given her no weapon that can reach the mind. Above all, I have taken care that no one should hold you captive against your will: the way of escape lies open before you: if you do not choose to fight, you may fly. For this reason, of all those matters which I have deemed essential for you, I have made nothing easier for you than to die. I have set man's life as it were on a mountain side: it soon slips down.[8] Do but watch, and you will see how short and how ready a path leads to freedom. I have not imposed such long delays upon those who quit the world as upon those who enter it: were it not so, fortune would hold a wide dominion over you, if a man died as slowly as he is born. Let all time, let every place teach you, how simple it is to renounce nature, and to fling back her gifts to her: before the altar itself and during the solemn rites of sacrifice, while life is being prayed for, learn how to die. Fat oxen fall dead with a tiny wound; a blow from a man's hand fells animals of great strength: the sutures of the neck are severed by a thin blade, and when the joint which connects the head and neck is cut, all that great mass falls. The

breath of life is not deep seated, nor only to be let forth by steel—the vitals need not be searched throughout by plunging a sword among them to the hilt: death lies near the surface, I have not appointed any particular spot for these blows—the body may be pierced wherever you please. That very act which is called dying, by which the breath of life leaves the body, is too short for you to be able to estimate its quickness: whether a knot crushes the windpipe, or water stops your breathing: whether you fall headlong from a height and perish upon the hard ground below, or a mouthful of fire checks the drawing of your breath—whatever it is, it acts swiftly. Do you not blush to spend so long a time in dreading what takes so short a time to do?”

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[1] honestior opposed to the gladiator—the loftier the station of the combatant. The Gracchus of Juvenal, Sat. ii. and viii., illustrates, the passage.

[2] par, a technical term in the language of sport (worthy of such a spectator).

[3] viderint—Let them see to it: it is no matter of mine.

[4] That is, to triumph over. “Two spears were set upright ... and a third was fastened across them at the top; and through this gateway the vanquished army marched out, as a token that they had been conquered in war, and owed their lives to the enemy’s mercy. It was no peculiar insult devised for this occasion, but a common usage, so far as appears, in similar cases; like the modern ceremony of piling arms when a garrison or army surrender themselves as prisoners of war.”— Arnold’s History of Rome, ch. xxxi.

[5] He was a “mirmillo,” a kind of gladiator who was armed with a Gaulish helmet.

[6] e lorica.

[7] The lines occur in Ovid’s Metamorphoses, ii. 63. Phoebus is telling Phaethon how to drive the chariot of the Sun.

[8] Compare Walter Scott: “All. . . . must have felt that but for the dictates of religion, or the natural recoil of the mind from the idea of dissolution, there have been times when they would have been willing to throw away life as a child does a broken toy. I am sure I know one who has often felt so. O God! what are we?—Lords of nature?—Why, a tile drops from a house-top, which an elephant would not feel more than a sheet of pasteboard, and there lies his lordship. Or something of inconceivably minute origin, the pressure of a bone, or the inflammation of a particle of the brain takes place, and the

emblem of the Deity destroys himself or some one else. We hold our health and our reason on terms slighter than any one would desire, were it in their choice, to hold an Irish cabin."—Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, vol. vii., p. 11.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO SERENUS.

"THAT THE WISE MAN CAN NEITHER RECEIVE INJURY NOR INSULT," OR, AN ESSAY ON THE FIRMNESS OF THE WISE MAN.

I. I might truly say, Serenus, that there is as wide a difference between the Stoics and the other sects of philosophers as there is between men and women, since each class contributes an equal share to human society, but the one is born to command, the other to obey. The other philosophers deal with us gently and coaxingly, just as our accustomed family physicians usually do with our bodies, treating them not by the best and shortest method, but by that which we allow them to employ; whereas the Stoics adopt a manly course, and do not care about its appearing attractive to those who are entering upon it, but that it should as quickly as possible take us out of the world, and lead us to that lofty eminence which is so far beyond the scope of any missile weapon that it is above the reach of Fortune herself. "But the way by which we are asked to climb is steep and uneven." What then? Can heights be reached by a level path? Yet they are not so sheer and precipitous as some think. It is only the first part that has rocks and cliffs and no apparent outlet, just as many hills seen from a long way off appear abruptly steep and joined together, because the distance deceives our sight, and then, as we draw nearer, those very hills which our mistaken eyes had made into one gradually unfold themselves, those parts which seemed precipitous from afar assume a gently sloping outline. When just now mention was made of Marcus Cato, you whose mind revolts at injustice were indignant at Cato's own age having so little understood him, at its having allotted a place below Vatinius to one who towered above both Caesar and Pompeius; it seemed shameful to you, that when he spoke against some law in the Forum his toga was torn from him, and that he was hustled through the hands of a mutinous mob from the Rostra as far as the arch of Fabius, enduring all the bad language, spitting, and other insults of the frantic rabble.

II. I then answered, that you had good cause to be anxious on behalf of the commonwealth, which Publius Clodius on the one side, Vatinius and all the greatest scoundrels on the other, were putting up for sale, and, carried away by their blind covetousness, did not

understand that when they sold it they themselves were sold with it; I bade you have no fears on behalf of Cato himself, because the wise man can neither receive injury nor insult, and it is more certain that the immortal gods have given Cato as a pattern of a wise man to us, than that they gave Ulysses or Hercules to the earlier ages; for these our Stoics have declared were wise men, unconquered by labours, despisers of pleasure, and superior to all terrors. Cato did not slay wild beasts, whose pursuit belongs to huntsmen and countrymen, nor did he exterminate fabulous creatures with fire and sword, or live in times when it was possible to believe that the heavens could be supported on the shoulders of one man. In an age which had thrown off its belief in antiquated superstitions, and had carried material knowledge to its highest point, he had to struggle against that many-headed monster, ambition, against that boundless lust for power which the whole world divided among three men could not satisfy. He alone withstood the vices of a worn-out State, sinking into ruin through its own bulk; he upheld the falling commonwealth as far as it could be upheld by one man's hand, until at last his support was withdrawn, and he shared the crash which he had so long averted, and perished together with that from which it was impious to separate him—for Cato did not outlive freedom, nor did freedom outlive Cato. Think you that the people could do any wrong to such a man when they tore away his praetorship or his toga? when they bespattered his sacred head with the rinsings of their mouths? The wise man is safe, and no injury or insult can touch him.

III. I think I see your excited and boiling temper. You are preparing to exclaim: "These are the things which take away all weight from your maxims; you promise great matters, such as I should not even wish for, let alone believe to be possible, and then, after all your brave words, though you say that the wise man is not poor, you admit that he often is in want of servants, shelter, and food. You say that the wise man is not mad, yet you admit that he sometimes loses his reason, talks nonsense, and is driven to the wildest actions by the stress of his disorder. When you say that the wise man cannot be a slave, you do not deny that he will be sold, carry out orders, and perform menial services at the bidding of his master; so, for all your proud looks, you come down to the level of every one else, and merely call things by different names. Consequently, I suspect that something of this kind lurks behind this maxim, which at first sight appears so beautiful and noble, 'that the wise man can neither receive injury nor insult.' It makes a great deal of difference whether you declare that the wise man is beyond feeling resentment, or beyond receiving injury; for if you say that he will bear it calmly, he has no special privilege in that, for he has developed a very common quality, and one which is learned by long endurance of wrong itself, namely, patience. If you declare that he can never receive an injury, that is, that no one will attempt to do him one, then I will throw up all my occupations in life and become a Stoic."

It has not been my object to decorate the wise man with mere imaginary verbal honours, but to raise him to a position where no injury will be permitted to reach him. "What? will there be no one

to tease him, to try to wrong him?” There is nothing on earth so sacred as not to be liable to sacrilege; yet holy things exist on high none the less because there are men who strike at a greatness which is far above themselves, though with no hope of reaching it. The invulnerable is not that which is never struck, but that which is never wounded. In this class I will show you the wise man. Can we doubt that the strength which is never overcome in fight is more to be relied on than that which is never challenged, seeing that untested power is untrustworthy, whereas that solidity which hurls back all attacks is deservedly regarded as the most trustworthy of all? In like manner you may know that the wise man, if no injury hurts him, is of a higher type than if none is offered to him, and I should call him a brave man whom war does not subdue and the violence of the enemy does not alarm, not him who enjoys luxurious ease amid a slothful people. I say, then, that such a wise man is invulnerable against all injury; it matters not, therefore, how many darts be hurled at him, since he can be pierced by none of them. Just as the hardness of some stones is impervious to steel, and adamant can neither be cut, broken, or ground, but blunts all instruments used upon it; just as some things cannot be destroyed by fire, but when encircled by flame still retain their hardness and shape; just as some tall projecting cliffs break the waves of the sea, and though lashed by them through many centuries, yet show no traces of their rage; even so the mind of the wise man is firm, and gathers so much strength, that it is as safe from injury as any of those things which I have mentioned.

IV. “What then? Will there be no one who will try to do an injury to the wise man?” Yes, some one will try, but the injury will not reach him; for he is separated from the contact of his inferiors by so wide a distance that no evil impulse can retain its power of harm until it reaches him. Even when powerful men, raised to positions of high authority, and strong in the obedience of their dependents, strive to injure him, all their darts fall as far short of his wisdom as those which are shot upwards by bowstrings or catapults, which, although they rise so high as to pass out of sight, yet fall back again without reaching the heavens. Why, do you suppose that when that stupid king[1] clouded the daylight with the multitude of his darts, that any arrow of them all went into the sun? or that when he flung his chains into the deep, that he was able to reach Neptune? Just as sacred things escape from the hands of men, and no injury is done to the godhead by those who destroy temples and melt down images, so whoever attempts to treat the wise man with impertinence, insolence, or scorn, does so in vain. “It would be better,” say you, “if no one wished to do so.” You are expressing a wish that the whole human race were inoffensive, which may hardly be; moreover, those who would gain by such wrongs not being done are those who would do them, not he who could not suffer from them even if they were done; nay, I know not whether wisdom is not best displayed by calmness in the midst of annoyances, just as the greatest proof of a general’s strength in arms and men consists in his quietness and confidence in the midst of an enemy’s country.

V. If you think fit, my Serenus, let us distinguish between injury

and insult. The former is naturally the more grievous, the latter less important, and grievous only to the thin-skinned, since it angers men but does not wound them. Yet such is the weakness of men's minds, that many think that there is nothing more bitter than insult; thus you will find slaves who prefer to be flogged to being slapped, and who think stripes and death more endurable than insulting words. To such a pitch of absurdity have we come that we suffer not only from pain, but from the idea of pain, like children, who are terror-stricken by darkness, misshapen masks, and distorted faces, and whose tears flow at hearing names unpleasing to their ears, at the movement of our fingers, and other things which they ignorantly shrink from with a sort of mistaken spasm. The object which injury proposes to itself is to do evil to some one. Now wisdom leaves no room for evil; to it, the only evil is baseness, which cannot enter into the place already occupied by virtue and honour. If, therefore, there can be no injury without evil, and no evil without baseness, and baseness cannot find any place with a man who is already filled with honour, it follows that no injury can reach the wise man: for if injury be the endurance of some evil, and the wise man can endure no evil, it follows that no injury takes effect upon the wise man. All injury implies a making less of that which it affects, and no one can sustain an injury without some loss either of his dignity, or of some part of his body, or of some of the things external to ourselves; but the wise man can lose nothing. He has invested everything in himself, has entrusted nothing to fortune, has his property in safety, and is content with virtue, which does not need casual accessories, and therefore can neither be increased or diminished; for virtue, as having attained to the highest position, has no room for addition to herself, and fortune can take nothing away save what she gave. Now fortune does not give virtue; therefore she does not take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, not to be moved, not to be shaken, and so hardened against misfortunes that she cannot be bent, let alone overcome by them. She looks unfalteringly on while tortures are being prepared for her; she makes no change of countenance, whether misery or pleasure be offered to her. The wise man therefore can lose nothing of whose loss he will be sensible, for he is the property of virtue alone, from whom he never can be taken away. He enjoys all other things at the good pleasure of fortune; but who is grieved at the loss of what is not his own? If injury can hurt none of those things which are the peculiar property of the wise man, because while his virtue is safe they are safe, then it is impossible that an injury should be done to a wise man. Demetrius, who was surnamed Poliorcetes, took Megara, and the philosopher Stilbo, when asked by him whether he had lost anything, answered, "No, I carry all my property about me." Yet his inheritance had been given up to pillage, his daughters had been outraged by the enemy, his country had fallen under a foreign dominion, and it was the king, enthroned on high, surrounded by the spears of his victorious troops, who put this question to him; yet he struck the victory out of the king's hands, and proved that, though the city was taken, he himself was not only unconquered but unharmed, for he bore with him those true goods which no one can lay hands upon. What was being plundered and carried away hither and thither he did not consider to be his own,

but to be merely things which come and go at the caprice of fortune; therefore he had not loved them as his own, for the possession of all things which come from without is slippery and insecure.

VI. Consider now, whether any thief, or false accuser, or headstrong neighbour, or rich man enjoying the power conferred by a childless old age, could do any injury to this man, from whom neither war nor an enemy whose profession was the noble art of battering city walls could take away anything. Amid the flash of swords on all sides, and the riot of the plundering soldiery, amid the flames and blood and ruin of the fallen city, amid the crash of temples falling upon their gods, one man was at peace. You need not therefore account that a reckless boast, for which I will give you a surety, if my words goes for nothing. Indeed, you would hardly believe so much constancy or such greatness of mind to belong to any man; but here a man comes forward to prove that you have no reason for doubting that one who is but of human birth can raise himself above human necessities, can tranquilly behold pains, losses, diseases, wounds, and great natural convulsions roaring around him, can bear adversity with calm and prosperity with moderation, neither yielding to the former nor trusting to the latter, that he can remain the same amid all varieties of fortune, and think nothing to be his own save himself, and himself too only as regards his better part. “Behold,” says he, “I am here to prove to you that although, under the direction of that destroyer of so many cities, walls may be shaken by the stroke of the ram, lofty towers may be suddenly brought low by galleries and hidden mines, and mounds arise so high as to rival the highest citadel, yet that no siege engines can be discovered which can shake a well-established mind. I have just crept from amid the ruins of my house, and with conflagrations blazing all around I have escaped from the flames through blood. What fate has befallen my daughters, whether a worse one than that of their country, I know not. Alone and elderly, and seeing everything around me in the hands of the enemy, still I declare that my property is whole and untouched. I have, I hold whatever of mine I have ever had. There is no reason for you to suppose me conquered and yourself my conqueror. It is your fortune which has overcome mine. As for those fleeting possessions which change their owners, I know not where they are; what belongs to myself is with me, and ever will be. I see rich men who have lost their estates; lustful men who have lost their loves, the courtesans whom they cherished at the cost of much shame; ambitious men who have lost the senate, the law courts, the places set apart for the public display of men’s vices; usurers who have lost their account-books, in which avarice vainly enjoyed an unreal wealth; but I possess everything whole and uninjured. Leave me, and go and ask those who are weeping and lamenting over the loss of their money, who are offering their bare breasts to drawn swords in its defence, or who are fleeing from the enemy with weighty pockets.” See then, Serenus, that the perfect man, full of human and divine virtues, can lose nothing; his goods are surrounded by strong and impassable walls. You cannot compare with them the walls of Babylon, which Alexander entered, nor the fortifications of Carthage and Numantia, won by one and the same hand,[2] nor the Capitol and citadel of Rome, which are branded with the marks of the victors’

insults; the ramparts which protect the wise man are safe from fire and hostile invasion; they afford no passage; they are lofty, impregnable, divine.

VII. You have no cause for saying, as you are wont to do, that this wise man of ours[3] is nowhere to be found; we do not invent him as an unreal glory of the human race, or conceive a mighty shadow of an untruth, but we have displayed and will display him just as we sketch him, though he may perhaps be uncommon, and only one appears at long intervals; for what is great and transcends the common ordinary type is not often produced; but this very Marcus Cato himself, the mention of whom started this discussion, was a man who I fancy even surpassed our model. Moreover, that which hurts must be stronger than that which is hurt. Now wickedness is not stronger than virtue; therefore the wise man cannot be hurt. Only the bad attempt to injure the good. Good men are at peace among themselves; bad ones are equally mischievous to the good and to one another. If a man cannot be hurt by one weaker than himself, and a bad man be weaker than a good one, and the good have no injury to dread, except from one unlike themselves; then, no injury takes effect upon the wise man; for by this time I need not remind you that no one save the wise man is good.

“If,” says our adversary, “Socrates was unjustly condemned, he received an injury.” At this point it is needful for us to bear in mind that it is possible for some one to do an injury to me, and yet for me not to receive it, as if any one were to steal something from my country-house and leave it in my town-house, that man would commit a theft, yet I should lose nothing. A man may become mischievous, and yet do no actual mischief: if a man lies with his own wife as if she were a stranger, he will commit adultery, but his wife will not; if a man gives me poison and the poison lose its strength when mixed with food, that man, by administering the poison, has made himself a criminal, even though he has done no hurt. A man is no less a brigand because his sword becomes entangled in his victim’s clothes and misses its mark. All crimes, as far as concerns their criminality, are completed before the actual deed is accomplished. Some crimes are of such a nature and bound by such conditions that the first part can take place without the second. though the second cannot take place without the first. I will endeavour to explain these words: I can move my feet and yet not run; but I cannot run without moving my feet. I can be in the water without swimming; but if I swim, I cannot help being in the water. The matter of which we are treating is of this character: if I have received an injury, it is necessary that some one must have done it to me; but if an injury has been done me, it is not necessary that I should have received one; for many circumstances may intervene to avert the injury, as, for example, some chance may strike the hand that is aiming at us, and the dart, after it has been thrown, may swerve aside. So injuries of all kinds may by certain circumstances be thrown back and intercepted in mid-course, so that they may be done and yet not received.

VIII. Moreover, justice can suffer nothing unjust, because

contraries cannot co-exist; but an injury can only be done unjustly, therefore an injury cannot be done to the wise man. Nor need you wonder at no one being able to do him an injury; for no one can do him any good service either. The wise man lacks nothing which he can accept by way of a present, and the bad man can bestow nothing that is worthy of the wise man's acceptance; for he must possess it before he can bestow it, and he possesses nothing which the wise man would rejoice to have handed over to him. Consequently, no one can do either harm or good to the wise man, because divine things neither want help nor are capable of being hurt; and the wise man is near, indeed very near to the gods, being like a god in every respect save that he is mortal. As he presses forward and makes his way towards the life that is sublime, well-ordered, without fear, proceeding in a regular and harmonious course, tranquil, beneficent, made for the good of mankind, useful both to itself and to others, he will neither long nor weep for anything that is grovelling. He who, trusting to reason, passes through human affairs with godlike mind, has no quarter from which he can receive injury. Do you suppose that I mean merely from no man? He cannot receive an injury even from fortune, which, whenever she contends with virtue, always retires beaten. If we accept with an undisturbed and tranquil mind that greatest terror of all, beyond which the angry laws and the most cruel masters have nothing to threaten us with, in which fortune's dominion is contained—if we know that death is not an evil, and therefore is not an injury either, we shall much more easily endure the other things, such as losses, pains, disgraces, changes of abode, bereavements, and partings, which do not overwhelm the wise man even if they all befall him at once, much less does he grieve at them when they assail him separately. And if he bears the injuries of fortune calmly, how much more will he bear those of powerful men, whom he knows to be the hands of fortune.

IX. He therefore endures everything in the same spirit with which he endures the cold of winter and the severities of climate, fevers, diseases, and other chance accidents, nor does he entertain so high an opinion of any man as to suppose that he acts of set purpose, which belongs to the wise man alone. All other men have no plans, but only plots and deceits and irregular impulses of mind, which he reckons the same as pure accident; now, what depends upon pure accident cannot rage around us designedly. He reflects, also, that the largest sources of injury are to be found in those things by means of which danger is sought for against us, as, for example, by a suborned accuser, or a false charge, or by the stirring up against us of the anger of great men, and the other forms of the brigandage of civilized life. Another common type of injury is when a man loses some profit or prize for which he has long been angling; when an inheritance which he has spent great pains to render his own is left to some one else, or the favour of some noble house, through which he makes great gain, is taken from him. The wise man escapes all this, since he knows not what it is to live for hope or for fear. Add to this, that no one receives an injury unmoved, but is disturbed by the feeling of it. Now, the man free from mistakes has no disturbance; he is master of himself, enjoying a deep and tranquil repose of mind; for if an injury reaches him it moves and

rouses him. But the wise man is without anger, which is caused by the appearance of injury, and he could not be free from anger unless he were also free from injury, which he knows cannot be done to him; hence it is that he is so upright and cheerful, hence he is elate with constant joy. So far, however, is he from shrinking from the encounter either of circumstances or of men, that he makes use of injury itself to make trial of himself and test his own virtue. Let us, I beseech you, show favour to this thesis and listen with impartial ears and minds while the wise man is being made exempt from injury; for nothing is thereby taken away from your insolence, your greediest lusts, your blind rashness and pride; it is without prejudice to your vices that this freedom is sought for the wise man; we do not strive to prevent your doing an injury, but to enable him to sink all injuries beneath himself and protect himself from them by his own greatness of mind. So in the sacred games many have won the victory by patiently enduring the blows of their adversaries and so wearying them out. Think that the wise man belongs to this class, that of men who, by long and faithful practice, have acquired strength to endure and tire out all the violence of their enemies.

X. Since we have now discussed the first part of our subject, let us pass on to the second, in which we will prove by arguments, some of which are our own, but which for the most part are Stoic commonplaces, that the wise man cannot be insulted. There is a lesser form of injury, which we must complain of rather than avenge, which the laws also have considered not to deserve any special punishment. This passion is produced by a meanness of mind which shrinks at any act or deed which treats it with disrespect. “He did not admit me to his house to-day, although he admitted others; he either turned haughtily away or openly laughed when I spoke;” or, “he placed me at dinner, not on the middle couch (the place of honour), but on the lowest one;” and other matters of the same sort, which I can call nothing but the whinings of a queasy spirit. These matters chiefly affect the luxuriously-nurtured and prosperous; for those who are pressed by worse evils have no time to notice such things as these. Through excessive idleness, dispositions naturally weak and womanish and prone to indulge in fancies through want of real injuries are disturbed at these things, the greater part of which arise from misunderstanding. He therefore who is affected by insult shows that he possesses neither sense nor trustfulness; for he considers it certain that he is scorned, and this vexation affects him with a certain sense of degradation, as he effaces himself and takes a lower room; whereas the wise man is scorned by no one, for he knows his own greatness, gives himself to understand that he allows no one to have such power over him, and as for all of what I should not so much call distress as uneasiness of mind, he does not overcome it, but never so much as feels it. Some other things strike the wise man, though they may not shake his principles, such as bodily pain and weakness, the loss of friends and children, and the ruin of his country in war-time. I do not say that the wise man does not feel these, for we do not ascribe to him the hardness of stone or iron; there is no virtue but is conscious of its own endurance. What then does he? He receives some blows, but when he has received them he rises superior to them, heals them, and

brings them to an end; these more trivial things he does not even feel, nor does he make use of his accustomed fortitude in the endurance of evil against them, but either takes no notice of them or considers them to deserve to be laughed at.

XI. Besides this, as most insults proceed from those who are haughty and arrogant and bear their prosperity ill, he has something wherewith to repel this haughty passion, namely, that noblest of all the virtues, magnanimity, which passes over everything of that kind as like unreal apparitions in dreams and visions of the night, which have nothing in them substantial or true. At the same time he reflects that all men are too low to venture to look down upon what is so far above them. The Latin word contumelia is derived from the word contempt, because no one does that injury to another unless he regards him with contempt; and no one can treat his elders and betters with contempt, even though he does what contemptuous persons are wont to do; for children strike their parents' faces, infants rumple and tear their mother's hair, and spit upon her and expose what should be covered before her, and do not shrink from using dirty language; yet we do not call any of these things contemptuous. And why? Because he who does it is not able to show contempt. For the same reason the scurrilous raillery of our slaves against their masters amuses us, as their boldness only gains licence to exercise itself at the expense of the guests if they begin with the master; and the more contemptible and the more an object of derision each one of them is, the greater licence he gives his tongue. Some buy forward slave-boys for this purpose, cultivate their scurrility and send them to school that they may vent premeditated libels, which we do not call insults, but smart sayings; yet what madness, at one time to be amused and at another to be affronted by the same thing, and to call a phrase an outrage when spoken by a friend, and an amusing piece of raillery when used by a slave-boy!

XII. In the same spirit in which we deal with boys, the wise man deals with all those whose childhood still endures after their youth is past and their hair is grey. What do men profit by age when their mind has all the faults of childhood and their defects are intensified by time? when they differ from children only in the size and appearance of their bodies, and are just as unsteady and capricious, eager for pleasure without discrimination, timorous and quiet through fear rather than through natural disposition? One cannot say that such men differ from children because the latter are greedy for knuckle-bones and nuts and coppers, while the former are greedy for gold and silver and cities; because the latter play amongst themselves at being magistrates, and imitate the purple-edged robe of state, the lictors' axes, and the judgment-seat, while the former play with the same things in earnest in the Campus Martius and the courts of justice; because the latter pile up the sand on the seashore into the likeness of houses, and the former, with an air of being engaged in important business, employ themselves in piling up stones and walls and roofs until they have turned what was intended for the protection of the body into a danger to it? Children and those more advanced in age both make the same mistake, but the latter deal with different and more important

things; the wise man, therefore, is quite justified in treating the affronts which he receives from such men as jokes: and sometimes he corrects them, as he would children, by pain and punishment, not because he has received an injury, but because they have done one and in order that they may do so no more. Thus we break in animals with stripes, yet we are not angry with them when they refuse to carry their rider, but curb them in order that pain may overcome their obstinacy. Now, therefore, you know the answer to the question which was put to us, “Why, if the wise man receives neither injury nor insult, he punishes those who do these things?” He does not revenge himself, but corrects them.

XIII. What, then, is there to prevent your believing this strength of mind to belong to the wise man, when you can see the same thing existing in others, though not from the same cause?—for what physician is angry with a crazy patient? who takes to heart the curses of a fever-stricken one who is denied cold water? The wise man retains in his dealings with all men this same habit of mind which the physician adopts in dealing with his patients, whose parts of shame he does not scorn to handle should they need treatment, nor yet to look at their solid and liquid evacuations, nor to endure their reproaches when frenzied by disease. The wise man knows that all those who strut about in purple-edged togas,[4] healthy and embrowned, are brain-sick people, whom he regards as sick and full of follies. He is not, therefore, angry, should they in their sickness presume to bear themselves somewhat impertinently towards their physician, and in the same spirit as that in which he sets no value upon their titles of honour, he will set but little value upon their acts of disrespect to himself. He will not rise in his own esteem if a beggar pays his court to him, and he will not think it an affront if one of the dregs of the people does not return his greeting. So also he will not admire himself even if many rich men admire him; for he knows that they differ in no respect from beggars —nay, are even more wretched than they; for beggars want but a little, whereas rich men want a great deal. Again, he will not be moved if the King of the Medes, or Attalus, King of Asia, passes by him in silence with a scornful air when he offers his greeting; for he knows that such a man’s position has nothing to render it more enviable than that of the man whose duty it is in some great household to keep the sick and mad servants in order. Shall I be put out if one of those who do business at the temple of Castor, buying and selling worthless slaves, does not return my salute, a man whose shops are crowded with throngs of the worst of bondmen? I trow not; for what good can there be in a man who owns none but bad men? As the wise man is indifferent to the courtesy or incivility of such a man, so is he to that of a king. “You own,” says he, “the Parthians and Bactrians, but they are men whom you keep in order by fear, they are people whose possession forbids you to unstring the bow, they are fierce enemies, on sale, and eagerly looking out for a new master.” He will not, then, be moved by an insult from any man for though all men differ one from another, yet the wise man regards them all as alike on account of their equal folly; for should he once lower himself to the point of being affected by either injury or insult, he could never feel safe afterwards, and safety is the

especial advantage of the wise man, and he will not be guilty of showing respect to the man who has done him an injury by admitting that he has received one, because it necessarily follows that he who is disquieted at any one's scorn would value that person's admiration.

XIV. Such madness possesses some men that they imagine it possible for an affront to be put upon them by a woman. What matters it who she may be, how many slaves bear her litter, how heavily her ears are laden, how soft her seat? she is always the same thoughtless creature, and unless she possesses acquired knowledge and much learning, she is fierce and passionate in her desires. Some are annoyed at being jostled by a heater of curling-tongs, and call the reluctance of a great man's porter to open the door, the pride of his nomenclator,[5] or the disdainfulness of his chamberlain, insults. O! what laughter is to be got out of such things, with what amusement the mind may be filled when it contrasts the frantic follies of others with its own peace! "How then? will the wise man not approach doors which are kept by a surly porter?" Nay, if any need calls him thither, he will make trial of him, however fierce he may be, will tame him as one tames a dog by offering it food, and will not be enraged at having to expend entrance-money, reflecting that on certain bridges also one has to pay toll; in like fashion he will pay his fee to whoever farms this revenue of letting in visitors, for he knows that men are wont to buy whatever is offered for sale.[6] A man shows a poor spirit if he is pleased with himself for having answered the porter cavalierly, broken his staff, forced his way into his master's presence, and demanded a whipping for him. He who strives with a man makes himself that man's rival, and must be on equal terms with him before he can overcome him. But what will the wise man do when he receives a cuff? He will do as Cato did when he was struck in the face; he did not flare up and revenge the outrage, he did not even pardon it, but ignored it, showing more magnanimity in not acknowledging it than if he had forgiven it. We will not dwell long upon this point; for who is there who knows not that none of those things which are thought to be good or evil are looked upon by the wise man and by mankind in general in the same manner? He does not regard what all men think low or wretched; he does not follow the people's track, but as the stars move in a path opposite to that of the earth, so he proceeds contrary to the prejudices of all.

XV. Cease then to say, "Will not the wise man, then, receive an injury if he be beaten, if his eye be knocked out? will he not receive an insult if he be hooted through the Forum by the foul voices of ruffians? if at a court banquet he be bidden to leave the table and eat with slaves appointed to degrading duties? if he be forced to endure anything else that can be thought of that would gall a high spirit?" However many or however severe these crosses may be, they will all be of the same kind; and if small ones do not affect him, neither will greater ones; if a few do not affect him, neither will more. It is from your own weakness that you form your idea of his colossal mind, and when you have thought how much you yourselves could endure to suffer, you place the limit of the wise

man’s endurance a little way beyond that. But his virtue has placed him in another region of the universe which has nothing in common with you. Seek out sufferings and all things hard to be borne, repulsive to be heard or seen; he will not be overwhelmed by their combination, and will bear all just as he bears each one of them. He who says that the wise man can bear this and cannot bear that, and restrains his magnanimity within certain limits, does wrong; for Fortune overcomes us unless she is entirely overcome. Think not that this is mere Stoic austerity. Epicurus, whom you adopt as the patron of your laziness, and who, you imagine, always taught what was soft and slothful and conducive to pleasure, said, “Fortune seldom stands in a wise man’s way.” How near he came to a manly sentiment! Do thou dare to speak more boldly, and clear her out of the way altogether! This is the house of the wise man—narrow, unadorned, without bustle and splendour, the threshold guarded by no porters who marshal the crowd of visitors with a haughtiness proportionate to their bribes—but Fortune cannot cross this open and unguarded threshold. She knows that there is no room for her where there is nothing of hers.

XVI. Now if even Epicurus, who made more concessions to the body than any one, takes a spirited tone with regard to injuries, what can appear beyond belief or beyond the scope of human nature amongst us Stoics? He says that injuries may be endured by the wise man, we say that they do not exist for him. Nor is there any reason why you should declare this to be repugnant to nature. We do not deny that it is an unpleasant thing to be beaten or struck, or to lose one of our limbs, but we say that none of these things are injuries. We do not take away from them the feeling of pain, but the name of “injury,” which cannot be received while our virtue is unimpaired. We shall see which of the two is nearest the truth; each of them agree in despising injury. You ask what difference there is between them? All that there is between two very brave gladiators, one of whom conceals his wound and holds his ground, while the other turns round to the shouting populace, gives them to understand that his wound is nothing, and does not permit them to interfere on his behalf. You need not think that it is any great thing about which we differ; the whole gist of the matter, that which alone concerns you, is what both schools of philosophy urge you to do, namely, to despise injuries and insults, which I may call the shadows and outlines of injuries, to despise which does not need a wise man, but merely a sensible one, who can say to himself, “Do these things befall me deservedly or undeservedly? If deservedly, it is not an insult, but a judicial sentence; if undeservedly, then he who does injustice ought to blush, not I. And what is this which is called an insult? Some one has made a joke about the baldness of my head, the weakness of my eyes, the thinness of my legs, the shortness of my stature; what insult is there in telling me that which every one sees? We laugh when tête-à-tête at the same thing at which we are indignant when it is said before a crowd, and we do not allow others the privilege of saying what we ourselves are wont to say about ourselves; we are amused at decorous jests, but are angry if they are carried too far.”

XVII. Chrysippus says that a man was enraged because some one called

him a sea-sheep; we have seen Fidus Cornelius, the son-in-law of Ovidius Naso, weeping in the Senate-house because Corbulo called him a plucked ostrich; his command of his countenance did not fail him at other abusive charges, which damaged his character and way of life; at this ridiculous saying he burst into tears. So deplorable is the weakness of men's minds when reason no longer guides them. What of our taking offence if any one imitates our talk, our walk, or apes any defect of our person or our pronunciation? as if they would become more notorious by another's imitation than by our doing them ourselves. Some are unwilling to hear about their age and grey hairs, and all the rest of what men pray to arrive at. The reproach of poverty agonizes some men, and whoever conceals it makes it a reproach to himself; and therefore if you of your own accord are the first to acknowledge it, you cut the ground from under the feet of those who would sneer and politely insult you; no one is laughed at who begins by laughing at himself. Tradition tells us that Vatinius, a man born both to be laughed at and hated, was a witty and clever jester. He made many jokes about his feet and his short neck, and thus escaped the sarcasms of Cicero above all, and of his other enemies, of whom he had more than he had diseases. If he, who through constant abuse had forgotten how to blush, could do this by sheer brazenness, why should not he who has made some progress in the education of a gentleman and the study of philosophy? Besides, it is a sort of revenge to spoil a man's enjoyment of the insult he has offered to us; such men say, "Dear me, I suppose he did not understand it." Thus the success of an insult lies in the sensitiveness and rage of the victim; hereafter the insulter will sometimes meet his match; some one will be found to revenge you also.

XVIII. Gaius Caesar, among the other vices with which he overflowed, was possessed by a strange insolent passion for marking every one with some note of ridicule, he himself being the most tempting subject for derision; so ugly was the paleness which proved him mad, so savage the glare of the eyes which lurked under his old woman's brow, so hideous his misshapen head, bald and dotted about with a few cherished hairs; besides the neck set thick with bristles, his thin legs, his monstrous feet. It would be endless were I to mention all the insults which he heaped upon his parents and ancestors, and people of every class of life. I will mention those which brought him to ruin. An especial friend of his was Asiaticus Valerius, a proud-spirited man and one hardly likely to put up with another's insults quietly. At a drinking bout, that is, a public assembly, Gaius, at the top of his voice, reproached this man with the way his wife behaved in bed. Good gods! that a man should hear that the emperor knew this, and that he, the emperor, should describe his adultery and his disappointment to the lady's husband, I do not say to a man of consular rank and his own friend. Chaerea, on the other hand, the military tribune, had a voice not befitting his prowess, feeble in sound, and somewhat suspicious unless you knew his achievements. When he asked for the watchword Gaius at one time gave him "Venus," and at another "Priapus," and by various means reproached the man-at-arms with effeminate vice; while he himself was dressed in transparent clothes, wearing sandals and jewellery.

Thus he forced him to use his sword, that he might not have to ask for the watchword oftener; it was Chaerea who first of all the conspirators raised his hand, who cut through the middle of Caligula's neck with one blow. After that, many swords, belonging to men who had public or private injuries to avenge, were thrust into his body, but he first showed himself a man who seemed least like one. The same Gaius construed everything as an insult (since those who are most eager to offer affronts are least able to endure them). He was angry with Herennius Macer for having greeted him as Gaius—nor did the chief centurion of triarii get off scot-free for having saluted him as Caligula; having been born in the camp and brought up as the child of the legions, he had been wont to be called by this name, nor was there any by which he was better known to the troops, but by this time he held "Caligula" to be a reproach and a dishonour. Let wounded spirits, then, console themselves with this reflexion, that, even though our easy temper may have neglected to revenge itself, nevertheless that there will be some one who will punish the impertinent, proud, and insulting man, for these are vices which he never confines to one victim or one single offensive act. Let us look at the examples of those men whose endurance we admire, as, for instance, that of Socrates, who took in good part the published and acted jibes of the comedians upon himself, and laughed no less than he did when he was drenched with dirty water by his wife Xanthippe. Antisthenes was reproached with his mother being a barbarian and a Thracian; he answered that the mother of the gods, too, came from Mount Ida.

XIX. We ought not to engage in quarrels and wrangling; we ought to betake ourselves far away and to disregard everything of this kind which thoughtless people do (indeed thoughtless people alone do it), and to set equal value upon the honours and the reproaches of the mob; we ought not to be hurt by the one or to be pleased by the other. Otherwise we shall neglect many essential points, shall desert our duty both to the state and in private life through excessive fear of insults or weariness of them, and sometimes we shall even miss what would do us good, while tortured by this womanish pain at hearing something not to our mind. Sometimes, too, when enraged with powerful men we shall expose this failing by our reckless freedom of speech; yet it is not freedom to suffer nothing—we are mistaken—freedom consists in raising one's mind superior to injuries and becoming a person whose pleasures come from himself alone, in separating oneself from external circumstances that one may not have to lead a disturbed life in fear of the laughter and tongues of all men; for if any man can offer an insult, who is there who cannot? The wise man and the would-be wise man will apply different remedies to this; for it is only those whose philosophical education is incomplete, and who still guide themselves by public opinion, who would suppose that they ought to spend their lives in the midst of insults and injuries; yet all things happen in a more endurable fashion to men who are prepared for them. The nobler a man is by birth, by reputation, or by inheritance, the more bravely he should bear himself, remembering that the tallest men stand in the front rank in battle. As for insults, offensive language, marks of disgrace, and such-like disfigurements, he ought to bear them as he

would bear the shouts of the enemy, and darts or stones flung from a distance, which rattle upon his helmet without causing a wound; while he should look upon injuries as wounds, some received on his armour and others on his body, which, he endures without falling or even leaving his place in the ranks. Even though you be hard pressed and violently attacked by the enemy, still it is base to give way; hold the post assigned to you by nature. You ask, what this post is? it is that of being a man. The wise man has another help, of the opposite kind to this; you are hard at work, while he has already won the victory. Do not quarrel with your own good advantage, and, until you shall have made your way to the truth, keep alive this hope in your minds, be willing to receive the news of a better life, and encourage it by your admiration and your prayers; it is to the interest of the commonwealth of mankind that there should be some one who is unconquered, some one against whom fortune has no power.

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[1] Xerxes.

[2] Scipio.

[3] The Stoics.

[4] Seneca here speaks of men wearing the toga as officials, contrasted with the mass of Roman citizens, among whom the wearing of the toga was already falling into disuse in the time of Augustus. See Macrob., “Sat.,” vi. 5 extr., and Suetonius, “Life of Octavius,” 40, where the author mentions that Augustus used sarcastically to apply the verse, Virg., ‘Aen.,’ i. 282, to the Romans of his day.

[5] See note, “De Beneficiis,” vi. 33.

[6] Gertz reads ‘decet emere venalia,’ ‘there is no harm in buying what is for sale.’

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO NOVATUS.

OF ANGER.

Book I.

You have demanded of me, Novatus, that I should write how anger may be soothed, and it appears to me that you are right in feeling especial fear of this passion, which is above all others hideous and wild: for the others have some alloy of peace and quiet, but this consists wholly in action and the impulse of grief, raging with an utterly inhuman lust for arms, blood and tortures, careless of itself provided it hurts another, rushing upon the very point of the sword, and greedy for revenge even when it drags the avenger to ruin with itself. Some of the wisest of men have in consequence of this called anger a short madness: for it is equally devoid of self control, regardless of decorum, forgetful of kinship, obstinately engrossed in whatever it begins to do, deaf to reason and advice, excited by trifling causes, awkward at perceiving what is true and just, and very like a falling rock which breaks itself to pieces upon the very thing which it crushes. That you may know that they whom anger possesses are not sane, look at their appearance; for as there are distinct symptoms which mark madmen, such as a bold and menacing air, a gloomy brow, a stern face, a hurried walk, restless hands, changed colour, quick and strongly-drawn breathing; the signs of angry men, too, are the same: their eyes blaze and sparkle, their whole face is a deep red with the blood which boils up from the bottom of their heart, their lips quiver, their teeth are set, their hair bristles and stands on end, their breath is laboured and hissing; their joints crack as they twist them about, they groan, bellow, and burst into scarcely intelligible talk, they often clap their hands together and stamp on the ground with their feet, and their whole body is highly-strung and plays those tricks which mark a distraught mind, so as to furnish an ugly and shocking picture of self-perversion and excitement. You cannot tell whether this vice is more execrable or more disgusting. Other vices can be concealed and cherished in secret; anger shows itself openly and appears in the countenance, and the greater it is, the more plainly it boils forth. Do you not see how in all animals certain signs appear before they proceed to mischief, and how their entire bodies put off their usual quiet appearance and stir up their ferocity? Boars foam at the mouth and sharpen their teeth by rubbing them against trees, bulls toss their horns in the air and scatter the sand with blows of their feet, lions growl, the necks of enraged snakes swell, mad dogs have a sullen look—there is no animal so hateful and venomous by nature that it does not, when seized by anger, show additional fierceness. I know well that the other passions, can hardly be concealed, and that lust, fear, and boldness give signs of their presence and may be discovered beforehand, for there is no one of the stronger passions that does not affect the countenance: what then is the difference between them and anger? Why, that the other passions are visible, but that this is conspicuous.

II. Next, if you choose to view its results and the mischief that it does, no plague has cost the human race more dear: you will see slaughterings and poisonings, accusations and counter-accusations, sacking of cities, ruin of whole peoples, the persons of princes sold into slavery by auction, torches applied to roofs, and fires not merely confined within city-walls but making whole tracts of

country glow with hostile flame. See the foundations of the most celebrated cities hardly now to be discerned; they were ruined by anger. See deserts extending for many miles without an inhabitant: they have been desolated by anger. See all the chiefs whom tradition mentions as instances of ill fate; anger stabbed one of them in his bed, struck down another, though he was protected by the sacred rights of hospitality, tore another to pieces in the very home of the laws and in sight of the crowded forum, bade one shed his own blood by the parricide hand of his son, another to have his royal throat cut by the hand of a slave, another to stretch out his limbs on the cross: and hitherto I am speaking merely of individual cases. What, if you were to pass from the consideration of those single men against whom anger has broken out to view whole assemblies cut down by the sword, the people butchered by the soldiery let loose upon it, and whole nations condemned to death in one common ruin . . . . [1] as though by men who either freed themselves from our charge or despised our authority? Why, wherefore is the people angry with gladiators, and so unjust as to think itself wronged if they do not die cheerfully? It thinks itself scorned, and by looks, gestures, and excitement turns itself from a mere spectator into an adversary. Everything of this sort is not anger, but the semblance of anger, like that of boys who want to beat the ground when they have fallen upon it, and who often do not even know why they are angry, but are merely angry without any reason or having received any injury, yet not without some semblance of injury received, or without some wish to exact a penalty for it. Thus they are deceived by the likeness of blows, and are appeased by the pretended tears of those who deprecate their wrath, and thus an unreal grief is healed by an unreal revenge.

III. “We often are angry,” says our adversary, “not with men who have hurt us, but with men who are going to hurt us: so you may be sure that anger is not born of injury.” It is true that we are angry with those who are going to hurt us, but they do already hurt us in intention, and one who is going to do an injury is already doing it. “The weakest of men,” argues he, “are often angry with the most powerful: so you may be sure that anger is not a desire to punish their antagonist—for men do not desire to punish him when they cannot hope to do so.” In the first place, I spoke of a desire to inflict punishment, not a power to do so: now men desire even what they cannot obtain. In the next place, no one is so low in station as not to be able to hope to inflict punishment even upon the greatest of men: we all are powerful for mischief. Aristotle’s definition differs little from mine: for he declares anger to be a desire to repay suffering. It would be a long task to examine the differences between his definition and mine: it may be urged against both of them that wild beasts become angry without being excited by injury, and without any idea of punishing others or requiting them with pain: for, even though they do these things, these are not what they aim at doing. We must admit, however, that neither wild beasts nor any other creature except man is subject to anger: for, whilst anger is the foe of reason, it nevertheless does not arise in any place where reason cannot dwell. Wild beasts have impulses, fury, cruelty, combativeness: they have not anger any more than they have

luxury: yet they indulge in some pleasures with less self-control than human beings. Do not believe the poet who says:

“The boar his wrath forgets, the stag forgets the hounds.

The bear forgets how ’midst the herd he leaped with frantic bounds.” [2]

When he speaks of beasts being angry he means that they are excited, roused up: for indeed they know no more how to be angry than they know how to pardon. Dumb creatures have not human feelings, but have certain impulses which resemble them: for if it were not so, if they could feel love and hate, they would likewise be capable of friendship and enmity, of disagreement and agreement. Some traces of these qualities exist even in them, though properly all of them, whether good or bad, belong to the human breast alone. To no creature besides man has been given wisdom, foresight, industry, and reflexion. To animals not only human virtues but even human vices are forbidden: their whole constitution, mental and bodily, is unlike that of human beings: in them the royal[3] and leading principle is drawn from another source, as, for instance, they possess a voice, yet not a clear one, but indistinct and incapable of forming words: a tongue, but one which is fettered and not sufficiently nimble for complex movements: so, too, they possess intellect, the greatest attribute of all, but in a rough and inexact condition. It is, consequently, able to grasp those visions and semblances which rouse it to action, but only in a cloudy and indistinct fashion. It follows from this that their impulses and outbreaks are violent, and that they do not feel fear, anxieties, grief, or anger, but some semblances of these feelings: wherefore they quickly drop them and adopt the converse of them: they graze after showing the most vehement rage and terror, and after frantic bellowing and plunging they straightway sink into quiet sleep.

IV. What anger is has been sufficiently explained. The difference between it and irascibility is evident: it is the same as that between a drunken man and a drunkard; between a frightened man and a coward. It is possible for an angry man not to be irascible; an irascible man may sometimes not be angry. I shall omit the other varieties of anger, which the Greeks distinguish by various names, because we have no distinctive words for them in our language, although we call men bitter, and harsh, and also peevish, frantic, clamorous, surly, and fierce: all of which are different forms of irascibility. Among these you may class sulkiness, a refined form of irascibility; for there are some sorts of anger which go no further than noise, while some are as lasting as they are common: some are fierce in deed, but inclined to be sparing of words: some expend themselves in bitter words and curses: some do not go beyond complaining and turning one’s back: some are great, deep-seated, and brood within a man: there are a thousand other forms of a multiform

evil.

V. We have now finished our enquiry as to what anger is, whether it exists in any other creature besides man, what the difference is between it and irascibility, and how many forms it possesses. Let us now enquire whether anger be in accordance with nature, and whether it be useful and worth entertaining in some measure.

Whether it be according to nature will become evident if we consider man's nature, than which what is more gentle while it is in its proper condition? Yet what is more cruel than anger? What is more affectionate to others than man? Yet what is more savage against them than anger? Mankind is born for mutual assistance, anger for mutual ruin: the former loves society, the latter estrangement. The one loves to do good, the other to do harm; the one to help even strangers, the other to attack even its dearest friends. The one is ready even to sacrifice itself for the good of others, the other to plunge into peril provided it drags others with it. Who, then, can be more ignorant of nature than he who classes this cruel and hurtful vice as belonging to her best and most polished work? Anger, as we have said, is eager to punish; and that such a desire should exist in man's peaceful breast is least of all according to his nature; for human life is founded on benefits and harmony, and is bound together into an alliance for the common help of all, not by terror, but by love towards one another.

VI. "What, then? Is not correction sometimes necessary?" Of course it is; but with discretion, not with anger; for it does not injure, but heals under the guise of injury. We char crooked spearshafts to straighten them, and force them by driving in wedges, not in order to break them, but to take the bends out of them; and, in like manner, by applying pain to the body or mind we correct dispositions which have been rendered crooked by vice. So the physician at first, when dealing with slight disorders, tries not to make much change in his patient's daily habits, to regulate his food, drink, and exercise, and to improve his health merely by altering the order in which he takes them. The next step is to see whether an alteration in their amount will be of service. If neither alteration of the order or of the amount is of use, he cuts off some and reduces others. If even this does not answer, he forbids food, and disburdens the body by fasting. If milder remedies have proved useless he opens a vein; if the extremities are injuring the body and infecting it with disease he lays his hands upon the limbs; yet none of his treatment is considered harsh if its result is to give health. Similarly, it is the duty of the chief administrator of the laws, or the ruler of a state, to correct ill-disposed men, as long as he is able, with words, and even with gentle ones, that he may persuade them to do what they ought, inspire them with a love of honour and justice, and cause them to hate vice and set store upon virtue. He must then pass on to severer language, still confining himself to advising and reprimanding; last of all he must betake himself to punishments, yet still making them slight and temporary. He ought to assign extreme punishments only to extreme crimes, that no one may die unless it be even to the criminal's own advantage

that he should die. He will differ from the physician in one point alone; for whereas physicians render it easy to die for those to whom they cannot grant the boon of life, he will drive the condemned out of life with ignominy and disgrace, not because he takes pleasure in any man's being punished, for the wise man is far from such inhuman ferocity, but that they may be a warning to all men, and that, since they would not be useful when alive, the state may at any rate profit by their death. Man's nature is not, therefore, desirous of inflicting punishment; neither, therefore, is anger in accordance with man's nature, because that is desirous of inflicting punishment. I will also adduce Plato's argument—for what harm is there in using other men's arguments, so far as they are on our side? "A good man," says he, "does not do any hurt: it is only punishment which hurts. Punishment, therefore, does not accord with a good man: wherefore anger does not do so either, because punishment and anger accord one with another. If a good man takes no pleasure in punishment, he will also take no pleasure in that state of mind to which punishment gives pleasure: consequently anger is not natural to man."

VII. May it not be that, although anger be not natural, it may be right to adopt it, because it often proves useful? It rouses the spirit and excites it; and courage does nothing grand in war without it, unless its flame be supplied from this source; this is the goad which stirs up bold men and sends them to encounter perils. Some therefore consider it to be best to control anger, not to banish it utterly, but to cut off its extravagances, and force it to keep within useful bounds, so as to retain that part of it without which action will become languid and all strength and activity of mind will die away.

In the first place, it is easier to banish dangerous passions than to rule them; it is easier not to admit them than to keep them in order when admitted; for when they have established themselves in possession of the mind they are more powerful than the lawful ruler, and will in no wise permit themselves to be weakened or abridged. In the next place, Reason herself, who holds the reins, is only strong while she remains apart from the passions; if she mixes and befouls herself with them she becomes no longer able to restrain those whom she might once have cleared out of her path; for the mind, when once excited and shaken up, goes whither the passions drive it. There are certain things whose beginnings lie in our own power, but which, when developed, drag us along by their own force and leave us no retreat. Those who have flung themselves over a precipice have no control over their movements, nor can they stop or slacken their pace when once started, for their own headlong and irremediable rashness has left no room for either reflexion or remorse, and they cannot help going to lengths which they might have avoided. So, also, the mind, when it has abandoned itself to anger, love, or any other passion, is unable to check itself: its own weight and the downward tendency of vices must needs carry the man off and hurl him into the lowest depth.

VIII. The best plan is to reject straightway the first incentives to

anger, to resist its very beginnings, and to take care not to be betrayed into it: for if once it begins to carry us away, it is hard to get back again into a healthy condition, because reason goes for nothing when once passion has been admitted to the mind, and has by our own free will been given a certain authority, it will for the future do as much as it chooses, not only as much as you will allow it. The enemy, I repeat, must be met and driven back at the outermost frontier-line: for when he has once entered the city and passed its gates, he will not allow his prisoners to set bounds to his victory. The mind does not stand apart and view its passions from without, so as not to permit them to advance further than they ought, but it is itself changed into a passion, and is therefore unable to check what once was useful and wholesome strength, now that it has become degenerate and misapplied: for passion and reason, as I said before, have not distinct and separate provinces, but consist of the changes of the mind itself for better or for worse. How then can reason recover itself when it is conquered and held down by vices, when it has given way to anger? or how can it extricate itself from a confused mixture, the greater part of which consists of the lower qualities? “But,” argues our adversary, “some men when in anger control themselves.” Do they so far control themselves that they do nothing which anger dictates, or somewhat? If they do nothing thereof, it becomes evident that anger is not essential to the conduct of affairs, although your sect advocated it as possessing greater strength than reason . . . . Finally, I ask, is anger stronger or weaker than reason? If stronger, how can reason impose any check upon it, since it is only the less powerful that obey: if weaker, then reason is competent to effect its ends without anger, and does not need the help of a less powerful quality. “But some angry men remain consistent and control themselves.” When do they do so? It is when their anger is disappearing and leaving them of its own accord, not when it was red-hot, for then it was more powerful than they. What then? do not men, even in the height of their anger, sometimes let their enemies go whole and unhurt, and refrain from injuring them? “They do: but when do they do so? It is when one passion overpowers another, and either fear or greed gets the upper hand for a while. On such occasions, it is not thanks to reason that anger is stilled, but owing to an untrustworthy and fleeting truce between the passions.

IX. In the next place, anger has nothing useful in itself, and does not rouse up the mind to warlike deeds: for a virtue, being self-sufficient, never needs the assistance of a vice: whenever it needs an impetuous effort, it does not become angry, but rises to the occasion, and excites or soothes itself as far as it deems requisite, just as the machines which hurl darts may be twisted to a greater or lesser degree of tension at the manager’s pleasure. “Anger,” says Aristotle, “is necessary, nor can any fight be won without it, unless it fills the mind, and kindles up the spirit. It must, however, be made use of, not as a general, but as a soldier,” Now this is untrue; for if it listens to reason and follows whither reason leads, it is no longer anger, whose characteristic is obstinacy: if, again, it is disobedient and will not be quiet when ordered, but is carried away by its own wilful and headstrong

spirit, it is then as useless an aid to the mind as a soldier who disregards the sounding of the retreat would be to a general. If, therefore, anger allows limits to be imposed upon it, it must be called by some other name, and ceases to be anger, which I understand to be unbridled and unmanageable: and if it does not allow limits to be imposed upon it, it is harmful and not to be counted among aids: wherefore either anger is not anger, or it is useless: for if any man demands the infliction of punishment, not because he is eager for the punishment itself, but because it is right to inflict it, he ought not to be counted as an angry man: that will be the useful soldier, who knows how to obey orders: the passions cannot obey any more than they can command.

X. For this cause reason will never call to its aid blind and fierce impulses, over whom she herself possesses no authority, and which she never can restrain save by setting against them similar and equally powerful passions, as for example, fear against anger, anger against sloth, greed against timidity. May virtue never come to such a pass, that reason should fly for aid to vices! The mind can find no safe repose there, it must needs be shaken and tempest-tossed if it be safe only because of its own defects, if it cannot be brave without anger, diligent without greed, quiet without fear: such is the despotism under which a man must live if he becomes the slave of a passion. Are you not ashamed to put virtues under the patronage of vices? Then, too, reason ceases to have any power if she can do nothing without passion, and begins to be equal and like unto passion; for what difference is there between them if passion without reason be as rash as reason without passion is helpless? They are both on the same level, if one cannot exist without the other. Yet who could endure that passion should be made equal to reason? “Then,” says our adversary, “passion is useful, provided it be moderate.” Nay, only if it be useful by nature: but if it be disobedient to authority and reason, al that we gain by its moderation is that the less there is of it, the less harm it does: wherefore a moderate passion is nothing but a moderate evil.

XI. “But,” argues he, “against our enemies anger is necessary.” In no case is it less necessary; since our attacks ought not to be disorderly, but regulated and under control. What, indeed, is it except anger, so ruinous to itself, that overthrows barbarians, who have so much more bodily strength than we, and are so much better able to endure fatigue? Gladiators, too, protect themselves by skill, but expose themselves to wounds when they are angry. Moreover, of what use is anger, when the same end can be arrived at by reason? Do you suppose that a hunter is angry with the beasts he kills? Yet he meets them when they attack him, and follows them when they flee from him, all of which is managed by reason without anger. When so many thousands of Cimbri and Teutones poured over the Alps, what was it that caused them to perish so completely, that no messenger, only common rumour, carried the news of that great defeat to their homes, except that with them anger stood in the place of courage? and anger, although sometimes it overthrows and breaks to pieces whatever it meets, yet is more often its own destruction. Who can be braver than the Germans? who charge more boldly? who have

more love of arms, among which they are born and bred, for which alone they care, to the neglect of everything else? Who can be more hardened to undergo every hardship, since a large part of them have no store of clothing for the body, no shelter from the continual rigour of the climate: yet Spaniards and Gauls, and even the unwarlike races of Asia and Syria cut them down before the main legion comes within sight, nothing but their own irascibility exposing them to death. Give but intelligence to those minds, and discipline to those bodies of theirs, which now are ignorant of vicious refinements, luxury, and wealth,—to say nothing more, we should certainly be obliged to go back to the ancient Roman habits of life. By what did Fabius restore the shattered forces of the state, except by knowing how to delay and spin out time, which angry men know not how to do? The empire, which then was at its last gasp, would have perished if Fabius had been as daring as anger urged him to be: but he took thought about the condition of affairs, and after counting his force, no part of which could be lost without everything being lost with it, he laid aside thoughts of grief and revenge, turning his sole attention to what was profitable and to making the most of his opportunities, and conquered his anger before he conquered Hannibal. What did Scipio do? Did he not leave behind Hannibal and the Carthaginian army, and all with whom he had a right to be angry, and carry over the war into Africa with such deliberation that he made his enemies think him luxurious and lazy? What did the second Scipio do? Did he not remain a long, long time before Numantia, and bear with calmness the reproach to himself and to his country that Numantia took longer to conquer than Carthage? By blockading and investing his enemies, he brought them to such straits that they perished by their own swords. Anger, therefore, is not useful even in wars or battles: for it is prone to rashness, and while trying to bring others into danger, does not guard itself against danger. The most trustworthy virtue is that which long and carefully considers itself, controls itself, and slowly and deliberately brings itself to the front.

XII. “What, then,” asks our adversary, “is a good man not to be angry if he sees his father murdered or his mother outraged?” No, he will not be angry, but will avenge them, or protect them. Why do you fear that filial piety will not prove a sufficient spur to him even without anger? You may as well say—“What then? When a good man sees his father or his son being cut down, I suppose he will not weep or faint,” as we see women do whenever any trifling rumour of danger reaches them. The good man will do his duty without disturbance or fear, and he will perform the duty of a good man, so as to do nothing unworthy of a man. My father will be murdered: then I will defend him: he has been slain, then I will avenge him, not because I am grieved, but because it is my duty. “Good men are made angry by injuries done to their friends.” When you say this, Theophrastus, you seek to throw discredit upon more manly maxims; you leave the judge and appeal to the mob: because every one is angry when such things befall his own friends, you suppose that men will decide that it is their duty to do what they do: for as a rule every man considers a passion which he recognises to be a righteous one. But he does the same thing if the hot water is not ready for his drink,

if a glass be broken, or his shoe splashed with mud. It is not filial piety, but weakness of mind that produces this anger, as children weep when they lose their parents, just as they do when they lose their toys. To feel anger on behalf of one's friends does not show a loving, but a weak mind: it is admirable and worthy conduct to stand forth as the defender of one's parents, children, friends, and countrymen, at the call of duty itself, acting of one's own free will, forming a deliberate judgment, and looking forward to the future, not in an impulsive, frenzied fashion. No passion is more eager for revenge than anger, and for that very reason it is unapt to obtain it: being over hasty and frantic, like almost all desires, it hinders itself in the attainment of its own object, and therefore has never been useful either in peace or war: for it makes peace like war, and when in arms forgets that Mars belongs to neither side, and falls into the power of the enemy, because it is not in its own. In the next place, vices ought not to be received into common use because on some occasions they have effected somewhat: for so also fevers are good for certain kinds of ill-health, but nevertheless it is better to be altogether free from them: it is a hateful mode of cure to owe one's health to disease. Similarly, although anger, like poison, or falling headlong, or being shipwrecked, may have unexpectedly done good, yet it ought not on that account to be classed as wholesome, for poisons have often proved good for the health.

XIII. Moreover, qualities which we ought to possess become better and more desirable the more extensive they are: if justice is a good thing, no one will say that it would be better if any part were subtracted from it; if bravery is a good thing, no one would wish it to be in any way curtailed: consequently the greater anger is, the better it is, for who ever objected to a good thing being increased? But it is not expedient that anger should be increased: therefore it is not expedient that it should exist at all, for that which grows bad by increase cannot be a good thing. "Anger is useful," says our adversary, "because it makes men more ready to fight." According to that mode of reasoning, then, drunkenness also is a good thing, for it makes men insolent and daring, and many use their weapons better when the worse for liquor: nay, according to that reasoning, also, you may call frenzy and madness essential to strength, because madness often makes men stronger. Why, does not fear often by the rule of contraries make men bolder, and does not the terror of death rouse up even arrant cowards to join battle? Yet anger, drunkenness, fear, and the like, are base and temporary incitements to action, and can furnish no arms to virtue, which has no need of vices, although they may at times be of some little assistance to sluggish and cowardly minds. No man becomes braver through anger, except one who without anger would not have been brave at all: anger does not therefore come to assist courage, but to take its place. What are we to say to the argument that, if anger were a good thing it would attach itself to all the best men? Yet the most irascible of creatures are infants, old men, and sick people. Every weakling is naturally prone to complaint.

XIV. It is impossible, says Theophrastus, for a good man not to be

angry with bad men. By this reasoning, the better a man is, the more irascible he will be: yet will he not rather be more tranquil, more free from passions, and hating no one: indeed, what reason has he for hating sinners, since it is error that leads them into such crimes? now it does not become a sensible man to hate the erring, since if so he will hate himself: let him think how many things he does contrary to good morals, how much of what he has done stands in need of pardon, and he will soon become angry with himself also, for no righteous judge pronounces a different judgment in his own case and in that of others. No one, I affirm, will be found who can acquit himself. Every one when he calls himself innocent looks rather to external witnesses than to his own conscience. How much more philanthropic it is to deal with the erring in a gentle and fatherly spirit, and to call them into the right course instead of hunting them down? When a man is wandering about our fields because he has lost his way, it is better to place him on the right path than to drive him away.

XV. The sinner ought, therefore, to be corrected both by warning and by force, both by gentle and harsh means, and may be made a better man both towards himself and others by chastisement, but not by anger: for who is angry with the patient whose wounds he is tending? “But they cannot be corrected, and there is nothing in them that is gentle or that admits of good hope.” Then let them be removed from mortal society, if they are likely to deprave every one with whom they come in contact, and let them cease to be bad men in the only way in which they can: yet let this be done without hatred: for what reason have I for hating the man to whom I am doing the greatest good, since I am rescuing him from himself? Does a man hate his own limbs when he cuts them off? That is not an act of anger, but a lamentable method of healing. We knock mad dogs on the head, we slaughter fierce and savage bulls, and we doom scabby sheep to the knife, lest they should infect our flocks: we destroy monstrous births, and we also drown our children if they are born weakly or unnaturally formed; to separate what is useless from what is sound is an act, not of anger, but of reason. Nothing becomes one who inflicts punishment less than anger, because the punishment has all the more power to work reformation if the sentence be pronounced with deliberate judgment. This is why Socrates said to the slave, “I would strike you, were I not angry.” He put off the correction of the slave to a calmer season; at the moment, he corrected himself. Who can boast that he has his passions, under control, when Socrates did not dare to trust himself to his anger?

XVI. We do not, therefore, need an angry chastiser to punish the erring and wicked: for since anger is a crime of the mind, it is not right that sins should be punished by sin. “What! am I not to be angry with a robber, or a poisoner?” No: for I am not angry with myself when I bleed myself. I apply all kinds of punishment as remedies. You are as yet only in the first stage of error, and do not go wrong seriously, although you do so often: then I will try to amend you by a reprimand given first in private and then in public. [4] You, again, have gone too far to be restored to virtue by words alone; you must be kept in order by disgrace. For the next, some

stronger measure is required, something that he can feel must be branded upon him; you, sir, shall be sent into exile and to a desert place. The next man's thorough villany needs harsher remedies: chains and public imprisonment must be applied to him. You, lastly, have an incurably vicious mind, and add crime to crime: you have come to such a pass, that you are not influenced by the arguments which are never wanting to recommend evil, but sin itself is to you a sufficient reason for sinning: you have so steeped your whole heart in wickedness, that wickedness cannot be taken from you without bringing your heart with it. Wretched man! you have long sought to die; we will do you good service, we will take away that madness from which you suffer, and to you who have so long lived a misery to yourself and to others, we will give the only good thing which remains, that is, death. Why should I be angry with a man just when I am doing him good: sometimes the truest form of compassion is to put a man to death. If I were a skilled and learned physician, and were to enter a hospital, or a rich[5] man's house, I should not have prescribed the same treatment for all the patients who were suffering from various diseases. I see different kinds of vice in the vast number of different minds, and am called in to heal the whole body of citizens: let us seek for the remedies proper for each disease. This man may be cured by his own sense of honour, that one by travel, that one by pain, that one by want, that one by the sword. If, therefore, it becomes my duty as a magistrate to put on black[6] robes, and summon an assembly by the sound of a trumpet,[7] I shall walk to the seat of judgment not in a rage or in a hostile spirit, but with the countenance of a judge; I shall pronounce the formal sentence in a grave and gentle rather than a furious voice, and shall bid them proceed sternly, yet not angrily. Even when I command a criminal to be beheaded, when I sew a parricide up in a sack, when I send a man to be punished by military law, when I fling a traitor or public enemy down the Tarpeian Rock, I shall be free from anger, and shall look and feel just as though I were crushing snakes and other venomous creatures. "Anger is necessary to enable us to punish." What? do you think that the law is angry with men whom it does not know, whom it has never seen, who it hopes will never exist? We ought, therefore, to adopt the law's frame of mind, which does not become angry, but merely defines offences: for, if it is right for a good man to be angry at wicked crimes, it will also be right for him to be moved with envy at the prosperity of wicked men: what, indeed, is more scandalous than that in some cases the very men, for whose deserts no fortune could be found bad enough, should flourish and actually be the spoiled children of success? Yet he will see their affluence without envy, just as he sees their crimes without anger: a good judge condemns wrongful acts, but does not hate them. "What then? when the wise man is dealing with something of this kind, will his mind not be affected by it and become excited beyond its usual wont?" I admit that it will: he will experience a slight and trifling emotion; for, as Zeno says, "Even in the mind of the wise man, a scar remains after the wound is quite healed." He will, therefore, feel certain hints and semblances of passions; but he will be free from the passions themselves.

XVII. Aristotle says that "certain passions, if one makes a proper

use of them, act as arms”: which would be true if, like weapons of war, they could be taken up or laid aside at the pleasure of their wielder. These arms, which Aristotle assigns to virtue, fight of their own accord, do not wait to be seized by the hand, and possess a man instead of being possessed by him. We have no need of external weapons, nature has equipped us sufficiently by giving us reason. She has bestowed this weapon upon us, which is strong, imperishable, and obedient to our will, not uncertain or capable of being turned against its master. Reason suffices by itself not merely to take thought for the future, but to manage our affairs:[8] what, then, can be more foolish than for reason to beg anger for protection, that is, for what is certain to beg of what is uncertain? what is trustworthy of what is faithless? what is whole of what is sick? What, indeed? since reason is far more powerful by itself even in performing those operations in which the help of anger seems especially needful: for when reason has decided that a particular thing should be done, she perseveres in doing it; not being able to find anything better than herself to exchange with. She, therefore, abides by her purpose when it has once been formed; whereas anger is often overcome by pity: for it possesses no firm strength, but merely swells like an empty bladder, and makes a violent beginning, just like the winds which rise from the earth and are caused by rivers and marshes, which blow furiously without any continuance: anger begins with a mighty rush, and then falls away, becoming fatigued too soon: that which but lately thought of nothing but cruelty and novel forms of torture, is become quite softened and gentle when the time comes for punishment to be inflicted. Passion soon cools, whereas reason is always consistent: yet even in cases where anger has continued to burn, it often happens that although there may be many who deserve to die, yet after the death of two or three it ceases to slay. Its first onset is fierce, just as the teeth of snakes when first roused from their lair are venomous, but become harmless after repeated bites have exhausted their poison. Consequently those who are equally guilty are not equally punished, and often he who has done less is punished more, because he fell in the way of anger when it was fresher. It is altogether irregular; at one time it runs into undue excess, at another it falls short of its duty: for it indulges its own feelings and gives sentence according to its caprices, will not listen to evidence, allows the defence no opportunity of being heard, clings to what it has wrongly assumed, and will not suffer its opinion to be wrested from it, even when it is a mistaken one.

XVIII. Reason gives each side time to plead; moreover, she herself demands adjournment, that she may have sufficient scope for the discovery of the truth; whereas anger is in a hurry: reason wishes to give a just decision; anger wishes its decision to be thought just: reason looks no further than the matter in hand; anger is excited by empty matters hovering on the outskirts of the case: it is irritated by anything approaching to a confident demeanour, a loud voice, an unrestrained speech, dainty apparel, high-flown pleading, or popularity with the public. It often condemns a man because it dislikes his patron; it loves and maintains error even when truth is staring it in the face. It hates to be proved wrong,

and thinks it more honourable to persevere in a mistaken line of conduct than to retract it. I remember Gnaeus Piso, a man who was free from many vices, yet of a perverse disposition, and one who mistook harshness for consistency. In his anger he ordered a soldier to be led off to execution because he had returned from furlough without his comrade, as though he must have murdered him if he could not show him. When the man asked for time for search, he would not grant it: the condemned man was brought outside the rampart, and was just offering his neck to the axe, when suddenly there appeared his comrade who was thought to be slain. Hereupon the centurion in charge of the execution bade the guardsman sheathe his sword, and led the condemned man back to Piso, to restore to him the innocence which Fortune had restored to the soldier. They were led into his presence by their fellow soldiers amid the great joy of the whole camp, embracing one another and accompanied by a vast crowd. Piso mounted the tribunal in a fury and ordered them both to be executed, both him who had not murdered and him who had not been slain. What could be more unworthy than this? Because one was proved to be innocent, two perished. Piso even added a third: for he actually ordered the centurion, who had brought back the condemned man, to be put to death. Three men were set up to die in the same place because one was innocent. O, how clever is anger at inventing reasons for its frenzy! “You,” it says, “I order to be executed, because you have been condemned to death: you, because you have been the cause of your comrade’s condemnation, and you, because when ordered to put him to death you disobeyed your general.” He discovered the means of charging them with three crimes, because he could find no crime in them.

XIX. Irascibility, I say, has this fault—it is loth to be ruled: it is angry with the truth itself, if it comes to light against its will: it assails those whom it has marked for its victims with shouting and riotous noise and gesticulation of the entire body, together with reproaches and curses. Not thus does reason act: but if it must be so, she silently and quietly wipes out whole households, destroys entire families of the enemies of the state, together with their wives and children, throws down their very dwellings, levels them with the ground, and roots out the names of those who are the foes of liberty. This she does without grinding her teeth or shaking her head, or doing anything unbecoming to a judge, whose countenance ought to be especially calm and composed at the time when he is pronouncing an important sentence. “What need is there,” asks Hieronymus, “for you to bite your own lips when you want to strike some one?” What would he have said, had he seen a proconsul leap down from the tribunal, snatch the fasces from the lictor, and tear his own clothes because those of others were not torn as fast as he wished. Why need you upset the table, throw down the drinking cups, knock yourself against the columns, tear your hair, smite your thigh and your breast? How vehement do you suppose anger to be, if it thus turns back upon itself, because it cannot find vent on another as fast as it wishes? Such men, therefore, are held back by the bystanders and are begged to become reconciled with themselves. But he who while free from anger assigns to each man the penalty which he deserves, does none of these things. He often lets

a man go after detecting his crime, if his penitence for what he has done gives good hope for the future, if he perceives that the man's wickedness is not deeply rooted in his mind, but is only, as the saying is, skin-deep. He will grant impunity in cases where it will hurt neither the receiver nor the giver. In some cases he will punish great crimes more leniently than lesser ones, if the former were the result of momentary impulse, not of cruelty, while the latter were instinct with secret, underhand, long-practised craftiness. The same fault, committed by two separate men, will not be visited by him with the same penalty, if the one was guilty of it through carelessness, the other with a premeditated intention of doing mischief. In all dealing with crime he will remember that the one form of punishment is meant to make bad men better, and the other to put them out of the way. In either case he will look to the future, not to the past: for, as Plato says, "no wise man punishes any one because he has sinned, but that he may sin no more: for what is past cannot be recalled, but what is to come may be checked." Those, too, whom he wishes to make examples of the ill success of wickedness, he executes publicly, not merely in order that they themselves may die, but that by dying they may deter others from doing likewise. You see how free from any mental disturbance a man ought to be who has to weigh and consider all this, when he deals with a matter which ought to be handled with the utmost care, I mean, the power of life and death. The sword of justice is ill-placed in the hands of an angry man.

XX. Neither ought it to be believed that anger contributes anything to magnanimity: what it gives is not magnanimity but vain glory. The increase which disease produces in bodies swollen with morbid humours is not healthy growth, but bloated corpulence. All those whose madness raises them above human considerations, believe themselves to be inspired with high and sublime ideas; but there is no solid ground beneath, and what is built without foundation is liable to collapse in ruin. Anger has no ground to stand upon, and does not rise from a firm and enduring foundation, but is a windy, empty quality, as far removed from true magnanimity as fool-hardiness from courage, boastfulness from confidence, gloom from austerity, cruelty from strictness. There is, I say, a great difference between a lofty and a proud mind: anger brings about nothing grand or beautiful. On the other hand, to be constantly irritated seems to me to be the part of a languid and unhappy mind, conscious of its own feebleness, like folk with diseased bodies covered with sores, who cry out at the lightest touch. Anger, therefore, is a vice which for the most part affects women and children. "Yet it affects men also." Because many men, too, have womanish or childish intellects. "But what are we to say? do not some words fall from angry men which appear to flow from a great mind?" Yes, to those who know not what true greatness is: as, for example, that foul and hateful saying, "Let them hate me, provided they fear me," which you may be sure was written in Sulla's time. I know not which was the worse of the two things he wished for, that he might be hated or that he might be feared. It occurs to his mind that some day people will curse him, plot against him, crush him: what prayer does he add to this? May all the gods curse him—for

discovering a cure for hate so worthy of it. “Let them hate.” How? “Provided they obey me?” No! “Provided they approve of me?” No! How then? “Provided they fear me!” I would not even be loved upon such terms. Do you imagine that this was a very spirited saying? You are wrong: this is not greatness, but monstrosity. You should not believe the words of angry men, whose speech is very loud and menacing, while their mind within them is as timid as possible: nor need you suppose that the most eloquent of men, Titus Livius, was right in describing somebody as being “of a great rather than a good disposition.” The things cannot be separated: he must either be good or else he cannot be great, because I take greatness of mind to mean that it is unshaken, sound throughout, firm and uniform to its very foundation; such as cannot exist in evil dispositions. Such dispositions may be terrible, frantic, and destructive, but cannot possess greatness; because greatness rests upon goodness, and owes its strength to it. “Yet by speech, action, and all outward show they will make one think them great.” True, they will say something which you may think shows a great spirit, like Gaius Caesar, who when angry with heaven because it interfered with his ballet-dancers, whom he imitated more carefully than he attended to them when they acted, and because it frightened his revels by its thunders, surely ill-directed,[9] challenged Jove to fight, and that to the death, shouting the Homeric verse:—

“Carry me off, or I will carry thee!”

How great was his madness! He must have believed either that he could not be hurt even by Jupiter himself, or that he could hurt even Jupiter itself. I imagine that this saying of his had no small weight in nerving the minds of the conspirators for their task: for it seemed to be the height of endurance to bear one who could not bear Jupiter.

XXI. There is therefore nothing great or noble in anger, even when it seems to be powerful and to contemn both gods and men alike. Any one who thinks that anger produces greatness of mind, would think that luxury produces it: such a man wishes to rest on ivory, to be clothed with purple, and roofed with gold; to remove lands, embank seas, hasten the course of rivers, suspend woods in the air. He would think that avarice shows greatness of mind: for the avaricious man broods over heaps of gold and silver, treats whole provinces as merely fields on his estate, and has larger tracts of country under the charge of single bailiffs than those which consuls once drew lots to administer. He would think that lust shows greatness of mind: for the lustful man swims across straits, castrates troops of boys, and puts himself within reach of the swords of injured husbands with complete scorn of death. Ambition, too, he would think shows greatness of mind: for the ambitious man is not content with office once a year, but, if possible, would fill the calendar of dignities with his name alone, and cover the whole world with his

titles. It matters nothing to what heights or lengths these passions may proceed: they are narrow, pitiable, grovelling. Virtue alone is lofty and sublime, nor is anything great which is not at the same time tranquil.

* * *

[1] Here a leaf or more has been lost, including the fragment cited in Lactantius, De ira dei, 17 “Ira est eupiditas,” &c. The entire passage is:—“But the Stoics did not perceive that there is a difference between right and wrong; that there is just and unjust anger: and as they could find no remedy for it, they wished to extirpate it. The Peripatetics, on the other hand, declared that it ought not to be destroyed, but restrained. These I have sufficiently answered in the sixth book of my ‘Institutiones.’ It is clear that the philosophers did not comprehend the reason of anger, from the definitions of it which Seneca has enumerated in the books ‘On Anger’ which he has written. ‘Anger,’ he says, ‘is the desire of avenging an injury.’ Others, as Posidonius says, call it ‘a desire to punish one by whom you think that you have been unjustly injured,’ Some have defined it thus, ‘Anger is an impulse of the mind to injure him who either has injured you or has sought to injure you.’ Aristotle’s definition differs but little from our own. He says, ‘that anger is a desire to repay suffering,’ ” etc.

[2] Ovid, “Met.” vii. 545-6.

[3] τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν of the Stoics.

[4] The gospel rule. Matt, xviii. 15.

[5] Divitis (where there might be an army of slaves).

[6] “Lorsque le Préteur devoit prononcer la sentence d’un coupable, il se depouilloit de la robe pretexte, et se revêtoit alors d’une simple tunique, ou d’une autre robe, presque usée, et d’un blanc sale (sordida) ou d’un gris très foncé tirant sur le noir (toga pulla), telle qu’en portoient à Rome le peuple et les pauvres (pullaque paupertas). Dans les jours solemnelles et marqués par un deuil public, les Senateurs quittoient le laticlave, et les Magistrats la pretexte. La pourpre, la hache, les faisceaux, aucun de ces signes extérieurs de leur dignité ne les distinguoient alors des autres citoyens: sine insignibus Magistratus. Mais ce n’étoit pas seulement pendant le temps ou la ville étoit plongée dans le deuil et dans I’affliction, que les magistrats s’habilloient comme le peuple (sordidam vestem induebant); ils en usoient de même lorsqu’ils devoient condamner à mort un citoyen. C’est dans ces tristes circonstances qu’ils quittoient la prétexte et prenoient la robe de deuil perversam vestem. (No doubt “inside out.”—J. E. B. M.) ”On pourroit supposer avec assez de vraisemblance que par cette

expression, Séneque a voulu faire allusion à ce changement . . . . . Peut-être les Magistrats qui devoient juger à mort un citoyen, portoient ils aussi leur robe renversée, ou la jettoient ils de travers ou confusément sur leurs épaules, pour mieux peindre par ce desordre le trouble de leur esprit. Si cette conjecture est vraie, comme je serais assez porté à croire, l'expression perversa vestis dont Séneque s'est servi ici, indiqueroit plus d'un simple changement d'habit," &c, (La Grange's translation of Seneca, edited by J, A. Naigeon. Paris, 1778.)

[7] "Ceci fait allusion à une coutume que Caius Gracchus prétend avoir été pratiquée de tout tems à Rome, 'Lorsqu'un citoyen," dit il, "avoit un procès criminel qui alloit à la mort, s'il refusoit d'obéir aux sommations qui lui étoient faites; le jour qu'on devoit le juger, en envoyoit des le matin à la porte de sa maison un Officier I'appeller au son de la trompette, et jamais avant que cette cérémonie eût été observée, les Juges ne donneroient leur voix contre lui: tant ces hommes sages,' ajoute ce hardi Tribun, 'avoient de retenue et de precaution dans leurs jugements, quand il s'agissoit de la vie d'un citoyen.' "

"C'étoit de même au son de la trompette que l'on convoquoit le peuple, lorsqu'on devoit faire mourir un citoyen, afin qu'il fût témoin de ce triste spectacle, et que la supplice du coupable pût lui servir d'exemple. Tacite dit qu'un Astrologue, nommé P. Marcius, fût exécuté, selon l'ancien usage, hors de la porte Esquiline, en presence du peuple Romain que les Consuls firent convoquer au son de la trompette." (Tac. Ann. II. 32.) L. Grom.

[8] I.e. not only for counsel but for action.

[9] Prorsus parum certis (i.e., the thunderbolts missed their aim in not striking him dead).

THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO NOVATUS.

OF ANGER.

Book II.

My first book, Novatus, had a more abundant subject: for carriages roll easily down hill:[1] now we must proceed to drier matters. The question before us is whether anger arises from deliberate choice or from impulse, that is, whether it acts of its own accord or like the greater part of those passions which spring up within us without our knowledge. It is necessary for our debate to stoop to the consideration of these matters, in order that it may afterwards be able to rise to loftier themes; for likewise in our bodies the parts which are first set in order are the bones, sinews, and joints, which are by no means fair to see, albeit they are the foundation of our frame and essential to its life: next to them come the parts of which all beauty of face and appearance consists; and after these, colour, which above all else charms the eye, is applied last of all, when the rest of the body is complete. There is no doubt that anger is roused by the appearance of an injury being done: but the question before us is, whether anger straightway follows the appearance, and springs up without assistance from the mind, or whether it is roused with the sympathy of the mind. Our (the Stoics') opinion is, that anger can venture upon nothing by itself, without the approval of mind: for to conceive the idea of a wrong having been done, to long to avenge it, and to join the two propositions, that we ought not to have been injured and that it is our duty to avenge our injuries, cannot belong to a mere impulse which is excited without our consent. That impulse is a simple act; this is a complex one, and composed of several parts. The man understands something to have happened: he becomes indignant thereat: he condemns the deed; and he avenges it. All these things cannot be done without his mind agreeing to those matters which touched him.

II. Whither, say you, does this inquiry tend? That we may know what anger is: for if it springs up against our will, it never will yield to reason: because all the motions which take place without our volition are beyond our control and unavoidable, such as shivering when cold water is poured over us, or shrinking when we are touched in certain places. Men's hair rises up at bad news, their faces blush at indecent words, and they are seized with dizziness when looking down a precipice; and as it is not in our power to prevent any of these things, no reasoning can prevent their taking place. But anger can be put to flight by wise maxims; for it is a voluntary defect of the mind, and not one of those things which are evolved by the conditions of human life, and which, therefore, may happen even to the wisest of us. Among these and in the first place must be ranked that thrill of the mind which seizes us at the thought of wrongdoing. We feel this even when witnessing the mimic scenes of the stage, or when reading about things that happened long ago. We often feel angry with Clodius for banishing Cicero, and with Antonius for murdering him. Who is not indignant with the wars of Marius, the proscriptions of Sulla? who is not enraged against Theodotus and Achillas and the boy king who dared to commit a more than boyish crime?[2] Sometimes songs excite us, and quickened rhythm and the martial noise of trumpets; so, too, shocking pictures and the dreadful sight of tortures, however well deserved, affect

our minds. Hence it is that we smile when others are smiling, that a crowd of mourners makes us sad, and that we take a glowing interest in another's battles; all of which feelings are not anger, any more than that which clouds our brow at the sight of a stage shipwreck is sadness, or what we feel, when we read how Hannibal after Cannae beset the walls of Rome, can be called fear. All these are emotions of minds which are loth to be moved, and are not passions, but rudiments which may grow into passions. So, too, a soldier starts at the sound of a trumpet, although he may be dressed as a civilian and in the midst of a profound peace, and camp horses prick up their ears at the clash of arms. It is said that Alexander, when Xenophantus was singing, laid his hand upon his weapons.

III. None of these things which casually influence the mind deserve to be called passions: the mind, if I may so express it, rather suffers passions to act upon itself than forms them. A passion, therefore, consists not in being affected by the sights which are presented to us, but in giving way to our feelings and following up these chance promptings: for whoever imagines that paleness, bursting into tears, lustful feelings, deep sighs, sudden flashes of the eyes, and so forth, are signs of passion and betray the state of the mind, is mistaken, and does not understand that these are merely impulses of the body. Consequently, the bravest of men often turns pale while he is putting on his armour; when the signal for battle is given, the knees of the boldest soldier shake for a moment; the heart even of a great general leaps into his mouth just before the lines clash together, and the hands and feet even of the most eloquent orator grow stiff and cold while he is preparing to begin his speech. Anger must not merely move, but break out of bounds, being an impulse: now, no impulse can take place without the consent of the mind: for it cannot be that we should deal with revenge and punishment without the mind being cognisant of them. A man may think himself injured, may wish to avenge his wrongs, and then may be persuaded by some reason or other to give up his intention and calm down: I do not call that anger, it is an emotion of the mind which is under the control of reason. Anger is that which goes beyond reason and carries her away with it: wherefore the first confusion of a man's mind when struck by what seems an injury is no more anger than the apparent injury itself: it is the subsequent mad rush, which not only receives the impression of the apparent injury, but acts upon it as true, that is anger, being an exciting of the mind to revenge, which proceeds from choice and deliberate resolve. There never has been any doubt that fear produces flight, and anger a rush forward; consider, therefore, whether you suppose that anything can be either sought or avoided without the participation of the mind.

IV. Furthermore, that you may know in what manner passions begin and swell and gain spirit, learn that the first emotion is involuntary, and is, as it were, a preparation for a passion, and a threatening of one. The next is combined with a wish, though not an obstinate one, as, for example, "It is my duty to avenge myself, because I have been injured," or "It is right that this man should be punished, because he has committed a crime." The third emotion is already beyond our control, because it overrides reason, and wishes

to avenge itself, not if it be its duty, but whether or no. We are not able by means of reason to escape from that first impression on the mind, any more than we can escape from those things which we have mentioned as occurring to the body: we cannot prevent other people's yawns temping us to yawn:[3] we cannot help winking when fingers are suddenly darted at our eyes. Reason is unable to overcome these habits, which perhaps might be weakened by practice and constant watchfulness: they differ from an emotion which is brought into existence and brought to an end by a deliberate mental act.

V. We must also enquire whether those whose cruelty knows no bounds, and who delight in shedding human blood, are angry when they kill people from whom they have received no injury, and who they themselves do not think have done them any injury; such as were Apollodorus or Phalaris. This is not anger, it is ferocity: for it does not do hurt because it has received injury: but is even willing to receive injury, provided it may do hurt. It does not long to inflict stripes and mangle bodies to avenge its wrongs, but for its own pleasure. What then are we to say? This evil takes its rise from anger; for anger, after it has by long use and indulgence made a man forget mercy, and driven all feelings of human fellowship from his mind, passes finally into cruelty. Such men therefore laugh, rejoice, enjoy themselves greatly, and are as unlike as possible in countenance to angry men, since cruelty is their relaxation. It is said that when Hannibal saw a trench full of human blood, he exclaimed, "O, what a beauteous sight!" How much more beautiful would he have thought it, if it had filled a river or a lake? Why should we wonder that you should be charmed with this sight above all others, you who were born in bloodshed and brought up amid slaughter from a child? Fortune will follow you and favour your cruelty for twenty years, and will display to you everywhere the sight that you love. You will behold it both at Trasumene and at Cannae, and lastly at your own city of Carthage. Volesus, who not long ago, under the Emperor Augustus, was proconsul of Asia Minor, after he had one day beheaded three hundred persons, strutted out among the corpses with a haughty air, as though he had performed some grand and notable exploit, and exclaimed in Greek, "What a kingly action!" What would this man have done, had he been really a king? This was not anger, but a greater and an incurable disease.

VI. "Virtue," argues our adversary, "ought to be angry with what is base, just as she approves of what is honourable." What should we think if he said that virtue ought to be both mean and great; yet this is what he means, when he wants her to be raised and lowered, because joy at a good action is grand and glorious, while anger at another's sin is base and befits a narrow mind: and virtue will never be guilty of imitating vice while she is repressing it; she considers anger to deserve punishment for itself, since it often is even more criminal than the faults which which it is angry. To rejoice and be glad is the proper and natural function of virtue: it is as much beneath her dignity to be angry, as to mourn: now, sorrow is the companion of anger, and all anger ends in sorrow, either from remorse or from failure. Secondly, if it be the part of the wise man

to be angry with sins, he will be more angry the greater they are, and will often be angry: from which it follows that the wise man will not only be angry but irascible. Yet if we do not believe that great and frequent anger can find any place in the wise man's mind, why should we not set him altogether free from this passion? for there can be no limit, if he ought to be angry in proportion to what every man does: because he will either be unjust if he is equally angry at unequal crimes, or he will be the most irascible of men, if he blazes into wrath as often as crimes deserve his anger.

VII. What, too, can be more unworthy of the wise man, than that his passions should depend upon the wickedness of others? If so, the great Socrates will no longer be able to return home with the same expression of countenance with which he set out. Moreover, if it be the duty of the wise man to be angry at base deeds, and to be excited and saddened at crimes, then is there nothing more unhappy than the wise man, for all his life will be spent in anger and grief. What moment will there be at which he will not see something deserving of blame? whenever he leaves his house, he will be obliged to walk among men who are criminals, misers, spendthrifts, profligates, and who are happy in being so: he can turn his eyes in no direction without their finding something to shock them. He will faint, if he demands anger from himself as often as reason calls for it. All these thousands who are hurrying to the law courts at break of day, how base are their causes, and how much baser their advocates? One impugns his father's will, when he would have done better to deserve it; another appears as the accuser of his mother; a third comes to inform against a man for committing the very crime of which he himself is yet more notoriously guilty. The judge, too, is chosen to condemn men for doing what he himself has done, and the audience takes the wrong side, led astray by the fine voice of the pleader.

VIII. Why need I dwell upon individual cases? Be assured, when you see the Forum crowded with a multitude, the Saepta[4] swarming with people, or the great Circus, in which the greater part of the people find room to show themselves at once, that among them there are as many vices as there are men. Among those whom you see in the garb of peace there is no peace: for a small profit any one of them will attempt the ruin of another: no one can gain anything save by another's loss. They hate the fortunate and despise the unfortunate: they grudgingly endure the great, and oppress the small: they are fired by divers lusts: they would wreck everything for the sake of a little pleasure or plunder: they live as though they were in a school of gladiators, fighting with the same people with whom they live: it is like a society of wild beasts, save that beasts are tame with one another, and refrain from biting their own species, whereas men tear one another, and gorge themselves upon one another. They differ from dumb animals in this alone, that the latter are tame with those who feed them, whereas the rage of the former preys on those very persons by whom they were brought up.

IX. The wise man will never cease to be angry, if he once begins, so full is every place of vices and crimes. More evil is done than can

be healed by punishment: men seem engaged in a vast race of wickedness. Every day there is greater eagerness to sin, less modesty. Throwing aside all reverence for what is better and more just, lust rushes whithersoever it thinks fit, and crimes are no longer committed by stealth, they take place before our eyes, and wickedness has become so general and gained such a footing in everyone's breast that innocence is no longer rare, but no longer exists. Do men break the law singly, or a few at a time? Nay, they rise in all quarters at once, as though obeying some universal signal, to wipe out the boundaries of right and wrong.

"Host is not safe from guest,

Father-in-law from son; but seldom love

Exists 'twixt brothers; wives long to destroy

Their husbands, husbands long to slay their wives,

Stepmothers deadly aconite prepare

And child-heirs wonder when their sires will die."

And how small a part of men's crimes are these! The poet[5] has not described one people divided into two hostile camps, parents and children enrolled on opposite sides, Rome set on fire by the hand of a Roman, troops of fierce horsemen scouring the country to track out the hiding-places of the proscribed, wells defiled with poison, plagues created by human hands, trenches dug by children round their beleaguered parents, crowded prisons, conflagrations that consume whole cities, gloomy tyrannies, secret plots to establish despotisms and ruin peoples, and men glorying in those deeds which, as long as it was possible to repress them, were counted as crimes—I mean rape, debauchery, and lust . . . . . Add to these, public acts of national bad faith, broken treaties, everything that cannot defend itself carried off as plunder by the stronger, knaveries, thefts, frauds, and disownings of debt such as three of our present law-courts would not suffice to deal with. If you want the wise man to be as angry as the atrocity of men's crimes requires, he must not merely be angry, but must go mad with rage.

X. You will rather think that we should not be angry with people's faults; for what shall we say of one who is angry with those who stumble in the dark, or with deaf people who cannot hear his orders, or with children, because they forget their duty and interest themselves in the games and silly jokes of their companions? What shall we say if you choose to be angry with weaklings for being sick, for growing old, or becoming fatigued? Among the other misfortunes of humanity is this, that men's intellects are confused, and they not only cannot help going wrong, but love to go wrong. To

avoid being angry with individuals, you must pardon the whole mass, you must grant forgiveness to the entire human race. If you are angry with young and old men because they do wrong, you will be angry with infants also, for they soon will do wrong. Does any one become angry with children, who are too young to comprehend distinctions? Yet, to be a human being is a greater and a better excuse than to be a child. Thus are we born, as creatures liable to as many disorders of the mind as of the body; not dull and slow-witted, but making a bad use of our keenness of wit, and leading one another into vice by our example. He who follows others who have started before him on the wrong road is surely excusable for having wandered on[6] the highway. A general's severity may be shown in the case of individual deserters; but where a whole army deserts, it must needs be pardoned. What is it that puts a stop to the wise man's anger? It is the number of sinners. He perceives how unjust and how dangerous it is to be angry with vices which all men share. Heraclitcus, whenever he came out of doors and beheld around him such a number of men who were living wretchedly, nay, rather perishing wretchedly, used to weep: he pitied all those who met him joyous and happy. He was of a gentle but too weak disposition: and he himself was one of those for whom he ought to have wept. Democritus, on the other hand, is said never to have appeared in public without laughing; so little did men's serious occupations appear serious to him. What room is there for anger? Everything ought either to move us to tears or to laughter. The wise man will not be angry with sinners. Why not? Because he knows that no one is born wise, but becomes so: he knows that very few wise men are produced in any age, because he thoroughly understands the circumstances of human life. Now, no sane man is angry with nature: for what should we say if a man chose to be surprised that fruit did not hang on the thickets of a forest, or to wonder at bushes and thorns not being covered with some useful berry? No one is angry when nature excuses a defect. The wise man, therefore, being tranquil, and dealing candidly with mistakes, not an enemy to but an improver of sinners, will go abroad every day in the following frame of mind:—"Many men will meet me who are drunkards, lustful, ungrateful, greedy, and excited by the frenzy of ambition." He will view all these as benignly as a physician does his patients. When a man's ship leaks freely through its opened seams, does he become angry with the sailors or the ship itself? No; instead of that, he tries to remedy it: he shuts out some water, bales out some other, closes all the holes that he can see, and by ceaseless labour counteracts those which are out of sight and which let water into the hold; nor does he relax his efforts because as much water as he pumps out runs in again. We need a long-breathed struggle against permanent and prolific evils; not, indeed, to quell them, but merely to prevent their overpowering us.

XI. "Anger," says our opponent, "is useful, because it avoids contempt, and because it frightens bad men." Now, in the first place, if anger is strong in proportion to its threats, it is hateful for the same reason that it is terrible: and it is more dangerous to be hated than to be despised. If, again, it is without strength, it is much more exposed to contempt, and cannot avoid

ridicule; for what is more flat than anger when it breaks out into meaningless ravings? Moreover, because some things are somewhat terrible, they are not on that account desirable: nor does wisdom wish it to be said of the wise man, as it is of a wild beast, that the fear which he inspires is as a weapon to him. Why, do we not fear fever, gout, consuming ulcers? and is there, for that reason, any good in them? nay; on the other hand, they are all despised and thought to be foul and base, and are for this very reason feared. So, too, anger is in itself hideous and by no means to be feared; yet it is feared by many, just as a hideous mask is feared by children. How can we answer the fact that terror always works back to him who inspired it, and that no one is feared who is himself at peace? At this point it is well that you should remember that verse of Laberius, which, when pronounced in the theatre during the height of the civil war, caught the fancy of the whole people as though it expressed the national feeling:—

“He must fear many, whom so many fear.”

Thus has nature ordained, that whatever becomes great by causing fear to others is not free from fear itself. How disturbed lions are at the faintest noises! How excited those fiercest of beasts become at strange shadows, voices, or smells! Whatever is a terror to others, fears for itself. There can be no reason, therefore, for any wise man to wish to be feared, and no one need think that anger is anything great because it strikes terror, since even the most despicable things are feared, as, for example, noxious vermin whose bite is venomous: and since a string set with feathers stops the largest herds of wild beasts and guides them into traps, it is no wonder that from its effect it should be named a “Scarer.”[7] Foolish creatures are frightened by foolish things: the movement of chariots and the sight of their wheels turning round drives lions back into their cage: elephants are frightened at the cries of pigs: and so also we fear anger just as children fear the dark, or wild beasts fear red feathers: it has in itself nothing solid or valiant, but it affects feeble minds.

XII. “Wickedness,” says our adversary, “must be removed from the system of nature, if you wish to remove anger: neither of which things can be done.” In the first place, it is possible for a man not to be cold, although according to the system of nature it may be winter-time, nor yet to suffer from heat, although it be summer according to the almanac. He may be protected against the inclement time of the year by dwelling in a favoured spot, or he may have so trained his body to endurance that it feels neither heat nor cold. Next, reverse this saying:—You must remove anger from your mind before you can take virtue into the same, because vices and virtues cannot combine, and none can at the same time be both an angry man and a good man, any more than he can be both sick and well. “It is not possible,” says he, “to remove anger altogether from the mind,

nor does human nature admit of it." Yet there is nothing so hard and difficult that the mind of man cannot overcome it, and with which unremitting study will not render him familiar, nor are there any passions so fierce and independent that they cannot be tamed by discipline. The mind can carry out whatever orders it gives itself: some have succeeded in never smiling: some have forbidden themselves wine, sexual intercourse, or even drink of all kinds. Some, who are satisfied with short hours of rest, have learned to watch for long periods without weariness. Men have learned to run upon the thinnest ropes even when slanting, to carry huge burdens, scarcely within the compass of human strength, or to dive to enormous depths and suffer themselves to remain under the sea without any chance of drawing breath. There are a thousand other instances in which application has conquered all obstacles, and proved that nothing which the mind has set itself to endure is difficult. The men whom I have just mentioned gain either no reward or one that is unworthy of their unwearied application; for what great thing does a man gain by applying his intellect to walking upon a tight rope? or to placing great burdens upon his shoulders? or to keeping sleep from his eyes? or to reaching the bottom of the sea? and yet their patient labour brings all these things to pass for a trifling reward. Shall not we then call in the aid of patience, we whom such a prize awaits, the unbroken calm of a happy life? How great a blessing is it to escape from anger, that chief of all evils, and therewith from frenzy, ferocity, cruelty, and madness, its attendants?

XIII. There is no reason why we should seek to defend such a passion as this or excuse its excesses by declaring it to be either useful or unavoidable. What vice, indeed, is without its defenders? yet this is no reason why you should declare anger to be ineradicable. The evils from which we suffer are curable, and since we were born with a natural bias towards good, nature herself will help us if we try to amend our lives. Nor is the path to virtue steep and rough, as some think it to be: it may be reached on level ground. This is no untrue tale which I come to tell you: the road to happiness is easy; do you only enter upon it with good luck and the good help of the gods themselves. It is much harder to do what you are doing. What is more restful than a mind at peace, and what more toilsome than anger? What is more at leisure than clemency, what fuller of business than cruelty? Modesty keeps holiday while vice is overwhelmed with work. In fine, the culture of any of the virtues is easy, while vices require a great expense. Anger ought to be removed from our minds: even those who say that it ought to be kept low admit this to some extent: let it be got rid of altogether; there is nothing to be gained by it. Without it we can more easily and more justly put an end to crime, punish bad men, and amend their lives. The wise man will do his duty in all things without the help of any evil passion, and will use no auxiliaries which require watching narrowly lest they get beyond his control.

XIV. Anger, then, must never become a habit with us, but we may sometimes affect to be angry when we wish to rouse up the dull minds of those whom we address, just as we rouse up horses who are slow at starting with goads and firebrands. We must sometimes apply fear to

persons upon whom reason makes no impression: yet to be angry is of no more use than to grieve or to be afraid. “What? do not circumstances arise which provoke us to anger?” Yes: but at those times above all others we ought to choke down our wrath. Nor is it difficult to conquer our spirit, seeing that athletes, who devote their whole attention to the basest parts of themselves, nevertheless are able to endure blows and pain, in order to exhaust the strength of the striker, and do not strike when anger bids them, but when opportunity invites them. It is said that Pyrrhus, the most celebrated trainer for gymnastic contests, used habitually to impress upon his pupils not to lose their tempers: for anger spoils their science, and thinks only how it can hurt: so that often reason counsels patience while anger counsels revenge, and we, who might have survived our first misfortunes, are exposed to worse ones. Some have been driven into exile by their impatience of a single contemptuous word, have been plunged into the deepest miseries because they would not endure the most trifling wrong in silence, and have brought upon themselves the yoke of slavery because they were too proud to give up the least part of their entire liberty.

XV. “That you may be sure,” says our opponent, “that anger has in it something noble, pray look at the free nations, such as the Germans and Scythians, who are especially prone to anger.” The reason of this is that stout and daring intellects are liable to anger before they are tamed by discipline; for some passions engraft themselves upon the better class of dispositions only, just as good land, even when waste, grows strong brushwood, and the trees are tall which stand upon a fertile soil. In like manner, dispositions which are naturally bold produce irritability, and, being hot and fiery, have no mean or trivial qualities, but their energy is misdirected, as happens with all those who without training come to the front by their natural advantages alone, whose minds, unless they be brought under control, degenerate from a courageous temper into habits of rashness and reckless daring. “What? are not milder spirits linked with gentler vices, such as tenderness of heart, love, and bashfulness?” Yes, and therefore I can often point out to you a good disposition by its own faults: yet their being the proofs of a superior nature does not prevent their being vices. Moreover, all those nations which are free because they are wild, like lions or wolves, cannot command any more than they can obey: for the strength of their intellect is not civilized, but fierce and unmanageable: now, no one is able to rule unless he is also able to be ruled. Consequently, the empire of the world has almost always remained in the hands of those nations who enjoy a milder climate. Those who dwell near the frozen north have uncivilized tempers—

“Just on the model of their native skies,”

as the poet has it. XVI. Those animals, urges our opponent, are held to be the most generous who have large capacity for anger. He is

mistaken when he holds up creatures who act from impulse instead of reason as patterns for men to follow, because in man reason takes the place of impulse. Yet even with animals, all do not alike profit by the same thing. Anger is of use to lions, timidity to stags, boldness to hawks, flight to doves. What if I declare that it is not even true that the best animals are the most prone to anger? I may suppose that wild beasts, who gain their food by rapine, are better the angrier they are; but I should praise oxen and horses who obey the rein for their patience. What reason, however, have you for referring mankind to such wretched models, when you have the universe and God, whom he alone of animals imitates because he alone comprehends Him? “The most irritable men,” says he, “are thought to be the most straightforward of all.” Yes, because they are compared with swindlers and sharpers, and appear to be simple because they are outspoken. I should not call such men simple, but heedless. We give this title of “simple” to all fools, gluttons, spendthrifts, and men whose vices lie on the surface.

XVII. “An orator,” says our opponent, “sometimes speaks better, when he is angry.” Not so, but when he pretends to be angry: for so also actors bring down the house by their playing, not when they are really angry, but when they act the angry man well: and in like manner, in addressing a jury or a popular assembly, or in any other position in which the minds of others have to be influenced at our pleasure, we must ourselves pretend to feel anger, fear, or pity before we can make others feel them, and often the pretence of passion will do what the passion itself could not have done. “The mind which does not feel anger,” says he, “is feeble.” True, if it has nothing stronger than anger to support it. A man ought to be neither robber nor victim, neither tender-hearted nor cruel. The former belongs to an over-weak mind, the latter to an over-hard one. Let the wise man be moderate, and when things have to be done somewhat briskly, let him call force, not anger, to his aid.

XVIII. Now that we have discussed the questions propounded concerning anger, let us pass on to the consideration of its remedies. These, I imagine, are two-fold: the one class preventing our becoming angry, the other preventing our doing wrong when we are angry. As with the body we adopt a certain regimen to keep ourselves in health, and use different rules to bring back health when lost, so likewise we must repel anger in one fashion and quench it in another. That we may avoid it, certain general rules of conduct which apply to all men’s lives must be impressed upon us. We may divide these into such as are of use during the education of the young and in after-life.

Education ought to be carried on with the greatest and most salutary assiduity: for it is easy to mould minds while they are still tender, but it is difficult to uproot vices which have grown up with ourselves.

XIX. A hot mind is naturally the most prone to anger: for as there are four elements,[8] consisting of fire, air, earth, and water, so there are powers corresponding and equivalent to each of these,

namely, hot, cold, dry, and moist. Now the mixture of the elements is the cause of the diversities of lands and of animals, of bodies and of character, and our dispositions incline to one or the other of these according as the strength of each element prevails in us. Hence it is that we call some regions wet or dry, warm or cold. The same distinctions apply likewise to animals and mankind; it makes a great difference how much moisture or heat a man contains; his character will partake of whichever element has the largest share in him. A warm temper of mind will make men prone to anger; for fire is full of movement and vigour; a mixture of coldness makes men cowards, for cold is sluggish and contracted. Because of this, some of our Stoics think that anger is excited in our breasts by the boiling of the blood round the heart: indeed, that place is assigned to anger for no other reason than because the breast is the warmest part of the whole body. Those who have more moisture in them become angry by slow degrees, because they have no heat ready at hand, but it has to be obtained by movement; wherefore the anger of women and children is sharp rather than strong, and arises on lighter provocation. At dry times of life anger is violent and powerful, yet without increase, and adding little to itself, because as heat dies away cold takes its place. Old men are testy and full of complaints, as also are sick people and convalescents, and all whose store of heat has been consumed by weariness or loss of blood. Those who are wasted by thirst or hunger are in the same condition, as also are those whose frame is naturally bloodless and faints from want of generous diet. Wine kindles anger, because it increases heat; according to each man’s disposition, some fly into a passion when they are heavily drunk, some when they are slightly drunk: nor is there any other reason than this why yellow-haired, ruddy-complexioned people should be excessively passionate, seeing that they are naturally of the colour which others put on during anger; for their blood is hot and easily set in motion.

XX. But just as nature makes some men prone to anger, so there are many other causes which have the same power as nature. Some are brought into this condition by disease or bodily injury, others by hard work, long watching, nights of anxiety, ardent longings, and love: and everything else which is hurtful to the body or the spirit inclines the distempered mind to find fault. All these, however, are but the beginning and causes of anger. Habit of mind has very great power, and, if it be harsh, increases the disorder. As for nature, it is difficult to alter it, nor may we change the mixture of the elements which was formed once for all at our birth: yet knowledge will be so far of service, that we should keep wine out of the reach of hot-tempered men, which Plato thinks ought also to be forbidden to boys, so that fire be not made fiercer. Neither should such men be over-fed: for if so, their bodies will swell, and their minds will swell with them. Such men ought to take exercise, stopping short, however, of fatigue, in order that their natural heat may be abated, but not exhausted, and their excess of fiery spirit may be worked off. Games also will be useful: for moderate pleasure relieves the mind and brings it to a proper balance. With those temperaments which incline to moisture, or dryness and stiffness, there is no danger of anger, but there is fear of greater vices,

such as cowardice, moroseness, despair, and suspiciousness: such dispositions therefore ought to be softened, comforted, and restored to cheerfulness: and since we must make use of different remedies for anger and for sullenness, and these two vices require not only unlike, but absolutely opposite modes of treatment, let us always attack that one of them which is gaining the mastery.

XXI. It is, I assure you, of the greatest service to boys that they should be soundly brought up, yet to regulate their education is difficult, because it is our duty to be careful neither to cherish a habit of anger in them, nor to blunt the edge of their spirit. This needs careful watching, for both qualities, both those which are to be encouraged, and those which are to be checked, are fed by the same things; and even a careful watcher may be deceived by their likeness. A boy's spirit is increased by freedom and depressed by slavery: it rises when praised, and is led to conceive great expectations of itself: yet this same treatment produces arrogance and quickness of temper: we must therefore guide him between these two extremes, using the curb at one time and the spur at another. He must undergo no servile or degrading treatment; he never must beg abjectly for anything, nor must he gain anything by begging; let him rather receive it for his own sake, for his past good behaviour, or for his promises of future good conduct. In contests with his comrades we ought not to allow him to become sulky or fly into a passion: let us see that he be on friendly terms with those whom he contends with, so that in the struggle itself he may learn to wish not to hurt his antagonist but to conquer him: whenever he has gained the day or done something praiseworthy, we should allow him to enjoy his victory, but not to rush into transports of delight: for joy leads to exultation, and exultation leads to swaggering and excessive self-esteem, We ought to allow him some relaxation, yet not yield him up to laziness and sloth, and we ought to keep him far beyond the reach of luxury, for nothing makes children more prone to anger than a soft and fond bringing-up, so that the more only children are indulged, and the more liberty is given to orphans, the more they are corrupted. He to whom nothing is ever denied, will not be able to endure a rebuff, whose anxious mother always wipes away his tears, whose paedagogus[9] is made to pay for his shortcomings. Do you not observe how a man's anger becomes more violent as he rises in station? This shows itself especially in those who are rich and noble, or in great place, when the favouring gale has roused all the most empty and trivial passions of their minds. Prosperity fosters anger, when a man's proud ears are surrounded by a mob of flatterers, saying, "That man answer you! you do not act according to your dignity, you lower yourself." And so forth, with all the language which can hardly be resisted even by healthy and originally well-principled minds. Flattery, then, must be kept well out of the way of children. Let a child hear the truth, and sometimes fear it: let him always reverence it. Let him rise in the presence of his elders. Let him obtain nothing by flying into a passion: let him be given when he is quiet what was refused him when he cried for it: let him behold, but not make use of his father's wealth: let him be reproved for what he does wrong. It will be advantageous to furnish boys with even-tempered teachers and paedagogi: what is soft and

unformed clings to what is near, and takes its shape: the habits of young men reproduce those of their nurses and paedagogi. Once, a boy who was brought up in Plato's house went home to his parents, and, on seeing his father shouting with passion, said, "I never saw any one at Plato's house act like that." I doubt not that he learned to imitate his father sooner than he learned to imitate Plato. Above all, let his food be scanty, his dress not costly, and of the same fashion as that of his comrades: if you begin by putting him on a level with many others, he will not be angry when some one is compared with him.

XXII. These precepts, however, apply to our children: in ourselves the accident of birth and our education no longer admits of either mistakes or advice; we must deal with what follows. Now we ought to fight against the first causes of evil: the cause of anger is the belief that we are injured; this belief, therefore, should not be lightly entertained. We ought not to fly into a rage even when the injury appears to be open and distinct: for some false things bear the semblance of truth. We should always allow some time to elapse, for time discloses the truth. Let not our ears be easily lent to calumnious talk: let us know and be on our guard against this fault of human nature, that we are willing to believe what we are unwilling to listen to, and that we become angry before we have formed our opinion. What shall I say? we are influenced not merely by calumnies but by suspicions, and at the very look and smile of others we may fly into a rage with innocent persons because we put the worst construction upon it. We ought, therefore, to plead the cause of the absent against ourselves, and to keep our anger in abeyance: for a punishment which has been postponed may yet be inflicted, but when once inflicted cannot be recalled.

XXIII. Every one knows the story of the tyrannicide who, being caught before he had accomplished his task, and being tortured by Hippias to make him betray his accomplices, named the friends of the tyrant who stood around, and every one to whom he knew the tyrant's safety was especially dear. As the tyrant ordered each man to be slain as he was named, at last the man, being asked if any one else remained, said, "You remain alone, for I have left no one else alive to whom you are dear." Anger had made the tyrant lend his assistance to the tyrant-slayer, and cut down his guards with his own sword. How far more spirited was Alexander, who after reading his mother's letter warning him to beware of poison from his physician Philip, nevertheless drank undismayed the medicine which Philip gave him! He felt more confidence in his friend: he deserved that his friend should be innocent, and deserved that his conduct should make him innocent. I praise Alexander's doing this all the more because he was above all men prone to anger; but the rarer moderation is among kings, the more it deserves to be praised. The great Gaius Caesar, who proved such a merciful conqueror in the civil war, did the same thing; he burned a packet of letters addressed to Gnaeus Pompeius by persons who had been thought to be either neutrals or on the other side. Though he was never violent in his anger, yet he preferred to put it out of his power to be angry: he thought that the kindest way to pardon each of them was not to know what his offence had been.

XXIV. Readiness to believe what we hear causes very great mischief; we ought often not even to listen, because in some cases it is better to be deceived than to suspect deceit. We ought to free our minds of suspicion and mistrust, those most untrustworthy causes of anger. “This man’s greeting was far from civil; that one would not receive my kiss; one cut short a story I had begun to tell; another did not ask me to dinner; another seemed to view me with aversion.” Suspicion will never lack grounds: what we want is straightforwardness, and a kindly interpretation of things. Let us believe nothing unless it forces itself upon our sight and is unmistakable, and let us reprove ourselves for being too ready to believe, as often as our suspicions prove to be groundless: for this discipline will render us habitually slow to believe what we hear.

XXV. Another consequence of this will be, that we shall not be exasperated by the slightest and most contemptible trifles. It is mere madness to be put out of temper because a slave is not quick, because the water we are going to drink is lukewarm, or because our couch is disarranged or our table carelessly laid. A man must be in a miserably bad state of health if he shrinks from a gentle breath of wind; his eyes must be diseased if they are distressed by the sight of white clothing; he must be broken down with debauchery if he feels pain at seeing another man work. It is said that there was one Mindyrides, a citizen of Sybaris, who one day seeing a man digging and vigorously brandishing a mattock, complained that the sight made him weary, and forbade the man to work where he could see him. The same man complained that he had suffered from the rose-leaves upon which he lay being folded double. When pleasures have corrupted both the body and the mind, nothing seems endurable, not indeed because it is hard, but because he who has to bear it is soft: for why should we be driven to frenzy by any one’s coughing and sneezing, or by a fly not being driven away with sufficient care, or by a dog’s hanging about us, or a key dropping from a careless servant’s hand? Will one whose ears are agonised by the noise of a bench being dragged along the floor be able to endure with unruffled mind the rude language of party strife, and the abuse which speakers in the forum or the senate house heap upon their opponents? Will he who is angry with his slave for icing his drink badly, be able to endure hunger, or the thirst of a long march in summer? Nothing, therefore, nourishes anger more than excessive and dissatisfied luxury: the mind ought to be hardened by rough treatment, so as not to feel any blow that is not severe.

XXVI. We are angry, either with those who can, or with those who cannot do us an injury. To the latter class belong some inanimate things, such as a book, which we often throw away when it is written in letters too small for us to read, or tear up when it is full of mistakes, or clothes which we destroy because we do not like them. How foolish to be angry with such things as these, which neither deserve nor feel our anger! “But of course it is their makers who really affront us.” I answer that, in the first place, we often become angry before making this distinction clear in our minds, and secondly, perhaps even the makers might put forward some reasonable

excuses: one of them, it may be, could not make them any better than he did, and it is not through any disrespect to you that he was unskilled in his trade: another may have done his work so without any intention of insulting you: and, finally, what can be more crazy than to discharge upon things the ill-feeling which one has accumulated against persons? Yet as it is the act of a madman to be angry with inanimate objects, so also is it to be angry with dumb animals, which can do us no wrong because they are not able to form a purpose; and we cannot call anything a wrong unless it be done intentionally. They are, therefore, able to hurt us, just as a sword or a stone may do so, but they are not able to do us a wrong. Yet some men think themselves insulted when the same horses which are docile with one rider are restive with another, as though it were through their deliberate choice, and not through habit and cleverness of handling that some horses are more easily managed by some men than by others. And as it is foolish to be angry with them, so it is to be angry with children, and with men who have little more sense than children: for all these sins, before a just judge, ignorance would be as effective an excuse as innocence.

XXVII. There are some things which are unable to hurt us, and whose power is exclusively beneficial and salutary, as, for example, the immortal gods, who neither wish nor are able to do harm: for their temperament is naturally gentle and tranquil, and no more likely to wrong others than to wrong themselves. Foolish people who know not the truth hold them answerable for storms at sea, excessive rain, and long winters, whereas all the while these phenomena by which we suffer or profit take place without any reference whatever to us: it is not for our sake that the universe causes summer and winter to succeed one another; these have a law of their own, according to which their divine functions are performed. We think too much of ourselves, when we imagine that we are worthy to have such prodigious revolutions effected for our sake: so, then, none of these things take place in order to do us an injury, nay, on the contrary, they all tend to our benefit. I have said that there are some things which cannot hurt us, and some which would not. To the latter class belong good men in authority, good parents, teachers, and judges whose punishments ought to be submitted to by us in the same spirit in which we undergo the surgeon’s knife, abstinence from food, and such like things which hurt us for our benefit. Suppose that we are being punished; let us think not only of what we suffer, but of what we have done: let us sit in judgement on our past life. Provided we are willing to tell ourselves the truth, we shall certainly decide that our crimes deserve a harder measure than they have received.

XXVIII. If we desire to be impartial judges of all that takes place, we must first convince ourselves of this, that no one of us is faultless: for it is from this that most of our indignation proceeds. “I have not sinned, I have done no wrong.” Say, rather, you do not admit that you have done any wrong. We are infuriated at being reproved, either by reprimand or actual chastisement, although we are sinning at that very time, by adding insolence and obstinacy to our wrong-doings. Who is there that can declare himself to have

broken no laws? Even if there be such a man, what a stinted innocence it is, merely to be innocent by the letter of the law. How much further do the rules of duty extend than those of the law! how many things which are not to be found in the statute book, are demanded by filial feeling, kindness, generosity, equity, and honour? Yet we are not able to warrant ourselves even to come under that first narrowest definition of innocence: we have done what was wrong, thought what was wrong, wished for what was wrong, and encouraged what was wrong: in some cases we have only remained innocent because we did not succeed. When we think of this, let us deal more justly with sinners, and believe that those who scold us are right: in any case let us not be angry with ourselves (for with whom shall we not be angry, if we are angry even with our own selves?), and least of all with the gods: for whatever we suffer befalls us not by any ordinance of theirs but of the common law of all flesh. “But diseases and pains attack us.” Well, people who live in a crazy dwelling must have some way of escape from it. Some one will be said to have spoken ill of you: think whether you did not first speak ill of him: think of how many persons you have yourself spoken ill. Let us not, I say, suppose that others are doing us a wrong, but are repaying one which we have done them, that some are acting with good intentions, some under compulsion, some in ignorance, and let us believe that even he who does so intentionally and knowingly did not wrong us merely for the sake of wronging us, but was led into doing so by the attraction of saying something witty, or did whatever he did, not out of any spite against us, but because he himself could not succeed unless he pushed us back. We are often offended by flattery even while it is being lavished upon us: yet whoever recalls to his mind how often he himself has been the victim of undeserved suspicion, how often fortune has given his true service an appearance of wrong-doing, how many persons he has begun by hating and ended by loving, will be able to keep himself from becoming angry straightway, especially if he silently says to himself when each offence is committed: “I have done this very thing myself.” Where, however, will you find so impartial a judge? The same man who lusts after everyone’s wife, and thinks that a woman’s belonging to someone else is a sufficient reason for adoring her, will not allow any one else to look at his own wife. No man expects such exact fidelity as a traitor: the perjurer himself takes vengeance of him who breaks his word: the pettifogging lawyer is most indignant at an action being brought against him: the man who is reckless of his own chastity cannot endure any attempt upon that of his slaves. We have other men’s vices before our eyes, and our own behind our backs: hence it is that a father, who is worse than his son, blames the latter for giving extravagant feasts,[10] and disapproves of the least sign of luxury in another, although he was wont to set no bounds to it in his own case; hence it is that despots are angry with homicides, and thefts are punished by those who despoil temples. A great part of mankind is not angry with sins, but with sinners. Regard to our own selves[11] will make us more moderate, if we inquire of ourselves:—have we ever committed any crime of this sort? have we ever fallen into this kind of error? is it for our interest that we should condemn this conduct?

XXIX. The greatest remedy for anger is delay: beg anger to grant you this at the first, not in order that it may pardon the offence, but that it may form a right judgment about it: if it delays, it will come to an end. Do not attempt to quell it all at once, for its first impulses are fierce; by plucking away its parts we shall remove the whole. We are made angry by some things which we learn at second-hand, and by some which we ourselves hear or see. Now, we ought to be slow to believe what is told us. Many tell lies in order to deceive us, and many because they are themselves deceived. Some seek to win our favour by false accusations, and invent wrongs in order that they may appear angry at our having suffered them. One man lies out of spite, that he may set trusting friends at variance; some because they are suspicious,[12] and wish to see sport, and watch from a safe distance those whom they have set by the ears. If you were about to give sentence in court about ever so small a sum of money, you would take nothing as proved without a witness, and a witness would count for nothing except on his oath. You would allow both sides to be heard: you would allow them time: you would not despatch the matter at one sitting, because the oftener it is handled the more distinctly the truth appears. And do you condemn your friend off-hand? Are you angry with him before you hear his story, before you have cross-examined him, before he can know either who is his accuser or with what he is charged. Why then, just now, in the case which you just tried, did you hear what was said on both sides? This very man who has informed against your friend, will say no more if he be obliged to prove what he says. “You need not,” says he, “bring me forward as a witness; if I am brought forward I shall deny what I have said; unless you excuse me from appearing I shall never tell you anything.” At the same time he spurs you on and withdraws himself from the strife and battle. The man who will tell you nothing save in secret hardly tells you anything at all. What can be more unjust than to believe in secret, and to be angry openly?

XXX. Some offences we ourselves witness: in these cases let us examine the disposition and purpose of the offender. Perhaps he is a child; let us pardon his youth, he knows not whether he is doing wrong: or he is a father; he has either rendered such great services, as to have won the right even to wrong us—or perhaps this very act which offends us is his chief merit: or a woman; well, she made a mistake. The man did it because he was ordered to do it. Who but an unjust person can be angry with what is done under compulsion? You had hurt him: well, there is no wrong in suffering the pain which you have been the first to inflict. Suppose that your opponent is a judge; then you ought to take his opinion rather than your own: or that he is a king; then, if he punishes the guilty, yield to him because he is just, and if he punishes the innocent, yield to him because he is powerful. Suppose that it is a dumb animal or as stupid as a dumb animal: then, if you are angry with it, you will make yourself like it. Suppose that it is a disease or a misfortune; it will take less effect upon you if you bear it quietly: or that it is a god; then you waste your time by being angry with him as much as if you prayed him to be angry with some one else. Is it a good man who has wronged you? do not believe it:

is it a bad one? do not be surprised at this; he will pay to some one else the penalty which he owes to you—indeed, by his sin he has already punished himself.

XXXI. There are, as I have stated, two cases which produce anger: first, when we appear to have received an injury, about which enough has been said, and, secondly, when we appear to have been treated unjustly: this must now be discussed. Men think some things unjust because they ought not to suffer them, and some because they did not expect to suffer them: we think what is unexpected is beneath our deserts. Consequently, we are especially excited at what befalls us contrary to our hope and expectation: and this is why we are irritated at the smallest trifles in our own domestic affairs, and why we call our friends' carelessness deliberate injury. How is it, then, asks our opponent, that we are angered by the injuries inflicted by our enemies? It is because we did not expect those particular injuries, or, at any rate, not on so extensive a scale. This is caused by our excessive self-love: we think that we ought to remain uninjured even by our enemies: every man bears within his breast the mind of a despot, and is willing to commit excesses, but unwilling to submit to them. Thus it is either ignorance or arrogance that makes us angry: ignorance of common facts; for what is there to wonder at in bad men committing evil deeds? what novelty is there in your enemy hurting you, your friend quarrelling with you, your son going wrong, or your servant doing amiss? Fabius was wont to say that the most shameful excuse a general could make was "I did not think." I think it the most shameful excuse that a man can make. Think of everything, expect everything: even with men of good character something queer will crop up; human nature produces minds that are treacherous, ungrateful, greedy, and impious: when you are considering what any man's morals may be, think what those of mankind are. When you are especially enjoying yourself, be especially on your guard: when everything seems to you to be peaceful, be sure that mischief is not absent, but only asleep. Always believe that something will occur to offend you. A pilot never spreads all his canvas abroad so confidently as not to keep his tackle for shortening sail ready for use. Think, above all, how base and hateful is the power of doing mischief, and how unnatural in man, by whose kindness even fierce animals are rendered tame. See how bulls yield their necks to the yoke, how elephants[13] allow boys and women to dance on their backs unhurt, how snakes glide harmlessly over our bosoms and among our drinking-cups, how within their dens bears and lions submit to be handled with complacent mouths, and wild beasts fawn upon their master: let us blush to have exchanged habits with wild beasts. It is a crime to injure one's country: so it is, therefore, to injure any of our countrymen, for he is a part of our country; if the whole be sacred, the parts must be sacred too. Therefore it is also a crime to injure any man: for he is your fellow-citizen in a larger state. What, if the hands were to wish to hurt the feet? or the eyes to hurt the hands? As all the limbs act in unison, because it is the interest of the whole body to keep each one of them safe, so men should spare one another, because they are born for society. The bond of society, however, cannot exist unless it guards and loves all its members. We should not even

destroy vipers and water-snakes and other creatures whose teeth and claws are dangerous, if we were able to tame them as we do other animals, or to prevent their being a peril to us: neither ought we, therefore, to hurt a man because he has done wrong, but lest he should do wrong, and our punishment should always look to the future, and never to the past, because it is inflicted in a spirit of precaution, not of anger: for if everyone who has a crooked and vicious disposition were to be punished, no one would escape punishment.

XXXII. “But anger possesses a certain pleasure of its own, and it is sweet to pay back the pain you have suffered.” Not at all; it is not honourable to requite injuries by injuries, in the same way as it is to repay benefits by benefits. In the latter case it is a shame to be conquered; in the former it is a shame to conquer. Revenge and retaliation are words which men use and even think to be righteous, yet they do not greatly differ from wrong-doing, except in the order in which they are done: he who renders pain for pain has more excuse for his sin; that is all. Some one who did not know Marcus Cato struck him in the public bath in his ignorance, for who would knowingly have done him an injury? Afterwards when he was apologizing, Cato replied, “I do not remember being struck.” He thought it better to ignore the insult than to revenge it. You ask, “Did no harm befall that man for his insolence?” No, but rather much good; he made the acquaintance of Cato. It is the part of a great mind to despise wrongs done to it; the most contemptuous form of revenge is not to deem one’s adversary worth taking vengeance upon. Many have taken small injuries much more seriously to heart than they need, by revenging them: that man is great and noble who like a large wild animal hears unmoved the tiny curs that bark at him.

XXXIII. “We are treated,” says our opponent, “with more respect if we revenge our injuries.” If we make use of revenge merely as a remedy, let us use it without anger, and not regard revenge as pleasant, but as useful: yet often it is better to pretend not to have received an injury than to avenge it. The wrongs of the powerful must not only be borne, but borne with a cheerful countenance: they will repeat the wrong if they think they have inflicted it. This is the worst trait of minds rendered arrogant by prosperity, they hate those whom they have injured. Every one knows the saying of the old courtier, who, when some one asked him how he had achieved the rare distinction of living at court till he reached old age, replied, “By receiving wrongs and returning thanks for them.” It is often so far from expedient to avenge our wrongs, that it will not do even to admit them. Gaius Caesar, offended at the smart clothes and well-dressed hair of the son of Pastor, a distinguished Roman knight, sent him to prison. When the father begged that his son might suffer no harm, Caius, as if reminded by this to put him to death, ordered him to be executed, yet, in order to mitigate his brutality to the father, invited him that very day to dinner. Pastor came with a countenance which betrayed no illwill. Caesar pledged him in a glass of wine, and set a man to watch him. The wretched creature went through his part, feeling as though he were drinking his son’s blood: the emperor sent him some perfume and

a garland, and gave orders to watch whether he used them: he did so. On the very day on which he had buried, nay, on which he had not even buried his son, he sat down as one of a hundred guests, and, old and gouty as he was, drank to an extent which would have been hardly decent on a child's birthday; he shed no tear the while; he did not permit his grief to betray itself by the slightest sign; he dined just as though his entreaties had gained his son's life. You ask me why he did so? he had another son. What did Priam do in the Iliad? Did he not conceal his wrath and embrace the knees of Achilles? did he not raise to his lips that death-dealing hand, stained with the blood of his son, and sup with his slayer? True! but there were no perfumes and garlands, and his fierce enemy encouraged him with many soothing words to eat, not to drain huge goblets with a guard standing over him to see that he did it. Had he only feared for himself, the father would have treated the tyrant with scorn: but love for his son quenched his anger: he deserved the emperor's permission to leave the banquet and gather up the bones of his son: but, meanwhile, that kindly and polite youth the emperor would not even permit him to do this, but tormented the old man with frequent invitations to drink, advising him thereby to lighten his sorrows. He, on the other hand, appeared to be in good spirits, and to have forgotten what had been done that day: he would have lost his second son had he proved an unacceptable guest to the murderer of his eldest.

XXXIV. We must, therefore, refrain from anger, whether he who provokes us be on a level with ourselves, or above us, or below us. A contest with one's equal is of uncertain issue, with one's superior is folly, and with one's inferior is contemptible. It is the part of a mean and wretched man to turn and bite one's biter: even mice and ants show their teeth if you put your hand to them, and all feeble creatures think that they are hurt if they are touched. It will make us milder tempered to call to mind any services which he with whom we are angry may have done us, and to let his deserts balance his offence. Let us also reflect, how much credit the tale of our forgiveness will confer upon us, how many men may be made into valuable friends by forgiveness. One of the lessons which Sulla's cruelty teaches us is not to be angry with the children of our enemies, whether they be public or private; for he drove the sons of the proscribed into exile. Nothing is more unjust than that any one should inherit the quarrels of his father. Whenever we are loth to pardon any one, let us think whether it would be to our advantage that all men should be inexorable. He who refuses to pardon, how often has he begged it for himself? how often has he grovelled at the feet of those whom he spurns from his own? How can we gain more glory than by turning anger into friendship? what more faithful allies has the Roman people than those who have been its most unyielding enemies? where would the empire be to-day, had not a wise foresight united the conquered and the conquerors? If any one is angry with you, meet his anger by returning benefits for it: a quarrel which is only taken up on one side falls to the ground: it takes two men to fight. But[14] suppose that there is an angry struggle on both sides, even then, he is the better man who first gives way; the winner is the real loser. He struck you; well

then, do you fall back: if you strike him in turn you will give him both an opportunity and an excuse for striking you again: you will not be able to withdraw yourself from the struggle when you please.

XXXV. Does any one wish to strike his enemy so hard, as to leave his own hand in the wound, and not to be able to recover his balance after the blow? yet such a weapon is anger: it is scarcely possible to draw it back. We are careful to choose for ourselves light weapons, handy and manageable swords: shall we not avoid these clumsy, unwieldy,[15] and never-to-be-recalled impulses of the mind? The only swiftness of which men approve is that which, when bidden, checks itself and proceeds no further, and which can be guided, and reduced from a run to a walk: we know that the sinews are diseased when they move against our will. A man must be either aged or weakly who runs when he wants to walk: let us think that those are the most powerful and the soundest operations of our minds, which act under our own control, not at their own caprice. Nothing, however, will be of so much service as to consider, first, the hideousness, and, secondly, the danger of anger. No passion bears a more troubled aspect: it befouls the fairest face, makes fierce the expression which before was peaceful. From the angry “all grace has fled;” though their clothing may be fashionable, they will trail it on the ground and take no heed of their appearance; though their hair be smoothed down in a comely manner by nature or art, yet it will bristle up in sympathy with their mind. The veins become swollen, the breast will be shaken by quick breathing, the man’s neck will be swelled as he roars forth his frantic talk: then, too, his limbs will tremble, his hands will be restless, his whole body will sway hither and thither. What, think you, must be the state of his mind within him, when its appearance without is so shocking? how far more dreadful a countenance he bears within his own breast, how far keener pride, how much more violent rage, which will burst him unless it finds some vent? Let us paint anger looking like those who are dripping with the blood of foemen or savage beasts, or those who are just about to slaughter them—like those monsters of the nether world fabled by the poet to be girt with serpents and breathing flame, when they sally forth from hell, most frightful to behold, in order that they may kindle wars, stir up strife between nations, and overthrow peace; let us paint her eyes glowing with fire, her voice hissing, roaring, grating, and making worse sounds if worse there be, while she brandishes weapons in both hands, for she cares not to protect herself, gloomy, stained with blood, covered with scars and livid with her own blows, reeling like a maniac, wrapped in a thick cloud, dashing hither and thither, spreading desolation and panic, loathed by every one and by herself above all, willing, if otherwise she cannot hurt her foe, to overthrow alike earth, sea, and heaven, harmful and hateful at the same time. Or, if we are to see her, let her be such as our poets have described her—

“There with her blood-stained scourge Bellona fights.

And Discord in her riven robe delights,”[16]

or, if possible, let some even more dreadful aspect be invented for this dreadful passion.

XXXVI. Some angry people, as Sextius remarks, have been benefited by looking at the glass: they have been struck by so great an alteration in their own appearance: they have been, as it were, brought into their own presence and have not recognized themselves: yet how small a part of the real hideousness of anger did that reflected image in the mirror reproduce? Could the mind be displayed or made to appear through any substance, we should be confounded when we beheld how black and stained, how agitated, distorted, and swollen it looked: even at present it is very ugly when seen through all the screens of blood, bones, and so forth: what would it be, were it displayed uncovered? You say, that you do not believe that any one was ever scared out of anger by a mirror: and why not? Because when he came to the mirror to change his mind, he had changed it already: to angry men no face looks fairer than one that is fierce and savage and such as they wish to look like. We ought rather to consider, how many men anger itself has injured. Some in their excessive heat have burst their veins; some by straining their voices beyond their strength have vomited blood, or have injured their sight by too violently injecting humours into their eyes, and have fallen sick when the fit passed off. No way leads more swiftly to madness: many have, consequently, remained always in the frenzy of anger, and, having once lost their reason, have never recovered it. Ajax was driven mad by anger, and driven to suicide by madness. Men, frantic with rage, call upon heaven to slay their children, to reduce themselves to poverty, and to ruin their houses, and yet declare that they are not either angry or insane. Enemies to their best friends, dangerous to their nearest and dearest, regardless of the laws save where they injure, swayed by the smallest trifles, unwilling to lend their ears to the advice or the services of their friends, they do everything by main force, and are ready either to fight with their swords or to throw themselves upon them, for the greatest of all evils, and one which surpasses all vices, has gained possession of them. Other passions gain a footing in the mind by slow degrees: anger’s conquest is sudden and complete, and, moreover, it makes all other passions subservient to itself. It conquers the warmest love: men have thrust swords through the bodies of those whom they loved, and have slain those in whose arms they have lain. Avarice, that sternest and most rigid of passions, is trampled underfoot by anger, which forces it to squander its carefully collected wealth and set fire to its house and all its property in one heap. Why, has not even the ambitious man been known to fling away the most highly valued ensigns of rank, and to refuse high office when it was offered to him? There is no passion over which anger does not bear absolute rule.

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[1] “Vehiculorum ridicule Koch,” says Gertz, justly, “vitiorum makes excellent sense.”—J. E. B. M.

[2] The murder of Pompeius, B.C. 48. Achillas and Theodotus acted under the nominal orders of Ptolemy XII., Cleopatra’s brother, then about seventeen years of age.

[3] See “De Clem.” ii. 6, 4, I emended many years ago ένὸς χανόντος με ΤΕΣΧΗΚεν into ἐ. χ., με ΤΑΚΕΧΗΝεν ἄτερος: “when one has yawned, the other yawns.”—J. E. B. M.

[4] The voting-place in the Campus Martius.

[5] Ovid, Metamorphoses, i., 144, sqq. The same lines are quoted in the essay on Benefits, v. 15.

[6] I.e., he can plead that he kept the beaten track.

[7] De Clem. i. 12, 5.

[8] Compare Shakespeare, “Julius Caesar,” Act v. Sc. 5:—

“His life was gentle, and the elements

So mixed in him, that nature might stand up

And say to all the world, this was a man!”

See Mr. Aldis Wright’s note upon the passage.

[9] Paedagogus was a slave who accompanied a boy to school, &c., to keep him out of mischief; he did not teach him anything.

[10] Tempestiva, beginning before the usual hour.

[11] Fear of self-condemnation.

[12] Lipsius conjectures supprocax, mischievous.

[13] I have adopted the transposition of Haase and Koch.

[14] I adopt Vahlen’s reading. See his Preface, p. viii., ed, Jenae, 1879.

[15] I read onerosos with Vahlen, See his Preface, p, viii., ed, Jenae, 1879.

[16] The lines are from Virgil, Aen. viii. 702, but are inaccurately quoted.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO NOVATUS.

OF ANGER.

Book III.

I. We will now, my Novatus, attempt to do that which you so especially long to do, that is, to drive out anger from our minds, or at all events to curb it and restrain its impulses. This may sometimes be done openly and without concealment, when we are only suffering from a slight attack of this mischief, and at other times it must be done secretly, when our anger is excessively hot, and when every obstacle thrown in its way increases it and makes it blaze higher. It is important to know how great and how fresh its strength may be, and whether it can be driven forcibly back and suppressed, or whether we must give way to it until its first storm blow over, lest it sweep away with it our remedies themselves. We must deal with each case according to each man’s character: some yield to entreaties, others are rendered arrogant and masterful by submission: we may frighten some men out of their anger, while some may be turned from their purpose by reproaches, some by acknowledging oneself to be in the wrong, some by shame, and some by delay, a tardy remedy for a hasty disorder, which we ought only to use when all others have failed: for other passions admit of having their case put off, and may be healed at a later time; but the eager and self-destructive violence of anger does not grow up by slow degrees, but reaches its full height as soon as it begins. Nor does it, like other vices, merely disturb men’s minds, but it takes them away, and torments them till they are incapable of restraining themselves and eager for the common ruin of all men, nor does it rage merely against its object, but against every obstacle which it encounters on its way. The other vices move our minds; anger hurls them headlong. If we are not able to withstand our passions, yet at any rate our passions ought to stand firm: but anger grows more and more powerful, like lightning flashes or hurricanes, or any other things which cannot stop themselves because they do not proceed along, but fall from above. Other vices affect our judgment, anger affects our sanity: others come in mild attacks and grow unnoticed, but men’s minds plunge abruptly into anger. There is no passion that is more frantic, more destructive to its own self; it is arrogant if successful, and frantic if it fails. Even when defeated it does not grow weary, but if chance places its foe beyond its reach, it turns

its teeth against itself. Its intensity is in no way regulated by its origin: for it rises to the greatest heights from the most trivial beginnings.

II. It passes over no time of life; no race of men is exempt from it: some nations have been saved from the knowledge of luxury by the blessing of poverty; some through their active and wandering habits have escaped from sloth; those whose manners are unpolished and whose life is rustic know not chicanery and fraud and all the evils to which the courts of law give birth: but there is no race which is not excited by anger, which is equally powerful with Greeks and barbarians, and is just as ruinous among law-abiding folk as among those whose only law is that of the stronger. Finally, the other passions seize upon individuals; anger is the only one which sometimes possesses a whole state. No entire people ever fell madly in love with a woman, nor did any nation ever set its affections altogether upon gain and profit. Ambition attacks single individuals; ungovernable rage is the only passion that affects nations. People often fly into a passion by troops; men and women, old men and boys, princes and populace all act alike, and the whole multitude, after being excited by a very few words, outdoes even its exciter: men betake themselves straightway to fire and sword, and proclaim a war against their neighbours or wage one against their countrymen. Whole houses are burned with the entire families which they contain, and he who but lately was honoured for his popular eloquence now finds that his speech moves people to rage. Legions aim their darts at their commander; the whole populace quarrels with the nobles; the senate, without waiting for troops to be levied or appointing a general, hastily chooses leaders, for its anger chases well-born men through the houses of Rome, and puts them to death with its own hand. Ambassadors are outraged, the law of nations violated, and an unnatural madness seizes the state. Without allowing time for the general excitement to subside, fleets are straightway launched and laden with a hastily enrolled soldiery. Without organization, without taking any auspices, the populace rushes into the field guided only by its own anger, snatches up whatever comes first to hand by way of arms, and then atones by a great defeat for the reckless audacity of its anger. This is usually the fate of savage nations when they plunge into war: as soon as their easily excited minds are roused by the appearance of wrong having been done them, they straightway hasten forth, and, guided only by their wounded feelings, fall like an avalanche upon our legions, without either discipline, fear, or precaution, and wilfully seeking for danger. They delight in being struck, in pressing forward to meet the blow, writhing their bodies along the weapon, and perishing by a wound which they themselves make.

III. “No doubt,” you say, “anger is very powerful and ruinous: point out, therefore, how it may be cured.” Yet, as I stated in my former books, Aristotle stands forth in defence of anger, and forbids it to be uprooted, saying that it is the spur of virtue, and that when it is taken away, our minds become weaponless, and slow to attempt great exploits. It is therefore essential to prove its unseemliness and ferocity, and to place distinctly before our eyes how monstrous

a thing it is that one man should rage against another, with what frantic violence he rushes to destroy alike himself and his foe, and overthrows those very things whose fall he himself must share. What, then? can any one call this man sane, who, as though caught up by a hurricane, does not go but is driven, and is the slave of a senseless disorder? He does not commit to another the duty of revenging him, but himself exacts it, raging alike in thought and deed, butchering those who are dearest to him, and for whose loss he himself will ere long weep. Will any one give this passion as an assistant and companion to virtue, although it disturbs calm reason, without which virtue can do nothing? The strength which a sick man owes to a paroxysm of disease is neither lasting nor wholesome, and is strong only to its own destruction. You need not, therefore, imagine that I am wasting time over a useless task in defaming anger, as though men had not made up their minds about it, when there is some one, and he, too, an illustrious philosopher, who assigns it services to perform, and speaks of it as useful and supplying energy for battles, for the management of business, and indeed for everything which requires to be conducted with spirit. Lest it should delude any one into thinking that on certain occasions and in certain positions it may be useful, we must show its unbridled and frenzied madness, we must restore to it its attributes, the rack, the cord, the dungeon, and the cross, the fires lighted round men’s buried bodies, the hook[1] that drags both living men and corpses, the different kinds of fetters, and of punishments, the mutilations of limbs, the branding of the forehead, the dens of savage beasts. Anger should be represented as standing among these her instruments, growling in an ominous and terrible fashion, herself more shocking than any of the means by which she gives vent to her fury.

IV. There may be some doubt about the others, but at any rate no passion has a worse look. We have described the angry man’s appearance in our former books, how sharp and keen he looks, at one time pale as his blood is driven inwards and backwards, at another with all the heat and fire of his body directed to his face, making it reddish-coloured as if stained with blood, his eyes now restless and starting out of his head, now set motionless in one fixed gaze. Add to this his teeth, which gnash against one another, as though he wished to eat somebody, with exactly the sound of a wild boar sharpening his tusks: add also the cracking of his joints, the involuntary wringing of his hands, the frequent slaps he deals himself on the chest, his hurried breathing and deep-drawn sighs, his reeling body, his abrupt broken speech, and his trembling lips, which sometimes he draws tight as he hisses some curse through them. By Hercules, no wild beast, neither when tortured by hunger, or with a weapon struck through its vitals, not even when it gathers its last breath to bite its slayer, looks so shocking as a man raging with anger. Listen, if you have leisure, to his words and threats: how dreadful is the language of his agonized mind! Would not every man wish to lay aside anger when he sees that it begins by injuring himself? When men employ anger as the most powerful of agents, consider it to be a proof of power, and reckon a speedy revenge among the greatest blessings of great prosperity, would you not wish

me to warn them that he who is the slave of his own anger is not powerful, nor even free? Would you not wish me to warn all the more industrious and circumspect of men, that while other evil passions assail the base, anger gradually obtains dominion over the minds even of learned and in other respects sensible men? So true is that, that some declare anger to be a proof of straight-forwardness, and it is commonly believed that the best-natured people are prone to it.

V. You ask me, whither does all this tend? To prove, I answer, that no one should imagine himself to be safe from anger, seeing that it rouses up even those who are naturally gentle and quiet to commit savage and violent acts. As strength of body and assiduous care of the health avail nothing against a pestilence, which attacks the strong and weak alike, so also steady and good-humoured people are just as liable to attacks of anger as those of unsettled character, and in the case of the former it is both more to be ashamed of and more to be feared, because it makes a greater alteration in their habits. Now as the first thing is not to be angry, the second to lay aside our anger, and the third to be able to heal the anger of others as well as our own, I will set forth first how we may avoid falling into anger; next, how we may set ourselves free from it, and, lastly, how we may restrain an angry man, appease his wrath, and bring him back to his right mind. We shall succeed in avoiding anger, if from time to time we lay before our minds all the vices connected with anger, and estimate it at its real value: it must be prosecuted before us and convicted: its evils must be thoroughly investigated and exposed. That we may see what it is, let it be compared with the worst vices. Avarice scrapes together and amasses riches for some better man to use: anger spends money; few can indulge in it for nothing. How many slaves an angry master drives to run away or to commit suicide! how much more he loses by his anger than the value of what he originally became angry about! Anger brings grief to a father, divorce to a husband, hatred to a magistrate, failure to a candidate for office. It is worse than luxury, because luxury enjoys its own pleasure, while anger enjoys another’s pain. It is worse than either spitefulness or envy; for they wish that some one may become unhappy, while anger wishes to make him so: they are pleased when evil befalls one by accident, but anger cannot wait upon Fortune; it desires to injure its victim personally, and is not satisfied merely with his being injured. Nothing is more dangerous than jealousy: it is produced by anger. Nothing is more ruinous than war: it is the outcome of powerful men’s anger; and even the anger of humble private persons, though without arms or armies, is nevertheless war. Moreover, even if we pass over its immediate consequences, such as heavy losses, treacherous plots, and the constant anxiety produced by strife, anger pays a penalty at the same moment that it exacts one: it forswears human feelings. The latter urge us to love, anger urges us to hatred: the latter bid us do men good, anger bids us do them harm. Add to this that, although its rage arises from an excessive self-respect and appears to show high spirit, it really is contemptible and mean: for a man must be inferior to one by whom he thinks himself despised, whereas the truly great mind, which takes a

true estimate of its own value, does not revenge an insult because it does not feel it. As weapons rebound from a hard surface, and solid substances hurt those who strike them, so also no insult can make a really great mind sensible of its presence, being weaker than that against which it is aimed. How far more glorious is it to throw back all wrongs and insults from oneself, like one wearing armour of proof against all weapons, for revenge is an admission that we have been hurt. That cannot be a great mind which is disturbed by injury. He who has hurt you must be either stronger or weaker than yourself. If he be weaker, spare him: if he be stronger, spare yourself.

VI. There is no greater proof of magnanimity than that nothing which befalls you should be able to move you to anger. The higher region of the universe, being more excellently ordered and near to the stars, is never gathered into clouds, driven about by storms, or whirled round by cyclones: it is free from all disturbance: the lightnings flash in the region below it. In like manner a lofty mind, always placid and dwelling in a serene atmosphere, restraining within itself all the impulses from which anger springs, is modest, commands respect, and remains calm and collected: none of which qualities will you find in an angry man: for who, when under the influence of grief and rage, does not first get rid of bashfulness? who, when excited and confused and about to attack some one, does not fling away any habits of shamefacedness he may have possessed? what angry man attends to the number or routine of his duties? who uses moderate language? who keeps any part of his body quiet? who can guide himself when in full career? We shall find much profit in that sound maxim of Democritus which defines peace of mind to consist in not labouring much, or too much for our strength, either in public or private matters. A man’s day, if he is engaged in many various occupations, never passes so happily that no man or no thing should give rise to some offence which makes the mind ripe for anger. Just as when one hurries through the crowded parts of the city one cannot help jostling many people, and one cannot help slipping at one place, being hindered at another, and splashed at another, so when one’s life is spent in disconnected pursuits and wanderings, one must meet with many troubles and many accusations. One man deceives our hopes, another delays their fulfilment, another destroys them: our projects do not proceed according to our intention. No one is so favoured by Fortune as to find her always on his side if he tempts her often: and from this it follows that he who sees several enterprises turn out contrary to his wishes becomes dissatisfied with both men and things, and on the slightest provocation flies into a rage with people, with undertakings, with places, with fortune, or with himself. In order, therefore, that the mind may be at peace, it ought not to be hurried hither and thither, nor, as I said before, wearied by labour at great matters, or matters whose attainment is beyond its strength. It is easy to fit one’s shoulder to a light burden, and to shift it from one side to the other without dropping it: but we have difficulty in bearing the burdens which others’ hands lay upon us, and when overweighted by them we fling them off upon our neighbours. Even when we do stand upright under our load, we nevertheless reel beneath a weight which is beyond our strength.

VII. Be assured that the same rule applies both to public and private life: simple and manageable undertakings proceed according to the pleasure of the person in charge of them, but enormous ones, beyond his capacity to manage, are not easily undertaken. When he has got them to administer, they hinder him, and press hard upon him, and just as he thinks that success is within his grasp, they collapse, and carry him with them: thus it comes about that a man's wishes are often disappointed if he does not apply himself to easy tasks, yet wishes that the tasks which he undertakes may be easy. Whenever you would attempt anything, first form an estimate both of your own powers, of the extent of the matter which you are undertaking, and of the means by which you are to accomplish it: for if you have to abandon your work when it is half done, the disappointment will sour your temper. In such cases, it makes a difference whether one is of an ardent or of a cold and unenterprising temperament: for failure will rouse a generous spirit to anger, and will move a sluggish and dull one to sorrow. Let our undertakings, therefore, be neither petty nor yet presumptuous and reckless: let our hopes not range far from home: let us attempt nothing which if we succeed will make us astonished at our success.

VIII. Since we know not how to endure an injury, let us take care not to receive one: we should live with the quietest and easiest-tempered persons, not with anxious or with sullen ones: for our own habits are copied from those with whom we associate, and just as some bodily diseases are communicated by touch, so also the mind transfers its vices to its neighbours. A drunkard leads even those who reproach him to grow fond of wine: profligate society will, if permitted, impair the morals even of robust-minded men: avarice infects those nearest it with its poison. Virtues do the same thing in the opposite direction, and improve all those with whom they are brought in contact: it is as good for one of unsettled principles to associate with better men than himself as for an invalid to live in a warm country with a healthy climate. You will understand how much may be effected this way, if you observe how even wild beasts grow tame by dwelling among us, and how no animal, however ferocious, continues to be wild, if it has long been accustomed to human companionship: all its savageness becomes softened, and amid peaceful scenes is gradually forgotten. We must add to this, that the man who lives with quiet people is not only improved by their example, but also by the fact that he finds no reason for anger and does not practise his vice: it will, therefore, be his duty to avoid all those who he knows will excite his anger. You ask, who these are: many will bring about the same thing by various means; a proud man will offend you by his disdain, a talkative man by his abuse, an impudent man by his insults, a spiteful man by his malice, a quarrelsome man by his wrangling, a braggart and liar by his vain-gloriousness: you will not endure to be feared by a suspicious man, conquered by an obstinate one, or scorned by an ultra-refined one: Choose straightforward, good-natured, steady people, who will not provoke your wrath, and will bear with it. Those whose dispositions are yielding, polite and suave, will be of even greater service, provided they do not flatter, for excessive obsequiousness irritates

bad-tempered men. One of my own friends was a good man indeed, but too prone to anger, and it was as dangerous to flatter him as to curse him. Caelius the orator, it is well known, was the worst-tempered man possible. It is said that once he was dining in his own chamber with an especially long-suffering client, but had great difficulty when thrown thus into a man's society to avoid quarrelling with him. The other thought it best to agree to whatever he said, and to play second fiddle, but Caelius could not bear his obsequious agreement, and exclaimed, "Do contradict me in something, that there may be two of us!" Yet even he, who was angry at not being angry, soon recovered his temper, because he had no one to fight with. If, then, we are conscious of an irascible disposition, let us especially choose for our friends those who will look and speak as we do: they will pamper us and lead us into a bad habit of listening to nothing that does not please us, but it will be good to give our anger respite and repose. Even those who are naturally crabbed and wild will yield to caresses: no creature continues either angry or frightened if you pat him. Whenever a controversy seems likely to be longer or more keenly disputed than usual, let us check its first beginnings, before it gathers strength. A dispute nourishes itself as it proceeds, and takes hold of those who plunge too deeply into it: it is easier to stand aloof than to extricate oneself from a struggle.

IX. Irascible men ought not to meddle with the more serious class of occupations, or, at any rate, ought to stop short of weariness in the pursuit of them; their mind ought not to be engaged upon hard subjects, but handed over to pleasing arts: let it be softened by reading poetry, and interested by legendary history: let it be treated with luxury and refinement. Pythagoras used to calm his troubled spirit by playing upon the lyre: and who does not know that trumpets and clarions are irritants, just as some airs are lullabies and soothe the mind? Green is good for wearied eyes, and some colours are grateful to weak sight, while the brightness of others is painful to it. In the same way cheerful pursuits soothe unhealthy minds. We must avoid law courts, pleadings, verdicts, and everything else that aggravates our fault, and we ought no less to avoid bodily weariness; for it exhausts all that is quiet and gentle in us, and rouses bitterness. For this reason those who cannot trust their digestion, when they are about to transact business of importance always allay their bile with food, for it is peculiarly irritated by fatigue, either because it draws the vital heat into the middle of the body, and injures the blood and stops its circulation by the clogging of the veins, or else because the worn-out and weakened body reacts upon the mind: this is certainly the reason why those who are broken by ill-health or age are more irascible than other men. Hunger also and thirst should be avoided for the same reason; they exasperate and irritate men's minds: it is an old saying that "a weary man is quarrelsome ": and so also is a hungry or a thirsty man, or one who is suffering from any cause whatever: for just as sores pain one at the slightest touch, and afterwards even at the fear of being touched, so an unsound mind takes offence at the slightest things, so that even a greeting, a letter, a speech, or a question, provokes some men to anger.

X. That which is diseased can never bear to be handled without complaining: it is best, therefore, to apply remedies to oneself as soon as we feel that anything is wrong, to allow oneself as little licence as possible in speech, and to restrain one’s impetuosity: now it is easy to detect the first growth of our passions: the symptoms precede the disorder. Just as the signs of storms and rain come before the storms themselves, so there are certain forerunners of anger, love, and all the storms which torment our minds. Those who suffer from epilepsy know that the fit is coming on if their extremities become cold, their sight fails, their sinews tremble, their memory deserts them, and their head swims: they accordingly check the growing disorder by applying the usual remedies: they try to prevent the loss of their senses by smelling or tasting some drug; they battle against cold and stiffness of limbs by hot fomentations; or, if all remedies fail, they retire apart, and faint where no one sees them fall. It is useful for a man to understand his disease, and to break its strength before it becomes developed. Let us see what it is that especially irritates us. Some men take offence at insulting words, others at deeds: one wishes his pedigree, another his person, to be treated with respect. This man wishes to be considered especially fashionable, that man to be thought especially learned: one cannot bear pride, another cannot bear obstinacy. One thinks it beneath him to be angry with his slaves, another is cruel at home, but gentle abroad. One imagines that he is proposed for office because he is unpopular, another thinks himself insulted because he is not proposed. People do not all take offence in the same way; you ought then to know what your own weak point is, that you may guard it with especial care.

XI. It is better not to see or to hear everything: many causes of offence may pass by us, most of which are disregarded by the man who ignores them. Would you not be irascible? then be not inquisitive. He who seeks to know what is said about him, who digs up spiteful tales even if they were told in secret, is himself the destroyer of his own peace of mind. Some stories may be so construed as to appear to be insults: wherefore it is best to put some aside, to laugh at others, and to pardon others. There are many ways in which anger may be checked; most things may be turned into jest. It is said that Socrates when he was given a box on the ear, merely said that it was a pity a man could not tell when he ought to wear his helmet out walking. It does not so much matter how an injury is done, as how it is borne; and I do not see how moderation can be hard to practise, when I know that even despots, though success and impunity combine to swell their pride, have sometimes restrained their natural ferocity. At any rate, tradition informs us that once, when a guest in his cups bitterly reproached Pisistratus, the despot of Athens, for his cruelty, many of those present offered to lay hands on the traitor, and one said one thing and one another to kindle his wrath, he bore it coolly, and replied to those who were egging him on, that he was no more angry with the man than he should be with one who ran against him blindfold.

XII. A large part of mankind manufacture their own grievances either

by entertaining unfounded suspicions or by exaggerating trifles. Anger often comes to us, but we often go to it. It ought never to be sent for: even when it falls in our way it ought to be flung aside. No one says to himself, “I myself have done or might have done this very thing which I am angry with another for doing.” No one considers the intention of the doer, but merely the thing done: yet we ought to think about him, and whether he did it intentionally or accidentally, under compulsion or under a mistake, whether he did it out of hatred for us, or to gain something for himself, whether he did it to please himself or to serve a friend. In some cases the age, in others the worldly fortunes of the culprit may render it humane or advantageous to bear with him and put up with what he has done. Let us put ourselves in the place of him with whom we are angry: at present an overweening conceit of our own importance makes us prone to anger, and we are quite willing to do to others what we cannot endure should be done to ourselves. No one will postpone his anger: yet delay is the best remedy for it, because it allows its first glow to subside, and gives time for the cloud which darkens the mind either to disperse or at any rate to become less dense. Of these wrongs which drive you frantic, some will grow lighter after an interval, not of a day, but even of an hour: some will vanish altogether. Even if you gain nothing by your adjournment, still what you do after it will appear to be the result of mature deliberation, not of anger. If you want to find out the truth about anything, commit the task to time: nothing can be accurately discerned at a time of disturbance. Plato, when angry with his slave, could not prevail upon himself to wait, but straightway ordered him to take off his shirt and present his shoulders to the blows which he meant to give him with his own hand: then, when he perceived that he was angry, he stopped the hand which he had raised in the air, and stood like one in act to strike. Being asked by a friend who happened to come in, what he was doing, he answered: “I am making an angry man expiate his crime.” He retained the posture of one about to give way to passion, as if struck with astonishment at its being so degrading to a philosopher, forgetting the slave, because he had found another still more deserving of punishment. He therefore denied himself the exercise of authority over his own household, and once, being rather angry at some fault, said, “Speusippus, will you please to correct that slave with stripes; for I am in a rage.” He would not strike him, for the very reason for which another man would have struck him. “I am in a rage,” said he; “I should beat him more than I ought: I should take more pleasure than I ought in doing so: let not that slave fall into the power of one who is not in his own power.” Can any one wish to grant the power of revenge to an angry man, when Plato himself gave up his own right to exercise it? While you are angry, you ought not to be allowed to do anything. “Why?” do you ask? Because when you are angry there is nothing that you do not wish to be allowed to do.

XIII. Fight hard with yourself and if you cannot conquer anger, do not let it conquer you: you have begun to get the better of it if it does not show itself, if it is not given vent. Let us conceal its symptoms, and as far as possible keep it secret and hidden. It will give us great trouble to do this, for it is eager to burst forth, to

kindle our eyes and to transform our face; but if we allow it to show itself in our outward appearance, it is our master. Let it rather be locked in the innermost recesses of our breast, and be borne by us, not bear us: nay, let us replace all its symptoms by their opposites; let us make our countenance more composed than usual, our voice milder, our step slower. Our inward thoughts gradually become influenced by our outward demeanour. With Socrates it was a sign of anger when he lowered his voice, and became sparing of speech; it was evident at such times that he was exercising restraint over himself. His friends, consequently, used to detect him acting thus, and convict him of being angry; nor was he displeased at being charged with concealment of anger; indeed, how could he help being glad that many men should perceive his anger, yet that none should feel it? they would however, have felt it had not he granted to his friends the same right of criticizing his own conduct which he himself assumed over theirs. How much more needful is it for us to do this? let us beg all our best friends to give us their opinion with the greatest freedom at the very time when we can bear it least, and never to be compliant with us when we are angry. While we are in our right senses, while we are under our own control, let us call for help against so powerful an evil, and one which we regard with such unjust favour. Those who cannot carry their wine discreetly, and fear to be betrayed into some rash and insolent act, give their slaves orders to take them away from the banquet when they are drunk; those who know by experience how unreasonable they are when sick give orders that no one is to obey them when they are in ill health. It is best to prepare obstacles beforehand for vices which are known, and above all things so to tranquilize our mind that it may bear the most sudden and violent shocks either without feeling anger, or, if anger be provoked by the extent of some unexpected wrong, that it may bury it deep, and not betray its wound. That it is possible to do this will be seen, if I quote a few of an abundance of examples, from which we may learn both how much evil there is in anger, when it exercises entire dominion over men in supreme power, and how completely it can control itself when overawed by fear.

XIV. King Cambyses[2] was excessively addicted to wine. Praexaspes was the only one of his closest friends who advised him to drink more sparingly, pointing out how shameful a thing drunkenness was in a king, upon whom all eyes and ears were fixed. Cambyses answered, “That you may know that I never lose command of myself, I will presently prove to you that both my eyes and my hands are fit for service after I have been drinking.” Hereupon he drank more freely than usual, using larger cups, and when heavy and besotted with wine ordered his reprover’s son to go beyond the threshold and stand there with his left hand raised above his head; then he bent his bow and pierced the youth’s heart, at which he had said that he aimed. He then had his breast cut open, showed the arrow sticking exactly into the heart, and, looking at the boy’s father, asked whether his hand was not steady enough. He replied, that Apollo himself could not have taken better aim. God confound such a man, a slave in mind, if not in station! He actually praised an act which he ought not to have endured to witness. He thought that the breast of his son being

torn assunder, and his heart quivering with its wound, gave him an opportunity of making a complimentary speech. He ought to have raised a dispute with him about his success, and have called for another shot, that the king might be pleased to prove upon the person of the father that his hand was even steadier than when he shot the son. What a savage king! what a worthy mark for all his follower's arrows! Yet though we curse him for making his banquet end in cruelty and death, still it was worse to praise that arrow-shot than to shoot it. We shall see hereafter how a father ought to bear himself when standing over the corpse of his son, whose murder he had both caused and witnessed: the matter which we are now discussing, has been proved, I mean, that anger can be suppressed. He did not curse the king, he did not so much as let fall a single inauspicious word, though he felt his own heart as deeply wounded as that of his son. He may be said to have done well in choking down his words; for though he might have spoken as an angry man, yet he could not have expressed what he felt as a father. He may, I repeat, be thought to have behaved with greater wisdom on that occasion than when he tried to regulate the drink of one who was better employed in drinking wine than in drinking blood, and who granted men peace while his hands were busy with the winecup. He, therefore, added one more to the number of those who have shown to their bitter cost how little kings care for their friends' good advice.

XV. I have no doubt that Harpagus must have given some such advice to the king of the Persians and of himself, in anger at which the king placed Harpagus's own children before him on the dinner-table for him to eat, and asked him from time to time, whether he liked the seasoning. Then, when he saw that he was satiated with his own misery, he ordered their heads to be brought to him, and asked him how he liked his entertainment. The wretched man did not lose his readiness of speech; his face did not change. "Every kind of dinner," said he, "is pleasant at the king's table." What did he gain by this obsequiousness? He avoided being invited a second time to dinner, to eat what was left of them. I do not forbid a father to blame the act of his king, or to seek for some revenge worthy of so bloodthirsty a monster, but in the meanwhile I gather from the tale this fact, that even the anger which arises from unheard of outrages can be concealed, and forced into using language which is the very reverse of its meaning. This way of curbing anger is necessary, at least for those who have chosen this sort of life and who are admitted to dine at a king's table; this is how they must eat and drink, this is how they must answer, and how they must laugh at their own deaths. Whether life is worth having at such a price, we shall see hereafter; that is another question. Let us not console so sorry a crew, or encourage them to submit to the orders of their butchers; let us point out that however slavish a man's condition may be, there is always a path to liberty open to him, unless his mind be diseased. It is a man's own fault if he suffers, when by putting an end to himself he can put an end to his misery. To him whose king aimed arrows at the breasts of his friends, and to him whose master gorged fathers with the hearts of their children, I would say "Madman, why do you groan? for what are you waiting? for some enemy to avenge you by the destruction of your entire nation,

or for some powerful king to arrive from a distant land? Wherever you turn your eyes you may see an end to your woes. Do you see that precipice? down that lies the road to liberty; do you see that sea? that river? that well? Liberty sits at the bottom of them. Do you see that tree? stunted, blighted, dried up though it be, yet liberty hangs from its branches. Do you see your own throat, your own neck, your own heart? they are so many ways of escape from slavery. Are these modes which I point out too laborious, and needing much strength and courage? do you ask what path leads to liberty? I answer, any vein[3] in your body.

XVI. As long, however, as we find nothing in our life so unbearable as to drive us to suicide, let us, in whatever position we may be, set anger far from us: it is destructive to those who are its slaves. All its rage turns to its own misery, and authority becomes all the more irksome the more obstinately it is resisted. It is like a wild animal whose struggles only pull the noose by which it is caught tighter; or like birds who, while flurriedly trying to shake themselves free, smear birdlime on to all their feathers. No yoke is so grievous as not to hurt him who struggles against it more than him who yields to it: the only way to alleviate great evils is to endure them and to submit to do what they compel. This control of our passions, and especially of this mad and unbridled passion of anger, is useful to subjects, but still more useful to kings. All is lost when a man’s position enables him to carry out whatever anger prompts him to do; nor can power long endure if it be exercised to the injury of many, for it becomes endangered as soon as common fear draws together those who bewail themselves separately. Many kings, therefore, have fallen victims, some to single individuals, others to entire peoples, who have been forced by general indignation to make one man the minister of their wrath. Yet many kings have indulged their anger as though it were a privilege of royalty, like Darius, who, after the dethronement of the Magian, was the first ruler of the Persians and of the greater part of the East: for when he declared war[4] against the Scythians who bordered on the empire of the East, Oeobazus, an aged noble, begged that one of his three sons might be left at home to comfort his father, and that the king might be satisfied with the services of two of them. Darius promised him more than he asked for, saying that he would allow all three to remain at home, and flung their dead bodies before their father’s eyes. He would have been harsh, had he taken them all to the war with him. How much more good-natured was Xerxes,[5] who, when Pythias, the father of five sons, begged for one to be excused from service, permitted him to choose which he wished for. He then tore the son whom the father had chosen into two halves, placed one on each side of the road, and, as it were, purified his army by means of this propitiatory victim. He therefore had the end which he deserved, being defeated, and his army scattered far and wide in utter rout, while he in the midst of it walked among the corpses of his soldiers, seeing on all sides the signs of his own overthrow.

XVII. So ferocious in their anger were those kings who had no learning, no tincture of polite literature: now I will show you King Alexander (the Great), fresh from the lap of Aristotle, who with his

own hand while at table stabbed Clitus, his dearest friend, who had been brought up with him, because he did not flatter him enough, and was too slow in transforming himself from a free man and a Macedonian into a Persian slave. Indeed he shut up Lysimachus,[6] who was no less his friend than Clitus, in a cage with a lion; yet did this make Lysimachus, who escaped by some happy chance from the lion's teeth, any gentler when he became a king? Why, he mutilated his own friend, Telesphorus the Rhodian, cutting off his nose and ears, and kept him for a long while in a den, like some new and strange animal, after the hideousness of his hacked and disfigured face had made him no longer appear to be human, assisted by starvation and the squalid filth of a body left to wallow in its own dung! Besides this, his hands and knees, which the narrowness of his abode forced him to use instead of his feet, became hard and callous, while his sides were covered with sores by rubbing against the walls, so that his appearance was no less shocking than frightful, and his punishment turned him into so monstrous a creature that he was not even pitied. Yet, however unlike a man he was who suffered this, even more unlike was he who inflicted it.

XVIII. Would to heaven that such savagery had contented itself with foreign examples, and that barbarity in anger and punishment had not been imported with other outlandish vices into our Roman manners! Marcus Marius, to whom the people erected a statue in every street, to whom they made offerings of incense and wine, had, by the command of Lucius Sulla, his legs broken, his eyes pulled out, his hands cut off, and his whole body gradually torn to pieces limb by limb, as if Sulla killed him as many times as he wounded him. Who was it who carried out Sulla's orders? who but Catiline, already practising his hands in every sort of wickedness? He tore him to pieces before the tomb of Quintus Catulus, an unwelcome burden to the ashes of that gentlest of men, above which one who was no doubt a criminal, yet nevertheless the idol of the people, and who was not undeserving of love, although men loved him beyond all reason, was forced to shed his blood drop by drop. Though Marius deserved such tortures, yet it was worthy of Sulla to order them, and of Catiline to execute them; but it was unworthy of the State to be stabbed by the swords of her enemy and her avenger alike. Why do I pry into ancient history? quite lately Gaius Caesar flogged and tortured Sextus Papinius, whose father was a consular, Betilienus Bassus, his own quaestor, and several others, both senators and knights, on the same day, not to carry out any judicial inquiry, but merely to amuse himself. Indeed, so impatient was he of any delay in receiving the pleasure which his monstrous cruelty never delayed in asking, that when walking with some ladies and senators in his mother's gardens, along the walk between the colonnade and the river, he struck off some of their heads by lamplight. What did he fear? what public or private danger could one night threaten him with? how very small a favour it would have been to wait until morning, and not to kill the Roman people's senators in his slippers?

XIX. It is to the purpose that we should know how haughtily his cruelty was exercised, although some one might suppose that we are wandering from the subject and embarking on a digression; but this

digression is itself connected with unusual outbursts of anger. He beat senators with rods; he did it so often that he made men able to say, “It is the custom.” He tortured them with all the most dismal engines in the world, with the cord, the boots, the rack, the fire, and the sight of his own face. Even to this we may answer, “To tear three senators to pieces with stripes and fire like criminal slaves was no such great crime for one who had thoughts of butchering the entire Senate, who was wont to wish that the Roman people had but one neck, that he might concentrate into one day and one blow all the wickedness which he divided among so many places and times. Was there ever anything so unheard-of as an execution in the night-time? Highway robbery seeks for the shelter of darkness, but the more public an execution is, the more power it has as an example and lesson. Here I shall be met by: “This, which you are so surprised at, was the daily habit of that monster; this was what he lived for, watched for, sat up at night for.” Certainly one could find no one else who would have ordered all those whom he condemned to death to have their mouths closed by a sponge being fastened in them, that they might not have the power even of uttering a sound. What dying man was ever forbidden to groan? He feared that the last agony might find too free a voice, that he might hear what would displease him. He knew, moreover, that there were countless crimes, with which none but a dying man would dare to reproach him. When sponges were not forthcoming, he ordered the wretched men’s clothes to be torn up, and the rags stuffed into their mouths. What savagery was this? Let a man draw his last breath: give room for his soul to escape through: let it not be forced to leave the body through a wound. It becomes tedious to add to this that in the same night he sent centurions to the houses of the executed men and made an end of their fathers also, that is to say, being a compassionate-minded man, he set them free from sorrow: for it is not my intention to describe the ferocity of Gaius, but the ferocity of anger, which does not merely vent its rage upon individuals, but rends in pieces whole nations, and even lashes cities, rivers, and things which have no sense of pain.

XX. Thus, the king of the Persians cut off the noses of a whole nation in Syria, wherefore the place is called Rhinocolura. Do you think that he was merciful, because he did not cut their heads off altogether? no, he was delighted at having invented a new kind of punishment. Something of the same kind would have befallen the Aethiopians,[7] who on account of their prodigiously long lives are called Macrobiotae; for, because they did not receive slavery with hands uplifted to heaven in thankfulness, and sent an embassy which used independent, or what kings call insulting language, Cambyses became wild with rage, and, without any store of provisions, or any knowledge of the roads, started with all his fighting men through an arid and trackless waste, where during the first day’s march the necessaries of life failed, and the country itself furnished nothing, being barren and uncultivated, and untrodden by the foot of man. At first the tenderest parts of leaves and shoots of trees relieved their hunger, then hides softened by fire, and anything else that their extremity drove them to use as food. When as they proceeded neither roots nor herbs were to be found in the sand, and

they found a wilderness destitute even of animal life, they chose each tenth man by lot and made of him a meal which was more cruel than hunger. Rage still drove the king madly forwards, until after he had lost one part of his army and eaten another he began to fear that he also might be called upon to draw the lot for his life; then at last he gave the order for retreat. Yet all the while his well-bred hawks were not sacrificed, and the means of feasting were carried for him on camels, while his soldiers were drawing lots for who should miserably perish, and who should yet more miserably live.

XXI. This man was angry with an unknown and inoffensive nation, which nevertheless was able to feel his wrath; but Cyrus[8] was angry with a river. When hurrying to besiege Babylon, since in making war it is above all things important to seize one's opportunity, he tried to ford the wide-spread river Gyndes, which it is hardly safe to attempt even when the river has been dried up by the summer heat and is at its lowest. Here one of the white horses which drew the royal chariot was washed away, and his loss moved the king to such violent rage, that he swore to reduce the river which had carried off his royal retinue to so low an ebb that even women should walk across it and trample upon it. He thereupon devoted all the resources of his army to this object, and remained working until by cutting one hundred and eighty channels across the bed of the river he divided it into three hundred and sixty brooks, and left the bed dry, the waters flowing through other channels. Thus he lost time, which is very important in great operations, and lost, also, the soldiers' courage, which was broken by useless labour, and the opportunity of falling upon his enemy unprepared, while he was waging against the river the war which he had declared against his foes. This frenzy, for what else can you call it, has befallen Romans also, for G. Caesar destroyed a most beautiful villa at Herculaneum because his mother was once imprisoned in it, and has thus made the place notorious by its misfortune; for while it stood, we used to sail past it without noticing it, but now people inquire why it is in ruins.

XXII. These should be regarded as examples to be avoided, and what I am about to relate, on the contrary, to be followed, being examples of gentle and lenient conduct in men who both had reasons for anger and power to avenge themselves. What could have been easier than for Antigonus to order those two common soldiers to be executed who leaned against their king's tent while doing what all men especially love to do, and run the greatest danger by doing, I mean while they spoke evil of their king. Antigonus heard all they said, as was likely, since there was only a piece of cloth between the speakers and the listener, who gently raised it, and said "Go a little further off, for fear the king should hear you." He also on one night, hearing some of his soldiers invoking everything that was evil upon their king for having brought them along that road and into that impassable mud, went to those who were in the greatest difficulties, and having extricated them without their knowing who was their helper, said, "Now curse Antigonus, by whose fault you have fallen into this trouble, but bless the man who has brought you out of this slough." This same Antigonus bore the abuse of his

enemies as good-naturedly as that of his countrymen; thus when he was besieging some Greeks in a little fort, and they, despising their enemy through their confidence in the strength of their position, cut many jokes upon the ugliness of Antigonus, at one time mocking him for his shortness of stature, at another for his broken nose, he answered, “I rejoice, and expect some good fortune because I have a Silenus in my camp.” After he had conquered these witty folk by hunger, his treatment of them was to form regiments of those who were fit for service, and sell the rest by public auction; nor would he, said he, have done this had it not been better that men who had such evil tongues should be under the control of a master.

XXIII. This man’s grandson[9] was Alexander, who used to hurl his lance at his guests, who, of the two friends which I have mentioned above, exposed one to the rage of a wild beast, and the other to his own; yet of these two men, he who was exposed to the lion survived. He did not derive this vice from his grandfather, nor even from his father; for it was an especial virtue of Philip’s to endure insults patiently, and was a great safeguard of his kingdom. Democharas, who was surnamed Parrhesiastes on account of his unbridled and impudent tongue, came on an embassy to him with other ambassadors from Athens. After graciously listening to what they had to say, Philip said to them, “Tell me, what can I do that will please the Athenians? “Democharas took him up, and answered, “Hang yourself.” All the bystanders expressed their indignation at so brutal an answer, but Philip bade them be silent, and let this Thersites depart safe and sound. “But do you,” said he, “you other ambassadors, tell the Athenians that those who say such things are much more arrogant than those who hear them without revenging themselves.”

The late Emperor Augustus also did and said many memorable things, which prove that he was not under the dominion of anger. Timagenes, the historical writer, made some remarks upon him, his wife, and his whole family: nor did his jests fall to the ground, for nothing spreads more widely or is more in people’s mouths than reckless wit. Caesar often warned him to be less audacious in his talk, and as he continued to offend, forbade him his house. Timagenes after this passed the later years of his life as the guest of Asinius Pollio, and was the favourite of the whole city: the closing of Caesar’s door did not close any other door against him. He read aloud the history which he wrote after this, but burned the books which contained the doings of Augustus Caesar. He was at enmity with Caesar, but yet no one feared to be his friend, no one shrank from him as though he were blasted by lightning: although he fell from so high a place, yet some one was found to catch him in his lap. Caesar, I say, bore this with patience, and was not even irritated by the historian’s having laid violent hands upon his own glories and acts: he never complained of the man who afforded his enemy shelter, but merely said to Asinius Pollio “You are keeping a wild beast:” then, when the other would have excused his conduct, he stopped him, and said “Enjoy, my Pollio, enjoy his friendship.” When Pollio said, “If you order me, Caesar, I will straightway forbid him my house,” he answered, “Do you think that I am likely to do this,

after having made you friends again?” for formerly Pollio had been angry with Timagenes, and ceased to be angry with him for no other reason than that Caesar began to be so.

XXIV. Let every one, then, say to himself, whenever he is provoked, “Am I more powerful than Philip? yet he allowed a man to curse him with impunity. Have I more authority in my own house than the Emperor Augustus possessed throughout the world? yet he was satisfied with leaving the society of his maligner. Why should I make my slave atone by stripes and manacles for having answered me too loudly or having put on a stubborn look, or muttered something which I did not catch? Who am I, that it should be a crime to shock my ears? Many men have forgiven their enemies: shall I not forgive men for being lazy, careless, and gossipping?” We ought to plead age as an excuse for children, sex for women, freedom for a stranger, familiarity for a house-servant. Is this his first offence? think how long he has been acceptable. Has he often done wrong, and in many other cases? then let us continue to bear what we have borne so long. Is he a friend? then he did not intend to do it. Is he an enemy? then in doing it he did his duty. If he be a sensible man, let us believe his excuses; if a fool, let us grant him pardon; whatever he may be, let us say to ourselves on his behalf, that even the wisest of men are often in fault, that no one is so alert that his carefulness never betrays itself, that no one is of so ripe a judgment that his serious mind cannot be goaded by circumstances into some hotheaded action, that, in fine, no one, however much he may fear to give offence, can help doing so even while he tries to avoid it.

XXV. As it is a consolation to a humble man in trouble that the greatest are subject to reverses of fortune, and a man weeps more calmly over his dead son in the corner of his hovel if he sees a piteous[10] funeral proceed out of the palace as well; so one bears injury or insult more calmly if one remembers that no power is so great as to be above the reach of harm. Indeed, if even the wisest do wrong, who cannot plead a good excuse for his faults? Let us look back upon our own youth, and think how often we then were too slothful in our duty, too impudent in our speech, too intemperate in our cups. Is anyone angry? then let us give him enough time to reflect upon what he has done, and he will correct his own self. But suppose he ought to pay the penalty of his deeds: well, that is no reason why we should act as he does. It canot be doubted that he who regards his tormentor with contempt raises himself above the common herd and looks down upon them from a loftier position: it is the property of true magnanimity not to feel the blows which it may receive. So does a huge wild beast turn slowly and gaze at yelping curs: so does the wave dash in vain against a great cliff. The man who is not angry remains unshaken by injury: he who is angry has been moved by it. He, however, whom I have described as being placed too high for any mischief to reach him, holds as it were the highest good in his arms: he can reply, not only to any man, but to fortune herself: “Do what you will, you are too feeble to disturb my serenity: this is forbidden by reason, to whom I have entrusted the guidance of my life: to become angry would do me more harm than your

violence can do me. ‘More harm?’ say you. Yes, certainly: I know how much injury you have done me, but I cannot tell to what excesses anger might not carry me.”

XXVI. You say, “I cannot endure it: injuries are hard to bear.” You lie; for how can any one not be able to bear injury, if he can bear to be angry? Besides, what you intend to do is to endure both injury and anger. Why do you bear with the delirium of a sick man, or the ravings of a madman, or the impudent blows of a child? Because, of course, they evidently do not know what they are doing: if a man be not responsible for his actions, what does it matter by what malady he became so: the plea of ignorance holds equally good in every case. “What then?” say you, “shall he not be punished?” He will be, even supposing that you do not wish it: for the greatest punishment for having done harm is the sense of having done it, and no one is more severely punished than he who is given over to the punishment of remorse. In the next place, we ought to consider the whole state of mankind, in order to pass a just judgment on all the occurrences of life: for it is unjust to blame individuals for a vice which is common to all. The colour of an Aethiop is not remarkable amongst his own people, nor is any man in Germany ashamed of red hair rolled into a knot. You cannot call anything peculiar or disgraceful in a particular man if it is the general characteristic of his nation. Now, the cases which I have quoted are defended only by the usage of one out-of-the-way quarter of the world: see now, how far more deserving of pardon those crimes are which are spread abroad among all mankind. We all are hasty and careless, we all are untrustworthy, dissatisfied, and ambitious: nay, why do I try to hide our common wickedness by a too partial description? we all are bad. Every one of us therefore will find in his own breast the vice which he blames in another. Why do you remark how pale this man, or how lean that man is? there is a general pestilence. Let us therefore be more gentle one to another: we are bad men, living among bad men: there is only one thing which can afford us peace, and that is to agree to forgive one another. “This man has already injured me,” say you, “and I have not yet injured him.” No, but you have probably injured some one else, and you will injure him some day. Do not form your judgment by one hour, or one day: consider the whole tendency of your mind: even though you have done no evil, yet you are capable of doing it.

XXVII. How far better is it to heal an injury than to avenge it? Revenge takes up much time, and throws itself in the way of many injuries while it is smarting under one. We all retain our anger longer than we feel our hurt: how far better it were to take the opposite course and not meet one mischief by another. Would any one think himself to be in his perfect mind if he were to return kicks to a mule or bites to a dog?” These creatures,” you say, “know not that they are doing wrong.” Then, in the first place, what an unjust judge you must be if a man has less chance of gaining your forgiveness than a beast! Secondly, if animals are protected from your anger by their want of reason, you ought to treat all foolish men in the like manner: for if a man has that mental darkness which excuses all the wrong-doings of dumb animals, what difference does

it make if in other respects he be unlike a dumb animal? He has sinned. Well, is this the first time, or will this be the last time? Why, you should not believe him even if he said, “Never will I do so again.” He will sin, and another will sin against him, and all his life he will wallow in wickedness. Savagery must be met by kindness: we ought to use, to a man in anger, the argument which is so effective with one in grief, that is, “Shall you leave off this at some time, or never? If you will do so at some time, how better is it that you should abandon anger than that anger should abandon you? Or, will this excitement never leave you? Do you see to what an unquiet life you condemn yourself? for what will be the life of one who is always swelling with rage?” Add to this, that after you have worked yourself up into a rage, and have from time to time renewed the causes of your excitement, yet your anger will depart from you of its own accord, and time will sap its strength: how much better then is it that it should be overcome by you than by itself?

XXVIII. If you are angry, you will quarrel first with this man, and then with that: first with slaves, then with freedmen: first with parents, then with children: first with acquaintances, then with strangers: for there are grounds for anger in every case, unless your mind steps in and intercedes with you: your frenzy will drag you from one place to another, and from thence to elsewhere, your madness will constantly meet with newly-occurring irritants, and will never depart from you. Tell me, miserable man, what time you will have for loving? O, what good time you are wasting on an evil thing! How much better it would be to win friends, and disarm enemies: to serve the state, or to busy oneself with one’s private affairs, rather than to cast about for what harm you can do to somebody, what wound you can inflict either upon his social position, his fortune, or his person, although you cannot succeed in doing so without a struggle and risk to yourself, even if your antagonist be inferior to you. Even supposing that he were handed over to you in chains, and that you were at liberty to torture him as much as you please, yet even then excessive violence in striking a blow often causes us to dislocate a joint, or entangles a sinew in the teeth which it has broken. Anger makes many men cripples, or invalids, even when it meets with an unresisting victim: and besides this, no creature is so weak that it can be destroyed without any danger to its destroyer: sometimes grief, sometimes chance, puts the weakest on a level with the strongest. What shall we say of the fact that the greater part of the things which enrage us are insults, not injuries? It makes a great difference whether a man thwarts my wishes or merely fails to carry them out, whether he robs me or does not give me anything: yet we count it all the same whether a man takes anything from us or refuses to give anything to us, whether he extinguishes our hope or defers it, whether his object be to hinder us or to help himself, whether he acts out of love for some one or out of hatred for us. Some men are bound to oppose us not only on the ground of justice, but of honour: one is defending his father, another his brother, another his country, another his friend: yet we do not forgive men for doing what we should blame them for not doing; nay, though one can hardly believe it, we often think well of an act, and ill of the man who did it. But, by Hercules, a great and

just man looks with respect at the bravest of his enemies, and the most obstinate defender of his freedom and his country, and wishes that he had such a man for his own countryman and soldier.

XXIX. It is shameful to hate him whom you praise: but how much more shameful is it to hate a man for something for which he deserves to be pitied? If a prisoner of war, who has suddenly been reduced to the condition of a slave, still retains some remnants of liberty, and does not run nimbly to perform foul and toilsome tasks, if, having grown slothful by long rest, he cannot run fast enough to keep pace with his master's horse or carriage, if sleep overpowers him when weary with many days and nights of watching, if he refuses to undertake farm work, or does not do it heartily when brought away from the idleness of city service and put to hard labour, we ought to make a distinction between whether a man cannot or will not do it: we should pardon many slaves, if we began to judge them before we began to be angry with them: as it is, however, we obey our first impulse, and then, although we may prove to have been excited about mere trifles, yet we continue to be angry, lest we should seem to have begun to be angry without cause; and, most unjust of all, the injustice of our anger makes us persist in it all the more; for we nurse it and inflame it, as though to be violently angry proved our anger to be just.

XXX. How much better is it to observe how trifling, how inoffensive are the first beginnings of anger? You will see that men are subject to the same influences as dumb animals: we are put out by trumpery, futile matters. Bulls are excited by red colour, the asp raises its head at a shadow, bears or lions are irritated at the shaking of a rag, and all creatures who are naturally fierce and wild are alarmed at trifles. The same thing befalls men both of restless and of sluggish disposition; they are seized by suspicions, sometimes to such an extent that they call slight benefits injuries: and these form the most common and certainly the most bitter subject for anger: for we become angry with our dearest friends for having bestowed less upon us than we expected, and less than others have received from them: yet there is a remedy at hand for both these grievances. Has he favoured our rival more than ourselves? then let us enjoy what we have without making any comparisons. A man will never be well off to whom it is a torture to see any one better off than himself. Have I less than I hoped for? well, perhaps I hoped for more than I ought. This it is against which we ought to be especially on our guard: from hence arises the most destructive anger, sparing nothing, not even the holiest. The Emperor Julius was not stabbed by so many enemies as by friends whose insatiable hopes he had not satisfied. He was willing enough to do so, for no one ever made a more generous use of victory, of whose fruits he kept nothing for himself save the power of distributing them; but how could he glut such unconscionable appetites, when each man coveted as much as any one man could possess? This was why he saw his fellow-soldiers standing round his chair with drawn swords, Tillius Cimber, though he had a short time before been the keenest defender of his party, and others who only became Pompeians after Pompeius was dead. This it is which has turned the arms of kings against

them, and made their trustiest followers meditate the death of him for whom and before whom[11] they once would have been glad to die.

XXXI. No man is satisfied with his own lot if he fixes his attention on that of another: and this leads to our being angry even with the gods, because somebody precedes us, though we forget of how many we take precedence, and that when a man envies few people, he must be followed in the background by a huge crowd of people who envy him. Yet so churlish is human nature, that, however much men may have received, they think themselves wronged if they are able to receive still more. “He gave me the praetorship. Yes, but I had hoped for the consulship. He bestowed the twelve axes upon me: true, but he did not make me a regular[12] consul. He allowed me to give my name to the year, but he did not help me to the priesthood. I have been elected a member of the college: but why only of one? He has bestowed upon me every honour that the state affords: yes, but he has added nothing to my private fortune. What he gave me he was obliged to give to somebody: he brought out nothing from his own pocket.” Rather than speak thus, thank him for what you have received: wait for the rest, and be thankful that you are not yet too full to contain more: there is a pleasure in having something left to hope for. Are you preferred to every one? then rejoice at holding the first place in the thoughts of your friend. Or are many others preferred before you? then think how many more are below you than there are above you. Do you ask, what is your greatest fault? It is, that you keep your accounts wrongly: you set a high value upon what you give, and a low one upon what you receive.

XXXII. Let different qualities in different people keep us from quarrelling with them: let us fear to be angry with some, feel ashamed of being angry with others, and disdain to be angry with others. We do a fine thing, indeed, when we send a wretched slave to the workhouse! Why are we in such a hurry to flog him at once, to break his legs straightway? we shall not lose our boasted power if we defer its exercise. Let us wait for the time when we ourselves can give orders: at present we speak under constraint from anger. When it has passed away we shall see what amount of damage has been done; for this is what we are especially liable to make mistakes about: we use the sword, and capital punishment, and we appoint chains, imprisonment, and starvation to punish a crime which deserves only flogging with a light scourge. “In what way,” say you, “do you bid us look at those things by which we think ourselves injured, that we may see how paltry, pitiful, and childish they are?” Of all things I would charge you to take to yourself a magnanimous spirit, and behold how low and sordid all these matters are about which we squabble and run to and fro till we are out of breath; to any one who entertains any lofty and magnificent ideas, they are not worthy of a thought.

XXXIII. The greatest hullabaloo is about money: this it is which wearies out the law-courts, sows strife between father and son, concocts poisons, and gives swords to murderers just as to soldiers: it is stained with our blood: on account of it husbands and wives wrangle all night long, crowds press round the bench of magistrates,

kings rage and plunder, and overthrow communities which it has taken the labour of centuries to build, that they may seek for gold and silver in the ashes of their cities. Do you like to look at your money-bags lying in the corner? it is for these that men shout till their eyes start from their heads, that the law-courts ring with the din of trials, and that jurymen brought from great distances sit to decide which man's covetousness is the more equitable. What shall we say if it be not even for a bag of money, but for a handful of coppers or a shilling scored up by a slave that some old man, soon to die without an heir, bursts with rage? what if it be an invalid money-lender whose feet are distorted by the gout, and who can no longer use his hands to count with, who calls for his interest of one thousandth a month,[13] and by his sureties demands his pence even during the paroxysms of his disease? If you were to bring to me all the money from all our mines, which we are at this moment sinking, if you were to bring to-night all that is concealed in hoards, where avarice returns money to the earth from whence it came, and pity that it ever was dug out—all that mass I should not think worthy to cause a wrinkle on the brow of a good man. What ridicule those things deserve which bring tears into our eyes!

XXXIV. Come now, let us enumerate the other causes of anger: they are food, drink, and the showy apparatus connected with them, words, insults, disrespectful movements of the body, suspicions, obstinate cattle, lazy slaves, and spiteful construction put upon other men's words, so that even the gift of language to mankind becomes reckoned among the wrongs of nature. Believe me, the things which cause us such great heat are trifles, the sort of things that children fight and squabble over: there is nothing serious, nothing important in all that we do with such gloomy faces. It is, I repeat, the setting a great value on trifles that is the cause of your anger and madness. This man wanted to rob me of my inheritance, that one has brought a charge against me before persons[14] whom I had long courted with great expectations, that one has coveted my mistress. A wish for the same things, which ought to have been a bond of friendship, becomes a source of quarrels and hatred. A narrow path causes quarrels among those who pass up and down it; a wide and broadly spread road may be used by whole tribes without jostling. Those objects of desire of yours cause strife and disputes among those who covet the same things, because they are petty, and cannot be given to one man without being taken away from another.

XXXV. You are indignant at being answered back by your slave, your freedman, your wife, or your client: and then you complain of the state having lost the freedom which you have destroyed in your own house: then again if he is silent when you question him, you call it sullen obstinacy. Let him both speak and be silent, and laugh too. "In the presence of his master?" you ask. Nay, say rather "in the presence of the house-father." Why do you shout? why do you storm? why do you in the middle of dinner call for a whip, because the slaves are talking, because a crowd as large as a public meeting is not as silent as the wilderness? You have ears, not merely that you may listen to musical sounds, softly and sweetly drawn out and harmonized: you ought to hear laughter and weeping, coaxing and

quarrelling, joy and sorrow, the human voice and the roaring and barking of animals. Miserable one! why do you shudder at the noise of a slave, at the rattling of brass or the banging of a door? you cannot help hearing the thunder, however refined you may be. You may apply these remarks about your ears with equal truth to your eyes, which are just as dainty, if they have been badly schooled: they are shocked at stains and dirt, at silver plate which is not sufficiently bright, or at a pool whose water is not clear down to the bottom. Those same eyes which can only endure to see the most variegated marble, and that which has just been scoured bright, which will look at no table whose wood is not marked with a network of veining, and which at home are loth to tread upon anything that is not more precious than gold, will, when out of doors, gaze most calmly upon rough and miry paths, will see unmoved that the greater number of persons that meet them are shabbily dressed, and that the walls of the houses are rotten, full of cracks, and uneven. What, then, can be the reason that they are not distressed out of doors by sights which would shock them in their own home, unless it be that their temper is placid and long-suffering in one case, sulky and fault-finding in the other?

XXXVI. All our senses should be educated into strength: they are naturally able to endure much, provided that the spirit forbears to spoil them. The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: “What bad habit of yours have you cured to-day? what vice have you checked? in what respect are you better?” Anger will cease, and become more gentle, if it knows that every day it will have to appear before the judgment seat. What can be more admirable than this fashion of discussing the whole of the day’s events? how sweet is the sleep which follows this self-examination? how calm, how sound, and careless is it when our spirit has either received praise or reprimand, and when our secret inquisitor and censor has made his report about our morals? I make use of this privilege, and daily plead my cause before myself: when the lamp is taken out of my sight, and my wife, who knows my habit, has ceased to talk, I pass the whole day in review before myself, and repeat all that I have said and done: I conceal nothing from myself, and omit nothing: for why should I be afraid of any of my shortcomings, when it is in my power to say, “I pardon you this time: see that you never do that any more? In that dispute you spoke too contentiously: do not for the future argue with ignorant people: those who have never been taught are unwilling to learn. You reprimanded that man with more freedom than you ought, and consequently you have offended him instead of amending his ways: in dealing with other cases of the kind, you should look carefully, not only to the truth of what you say, but also whether the person to whom you speak can bear to be told the truth.” A good man delights in receiving advice: all the worst men are the most impatient of guidance.

XXXVII. At the dinner-table some jokes and sayings intended to give you pain have been directed against you: avoid feasting with low people. Those who are not modest even when sober become much more

recklessly impudent after drinking. You have seen your friend in a rage with the porter of some lawyer or rich man, because he has sent him back when about to enter, and you yourself on behalf of your friend have been in a rage with the meanest of slaves. Would you then be angry with a chained housedog? Why, even he, after a long bout of barking, becomes gentle if you offer him food. So draw back and smile; for the moment your porter fancies himself to be somebody, because he guards a door which is beset by a crowd of litigants; for the moment he who sits within is prosperous and happy, and thinks that a street-door through which it is hard to gain entrance is the mark of a rich and powerful man; he knows not that the hardest door of all to open is that of the prison. Be prepared to submit to much. Is any one surprised at being cold in winter? at being sick at sea? or at being jostled in the street? The mind is strong enough to bear those evils for which it is prepared. When you are not given a sufficiently distinguished place at table you have begun to be angry with your fellow-guests, with your host, and with him who is preferred above you. Idiot! What difference can it make what part of the couch you rest upon? Can a cushion give you honour or take it away? You have looked askance at somebody because he has spoken slightingly of your talents; will you apply this rule to yourself? If so, Ennius, whose poetry you do not care for, would have hated you. Hortensius, if you had found fault with his speeches, would have quarrelled with you, and Cicero, if you had laughed at his poetry, would have been your enemy. A candidate for office, will you resent men’s votes?

XXXVIII. Some one has offered you an insult? Not a greater one, probably, than was offered to the Stoic philosopher Diogenes, in whose face an insolent young man spat just when he was lecturing upon anger. He bore it mildly and wisely. “I am not angry,” said he, “but I am not sure that I ought not to be angry.” Yet how much better did our Cato behave? When he was pleading, one Lentulus, whom our fathers remember as a demagogue and passionate man, spat all the phlegm he could muster upon his forehead. Cato wiped his face, and said, “Lentulus, I shall declare to all the world that men are mistaken when they say that you are wanting in cheek.”

XXXIX. We have now succeeded, my Novatus, in properly regulating our own minds: they either do not feel anger or are above it: let us next see how we may soothe the wrath of others, for we do not only wish to be whole, but to heal.

You should not attempt to allay the first burst of anger by words: it is deaf and frantic: we must give it scope; our remedies will only be effective when it slackens. We do not meddle with men’s eyes when they are swollen, because we should only irritate their hard stiffness by touching them, nor do we try to cure other diseases when at their height: the best treatment in the first stage of illness is rest. “Of how very little value,” say you, “is your remedy, if it appeases anger which is subsiding of its own accord?” In the first place, I answer, it makes it end quicker: in the next, it prevents a relapse. It can render harmless even the violent impulse which it dares not soothe: it will put out of the way all

weapons which might be used for revenge: it will pretend to be angry, in order that its advice may have more weight as coming from an assistant and comrade in grief. It will invent delays, and postpone immediate punishment while a greater one is being sought for: it will use every artifice to give the man a respite from his frenzy. If his anger be unusually strong, it will inspire him with some irresistible feeling of shame or of fear: if weak, it will make use of conversation on amusing or novel subjects, and by playing upon his curiosity lead him to forget his passion. We are told that a physician, who was forced to cure the king's daughter, and could not without using the knife, conveyed a lancet to her swollen breast concealed under the sponge with which he was fomenting it. The same girl, who would have shrunk from the remedy if he had applied it openly, bore the pain because she did not expect it. Some diseases can only be cured by deceit.

XL. To one class of men you will say, "Beware, lest your anger give pleasure to your foes:" to the other, "Beware lest your greatness of mind and the reputation it bears among most people for strength become impaired. I myself, by Hercules, am scandalized at your treatment and am grieved beyond measure, but we must wait for a proper opportunity. He shall pay for what he has done; be well assured of that: when you are able you shall return it to him with interest." To reprove a man when he is angry is to add to his anger by being angry oneself. You should approach him in different ways and in a compliant fashion, unless perchance you be so great a personage that you can quash his anger, as the Emperor Augustus did when he was dining with Vedius Pollio.[15] One of the slaves had broken a crystal goblet of his: Vedius ordered him to be led away to die, and that too in no common fashion: he ordered him to be thrown to feed the muraenae, some of which fish, of great size, he kept in a tank. Who would not think that he did this out of luxury? but it was out of cruelty. The boy slipped through the hands of those who tried to seize him, and flung himself at Caesar's feet in order to beg for nothing more than that he might die in some different way, and not be eaten. Caesar was shocked at this novel form of cruelty, and ordered him to be let go, and, in his place, all the crystal ware which he saw before him to be broken, and the tank to be filled up. This was the proper way for Caesar to reprove his friend: he made a good use of his power. What are you, that when at dinner you order men to be put to death, and mangled by an unheard-of form of torture? Are a man's bowels to be torn asunder because your cup is broken? You must think a great deal of yourself, if even when the emperor is present you order men to be executed.

XLI. If any one's power is so great that he can treat anger with the tone of a superior let him crush it out of existence, but only if it be of the kind of which I have just spoken, fierce, inhuman, bloodthirsty, and incurable save by fear of something more powerful than itself . . . . . let us give the mind that peace which is given by constant meditation upon wholesome maxims, by good actions, and by a mind directed to the pursuit of honour alone. Let us set our own conscience fully at rest, but make no efforts to gain credit for ourselves: so long as we deserve well, let us be satisfied, even

if we should be ill spoken of. “But the common herd admires spirited actions, and bold men are held in honour, while quiet ones are thought to be indolent.” True, at first sight they may appear to be so: but as soon as the even tenor of their life proves that this quietude arises not from dullness but from peace of mind, then that same populace respects and reverences them. There is, then, nothing useful in that hideous and destructive passion of anger, but on the contrary, every kind of evil, fire and sword. Anger tramples self-restraint underfoot, steeps its hands in slaughter, scatters abroad the limbs of its children: it leaves no place unsoiled by crime, it has no thoughts of glory, no fears of disgrace, and when once anger has hardened into hatred, no amendment is possible.

XLII. Let us be free from this evil, let us clear our minds of it, and extirpate root and branch a passion which grows again wherever the smallest particle of it finds a resting-place. Let us not moderate anger, but get rid of it altogether: what can moderation have to do with an evil habit? We shall succeed in doing this, if only we exert ourselves. Nothing will be of greater service than to bear in mind that we are mortal: let each man say to himself and to his neighbour, “Why should we, as though we were born to live for ever, waste our tiny span of life in declaring anger against any one? why should days, which we might spend in honourable enjoyment, be misapplied in grieving and torturing others? Life is a matter which does not admit of waste, and we have no spare time to throw away. Why do we rush into the fray? why do we go out of our way to seek disputes? why do we, forgetful of the weakness of our nature, undertake mighty feuds, and, frail though we be, summon up all our strength to cut down other men? Ere long, fever or some other bodily ailment will make us unable to carry on this warfare of hatred which we so implacably wage: death will soon part the most vigorous pair of combatants. Why do we make disturbances and spend our lives in rioting? fate hangs over our heads, scores up to our account the days as they pass, and is ever drawing nearer and nearer. The time which you have marked for the death of another perhaps includes your own.”

XLIII. Instead of acting thus, why do you not rather draw together what there is of your short life, and keep it peaceful for others and for yourself? why do you not rather make yourself beloved by every one while you live, and regretted by every one when you die? Why do you wish to tame that man’s pride, because he takes too lofty a tone with you? why do you try with all your might to crush that other who snaps and snarls at you, a low and contemptible wretch, but spiteful and offensive to his betters? Master, why are you angry with your slave? Slave, why are you angry with your master? Client, why are you angry with your patron? Patron, why are you angry with your client? Wait but a little while. See, here comes death, who will make you all equals. We often see at a morning performance in the arena a battle between a bull and a bear, fastened together, in which the victor, after he has torn the other to pieces, is himself slain. We do just the same thing: we worry some one who is connected with us, although the end of both victor and vanquished is at hand, and that soon. Let us rather pass the little remnant of our lives in

peace and quiet: may no one loathe us when we lie dead. A quarrel is often brought to an end by a cry of “Fire!” in the neighbourhood, and the appearance of a wild beast parts the highwayman from the traveller: men have no leisure to battle with minor evils when menaced by some overpowering terror. What have we to do with fighting and ambuscades? do you want anything more than death to befall him with whom you are angry? well, even though you sit quiet, he will be sure to die. You waste your pains: you want to do what is certain to be done. You say, “I do not wish necessarily to kill him, but to punish him by exile, or public disgrace, or loss of property.” I can more easily pardon one who wishes to give his enemy a wound than one who wishes to give him a blister: for the latter is not only bad, but petty-minded. Whether you are thinking of extreme or slighter punishments, how very short is the time during which either your victim is tortured or you enjoy an evil pleasure in another’s pain? This breath that we hold so dear will soon leave us: in the meantime, while we draw it, while we live among human beings, let us practise humanity: let us not be a terror or a danger to any one. Let us keep our tempers in spite of losses, wrongs, abuse or sarcasm, and let us endure with magnanimity our shortlived troubles: while we are considering what is due to ourselves, as the saying is, and worrying ourselves, death will be upon us.

* * *

[1] The hook alluded to was fastened to the neck of condemned criminals, and by it they were dragged to the Tiber. Also the bodies of dead gladiators were thus dragged out of the arena. The hook by which the dead bull is drawn away at a modern Spanish bull-fight is probably a survival of this custom.

[2] Hdt. iii, 34, 35,

[3] Seneca’s own death, by opening his veins, gives a melancholy interest to this passage.

[4] Hdt. iv. 84.

[5] Hdt. vii. 38, 39.

[6] Plut. Dem. 27.

[7] Hdt. iii. 17, sqq.

[8] Hdt. i. 189, 190.

[9] A mistake: Antigonus (Monophthalmus) was one of Alexander’s generals.

[10] Acerbum = ἄωρυν; the funeral of one who has been cut off in the

flower of his youth.

[11] In point of time.

[12] Consul ordinarius, a regular consul, one who administered in office from the first of January, in opposition to consul suffectus, one chosen in the course of the year in the place of one who had died. The consul ordinarius gave his name to the year.

[13] It seems inconceivable that so small an interest, 1 1/5 per cent, per an., can be meant.

[14] Captatis, Madvig. Adv. II. 394.

[15] See “On Clemency,” i. 18, 2.

THE SIXTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO MARCIA.

OF CONSOLATION.

I. Did I not know, Marcia, that you have as little of a woman’s weakness of mind as of her other vices, and that your life was regarded as a pattern of antique virtue, I should not have dared to combat your grief, which is one that many men fondly nurse and embrace, nor should I have conceived the hope of persuading you to hold fortune blameless, having to plead for her at such an unfavorable time, before so partial a judge, and against such an odious charge. I derive confidence, however, from the proved strength of your mind, and your virtue, which has been proved by a severe test. All men know how well you behaved towards your father, whom you loved as dearly as your children in all respects, save that you did not wish him to survive you: indeed, for all that I know you may have wished that also: for great affection ventures to break some of the golden rules of life. You did all that lay in your power to avert the death of your father, Aulus Cremutius Cordus;[1] but when it became clear that, surrounded as he was by the myrmidons of Sejanus, there was no other way of escape from slavery, you did not indeed approve of his resolution, but gave up all attempts to oppose it; you shed tears openly, and choked down your sobs, yet did not screen them behind a smiling face; and you did all this in the present century, when not to be unnatural towards one’s parents is considered the height of filial affection. When the changes of our times gave you an opportunity, you restored to the use of man that genius of your father for which he had suffered, and made him in real truth immortal by publishing as an eternal memorial of him

those books which that bravest of men had written with his own blood. You have done a great service to Roman literature: a large part of Cordus's books had been burned; a great service to posterity, who will receive a true account of events, which cost its author so dear; and a great service to himself, whose memory flourishes and ever will flourish, as long as men set any value upon the facts of Roman history, as long as any one lives who wishes to review the deeds of our fathers, to know what a true Roman was like—one who still remained unconquered when all other necks were broken in to receive the yoke of Sejanus, one who was free in every thought, feeling, and act. By Hercules, the state would have sustained a great loss if you had not brought him forth from the oblivion to which his two splendid qualities, eloquence and independence, had consigned him: he is now read, is popular, is received into men's hands and bosoms, and fears no old age: but as for those who butchered him, before long men will cease to speak even of their crimes, the only things by which they are remembered. This greatness of mind in you has forbidden me to take into consideration your sex or your face, still clouded by the sorrow by which so many years ago it was suddenly overcast. See; I shall do nothing underhand, nor try to steal away your sorrows: I have reminded you of old hurts, and to prove that your present wound may be healed, I have shown you the scar of one which was equally severe. Let others use soft measures and caresses; I have determined to do battle with your grief, and I will dry those weary and exhausted eyes, which already, to tell you the truth, are weeping more from habit than from sorrow. I will effect this cure, if possible, with your goodwill: if you disapprove of my efforts, or dislike them, then you must continue to hug and fondle the grief which you have adopted as the survivor of your son. What, I pray you, is to be the end of it? All means have been tried in vain: the consolations of your friends, who are weary of offering them, and the influence of great men who are related to you: literature, a taste which your father enjoyed and which you have inherited from him, now finds your ears closed, and affords you but a futile consolation, which scarcely engages your thoughts for a moment. Even time itself, nature's greatest remedy, which quiets the most bitter grief, loses its power with you alone. Three years have already passed, and still your grief has lost none of its first poignancy, but renews and strengthens itself day by day, and has now dwelt so long with you that it has acquired a domicile in your mind, and actually thinks that it would be base to leave it. All vices sink into our whole being, if we do not crush them before they gain a footing; and in like manner these sad, pitiable, and discordant feelings end by feeding upon their own bitterness, until the unhappy mind takes a sort of morbid delight in grief. I should have liked, therefore, to have attempted to effect this cure in the earliest stages of the disorder, before its force was fully developed; it might have been checked by milder remedies, but now that it has been confirmed by time it cannot be beaten without a hard struggle. In like manner, wounds heal easily when the blood is fresh upon them: they can then be cleared out and brought to the surface, and admit of being probed by the finger: when disease has turned them into malignant ulcers, their cure is more difficult. I cannot now

influence so strong a grief by polite and mild measures: it must be broken down by force.

II. I am aware that all who wish to give any one advice begin with precepts, and end with examples: but it is sometimes useful to alter this fashion, for we must deal differently with different people. Some are guided by reason, others must be confronted with authority and the names of celebrated persons, whose brilliancy dazzles their mind and destroys their power of free judgment. I will place before your eyes two of the greatest examples belonging to your sex and your century: one, that of a woman who allowed herself to be entirely carried away by grief; the other, one who, though afflicted by a like misfortune, and an even greater loss, yet did not allow her sorrows to reign over her for a very long time, but quickly restored her mind to its accustomed frame. Octavia and Livia, the former Augustus's sister, the latter his wife, both lost their sons when they were young men, and when they were certain of succeeding to the throne. Octavia lost Marcellus, whom both his father-in-law and his uncle had begun to depend upon, and to place upon his shoulders the weight of the empire—a young man of keen intelligence and firm character, frugal and moderate in his desires to an extent which deserved especial admiration in one so young and so wealthy, strong to endure labour, averse to indulgence, and able to bear whatever burden his uncle might choose to lay, or I may say to pile upon his shoulders. Augustus had well chosen him as a foundation, for he would not have given way under any weight, however excessive. His mother never ceased to weep and sob during her whole life, never endured to listen to wholesome advice, never even allowed her thoughts to be diverted from her sorrow. She remained during her whole life just as she was during the funeral, with all the strength of her mind intently fixed upon one subject. I do not say that she lacked the courage to shake off her grief, but she refused to be comforted, thought that it would be a second bereavement to lose her tears, and would not have any portrait of her darling son, nor allow any allusion to be made to him. She hated all mothers, and raged against Livia with especial fury, because it seemed as though the brilliant prospect once in store for her own child was now transferred to Livia's son. Passing all her days in darkened rooms and alone, not conversing even with her brother, she refused to accept the poems which were composed in memory of Marcellus, and all the other honours paid him by literature, and closed her ears against all consolation. She lived buried and hidden from view, neglecting her accustomed duties, and actually angry with the excessive splendour of her brother's prosperity, in which she shared. Though surrounded by her children and grandchildren, she would not lay aside her mourning garb, though by retaining it she seemed to put a slight upon all her relations, in thinking herself bereaved in spite of their being alive.

III. Livia lost her son Drusus, who would have been a great emperor, and was already a great general: he had marched far into Germany, and had planted the Roman standards in places where the very existence of the Romans was hardly known. He died on the march, his very foes treating him with respect, observing a reciprocal truce,

and not having the heart to wish for what would do them most service. In addition to his dying thus in his country's service, great sorrow for him was expressed by the citizens, the provinces, and the whole of Italy, through which his corpse was attended by the people of the free towns and colonies, who poured out to perform the last sad offices to him, till it reached Rome in a procession which resembled a triumph. His mother was not permitted to receive his last kiss and gather the last fond words from his dying lips: she followed the relics of her Drusus on their long journey, though every one of the funeral pyres with which all Italy was glowing seemed to renew her grief, as though she had lost him so many times. When, however, she at last laid him in the tomb, she left her sorrow there with him, and grieved no more than was becoming to a Caesar or due to a son. She did not cease to make frequent mention of the name of her Drusus, to set up his portrait in all places, both public and private, and to speak of him and listen while others spoke of him with the greatest pleasure: she lived with his memory; which none can embrace and consort with who has made it painful to himself.[2] Choose, therefore, which of these two examples you think the more commendable: if you prefer to follow the former, you will remove yourself from the number of the living; you will shun the sight both of other people's children and of your own, and even of him whose loss you deplore; you will be looked upon by mothers as an omen of evil; you will refuse to take part in honourable, permissible pleasures, thinking them unbecoming for one so afflicted; you will be loth to linger above ground, and will be especially angry with your age, because it will not straightway bring your life abruptly to an end. I here put the best construction on what is really most contemptible and foreign to your character. I mean that you will show yourself unwilling to live, and unable to die. If, on the other hand, showing a milder and better regulated spirit, you try to follow the example of the latter most exalted lady, you will not be in misery, nor will you wear your life out with suffering. Plague on it! what madness this is, to punish one's self because one is unfortunate, and not to lessen, but to increase one's ills! You ought to display, in this matter also, that decent behaviour and modesty which has characterised all your life: for there is such a thing as self-restraint in grief also. You will show more respect for the youth himself, who well deserves that it should make you glad to speak and think of him, if you make him able to meet his mother with a cheerful countenance, even as he was wont to do when alive.

IV. I will not invite you to practise the sterner kind of maxims, nor bid you bear the lot of humanity with more than human philosophy; neither will I attempt to dry a mother's eyes on the very day of her son's burial. I will appear with you before an arbitrator: the matter upon which we shall join issue is, whether grief ought to be deep or unceasing. I doubt not that you will prefer the example of Julia Augusta, who was your intimate friend: she invites you to follow her method: she, in her first paroxysm, when grief is especially keen and hard to bear, betook herself for consolation to Areus, her husband's teacher in philosophy, and declared that this did her much good; more good than the thought of

the Roman people, whom she was unwilling to sadden by her mourning; more than Augustus, who, staggering under the loss of one of his two chief supporters, ought not to be yet more bowed down by the sorrow of his relatives; more even than her son Tiberius, whose affection during that untimely burial of one for whom whole nations wept made her feel that she had only lost one member of her family. This was, I imagine, his introduction to and grounding in philosophy of a woman peculiarly tenacious of her own opinion:—"Even to the present day, Julia, as far as I can tell—and I was your husband's constant companion, and knew not only what all men were allowed to know, but all the most secret thoughts of your hearts— you have been careful that no one should find anything to blame in your conduct; not only in matters of importance, but even in trifles you have taken pains to do nothing which you could wish common fame, that most frank judge of the acts of princes, to overlook. Nothing, I think, is more admirable than that those who are in high places should pardon many shortcomings in others, and have to ask it for none of their own. So also in this matter of mourning you ought to act up to your maxim of doing nothing which you could wish undone, or done otherwise.

V. "In the next place, I pray and beseech you not to be self-willed and beyond the management of your friends. You must be aware that none of them know how to behave, whether to mention Drusus in your presence or not, as they neither wish to wrong a noble youth by forgetting him, nor to hurt you by speaking of him. When we leave you and assemble together by ourselves, we talk freely about his sayings and doings, treating them with the respect which they deserve: in your presence deep silence is observed about him, and thus you lose that greatest of pleasures, the hearing the praises of your son, which I doubt not you would be willing to hand down to all future ages, had you the means of so doing, even at the cost of your own life. Wherefore endure to listen to, nay, encourage conversation of which he is the subject, and let your ears be open to the name and memory of your son. You ought not to consider this painful, like those who in such a case think that part of their misfortune consists in listening to consolation. As it is, you have altogether run into the other extreme, and, forgetting the better aspects of your lot, look only upon its worse side: you pay no attention to the pleasure you have had in your son's society and your joyful meetings with him, the sweet caresses of his babyhood, the progress of his education: you fix all your attention upon that last scene of all: and to this, as though it were not shocking enough, you add every horror you can. Do not, I implore you, take a perverse pride in appearing the most unhappy of women: and reflect also that there is no great credit in behaving bravely in times of prosperity, when life glides easily with a favouring current: neither does a calm sea and fair wind display the art of the pilot: some foul weather is wanted to prove his courage. Like him, then, do not give way, but rather plant yourself firmly, and endure whatever burden may fall upon you from above, scared though you may have been at the first roar of the tempest. There is nothing that fastens such a reproach[3] on Fortune as resignation." After this he points out to her the son who is yet alive: he points out grandchildren from the lost one.

VI. It is your trouble, Marcia, which has been dealt with here: it is beside your couch of mourning that Areus has been sitting: change the characters, and it is you whom he has been consoling. But, on the other hand, Marcia, suppose that you have sustained a greater loss than ever mother did before you: see, I am not soothing you or making light of your misfortune: if fate can be overcome by tears, let us bring tears to bear upon it: let every day be passed in mourning, every night be spent in sorrow instead of sleep: let your breast be torn by your own hands, your very face attacked by them, and every kind of cruelty be practised by your grief, if it will profit you. But if the dead cannot be brought back to life, however much we may beat our breasts, if destiny remains fixed and immoveable for ever, not to be changed by any sorrow, however great, and death does not loose his hold of anything that he once has taken away, then let our futile grief be brought to an end. Let us, then, steer our own course, and no longer allow ourselves to be driven to leeward by the force of our misfortune. He is a sorry pilot who lets the waves wring his rudder from his grasp, who leaves the sails to fly loose, and abandons the ship to the storm: but he who boldly grasps the helm and clings to it until the sea closes over him, deserves praise even though he be shipwrecked.

VII. “But,” say you, “sorrow for the loss of one’s own children is natural.” Who denies it? provided it be reasonable? for we cannot help feeling a pang, and the stoutest-hearted of us are cast down not only at the death of those dearest to us, but even when they leave us on a journey. Nevertheless, the mourning which public opinion enjoins is more than nature insists upon. Observe how intense and yet how brief are the sorrows of dumb animals: we hear a cow lowing for one or two days, nor do mares pursue their wild and senseless gallops for longer: wild beasts after they have tracked their lost cubs throughout the forest, and often visited their plundered dens, quench their rage within a short space of time. Birds circle round their empty nests with loud and piteous cries, yet almost immediately resume their ordinary flight in silence; nor does any creature spend long periods in sorrowing for the loss of its offspring, except man, who encourages his own grief, the measure of which depends not upon his sufferings, but upon his will. You may know that to be utterly broken down by grief is not natural, by observing that the same bereavement inflicts a deeper wound upon women than upon men, upon savages than upon civilised and cultivated persons, upon the unlearned than upon the learned: yet those passions which derive their force from nature are equally powerful in all men: therefore it is clear that a passion of varying strength cannot be a natural one. Fire will burn all people equally, male and female, of every rank and every age: steel will exhibit its cutting power on all bodies alike: and why? Because these things derive their strength from nature, which makes no distinction of persons. Poverty, grief, and ambition,[4] are felt differently by different people, according as they are influenced by habit: a rooted prejudice about the terrors of these things, though they are not really to be feared, makes a man weak and unable to endure them.

VIII. Moreover, that which depends upon nature is not weakened by delay, but grief is gradually effaced by time. However obstinate it may be, though it be daily renewed and be exasperated by all attempts to soothe it, yet even this becomes weakened by time, which is the most efficient means of taming its fierceness. You, Marcia, have still a mighty sorrow abiding with you, nevertheless it already appears to have become blunted: it is obstinate and enduring, but not so acute as it was at first: and this also will be taken from you piecemeal by succeeding years. Whenever you are engaged in other pursuits your mind will be relieved from its burden: at present you keep watch over yourself to prevent this. Yet there is a great difference between allowing and forcing yourself to grieve. How much more in accordance with your cultivated taste it would be to put an end to your mourning instead of looking for the end to come, and not to wait for the day when your sorrow shall cease against your will: dismiss it of your own accord.

IX. “Why then,” you ask, “do we show such persistence in mourning for our friends, if it be not nature that bids us do so?” It is because we never expect that any evil will befall ourselves before it comes, we will not be taught by seeing the misfortunes of others that they are the common inheritance of all men, but imagine that the path which we have begun to tread is free from them and less beset by dangers than that of other people. How many funerals pass our houses? yet we do not think of death. How many untimely deaths? we think only of our son’s coming of age, of his service in the army, or of his succession to his father’s estate. How many rich men suddenly sink into poverty before our very eyes, without its ever occurring to our minds that our own wealth is exposed to exactly the same risks? When, therefore, misfortune befalls us, we cannot help collapsing all the more completely, because we are struck as it were unawares: a blow which has long been foreseen falls much less heavily upon us. Do you wish to know how completely exposed you are to every stroke of fate, and that the same shafts which have transfixed others are whirling around yourself? then imagine that you are mounting without sufficient armour to assault some city wall or some strong and lofty position manned by a great host, expect a wound, and suppose that all those stones, arrows, and darts which fill the upper air are aimed at your body: whenever any one falls at your side or behind your back, exclaim, “Fortune, you will not outwit me, or catch me confident and heedless: I know what you are preparing to do: you have struck down another, but you aimed at me.” Who ever looks upon his own affairs as though he were at the point of death? which of us ever dares to think about banishment, want, or mourning? who, if advised to meditate upon these subjects, would not reject the idea like an evil omen, and bid it depart from him and alight on the heads of his enemies, or even on that of his untimely adviser? “I never thought it would happen!” How can you think that anything will not happen, when you know that it may happen to many men, and has happened to many? That is a noble verse, and worthy of a nobler source than the stage:—

“What one hath suffered may befall us all.”

That man has lost his children: you may lose yours. That man has been convicted: your innocence is in peril. We are deceived and weakened by this delusion, when we suffer what we never foresaw that we possibly could suffer: but by looking forward to the coming of our sorrows we take the sting out of them when they come.

X. My Marcia, all these adventitious circumstances which glitter around us, such as children, office in the state, wealth, large halls, vestibules crowded with clients seeking vainly for admittance, a noble name, a well-born or beautiful wife, and every other thing which depends entirely upon uncertain and changeful fortune, are but furniture which is not our own, but entrusted to us on loan: none of these things are given to us outright: the stage of our lives is adorned with properties gathered from various sources, and soon to be returned to their several owners: some of them will be taken away on the first day, some on the second, and but few will remain till the end. We have, therefore, no grounds for regarding ourselves with complacency, as though the things which surround us were our own: they are only borrowed: we have the use and enjoyment of them for a time regulated by the lender, who controls his own gift: it is our duty always to be able to lay our hands upon what has been lent us with no fixed date for its return, and to restore it when called upon without a murmur: the most detestable kind of debtor is he who rails at his creditor. Hence all our relatives, both those who by the order of their birth we hope will outlive ourselves, and those who themselves most properly wish to die before us, ought to be loved by us as persons whom we cannot be sure of having with us for ever, nor even for long. We ought frequently to remind ourselves that we must love the things of this life as we would what is shortly to leave us, or indeed in the very act of leaving us. Whatever gift Fortune bestows upon a man, let him think while he enjoys it, that it will prove as fickle as the goddess from whom it came. Snatch what pleasure you can from your children, allow your children in their turn to take pleasure in your society, and drain every pleasure to the dregs without any delay. We cannot reckon on to-night, nay, I have allowed too long a delay, we cannot reckon on this hour: we must make haste: the enemy presses on behind us: soon that society of yours will be broken up, that pleasant company will be taken by assault and dispersed. Pillage is the universal law: unhappy creatures, know you not that life is but a flight? If you grieve for the death of your son, the fault lies with the time when he was born, for at his birth he was told that death was his doom: it is the law under which he was born, the fate which has pursued him ever since he left his mother’s womb. We have come under the dominion of Fortune, and a harsh and unconquerable dominion it is: at her caprice we must suffer all things whether we deserve them or not. She maltreats our bodies with anger, insult, and cruelty: some she burns, the fire being sometimes applied as a punishment and sometimes as a remedy: some she imprisons, allowing it to be done at one time by our enemies, at another by our

countrymen: she tosses others naked on the changeful seas, and after their struggle with the waves will not even cast them out upon the sand or the shore, but will entomb them in the belly of some huge sea-monster: she wears away others to a skeleton by divers kinds of disease, and keeps them long in suspense between life and death: she is as capricious in her rewards and punishments as a fickle, whimsical, and careless mistress is with those of her slaves.

XI. Why need we weep over parts of our life? the whole of it calls for tears: new miseries assail us before we have freed ourselves from the old ones. You, therefore, who allow them to trouble you to an unreasonable extent ought especially to restrain yourselves, and to muster all the powers of the human breast to combat your fears and your pains. Moreover, what forgetfulness of your own position and that of mankind is this? You were born a mortal, and you have given birth to mortals: yourself a weak and fragile body, liable to all diseases, can you have hoped to produce anything strong and lasting from such unstable materials? Your son has died: in other words he has reached that goal towards which those whom you regard as more fortunate than your offspring are still hastening: this is the point towards which move at different rates all the crowds which are squabbling in the law courts, sitting in the theatres, praying in the temples. Those whom you love and those whom you despise will both be made equal in the same ashes. This is the meaning of that command, KNOW THYSELF, which is written on the shrine of the Pythian oracle. What is man? a potter’s vessel, to be broken by the slightest shake or toss: it requires no great storm to rend you asunder: you fall to pieces wherever you strike. What is man? a weakly and frail body, naked, without any natural protection, dependent on the help of others, exposed to all the scorn of Fortune; even when his muscles are well trained he is the prey and the food of the first wild beast he meets, formed of weak and unstable substances, fair in outward feature, but unable to endure cold, heat, or labour, and yet falling to ruin if kept in sloth and idleness, fearing his very victuals, for he is starved if he has them not, and bursts if he has too much. He cannot be kept safe without anxious care, his breath only stays in the body on sufferance, and has no real hold upon it; he starts at every sudden danger, every loud and unexpected noise that reaches his ears. Ever a cause of anxiety to ourselves, diseased and useless as we are, can we be surprised at the death of a creature which can be killed by a single hiccup? Is it a great undertaking to put an end to us? why, smells, tastes, fatigue and want of sleep, food and drink, and the very necessaries of life, are mortal. Whithersoever he moves he straightway becomes conscious of his weakness, not being able to bear all climates, falling sick after drinking strange water, breathing an air to which he is not accustomed, or from other causes and reasons of the most trifling kind, frail, sickly, entering upon his life with weeping: yet nevertheless what a disturbance this despicable creature makes! what ideas it conceives, forgetting its lowly condition! It exercises its mind upon matters which are immortal and eternal, and arranges the affairs of its grandchildren and great-grandchildren, while death surprises it in the midst of its far-reaching schemes, and what we call old age is but the round

of a very few years.

XII. Supposing that your sorrow has any method at all, is it your own sufferings or those of him who is gone that it has in view? Why do you grieve over your lost son? is it because you have received no pleasure from him, or because you would have received more had he lived longer? If you answer that you have received no pleasure from him you make your loss more endurable: for men miss less when lost what has given them no enjoyment or gladness. If, again, you admit that you have received much pleasure, it is your duty not to complain of that part which you have lost, but to return thanks for that which you have enjoyed. His rearing alone ought to have brought you a sufficient return for your labours, for it can hardly be that those who take the greatest pains to rear puppies, birds, and such like paltry objects of amusement derive a certain pleasure from the sight and touch and fawning caresses of these dumb creatures, and yet that those who rear children should not find their reward in doing so. Thus, even though his industry may have gained nothing for you, his carefulness may have saved nothing for you, his foresight may have given you no advice, yet you found sufficient reward in having owned him and loved him. “But,” say you, “it might have lasted longer.” True, but you have been better dealt with than if you had never had a son, for, supposing you were given your choice, which is the better lot, to be happy for a short time or not at all? It is better to enjoy pleasures which soon leave us than to enjoy none at all. Which, again, would you choose? to have had one who was a disgrace to you, and who merely filled the position and owned the name of your son, or one of such noble character as your son’s was? a youth who soon grew discreet and dutiful, soon became a husband and a father, soon became eager for public honours, and soon obtained the priesthood, winning his way to all these admirable things with equally admirable speed. It falls to scarcely any one’s lot to enjoy great prosperity, and also to enjoy it for a long time: only a dull kind of happiness can last for long and accompany us to the end of our lives. The immortal gods, who did not intend to give you a son for long, gave you one who was straightway what another would have required long training to become. You cannot even say that you have been specially marked by the gods for misfortune because you have had no pleasure in your son. Look at any company of people, whether they be known to you or not: everywhere you will see some who have endured greater misfortunes than your own. Great generals and princes have undergone like bereavements: mythology tells us that the gods themselves are not exempt from them, its aim, I suppose, being to lighten our sorrow at death by the thought that even deities are subject to it. Look around, I repeat, at every one: you cannot mention any house so miserable as not to find comfort in the fact of another being yet more miserable. I do not, by Hercules, think so ill of your principles as to suppose that you would bear your sorrow more lightly were I to show you an enormous company of mourners: that is a spiteful sort of consolation which we derive from the number of our fellow-sufferers: nevertheless I will quote some instances, not indeed in order to teach you that this often befalls men, for it is absurd to multiply examples of man’s mortality, but to let you know that there have been many who have

lightened their misfortunes by patient endurance of them. I will begin with the luckiest man of all. Lucius Sulla lost his son, yet this did not impair either the spitefulness or the brilliant valour which he displayed at the expense of his enemies and his countrymen alike, nor did it make him appear to have assumed his well-known title untruly that he did so after his son's death, fearing neither the hatred of men, by whose sufferings that excessive prosperity of his was purchased, nor the ill-will of the gods, to whom it was a reproach that Sulla should be so truly The Fortunate. What, however, Sulla's real character was may pass among questions still undecided: even his enemies will admit that he took up arms with honour, and laid them aside with honour: his example proves the point at issue, that an evil which befalls even the most prosperous cannot be one of the first magnitude.

XIII. That Greece cannot boast unduly of that father who, being in the act of offering sacrifice when he heard the news of his son's death, merely ordered the flute-player to be silent, and removed the garland from his head, but accomplished all the rest of the ceremony in due form, is due to a Roman, Pulvillus the high priest. When he was in the act of holding the doorpost[5] and dedicating the Capitol the news of his son's death was brought to him. He pretended not to hear it, and pronounced the form of words proper for the high priest on such an occasion, without his prayer being interrupted by a single groan, begging that Jupiter would show himself gracious, at the very instant that he heard his son's name mentioned as dead. Do you imagine that this man's mourning knew no end, if the first day and the first shook could not drive him, though a father, away from the public altar of the state, or cause him to mar the ceremony of dedication by words of ill omen? Worthy, indeed, of the most exalted priesthood was he who ceased not to revere the gods even when they were angry. Yet he, after he had gone home, filled his eyes with tears, said a few words of lamentation, and performed the rites with which it was then customary to honour the dead, resumed the expression of countenance which he had worn in the Capitol.

Paulus,[6] about the time of his magnificent triumph, in which he drove Perses in chains before his car, gave two of his sons to be adopted into other families, and buried those whom he had kept for himself. What, think you, must those whom he kept have been, when Scipio was one of those whom he gave away? It was not without emotion that the Roman people looked upon Paulus's empty chariot:[7] nevertheless he made a speech to them, and returned thanks to the gods for having granted his prayer: for he had prayed that, if any offering to Nemesis were due in consequence of the stupendous victory which he had won, it might be paid at his own expense rather than at that of his country. Do you see how magnanimously he bore his loss? he even congratulated himself on being left childless, though who had more to suffer by such a change? he lost at once his comforters and his helpers. Yet Perses did not have the pleasure of seeing Paulus look sorrowful.

XIV. Why should I lead you on through the endless series of great men and pick out the unhappy ones, as though it were not more

difficult to find happy ones? for how few households have remained possessed of all their members until the end? what one is there that has not suffered some loss? Take any one year you please and name the consuls for it: if you like, that of[8] Lucius Bibulus and Gaius Caesar; you will see that, though these colleagues were each other's bitterest enemies, yet their fortunes agreed. Lucius Bibulus, a man more remarkable for goodness than for strength of character, had both his sons murdered at the same time, and even insulted by the Egyptian soldiery, so that the agent of his bereavement was as much a subject for tears as the bereavement itself. Nevertheless Bibulus, who during the whole of his year of office had remained hidden in his house, to cast reproach upon his colleague Caesar on the day following that upon which he heard of both his sons' deaths, came forth and went through the routine business of his magistracy. Who could devote less than one day to mourning for two sons? Thus soon did he end his mourning for his children, although he had mourned a whole year for his consulship. Gaius Caesar, after having traversed Britain, and not allowed even the ocean to set bounds to his successes, heard of the death of his daughter, which hurried on the crisis of affairs. Already Gnaeus Pompeius stood before his eyes, a man who would ill endure that any one besides himself should become a great power in the state, and one who was likely to place a check upon his advancement, which he had regarded as onerous even when each gained by the other's rise: yet within three days' time he resumed his duties as general, and conquered his grief as quickly as he was wont to conquer everything else.

XV. Why need I remind you of the deaths of the other Caesars, whom fortune appears to me sometimes to have outraged in order that even by their deaths they might be useful to mankind, by proving that not even they, although they were styled "sons of gods," and "fathers of gods to come," could exercise the same power over their own fortunes which they did over those of others? The Emperor Augustus lost his children and his grandchildren, and after all the family of Caesar had perished was obliged to prop his empty house by adopting a son: yet he bore his losses as bravely as though he were already personally concerned in the honour of the gods, and as though it were especially to his interest that no one should complain of the injustice of Heaven. Tiberius Caesar lost both the son whom he begot and the son whom he adopted, yet he himself pronounced a panegyric upon his son from the Rostra, and stood in full view of the corpse, which merely had a curtain on one side to prevent the eyes of the high priest resting upon the dead body, and did not change his countenance, though all the Romans wept: he gave Sejanus, who stood by his side, a proof of how patiently he could endure the loss of his relatives. See you not what numbers of most eminent men there have been, none of whom have been spared by this blight which prostrates us all: men, too, adorned with every grace of character, and every distinction that public or private life can confer. It appears as though this plague moved in a regular orbit, and spread ruin and desolation among us all without distinction of persons, all being alike its prey. Bid any number of individuals tell you the story of their lives: you will find that all have paid some penalty for being born.

XVI. I know what you will say, “You quote men as examples: you forget that it is a woman that you are trying to console.” Yet who would say that nature has dealt grudgingly with the minds of women, and stunted their virtues? Believe me, they have the same intellectual power as men, and the same capacity for honourable and generous action. If trained to do so, they are just as able to endure sorrow or labour. Ye good gods, do I say this in that very city in which Lucretia and Brutus removed the yoke of kings from the necks of the Romans? We owe liberty to Brutus, but we owe Brutus to Lucretia—in which Cloelia, for the sublime courage with which she scorned both the enemy and the river, has been almost reckoned as a man. The statue of Cloelia, mounted on horseback, in that busiest of thoroughfares, the Sacred Way, continually reproaches the youth of the present day, who never mount anything but a cushioned seat in a carriage, with journeying in such a fashion through that very city in which we have enrolled even women among our knights. If you wish me to point out to you examples of women who have bravely endured the loss of their children, I shall not go far afield to search for them: in one family I can quote two Cornelias, one the daughter of Scipio, and the mother of the Gracchi, who made acknowledgment of the birth of her twelve children by burying them all: nor was it so hard to do this in the case of the others, whose birth and death were alike unknown to the public, but she beheld the murdered and unburied corpses of both Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus, whom even those who will not call them good must admit were great men. Yet to those who tried to console her and called her unfortunate, she answered, “I shall never cease to call myself happy, because I am the mother of the Gracchi.” Cornelia, the wife of Livius Drusus, lost by the hands of an unknown assassin a young son of great distinction, who was treading in the footsteps of the Gracchi, and was murdered in his own house just when he had so many bills half way through the process of becoming law: nevertheless she bore the untimely and unavenged death of her son with as lofty a spirit as he had shown in carrying his laws. Will you not, Marcia, forgive fortune because she has not refrained from striking you with the darts with which she launched at the Scipios, and the mothers and daughters of the Scipios, and with which she has attacked the Caesars themselves? Life is full of misfortunes; our path is beset with them: no one can make a long peace, nay, scarcely an armistice with fortune. You, Marcia, have borne four children: now they say that no dart which is hurled into a close column of soldiers can fail to hit one,—ought you then to wonder at not having been able to lead along such a company without exciting the ill-will of Fortune, or suffering loss at her hands? “But,” say you, “Fortune has treated me unfairly, for she not only has bereaved me of my son, but chose my best beloved to deprive me of.” Yet you never can say that you have been wronged, if you divide the stakes equally with an antagonist who is stronger than yourself: Fortune has left you two daughters, and their children: she has not even taken away altogether him who you now mourn for, forgetful of his elder brother: you have two daughters by him, who if you support them ill will prove great burdens, but if well, great comforts to you. You ought to prevail upon yourself, when you see them, to let them

remind you of your son, and not of your grief. When a husbandman's trees have either been torn up, roots and all, by the wind, or broken off short by the force of a hurricane, he takes care of what is left of their stock, straightway plants seeds or cuttings in the place of those which he has lost, and in a moment—for time is as swift in repairing losses as in causing them—more flourishing trees are growing than were there before. Take, then, in the place of your Metilius these his two daughters, and by their twofold consolation lighten your single sorrow. True, human nature is so constituted as to love nothing so much as what it has lost, and our yearning after those who have been taken from us makes us judge unfairly of those who are left to us: nevertheless, if you choose to reckon up how merciful Fortune has been to you even in her anger, you will feel that you have more than enough to console you. Look at all your grandchildren, and your two daughters: and say also, Marcia:—"I should indeed be cast down, if everyone's fortune followed his deserts, and if no evil ever befel good men: but as it is I perceive that no distinction is made, and that the bad and the good are both harassed alike."

XVII. "Still, it is a sad thing to lose a young man whom you have brought up, just as he was becoming a defence and a pride both to his mother and to his country." No one denies that it is sad: but it is the common lot of mortals. You were born to lose others, to be lost, to hope, to fear, to destroy your own peace and that of others, to fear and yet to long for death, and, worst of all, never to know what your real position is. If you were about to journey to Syracuse, and some one were to say:—"Learn beforehand all the discomforts, and all the pleasures of your coming voyage, and then set sail. The sights which you will enjoy will be as follows: first, you will see the island itself, now separated from Italy by a narrow strait, but which, we know, once formed part of the mainland. The sea suddenly broke through, and

'Sever'd Sicilia from the western shore.'[9]

Next, as you will be able to sail close to Charybdis, of which the poets have sung, you will see that greediest of whirlpools, quite smooth if no south wind be blowing, but whenever there is a gale from that quarter, sucking down ships into a huge and deep abyss. You will see the fountain of Arethusa, so famed in song, with its waters bright and pellucid to the very bottom, and pouring forth an icy stream which it either finds on the spot or else plunges it under ground, conveys it thither as a separate river beneath so many seas, free from any mixture of less pure water, and there brings it again to the surface. You will see a harbour which is more sheltered than all the others in the world, whether they be natural or improved by human art for the protection of shipping; so safe, that even the most violent storms are powerless to disturb it. You will see the place where the power of Athens was broken, where that

natural prison, hewn deep among precipices of rock, received so many thousands of captives: you will see the great city itself, occupying a wider site than many capitals, an extremely warm resort in winter, where not a single day passes without sunshine: but when you have observed all this, you must remember that the advantages of its winter climate are counterbalanced by a hot and pestilential summer: that here will be the tyrant Dionysius, the destroyer of freedom, of justice, and of law, who is greedy of power even after conversing with Plato, and of life even after he has been exiled; that he will burn some, flog others, and behead others for slight offences; that he will exercise his lust upon both sexes . . . . . You have now heard all that can attract you thither, all that can deter you from going: now, then, either set sail or remain at home!" If, after this declaration, anybody were to say that he wished to go to Syracuse, he could blame no one but himself for what befel him there, because he would not stumble upon it unknowingly, but would have gone thither fully aware of what was before him. To everyone Nature says: "I do not deceive any person. If you choose to have children, they may be handsome, or they may be deformed; perhaps they will be born dumb. One of them may perhaps prove the saviour of his country, or perhaps its betrayer. You need not despair of their being raised to such honour that for their sake no one will dare to speak evil of you: yet remember that they may reach such a pitch of infamy as themselves to become curses to you. There is nothing to prevent their performing the last offices for you, and your panegyric being spoken by your children: but hold yourself prepared nevertheless to place a son as boy, man, or greybeard, upon the funeral pyre: for years have nothing to do with the matter, since every sort of funeral in which a parent buries his child must alike be untimely. [10] If you still choose to rear children, after I have explained these conditions to you, you render yourself incapable of blaming the gods, for they never guaranteed anything to you."

XVIII. You may make this simile apply to your whole entrance into life. I have explained to you what attractions and what drawbacks there would be if you were thinking of going to Syracuse: now suppose that I were to come and give you advice when you were going to be born. "You are about," I should say, "to enter a city of which both gods and men are citizens, a city which contains the whole universe, which is bound by irrevocable and eternal laws, and wherein the heavenly bodies run their unwearied courses: you will see therein innumerable twinkling stars, and the sun, whose single light pervades every place, who by his daily course marks the times of day and night, and by his yearly course makes a more equal division between summer and winter. You will see his place taken by night by the moon, who borrows at her meetings with her brother a gentle and softer light, and who at one time is invisible, at another hangs full-faced above the earth, ever waxing and waning, each phase unlike the last. You will see five stars, moving in the opposite direction to the others, stemming the whirl of the skies towards the West: on the slightest motions of these depend the fortunes of nations, and according as the aspect of the planets is auspicious or malignant, the greatest empires rise and fall: you will see with wonder the gathering clouds, the falling showers, the

zigzag lightning, the crashing together of the heavens. When, sated with the wonders above, you turn your eyes towards the earth, they will be met by objects of a different yet equally admirable aspect: on one side a boundless expanse of open plains, on another the towering peaks of lofty and snow-clad mountains: the downward course of rivers, some streams running eastward, some westward from the same source: the woods which wave even on the mountain tops, the vast forests with all the creatures that dwell therein, and the confused harmony of the birds: the variously-placed cities, the nations which natural obstacles keep secluded from the world, some of whom withdraw themselves to lofty mountains, while others dwell in fear and trembling on the sloping banks of rivers: the crops which are assisted by cultivation, and the trees which bear fruit even without it: the rivers that flow gently through the meadows, the lovely bays and shores that curve inwards to form harbours: the countless islands scattered over the main, which break and spangle the seas. What of the brilliancy of stones and gems, the gold that rolls amid the sands of rushing streams, the heaven-born fires that burst forth from the midst of the earth and even front the midst of the sea; the ocean itself, that binds land to land, dividing the nations by its threefold indentations, and boiling up with mighty rage? Swimming upon its waves, making them disturbed and swelling without wind, you will see animals exceeding the size of any that belong to the land, some clumsy and requiring others to guide their movements, some swift and moving faster than the utmost efforts of rowers, some of them that drink in the waters and blow them out again to the great perils of those who sail near them: you will see here ships seeking for unknown lands: you will see that man’s audacity leaves nothing unattempted, and you will yourself be both a witness and a sharer in great attempts. You will both learn and teach the arts by which men’s lives are supplied with necessaries, are adorned, and are ruled: but in this same place there will be a thousand pestilences fatal to both body and mind, there will be wars and highway robberies, poisonings and shipwrecks, extremes of climate and excesses of body, untimely griefs for our dearest ones, and death for ourselves, of which we cannot tell whether it will be easy or by torture at the hands of the executioner. Now consider and weigh carefully in your own mind which you would choose. If you wish to enjoy these blessings you must pass through these pains. Do you answer that you choose to live? ‘Of course.’ Nay, I thought you would not enter upon that of which the least diminution causes pain. Live, then, as has been agreed on. You say, “No one has asked my opinion.” Our parents’ opinion was taken about us, when, knowing what the conditions of life are, they brought us into it.

XIX. But, to come to topics of consolation, in the first place consider if you please to what our remedies must be applied, and next, in what way. It is regret for the absence of his loved one which causes a mourner to grieve: yet it is clear that this in itself is bearable enough; for we do not weep at their being absent or intending to be absent during their lifetime, although when they leave our sight we have no more pleasure in them. What tortures us, therefore, is an idea. Now every evil is just as great as we consider it to be: we have, therefore, the remedy in our own hands.

Let us suppose that they are on a journey, and let us deceive ourselves: we have sent them away, or, rather, we have sent them on in advance to a place whither we shall soon follow them.[11] Besides this, mourners are wont to suffer from the thought, “I shall have no one to protect me, no one to avenge me when I am scorned.” To use a very disreputable but very true mode of consolation, I may say that in our country the loss of children bestows more influence than it takes away, and loneliness, which used to bring the aged to ruin, now makes them so powerful that some old men have pretended to pick quarrels with their sons, have disowned their own children, and have made themselves childless by their own act. I know what you will say: “My own losses do not grieve me:” and indeed a man does not deserve to be consoled if he is sorry for his son’s death as he would be for that of a slave, who is capable of seeing anything in his son beyond his son’s self. What then, Marcia, is it that grieves you? is it that your son has died, or that he did not live long? If it be his having died, then you ought always to have grieved, for you always knew that he would die. Reflect that the dead suffer no evils, that all those stories which make us dread the nether world are mere fables, that he who dies need fear no darkness, no prison, no blazing streams of fire, no river of Lethe, no judgment seat before which he must appear, and that Death is such utter freedom that, he need fear no more despots. All that is a phantasy of the poets, who have terrified us without a cause. Death is a release from and an end of all pains: beyond it our sufferings cannot extend: it restores us to the peaceful rest in which we lay before we were born. If any one pities the dead, he ought also to pity those who have not been born. Death is neither a good nor a bad thing, for that alone which is something can be a good or a bad thing: but that which is nothing, and reduces all things to nothing, does not hand us over to either fortune, because good and bad require some material to work upon. Fortune cannot take hold of that which Nature has let go, nor can a man be unhappy if he is nothing. Your son has passed beyond the border of the country where men are forced to labour; he has reached deep and everlasting peace. He feels no fear of want, no anxiety about his riches, no stings of lust that tears the heart in guise of pleasure: he knows no envy of another’s prosperity, he is not crushed by the weight of his own; even his chaste ears are not wounded by any ribaldry: he is menaced by no disaster, either to his country or to himself. He does not hang, full of anxiety, upon the issue of events, to reap even greater uncertainty as his reward: he has at last taken up a position from which nothing can dislodge him, where nothing can make him afraid.

XX. O how little do men understand their own misery, that they do not praise and look forward to death as the best discovery of Nature, whether because it hedges in happiness, or because it drives away misery: because it puts an end to the sated weariness of old age, cuts down youth in its bloom while still full of hope of better

things, or calls home childhood before the harsher stages of life are reached: it is the end of all men, a relief to many, a desire to some, and it treats none so well as those to whom it comes before they call for it. Death frees the slave though his master wills it not, it lightens the captive's chains: it leads out of prison those whom headstrong power has forbidden to quit it: it points out to exiles, whose minds and eyes are ever turned towards their own country, that it makes no difference under what people's soil one lies. When Fortune has unjustly divided the common stock, and has given over one man to another, though they were born with equal rights. Death makes them all equal. After Death no one acts any more at another's bidding: in death no man suffers any more from the sense of his low position. It is open to all: it was what your father, Marcia, longed for: it is this, I say, that renders it no misery to be born, which enables me to face the threatenings of misfortune without quailing, and to keep my mind unharmed and able to command itself. I have a last appeal. I see before me crosses not all alike, but differently made by different peoples: some hang a man head downwards, some force a stick upwards through his groin, some stretch out his arms on a forked gibbet. I see cords, scourges, and instruments of torture for each limb and each joint: but I see Death also. There are bloodthirsty enemies, there are overbearing fellow-countrymen, but where they are there I see Death also. Slavery is not grievous if a man can gain his freedom by one step as soon as he becomes tired of thraldom. Life, it is thanks to Death that I hold thee so dear. Think how great a blessing is a timely death, how many have been injured by living longer than they ought. If sickness had carried off that glory and support of the empire, Gnaeus Pompeius, at Naples, he would have died the undoubted head of the Roman people, but as it was, a short extension of time cast him down from his pinnacle of fame: he beheld his legions slaughtered before his eyes: and what a sad relic of that battle, in which the Senate formed the first line, was the survival of the general. He saw his Egyptian butcher, and offered his body, hallowed by so many victories, to a guardsman's sword, although even had he been unhurt, he would have regretted his safety: for what could have been more infamous than that a Pompeius should owe his life to the clemency of a king? If Marcus Cicero had fallen at the time when he avoided those daggers which Catiline aimed equally at him and at his country, he might have died as the saviour of the commonwealth which he had set free: if his death had even followed upon that of his daughter, he might have died happy. He would not then have seen swords drawn for the slaughter of Roman citizens, the goods of the murdered divided among the murderers that men might pay from their own purse the price of their own blood, the public auction of the consul's spoil in the civil war, the public letting out of murder to be done, brigandage, war, pillage, hosts of Catilines. Would it not have been a good thing for Marcus Cato if the sea had swallowed him up when he was returning from Cyprus after sequestrating the king's hereditary possessions, even if that very money which he was bringing to pay the soldiers in the civil war had been lost with him? He certainly would have been able to boast that no one would dare to do wrong in the presence of Cato: as it was, the extension of his life for a very few more years forced one who was born for

personal and political freedom to flee from Caesar and to become Pompeius's follower. Premature death therefore did him no evil: indeed, it put an end to the power of any evil to hurt him.

XXI. "Yet," say you, "he perished too soon and untimely." In the first place, suppose that he had lived to extreme old age: let him continue alive to the extreme limits of human existence: how much is it after all? Born for a very brief space of time, we regard this life as an inn which we are soon to quit that it may be made ready for the coming guest. Do I speak of our lives, which we know roll away incredibly fast? Reckon up the centuries of cities: you will find that even those which boast of their antiquity have not existed for long. All human works are brief and fleeting; they take up no part whatever of infinite time. Tried by the standard of the universe, we regard this earth of ours, with all its cities, nations, rivers, and sea-board as a mere point: our life occupies less than a point when compared with all time, the measure of which exceeds that of the world, for indeed the world is contained many times in it. Of what importance, then, can it be to lengthen that which, however much you add to it, will never be much more than nothing? We can only make our lives long by one expedient, that is, by being satisfied with their length: you may tell me of long-lived men, whose length of days has been celebrated by tradition, you may assign a hundred and ten years apiece to them: yet when you allow your mind to conceive the idea of eternity, there will be no difference between the shortest and the longest life, if you compare the time during which any one has been alive with that during which he has not been alive. In the next place, when he died his life was complete: he had lived as long as he needed to live: there was nothing left for him to accomplish. All men do not grow old at the same age, nor indeed do all animals: some are wearied out by life at fourteen years of age, and what is only the first stage of life with man is their extreme limit of longevity. To each man a varying length of days has been assigned: no one dies before his time, because he was not destined to live any longer than he did. Everyone's end is fixed, and will always remain where it has been placed: neither industry nor favour will move it on any further. Believe, then, that you lost him by advice: he took all that was his own,

"And reached the goal allotted to his life,"

so you need not burden yourself with the thought, "He might have lived longer." His life has not been cut short, nor does chance ever cut short our years: every man receives as much as was promised to him: the Fates go their own way, and neither add anything nor take away anything from what they have once promised. Prayers and endeavours are all in vain: each man will have as much life as his first day placed to his credit: from the time when he first saw the light he has entered on the path that leads to death, and is drawing

nearer to his doom: those same years which were added to his youth were subtracted from his life. We all fall into this mistake of supposing that it is only old men, already in the decline of life, who are drawing near to death, whereas our first infancy, our youth, indeed every time of life leads thither. The Fates ply their own work: they take from us the consciousness of our death, and, the better to conceal its approaches, death lurks under the very names we give to life: infancy changes into boyhood, maturity swallows up the boy, old age the man; these stages themselves, if you reckon them properly, are so many losses.

XXII. Do you complain, Marcia, that your son did not live as long as he might have done? How do you know that it was to his advantage to live longer? whether his interest was not served by this death? Whom can you find at the present time whose fortunes are grounded on such sure foundations that they have nothing to fear in the future? All human affairs are evanescent and perishable, nor is any part of our life so frail and liable to accident as that which we especially enjoy. We ought, therefore, to pray for death when our fortune is at its best, because so great is the uncertainty and turmoil in which we live, that we can be sure of nothing but what is past. Think of your son's handsome person, which you had guarded in perfect purity among all the temptations of a voluptuous capital. Who could have undertaken to keep that clear of all diseases, so that it might preserve its beauty of form unimpaired even to old age? Think of the many taints of the mind: for fine dispositions do not always continue to their life's end to make good the promise of their youth, but have often broken down: either extravagance, all the more shameful for being indulged in late in life, takes possession of men and makes their well-begun lives end in disgrace, or they devote their entire thoughts to the eating-house and the belly, and they become interested in nothing save what they shall eat and what they shall drink. Add to this conflagrations, falling houses, shipwrecks, the agonizing operations of surgeons, who cut pieces of bone out of men's living bodies, plunge their whole hands into their entrails, and inflict more than one kind of pain to effect the cure of shameful diseases. After these comes exile; your son was not more innocent than Rutilius: imprisonment; he was not wiser than Socrates: the piercing of one's breast by a self-inflicted wound; he was not of holier life than Cato. When you look at these examples, you will perceive that nature deals very kindly with those whom she puts speedily in a place of safety because there awaited them the payment of some such price as this for their lives. Nothing is so deceptive, nothing is so treacherous as human life; by Hercules, were it not given to men before they could form an opinion, no one would take it. Not to be born, therefore, is the happiest lot of all, and the nearest thing to this, I imagine, is that we should soon finish our strife here and be restored again to our former rest. Recall to your mind that time, so painful to you, during which Sejanus handed over your father as a present to his client Satrius Secundus: he was angry with him about something or other which he had said with too great freedom, because he was not able to keep silence and see Sejanus climbing up to take his seat upon our necks, which would have been bad enough had he been placed there by his

master. He was decreed the honour of a statue, to be set up in the theatre of Pompeius, which had been burned down and was being restored by Caesar. Cordus exclaimed that “Now the theatre was really destroyed.” What then? should he not burst with spite at a Sejanus being set up over the ashes of Gnaeus Pompeius, at a faithless soldier being commemorated within the memorial of a consummate commander? The inscription was put up:[12] and those keen-scented hounds whom Sejanus used to feed on human blood, to make them tame towards himself and fierce to all the world beside, began to bay around their victim and even to make premature snaps at him. What was he to do? If he chose to live, he must gain the consent of Sejanus; if to die, he must gain that of his daughter; and neither of them could have been persuaded to grant it: he therefore determined to deceive his daughter, and having taken a bath in order to weaken himself still further, he retired to his bed-chamber on the pretence of taking a meal there. After dismissing his slaves he threw some of the food out of the window, that he might appear to have eaten it: then he took no supper, making the excuse that he had already had enough food in his chamber. This he continued to do on the second and the third day: the fourth betrayed his condition by his bodily weakness; so, embracing you, “My dearest daughter,” said he, “from whom I have never throughout your whole life concealed aught but this, I have begun my journey towards death, and have already travelled half-way thither. You cannot and you ought not to call me back.” So saying he ordered all light to be excluded from the room and shut himself up in the darkness. When his determination became known there was a general feeling of pleasure at the prey being snatched out of the jaws of those ravening wolves. His prosecutors, at the instance of Sejanus, went to the judgment-seat of the consuls, complained that Cordus was dying, and begged the consuls to interpose to prevent his doing what they themselves had driven him to do; so true was it that Cordus appeared to them to be escaping: an important matter was at stake, namely, whether the accused should lose the right to die. While this point was being debated, and the prosecutors were going to attend the court a second time, he had set himself free from them. Do you see, Marcia, how suddenly evil days come upon a man? and do you weep because one of your family could not avoid dying? one of your family was within a very little of not being allowed to die.

XXIII. Besides the fact that everything that is future is uncertain, and the only certainty is that it is more likely to turn out ill than well, our spirits find the path to the Gods above easiest when it is soon allowed to leave the society of mankind, because it has then contracted fewest impurities to weigh it down: if set free before they become hardened worldlings, before earthly things have sunk too deep into them, they fly all the more lightly back to the place from whence they came, and all the more easily wash away the stains and defilements which they may have contracted. Great minds never love to linger long in the body: they are eager to burst its bonds and escape from it, they chafe at the narrowness of their prison, having been wont to wander through space, and from aloft in the upper air to look down with contempt upon human affairs. Hence it is that Plato declares that the wise man’s mind is entirely given

up to death, longs for it, contemplates it, and through his eagerness for it is always striving after things which lie beyond this life. Why, Marcia, when you saw him while yet young displaying the wisdom of age, with a mind that could rise superior to all sensual enjoyments, faultless and without a blemish, able to win riches without greediness, public office without ambition, pleasure without extravagance, did you suppose it would long be your lot to keep him safe by your side? Whatever has arrived at perfection, is ripe for dissolution. Consummate virtue flees away and betakes itself out of our sight, and those things which come to maturity in the first stage of their being do not wait for the last. The brighter a fire glows, the sooner it goes out: it lasts longer when it is made up with bad and slowly burning fuel, and shows a dull light through a cloud of smoke: its being poorly fed makes it linger all the longer. So also the more brilliant men's minds, the shorter lived they are: for when there is no room for further growth, the end is near. Fabianus tells us, what our parents themselves have seen, that there was at Rome a boy of gigantic stature, exceeding that of a man: but he soon died, and every sensible person always said that he would soon die, for he could not live to reach the age which he had assumed before it was due. So it is: too complete maturity is a proof that destruction is near, and the end approaches when growth is over.

XXIV. Begin to reckon his age, not by years, but by virtues: he lived long enough. He was left as a ward in the care of guardians up to his fourteenth year, and never passed out of that of his mother: when he had a household of his own he was loth to leave yours, and continued to dwell under his mother's roof, though few sons can endure to live under their father's. Though a youth whose height, beauty, and vigour of body destined him for the army, yet he refused to serve, that he might not be separated from you. Consider, Marcia, how seldom mothers who live in separate houses see their children: consider how they lose and pass in anxiety all those years during which they have sons in the army, and you will see that this time, none of which you lost, was of considerable extent: he never went out of your sight: it was under your eyes that he applied himself to the cultivation of an admirable intellect and one which would have rivalled that of his grandfather, had it not been hindered by shyness, which has concealed many men's accomplishments: though a youth of unusual beauty, and living among such throngs of women who made it their business to seduce men, he gratified the wishes of none of them, and when the effrontery of some led them so far as actually to tempt him, he blushed as deeply at having found favour in their eyes as though he had been guilty. By this holiness of life he caused himself, while yet quite a boy, to be thought worthy of the priesthood, which no doubt he owed to his mother's influence; but even his mother's influence would have had no weight if the candidate for whom it was exerted had been unfit for the post. Dwell upon these virtues, and nurse your son as it were in your lap: now he is more at leisure to respond to your caresses, he has nothing to call him away from you, he will never be an anxiety or a sorrow to you. You have grieved at the only grief so good a son could cause you: all else is beyond the power of fortune to harm, and is full of

pleasure, if only you know how to make use of your son, if you do but know what his most precious quality was. It is merely the outward semblance of your son that has perished, his likeness, and that not a very good one; he himself is immortal, and is now in a far better state, set free from the burden of all that was not his own, and left simply by himself: all this apparatus which you see about us of bones and sinews, this covering of skin, this face, these our servants the hands, and all the rest of our environment, are but chains and darkness to the soul: they overwhelm it, choke it, corrupt it, fill it with false ideas, and keep it at a distance from its own true sphere: it has to struggle continually against this burden of the flesh, lest it be dragged down and sunk by it. It ever strives to rise up again to the place from whence it was sent down on earth: there eternal rest awaits it, there it will behold what is pure and clear, in place of what is foul and turbid.

XXV. You need not, therefore, hasten to the burial-place of your son: that which lies there is but the worst part of him and that which gave him most trouble, only bones and ashes, which are no more parts of him than clothes or other coverings of his body. He is complete, and without leaving any part of himself behind on earth has taken wing and gone away altogether: he has tarried a brief space above us while his soul was being cleansed and purified from the vices and rust which all mortal lives must contract, and from thence he will rise to the high heavens and join the souls of the blessed: a saintly company will welcome him thither,—Scipios and Catos; and among the rest of those who have held life cheap and set themselves free, thanks to death, albeit all there are alike akin, your father, Marcia, will embrace his grandson as he rejoices in the unwonted light, will teach him the motion of the stars which are so near to them, and introduce him with joy into all the secrets of nature, not by guesswork but by real knowledge. Even as a stranger is grateful to one who shows him the way about an unknown city, so is a searcher after the causes of what he sees in the heavens to one of his own family who can explain them to him. He will delight in gazing deep down upon the earth, for it is a delight to look from aloft at what one has left below. Bear yourself, therefore, Marcia, as though you were placed before the eyes of your father and your son, yet not such as you knew them, but far loftier beings, placed in a higher sphere. Blush, then, to do any mean or common action, or to weep for those your relatives who have been changed for the better. Free to roam through the open, boundless realms of the everliving universe, they are not hindered in their course by intervening seas, lofty mountains, impassable valleys, or the treacherous fiats of the Syrtes: they find a level path everywhere, are swift and ready of motion, and are permeated in their turn by the stars and dwell together with them.

XXVI. Imagine then, Marcia, that your father, whose influence over you was as great as yours over your son, no longer in that frame of mind in which he deplored the civil wars, or in which he for ever proscribed those who would have proscribed him, but in a mood as much more joyful as his abode now is higher than of old, is saying, as he looks down from the height of heaven, “My daughter, why does

this sorrow possess you for so long? why do you live in such ignorance of the truth, as to think that your son has been unfairly dealt with because he has returned to his ancestors in his prime, without decay of body or mind, leaving his family flourishing? Do you not know with what storms Fortune unsettles everything? how she proves kind and compliant to none save to those who have the fewest possible dealings with her? Need I remind you of kings who would have been the happiest of mortals had death sooner withdrawn them from the ruin which was approaching them? or of Roman generals, whose greatness, had but a few years been taken from their lives, would have wanted nothing to render it complete? or of men of the highest distinction and noblest birth who have calmly offered their necks to the stroke of a soldier's sword? Look at your father and your grandfather: the former fell into the hands of a foreign murderer: I allowed no man to take any liberties with me, and by abstinence from food showed that my spirit was as great as my writings had represented it. Why, then, should that member of our household who died most happily of all be mourned in it the longest? We have all assembled together, and, not being plunged in utter darkness, we see that with you on earth there is nothing to be wished for, nothing grand or magnificent, but all is mean, sad, anxious, and hardly receives a fractional part of the clear light in which we dwell. I need not say that here are no frantic charges of rival armies, no fleets shattering one another, no parricides, actual or meditated, no courts where men babble over lawsuits for days together, here is nothing underhand, all hearts and minds are open and unveiled, our life is public and known to all, and that we command a view of all time and of things to come. I used to take pleasure in compiling the history of what took place in one century among a few people in the most out-of-the-way corner of the world: here I enjoy the spectacle of all the centuries, the whole chain of events from age to age as long as years have been. I may view kingdoms when they rise and when they fall, and behold the ruin of cities and the new channels made by the sea. If it will be any consolation to you in your bereavement to know that it is the common lot of all, be assured that nothing will continue to stand in the place in which it now stands, but that time will lay everything low and bear it away with itself: it will sport, not only with men—for how small a part are they of the dominion of Fortune? —but with districts, provinces, quarters of the world: it will efface entire mountains, and in other places will pile new rocks on high: it will dry up seas, change the course of rivers, destroy the intercourse of nation with nation, and break up the communion and fellowship of the human race: in other regions it will swallow up cities by opening vast chasms in the earth, will shake them with earthquakes, will breathe forth pestilence from the nether world, cover all habitable ground with inundations and destroy every creature in the flooded world, or burn up all mortals by a huge conflagration. When the time shall arrive for the world to be brought to an end, that it may begin its life anew, all the forces of nature will perish in conflict with one another, the stars will be dashed together, and all the lights which now gleam in regular order in various parts of the sky will then blaze in one fire with all their fuel burning at once. Then we also, the souls of the blest and the heirs of eternal

life, whenever God thinks fit to reconstruct the universe, when all things are settling down again, we also, being a small accessory to the universal wreck,[13] shall be changed into our old elements. Happy is your son, Marcia, in that he already knows this."

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[1] See Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire," ch. xlv.

[2] If it is a pain to dwell upon the thought of lost friends, of course you do not continually refresh the memory of them by speaking of them.

[3] See my note on invidiam facere alicui in Juv. 15.—J. E. B. Mayor.

[4] Koch declares that this cannot be the true reading, and suggests deminutio, 'degradation.'

[5] This seems to have been part of the ceremony of dedication. Pulvillus was dedicating the Temple of Jupiter in the Capitol. See Livy, ii. 8; Cic. Pro Domo, paragraph cxxi.

[6] Lucius Aemilius Paullus conquered Perses, the last King of Macedonia, B.C. 168.

[7] "For he had four sons, two, as has been already related, adopted into other families, Scipio and Fabius; and two others, who were still children, by his second wife, who lived in his own house. Of these, one died five days before Aemilius's triumph, at the age of fourteen, and the other, twelve years old, died three days after it: so that there was no Roman that did not grieve for him," &c.—Plutarch, "Life of Aemilius," ch. xxxv.

[8] A. U. C. 695, B.C 59.

[9] Virg. Ae. III. 418.

[10] See Mayor's note on Juv. i., and above, c. 16, § 4.

[11] Lipsius points out that this idea is borrowed from the comic poet Antiphanes. See Meineke's "Comic Fragments," p. 3.

[12] This I believe to be the meaning of the text, but Koch reasonably conjectures that the true reading is "editur subscriptio," "an indictment was made out against him." See "On Benefits," iii. 26.

[13] Ruinae; Koch's urinae is a misprint.

THE SEVENTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO GALLIO.

OF A HAPPY LIFE.

I. All men, brother Gallio, wish to live happily, but are dull at perceiving exactly what it is that makes life happy: and so far is it from being easy to attain to happiness that the more eagerly a man struggles to reach it the further he departs from it, if he takes the wrong road; for, since this leads in the opposite direction, his very swiftness carries him all the further away. We must therefore first define clearly what it is at which we aim: next we must consider by what path we may most speedily reach it, for on our journey itself, provided it be made in the right direction, we shall learn how much progress we have made each day, and how much nearer we are to the goal towards which our natural desires urge us. But as long as we wander at random, not following any guide except the shouts and discordant clamours of those who invite us to proceed in different directions, our short life will be wasted in useless roamings, even if we labour both day and night to get a good understanding. Let us not therefore decide whither we must tend, and by what path, without the advice of some experienced person who has explored the region which we are about to enter, because this journey is not subject to the same conditions as others; for in them some distinctly understood track and inquiries made of the natives make it impossible for us to go wrong, but here the most beaten and frequented tracks are those which lead us most astray. Nothing, therefore, is more important than that we should not, like sheep, follow the flock that has gone before us, and thus proceed not whither we ought, but whither the rest are going. Now nothing gets us into greater troubles than our subservience to common rumour, and our habit of thinking that those things are best which are most generally received as such, of taking many counterfeits for truly good things, and of living not by reason but by imitation of others. This is the cause of those great heaps into which men rush till they are piled one upon another. In a great crush of people, when the crowd presses upon itself, no one can fall without drawing some one else down upon him, and those who go before cause the destruction of those who follow them. You may observe the same thing in human life: no one can merely go wrong by himself, but he must become both the cause and adviser of another’s wrongdoing. It is harmful to follow the march of those who go before us, and since every one had rather believe another than form his own opinion, we never pass a deliberate judgment upon life, but some traditional error always entangles us and brings us to ruin, and we perish because we follow

other men’s examples: we should be cured of this if we were to disengage ourselves from the herd; but as it is, the mob is ready to fight against reason in defence of its own mistake. Consequently the same thing happens as at elections, where, when the fickle breeze of popular favour has veered round, those who have been chosen consuls and praetors are viewed with admiration by the very men who made them so. That we should all approve and disapprove of the same things is the end of every decision which is given according to the voice of the majority.

II. When we are considering a happy life, you cannot answer me as though after a division of the House, “This view has most supporters;” because for that very reason it is the worse of the two: matters do not stand so well with mankind that the majority should prefer the better course: the more people do a thing the worse it is likely to be. Let us therefore inquire, not what is most commonly done, but what is best for us to do, and what will establish us in the possession of undying happiness, not what is approved of by the vulgar, the worst possible exponents of truth. By “the vulgar” I mean both those who wear woollen cloaks and those who wear crowns;[1] for I do not regard the colour of the clothes with which they are covered: I do not trust my eyes to tell me what a man is: I have a better and more trustworthy light by which I can distinguish what is true from what is false: let the mind find out what is good for the mind. If a man ever allows his mind some breathing space and has leisure for communing with himself, what truths he will confess to himself, after having been put to the torture by his own self! He will say, “Whatever I have hitherto done I wish were undone: when I think over what I have said, I envy dumb people: whatever I have longed for seems to have been what my enemies would pray might befall me: good heaven, how far more endurable what I have feared seems to be than what I have lusted after. I have been at enmity with many men, and have changed my dislike of them into friendship, if friendship can exist between bad men: yet I have not yet become reconciled to myself. I have striven with all my strength to raise myself above the common herd, and to make myself remarkable for some talent: what have I effected save to make myself a mark for the arrows of my enemies, and show those who hate me where to wound me? Do you see those who praise your eloquence, who covet your wealth, who court your favour, or who vaunt your power? All these either are, or, which comes to the same thing, may be your enemies: the number of those who envy you is as great as that of those who admire you; why do I not rather seek for some good thing which I can use and feel, not one which I can show? these good things which men gaze at in wonder, which they crowd to see, which one points out to another with speechless admiration, are outwardly brilliant, but within are miseries to those who possess them.”

III. Let us seek for some blessing, which does not merely look fine, but is sound and good throughout alike, and most beautiful in the parts which are least seen: let us unearth this. It is not far distant from us; it can be discovered: all that is necessary is to know whither to stretch out your hand: but, as it is, we behave as

though we were in the dark, and reach out beyond what is nearest to us, striking as we do so against the very things that we want. However, that I may not draw you into digressions, I will pass over the opinions of other philosophers, because it would take a long time to state and confute them all: take ours. When, however, I say "ours," I do not bind myself to any one of the chiefs of the Stoic school, for I too have a right to form my own opinion. I shall, therefore, follow the authority of some of them, but shall ask some others to discriminate their meaning:[2] perhaps, when after having reported all their opinions, I am asked for my own, I shall impugn none of my predecessors' decisions, and shall say, "I will also add somewhat to them." Meanwhile I follow nature, which is a point upon which every one of the Stoic philosophers are agreed: true wisdom consists in not departing from nature and in moulding our conduct according to her laws and model. A happy life, therefore, is one which is in accordance with its own nature, and cannot be brought about unless in the first place the mind be sound and remain so without interruption, and next, be bold and vigorous, enduring all things with most admirable courage, suited to the times in which it lives, careful of the body and its appurtenances, yet not troublesomely careful. It must also set due value upon all the things which adorn our lives, without over-estimating any one of them, and must be able to enjoy the bounty of Fortune without becoming her slave. You understand without my mentioning it that an unbroken calm and freedom ensue, when we have driven away all those things which either excite us or alarm us: for in the place of sensual pleasures and those slight perishable matters which are connected with the basest crimes, we thus gain an immense, unchangeable, equable joy, together with peace, calmness and greatness of mind, and kindliness: for all savageness is a sign of weakness.

IV. Our highest good may also be defined otherwise, that is to say, the same idea may be expressed in different language. Just as the same army may at one time be extended more widely, at another contracted into a smaller compass, and may either be curved towards the wings by a depression in the line of the centre, or drawn up in a straight line, while, in whatever figure it be arrayed, its strength and loyalty remain unchanged; so also our definition of the highest good may in some cases be expressed diffusely and at great length, while in others it is put into a short and concise form. Thus, it will come to the same thing, if I say "The highest good is a mind which despises the accidents of fortune, and takes pleasure in virtue": or, "It is an unconquerable strength of mind, knowing the world well, gentle in its dealings, showing great courtesy and consideration for those with whom it is brought into contact." Or we may choose to define it by calling that man happy who knows good and bad only in the form of good or bad minds: who worships honour, and is satisfied with his own virtue, who is neither puffed up by good fortune nor cast down by evil fortune, who knows no other good than that which he is able to bestow upon himself, whose real pleasure lies in despising pleasures. If you choose to pursue this digression further, you can put this same idea into many other forms, without impairing or weakening its meaning: for what prevents our saying

that a happy life consists in a mind which is free, upright, undaunted, and steadfast, beyond the influence of fear or desire, which thinks nothing good except honour, and nothing bad except shame, and regards everything else as a mass of mean details which can neither add anything to nor take anything away from the happiness of life, but which come and go without either increasing or diminishing the highest good? A man of these principles, whether he will or no, must be accompanied by a continual cheerfulness, a high happiness, which comes indeed from on high because he delights in what he has, and desires no greater pleasures than those which his home affords. Is he not right in allowing these to turn the scale against petty, ridiculous, and shortlived movements of his wretched body? on the day on which he becomes proof against pleasure he also becomes proof against pain. See, on the other hand, how evil and guilty a slavery the man is forced to serve who is dominated in turn by pleasures and pains, those most untrustworthy and passionate of masters. We must, therefore, escape from them into freedom. This nothing will bestow upon us save contempt of Fortune: but if we attain to this, then there will dawn upon us those invaluable blessings, the repose of a mind that is at rest in a safe haven, its lofty imaginings, its great and steady delight at casting out errors and learning to know the truth, its courtesy, and its cheerfulness, in all of which we shall take delight, not regarding them as good things, but as proceeding from the proper good of man.

V. Since I have begun to make my definitions without a too strict adherence to the letter, a man may be called “happy” who, thanks to reason, has ceased either to hope or to fear: but rocks also feel neither fear nor sadness, nor do cattle, yet no one would call those things happy which cannot comprehend what happiness is. With them you may class men whose dull nature and want of self-knowledge reduces them to the level of cattle, mere animals: there is no difference between the one and the other, because the latter have no reason, while the former have only a corrupted form of it, crooked and cunning to their own hurt. For no one can be styled happy who is beyond the influence of truth: and consequently a happy life is unchangeable, and is founded upon a true and trustworthy discernment; for the mind is uncontaminated and freed from all evils only when it is able to escape not merely from wounds but also from scratches, when it will always be able to maintain the position which it has taken up, and defend it even against the angry assaults of Fortune: for with regard to sensual pleasures, though they were to surround one on every side, and use every means of assault, trying to win over the mind by caresses and making trial of every conceivable stratagem to attract either our entire selves or our separate parts, yet what mortal that retains any traces of human origin would wish to be tickled day and night, and, neglecting his mind, to devote himself to bodily enjoyments?

VI. “But,” says our adversary, “the mind also will have pleasures of its own.” Let it have them, then, and let it sit in judgment over luxury and pleasures; let it indulge itself to the full in all those matters which give sensual delights: then let it look back upon what it enjoyed before, and with all those faded sensualities fresh in

its memory let it rejoice and look eagerly forward to those other pleasures which it experienced long ago, and intends to experience again, and while the body lies in helpless repletion in the present, let it send its thoughts onward towards the future, and take stock of its hopes: all this will make it appear, in my opinion, yet more wretched, because it is insanity to choose evil instead of good: now no insane person can be happy, and no one can be sane if he regards what is injurious as the highest good and strives to obtain it. The happy man, therefore, is he who can make a right judgment in all things: he is happy who in his present circumstances, whatever they may be, is satisfied and on friendly terms with the conditions of his life. That man is happy, whose reason recommends to him the whole posture of his affairs.

VII. Even those very people who declare the highest good to be in the belly, see what a dishonourable position they have assigned to it: and therefore they say that pleasure cannot be parted from virtue, and that no one can either live honourably without living cheerfully, nor yet live cheerfully without living honourably. I do not see how these very different matters can have any connexion with one another. What is there, I pray you, to prevent virtue existing apart from pleasure? of course the reason is that all good things derive their origin from virtue, and therefore even those things which you cherish and seek for come originally from its roots. Yet, if they were entirely inseparable, we should not see some things to be pleasant, but not honourable, and others most honourable indeed, but hard and only to be attained by suffering. Add to this, that pleasure visits the basest lives, but virtue cannot co-exist with an evil life; yet some unhappy people are not without pleasure, nay, it is owing to pleasure itself that they are unhappy; and this could not take place if pleasure had any connexion with virtue, whereas virtue is often without pleasure, and never stands in need of it. Why do you put together two things which are unlike and even incompatible one with another? virtue is a lofty quality, sublime, royal, unconquerable, untiring: pleasure is low, slavish, weakly, perishable; its haunts and homes are the brothel and the tavern. You will meet virtue in the temple, the market-place, the senate house, manning the walls, covered with dust, sunburnt, horny-handed: you will find pleasure skulking out of sight, seeking for shady nooks at the public baths, hot chambers, and places which dread the visits of the aedile, soft, effeminate, reeking of wine and perfumes, pale or perhaps painted and made up with cosmetics. The highest good is immortal: it knows no ending, and does not admit of either satiety or regret: for a right-thinking mind never alters or becomes hateful to itself, nor do the best things ever undergo any change: but pleasure dies at the very moment when it charms us most: it has no great scope, and therefore it soon cloys and wearies us, and fades away as soon as its first impulse is over: indeed, we cannot depend upon anything whose nature is to change. Consequently it is not even possible that there should be any solid substance in that which comes and goes so swiftly, and which perishes by the very exercise of its own functions, for it arrives at a point at which it ceases to be, and even while it is beginning always keeps its end in view.

VIII. What answer are we to make to the reflexion that pleasure belongs to good and bad men alike, and that bad men take as much delight in their shame as good men in noble things? This was why the ancients bade us lead the highest, not the most pleasant life, in order that pleasure might not be the guide but the companion of a right-thinking and honourable mind; for it is Nature whom we ought to make our guide: let our reason watch her, and be advised by her. To live happily, then, is the same thing as to live according to Nature: what this may be, I will explain. If we guard the endowments of the body and the advantages of nature with care and fearlessness, as things soon to depart and given to us only for a day; if we do not fall under their dominion, nor allow ourselves to become the slaves of what is no part of our own being; if we assign to all bodily pleasures and external delights the same position which is held by auxiliaries and light-armed troops in a camp; if we make them our servants, not our masters—then and then only are they of value to our minds. A man should be unbiassed and not to be conquered by external things: he ought to admire himself alone, to feel confidence in his own spirit, and so to order his life as to be ready alike for good or for bad fortune. Let not his confidence be without knowledge, nor his knowledge without steadfastness: let him always abide by what he has once determined, and let there be no erasure in his doctrines. It will be understood, even though I append it not, that such a man will be tranquil and composed in his demeanour, high-minded and courteous in his actions. Let reason be encouraged by the senses to seek for the truth, and draw its first principles from thence: indeed it has no other base of operations or place from which to start in pursuit of truth: it must fall back upon itself. Even the all-embracing universe and God who is its guide extends himself forth into outward things, and yet altogether returns from all sides back to himself. Let our mind do the same thing: when, following its bodily senses it has by means of them sent itself forth into the things of the outward world, let it remain still their master and its own. By this means we shall obtain a strength and an ability which are united and allied together, and shall derive from it that reason which never halts between two opinions, nor is dull in forming its perceptions, beliefs, or convictions. Such a mind, when it has ranged itself in order, made its various parts agree together, and, if I may so express myself, harmonized them, has attained to the highest good: for it has nothing evil or hazardous remaining, nothing to shake it or make it stumble: it will do everything under the guidance of its own will, and nothing unexpected will befal it, but whatever may be done by it will turn out well, and that, too, readily and easily, without the doer having recourse to any underhand devices: for slow and hesitating action are the signs of discord and want of settled purpose. You may, then, boldly declare that the highest good is singleness of mind: for where agreement and unity are, there must the virtues be: it is the vices that are at war one with another.

IX. “But,” says our adversary, “you yourself only practise virtue because you hope to obtain some pleasure from it.” In the first place, even though virtue may afford us pleasure, still we do not seek after her on that account: for she does not bestow this, but

bestows this to boot, nor is this the end for which she labours, but her labour wins this also, although it be directed to another end. As in a tilled-field, when ploughed for corn, some flowers are found amongst it, and yet, though these posies may charm the eye, all this labour was not spent in order to produce them—the man who sowed the field had another object in view, he gained this over and above it—so pleasure is not the reward or the cause of virtue, but comes in addition to it; nor do we choose virtue because she gives us pleasure, but she gives us pleasure also if we choose her. The highest good lies in the act of choosing her, and in the attitude of the noblest minds, which when once it has fulfilled its function and established itself within its own limits has attained to the highest good, and needs nothing more: for there is nothing outside of the whole, any more than there is anything beyond the end. You are mistaken, therefore, when you ask me what it is on account of which I seek after virtue: for you are seeking for something above the highest. Do you ask what I seek from virtue? I answer. Herself: for she has nothing better; she is her own reward. Does this not appear great enough, when I tell you that the highest good is an unyielding strength of mind, wisdom, magnanimity, sound judgment, freedom, harmony, beauty? Do you still ask me for something greater, of which these may be regarded as the attributes? Why do you talk of pleasures to me? I am seeking to find what is good for man, not for his belly; why, cattle and whales have larger ones than he.

X. “You purposely misunderstand what I say,” says he, “for I too say that no one can live pleasantly unless he lives honorably also, and this cannot be the case with dumb animals who measure the extent of their happiness by that of their food. I loudly and publicly proclaim that what I call a pleasant life cannot exist without the addition of virtue.” Yet who does not know that the greatest fools drink the deepest of those pleasures of yours? or that vice is full of enjoyments, and that the mind itself suggests to itself many perverted, vicious forms of pleasure?—in the first place arrogance, excessive self-esteem, swaggering precedence over other men, a shortsighted, nay, a blind devotion to his own interests, dissolute luxury, excessive delight springing from the most trifling and childish causes, and also talkativeness, pride that takes a pleasure in insulting others, sloth, and the decay of a dull mind which goes to sleep over itself. All these are dissipated by virtue, which plucks a man by the ear, and measures the value of pleasures before she permits them to be used; nor does she set much store by those which she allows to pass current, for she merely allows their use, and her cheerfulness is not due to her use of them, but to her moderation in using them. “Yet when moderation lessens pleasure, it impairs the highest good.” You devote yourself to pleasures, I check them; you indulge in pleasure, I use it; you think that it is the highest good, I do not even think it to be good: for the sake of pleasure I do nothing, you do everything.

XI. When I say that I do nothing for the sake of pleasure, I allude to that wise man, whom alone you admit to be capable of pleasure: now I do not call a man wise who is overcome by anything, let alone by pleasure: yet, if engrossed by pleasure, how will he resist toil,

danger, want, and all the ills which surround and threaten the life of man? How will he bear the sight of death or of pain? How will he endure the tumult of the world, and make head against so many most active foes, if he be conquered by so effeminate an antagonist? He will do whatever pleasure advises him: well, do you not see how many things it will advise him to do? “It will not,” says our adversary, “be able to give him any bad advice, because it is combined with virtue?” Again, do you not see what a poor kind of highest good that must be which requires a guardian to ensure its being good at all? and how is virtue to rule pleasure if she follows it, seeing that to follow is the duty of a subordinate, to rule that of a commander? do you put that which commands in the background? According to your school, virtue has the dignified office of preliminary taster of pleasures. We shall, however, see whether virtue still remains virtue among those who treat her with such contempt, for if she leaves her proper station she can no longer keep her proper name: in the meanwhile, to keep to the point, I will show you many men beset by pleasures, men upon whom Fortune has showered all her gifts, whom you must needs admit to be bad men. Look at Nomentanus and Apicius, who digest all the good things, as they call them, of the sea and land, and review upon their tables the whole animal kingdom. Look at them as they lie on beds of roses gloating over their banquet, delighting their ears with music, their eyes with exhibitions, their palates with flavours: their whole bodies are titillated with soft and soothing applications, and lest even their nostrils should be idle, the very place in which, they solemnize[3] the rites of luxury is scented with various perfumes. You will say that these men live in the midst of pleasures. Yet they are ill at ease, because they take pleasure in what is not good.

XII. “They are ill at ease,” replies he, “because many things arise which distract their thoughts, and their minds are disquieted by conflicting opinions.” I admit that this is true: still these very men, foolish, inconsistent, and certain to feel remorse as they are, do nevertheless receive great pleasure, and we must allow that in so doing they are as far from feeling any trouble as they are from forming a right judgment, and that, as is the case with many people, they are possessed by a merry madness, and laugh while they rave. The pleasures of wise men, on the other hand, are mild, decorous, verging on dulness, kept under restraint and scarcely noticeable, and are neither invited to come nor received with honour when they come of their own accord, nor are they welcomed with any delight by those whom they visit, who mix them up with their lives and fill up empty spaces with them, like an amusing farce in the intervals of serious business. Let them no longer, then, join incongruous matters together, or connect pleasure with virtue, a mistake whereby they court the worst of men. The reckless profligate, always in liquor and belching out the fumes of wine, believes that he lives with virtue, because he knows that he lives with pleasure, for he hears it said that pleasure cannot exist apart from virtue; consequently he dubs his vices with the title of wisdom and parades all that he ought to conceal. So, men are not encouraged by Epicurus to run riot, but the vicious hide their excesses in the lap of philosophy, and flock to the schools in which they hear the praises of pleasure.

They do not consider how sober and temperate—for so, by Hercules, I believe it to be—that “pleasure” of Epicurus is, but they rush at his mere name, seeking to obtain some protection and cloak for their vices. They lose, therefore, the one virtue which their evil life possessed, that of being ashamed of doing wrong: for they praise what they used to blush at, and boast of their vices. Thus modesty can never reassert itself, when shameful idleness is dignified with an honourable name. The reason why that praise which your school lavishes upon pleasure is so hurtful, is because the honourable part of its teaching passes unnoticed, but the degrading part is seen by all.

XIII. I myself believe, though my Stoic comrades would be unwilling to hear me say so, that the teaching of Epicurus was upright and holy, and even, if you examine it narrowly, stern: for this much talked of pleasure is reduced to a very narrow compass, and he bids pleasure submit to the same law which we bid virtue do—I mean, to obey nature. Luxury, however, is not satisfied with what is enough for nature. What is the consequence? Whoever thinks that happiness consists in lazy sloth, and alternations of gluttony and profligacy, requires a good patron for a bad action, and when he has become an Epicurean, having been led to do so by the attractive name of that school, he follows, not the pleasure which he there hears spoken of, but that which he brought thither with him, and, haying learned to think that his vices coincide with the maxims of that philosophy, he indulges in them no longer timidly and in dark corners, but boldly in the face of day. I will not, therefore, like most of our school, say that the sect of Epicurus is the teacher of crime, but what I say is: it is ill spoken of, it has a bad reputation, and yet it does not deserve it. “Who can know this without having been admitted to its inner mysteries?” Its very outside gives opportunity for scandal, and encourages men’s baser desires: it is like a brave man dressed in a woman’s gown: your chastity is assured, your manhood is safe, your body is submitted to nothing disgraceful, but your hand holds a drum (like a priest of Cybele). Choose, then, some honourable superscription for your school, some writing which shall in itself arouse the mind: that which at present stands over your door has been invented by the vices. He who ranges himself on the side of virtue gives thereby a proof of a noble disposition: he who follows pleasure appears to be weakly, worn out, degrading his manhood, likely to fall into infamous vices unless someone discriminates his pleasures for him, so that he may know which remain within the bounds of natural desire, which are frantic and boundless, and become all the more insatiable the more they are satisfied. But come! let virtue lead the way: then every step will be safe. Too much pleasure is hurtful: but with virtue we need fear no excess of any kind, because moderation is contained in virtue herself. That which is injured by its own extent cannot be a good thing: besides, what better guide can there be than reason for beings endowed with a reasoning nature? so if this combination pleases you, if you are willing to proceed to a happy life thus accompanied, let virtue lead the way, let pleasure follow and hang about the body like a shadow: it is the part of a mind incapable of great things to hand over virtue, the highest of all qualities, as a

handmaid to pleasure.

XIV. Let virtue lead the way and bear the standard: we shall have pleasure for all that, but we shall be her masters and controllers; she may win some concessions from us, but will not force us to do anything. On the contrary, those who have permitted pleasure to lead the van, have neither one nor the other: for they lose virtue altogether, and yet they do not possess pleasure, but are possessed by it, and are either tortured by its absence or choked by its excess, being wretched if deserted by it, and yet more wretched if overwhelmed by it, like those who are caught in the shoals of the Syrtes and at one time are left on dry ground and at another tossed on the flowing waves. This arises from an exaggerated want of self-control, and a hidden love of evil: for it is dangerous for one who seeks after evil instead of good to attain his object. As we hunt wild beasts with toil and peril, and even when they are caught find them an anxious possession, for they often tear their keepers to pieces, even so are great pleasures: they turn out to be great evils and take their owners prisoner. The more numerous and the greater they are, the more inferior and the slave of more masters does that man become whom the vulgar call a happy man. I may even press this analogy further: as the man who tracks wild animals to their lairs, and who sets great store on—

“Seeking with snares the wandering brutes to noose,”

and

“Making their hounds the spacious glade surround,”

that he may follow their tracks, neglects far more desirable things, and leaves many duties unfulfilled, so he who pursues pleasure postpones everything to it, disregards that first essential, liberty, and sacrifices it to his belly; nor does he buy pleasure for himself, but sells himself to pleasure.

XV. “But what,” asks our adversary, “is there to hinder virtue and pleasure being combined together, and a highest good being thus formed, so that honour and pleasure may be the same thing?” Because nothing except what is honourable can form a part of honour, and the highest good would lose its purity if it were to see within itself anything unlike its own better part. Even the joy which arises from virtue, although it be a good thing, yet is not a part of absolute good, any more than cheerfulness or peace of mind, which are indeed good things, but which merely follow the highest good, and do not contribute to its perfection, although they are generated by the

noblest causes. Whoever on the other hand forms an alliance, and that, too, a one-sided one, between virtue and pleasure, clogs whatever strength the one may possess by the weakness of the other, and sends liberty under the yoke, for liberty can only remain unconquered as long as she knows nothing more valuable than herself: for he begins to need the help of Fortune, which is the most utter slavery: his life becomes anxious, full of suspicion, timorous, fearful of accidents, waiting in agony for critical moments of time. You do not afford virtue a solid immoveable base if you bid it stand on what is unsteady: and what can be so unsteady as dependence on mere chance, and the vicissitudes of the body and of those things which act on the body? How can such a man obey God and receive everything which comes to pass in a cheerful spirit, never complaining of fate, and putting a good construction upon everything that befalls him, if he be agitated by the petty pin-pricks of pleasures and pains? A man cannot be a good protector of his country, a good avenger of her wrongs, or a good defender of his friends, if he be inclined to pleasures. Let the highest good, then, rise to that height from whence no force can dislodge it, whither neither pain can ascend, nor hope, nor fear, nor anything else that can impair the authority of the “highest good.” Thither virtue alone can make her way: by her aid that hill must be climbed: she will bravely stand her ground and endure whatever may befal her not only resignedly, but even willingly: she will know that all hard times come in obedience to natural laws, and like a good soldier she will bear wounds, count scars, and when transfixed and dying will yet adore the general for whom she falls: she will bear in mind the old maxim “Follow God.” On the other hand, he who grumbles and complains and bemoans himself is nevertheless forcibly obliged to obey orders, and is dragged away, however much against his will, to carry them out: yet what madness is it to be dragged rather than to follow? as great, by Hercules, as it is folly and ignorance of one’s true position to grieve because one has not got something or because something has caused us rough treatment, or to be surprised or indignant at those ills which befall good men as well as bad ones, I mean diseases, deaths, illnesses, and the other cross accidents of human life. Let us bear with magnanimity whatever the system of the universe makes it needful for us to bear: we are all bound by this oath: “To bear the ills of mortal life, and to submit with a good grace to what we cannot avoid.” We have been born into a monarchy: our liberty is to obey God.

XVI. True happiness, therefore, consists in virtue: and what will this virtue bid you do? Not to think anything bad or good which is connected neither with virtue nor with wickedness: and in the next place, both to endure unmoved the assaults of evil, and, as far as is right, to form a god out of what is good. What reward does she promise you for this campaign? an enormous one, and one that raises you to the level of the gods: you shall be subject to no restraint and to no want; you shall be free, safe, unhurt; you shall fail in nothing that you attempt; you shall be debarred from nothing; everything shall turn out according to your wish; no misfortune shall befal you; nothing shall happen to you except what you expect and hope for. “What! does virtue alone suffice to make you happy?”

why, of course, consummate and god-like virtue such as this not only suffices, but more than suffices: for when a man is placed beyond the reach of any desire, what can he possibly lack? if all that he needs is concentred in himself, how can he require anything from without? He, however, who is only on the road to virtue, although he may have made great progress along it, nevertheless needs some favour from fortune while he is still struggling among mere human interests, while he is untying that knot, and all the bonds which bind him to mortality. What, then, is the difference between them? it is that some are tied more or less tightly by these bonds, and some have even tied themselves with them as well; whereas he who has made progress towards the upper regions and raised himself upwards drags a looser chain, and though not yet free, is yet as good as free.

XVII. If, therefore, any one of those dogs who yelp at philosophy were to say, as they are wont to do, “Why, then, do you talk so much more bravely than you live? why do you check your words in the presence of your superiors, and consider money to be a necessary implement? why are you disturbed when you sustain losses, and weep on hearing of the death of your wife or your friend? why do you pay regard to common rumour, and feel annoyed by calumnious gossip? why is your estate more elaborately kept than its natural use requires? why do you not dine according to your own maxims? why is your furniture smarter than it need be? why do you drink wine that is older than yourself? why are your grounds laid out? why do you plant trees which afford nothing except shade? why does your wife wear in her ears the price of a rich man’s house? why are your children at school dressed in costly clothes? why is it a science to wait upon you at table? why is your silver plate not set down anyhow or at random, but skilfully disposed in regular order, with a superintendent to preside over the carving of the viands?” Add to this, if you like, the questions “Why do you own property beyond the seas? why do you own more than you know of? it is a shame to you not to know your slaves by sight: for you must be very neglectful of them if you only own a few, or very extravagant if you have too many for your memory to retain.” I will add some reproaches afterwards, and will bring more accusations against myself than you think of: for the present I will make you the following answer. “I am not a wise man, and I will not be one in order to feed your spite: so do not require me to be on a level with the best of men, but merely to be better than the worst: I am satisfied, if every day I take away something from my vices and correct my faults. I have not arrived at perfect soundness of mind, indeed, I never shall arrive at it: I compound palliatives rather than remedies for my gout, and am satisfied if it comes at rarer intervals and does not shoot so painfully. Compared with your feet, which are lame, I am a racer.” I make this speech, not on my own behalf, for I am steeped in vices of every kind, but on behalf of one who has made some progress in virtue.

XVIII. “You talk one way,” objects our adversary, “and live another.” You most spiteful of creatures, you who always show the bitterest hatred to the best of men, this reproach was flung at

Plato, at Epicurus, at Zeno: for all these declared how they ought to live, not how they did live. I speak of virtue, not of myself, and when I blame vices, I blame my own first of all: when I have the power, I shall live as I ought to do: spite, however deeply steeped in venom, shall not keep me back from what is best: that poison itself with which you bespatter others, with which you choke yourselves, shall not hinder me from continuing to praise that life which I do not, indeed, lead, but which I know I ought to lead, from loving virtue and from following after her, albeit a long way behind her and with halting gait. Am I to expect that evil speaking will respect anything, seeing that it respected neither Rutilius nor Cato? Will any one care about being thought too rich by men for whom Diogenes the Cynic was not poor enough? That most energetic philosopher fought against all the desires of the body, and was poorer even than the other Cynics, in that besides haying given up possessing anything he had also given up asking for anything: yet they reproached him for not being sufficiently in want: as though forsooth it were poverty, not virtue, of which he professed knowledge.

XIX. They say that Diodorus, the Epicurean philosopher, who within these last few days put an end to his life with his own hand, did not act according to the precepts of Epicurus, in cutting his throat: some choose to regard this act as the result of madness, others of recklessness; he, meanwhile, happy and filled with the consciousness of his own goodness, has borne testimony to himself by his manner of departing from life, has commended the repose of a life spent at anchor in a safe harbour, and has said what you do not like to hear, because you too ought to do it:

“I’ve lived, I’ve run the race which Fortune set me.”

You argue about the life and death of another, and yelp at the name of men whom some peculiarly noble quality has rendered great, just as tiny curs do at the approach of strangers: for it is to your interest that no one should appear to be good, as if virtue in another were a reproach to all your crimes. You enviously compare the glories of others with your own dirty actions, and do not understand how greatly to your disadvantage it is to venture to do so: for if they who follow after virtue be greedy, lustful, and fond of power, what must you be, who hate the very name of virtue? You say that no one acts up to his professions, or lives according to the standard which he sets up in his discourses: what wonder, seeing that the words which they speak are brave, gigantic, and able to weather all the storms which wreck mankind, whereas they themselves are struggling to tear themselves away from crosses into which each one of you is driving his own nail. Yet men who are crucified hang from one single pole, but these who punish themselves are divided between as many crosses as they have lusts, but yet are given to evil speaking, and are so magnificent in their contempt of the vices

of others that I should suppose that they had none of their own, were it not that some criminals when on the gibbet spit upon the spectators.

XX. “Philosophers do not carry into effect all that they teach.” No; but they effect much good by their teaching, by the noble thoughts which they conceive in their minds: would, indeed, that they could act up to their talk: what could be happier than they would be? but in the meanwhile you have no right to despise good sayings and hearts full of good thoughts. Men deserve praise for engaging in profitable studies, even though they stop short of producing any results. Why need we wonder if those who begin to climb a steep path do not succeed in ascending it very high? yet, if you be a man, look with respect on those who attempt great things, even though they fall. It is the act of a generous spirit to proportion its efforts not to its own strength but to that of human nature, to entertain lofty aims, and to conceive plans which are too vast to be carried into execution even by those who are endowed with gigantic intellects, who appoint for themselves the following rules: I will look upon death or upon a comedy with the same expression of countenance: I will submit to labours, however great they may be, supporting the strength of my body by that of my mind: I will despise riches when I have them as much as when I have them not; if they be elsewhere I will not be more gloomy, if they sparkle around me I will not be more lively than I should otherwise be: whether Fortune comes or goes I will take no notice of her: I will view all lands as though they belong to me, and my own as though they belonged to all mankind: I will so live as to remember that I was born for others, and will thank Nature on this account: for in what fashion could she have done better for me? she has given me alone to all, and all to me alone. Whatever I may possess, I will neither hoard it greedily nor squander it recklessly. I will think that I have no possessions so real as those which I have given away to deserving people: I will not reckon benefits by their magnitude or number, or by anything except the value set upon them by the receiver: I never will consider a gift to be a large one if it be bestowed upon a worthy object. I will do nothing because of public opinion, but everything because of conscience: whenever I do anything alone by myself I will believe that the eyes of the Roman people are upon me while I do it. In eating and drinking my object shall be to quench the desires of Nature, not to fill and empty my belly. I will be agreeable with my friends, gentle and mild to my foes: I will grant pardon before I am asked for it, and will meet the wishes of honourable men half way: I will bear in mind that the world is my native city, that its governors are the gods, and that they stand above and around me, criticizing whatever I do or say. Whenever either Nature demands my breath again, or reason bids me dismiss it, I will quit this life, calling all to witness that I have loved a good conscience, and good pursuits; that no one’s freedom, my own least of all, has been impaired through me.” He who sets up these as the rules of his life will soar aloft and strive to make his way to the gods: of a truth, even though he fails, yet he

“Fails in a high emprise.”[4]

But you, who hate both virtue and those who practise it, do nothing at which we need be surprised, for sickly lights cannot bear the sun, nocturnal creatures avoid the brightness of day, and at its first dawning become bewildered and all betake themselves to their dens together: creatures that fear the light hide themselves in crevices. So croak away, and exercise your miserable tongues in reproaching good men: open wide your jaws, bite hard: you will break many teeth before you make any impression.

XXI. “But how is it that this man studies philosophy and nevertheless lives the life of a rich man? Why does he say that wealth ought to be despised and yet possess it? that life should be despised, and yet live? that health should be despised, and yet guard it with the utmost care, and wish it to be as good as possible? Does he consider banishment to be an empty name, and say, “What evil is there in changing one country for another?” and yet, if permitted, does he not grow old in his native land? does he declare that there is no difference between a longer and a shorter time, and yet, if he be not prevented, lengthen out his life and flourish in a green old age?” His answer is, that these things ought to be despised, not that he should not possess them, but that he should not possess them with fear and trembling: he does not drive them away from him, but when they leave him he follows after them unconcernedly. Where, indeed, can fortune invest riches more securely than in a place from whence they can always be recovered without any squabble with their trustee? Marcus Cato, when he was praising Curius and Coruncanius and that century in which the possession of a few small silver coins were an offence which was punished by the Censor, himself owned four million sesterces; a less fortune no doubt, than that of Crassus, but larger than of Cato the Censor. If the amounts be compared, he had outstripped his great-grandfather further than he himself was outdone by Crassus, and if still greater riches had fallen to his lot, he would not have spurned them: for the wise man does not think himself unworthy of any chance presents: he does not love riches, but he prefers to have them; he does not receive them into his spirit, but only into his house: nor does he cast away from him what he already possesses, but keeps them, and is willing that his virtue should receive a larger subject-matter for its exercise.

XXII. Who can doubt, however, that the wise man, if he is rich, has a wider field for the development of his powers than if he is poor, seeing that in the latter case the only virtue which he can display is that of neither being perverted nor crushed by his poverty, whereas if he has riches, he will have a wide field for the exhibition of temperance, generosity, laboriousness, methodical arrangement, and grandeur. The wise man will not despise himself, however short of stature he may be, but nevertheless he will wish to be tall: even though he be feeble and one-eyed he may be in good

health, yet he would prefer to have bodily strength, and that too, while he knows all the while that he has something which is even more powerful: he will endure illness, and will hope for good health: for some things, though they may be trifles compared with the sum total, and though they may be taken away without destroying the chief good, yet add somewhat to that constant cheerfulness which arises from virtue. Riches encourage and brighten up such a man just as a sailor is delighted at a favourable wind that bears him on his way, or as people feel pleasure at a fine day or at a sunny spot in the cold weather. What wise man, I mean of our school, whose only good is virtue, can deny that even these matters which we call neither good nor bad have in themselves a certain value, and that some of them are preferable to others? to some of them we show a certain amount of respect, and to some a great deal. Do not, then, make any mistake: riches belong to the class of desirable things. "Why then," say you, "do you laugh at me, since you place them in the same position that I do?" Do you wish to know how different the position is in which we place them? If my riches leave me, they will carry away with them nothing except themselves: you will be bewildered and will seem to be left without yourself if they should pass away from you: with me riches occupy a certain place, but with you they occupy the highest place of all. In fine, my riches belong to me, you belong to your riches.

XXIII. Cease, then, forbidding philosophers to possess money: no one has condemned wisdom to poverty. The philosopher may own ample wealth, but will not own wealth that which has been torn from another, or which is stained with another's blood: his must be obtained without wronging any man, and without its being won by base means; it must be alike honourably come by and honourably spent, and must be such as spite alone could shake its head at. Raise it to whatever figure you please, it will still be an honourable possession, if, while it includes much which every man would like to call his own, there be nothing which any one can say is his own. Such a man will not forfeit his right to the favour of Fortune, and will neither boast of his inheritance nor blush for it if it was honourably acquired: yet he will have something to boast of, if he throw his house open, let all his countrymen come among his property, and say, "If any one recognizes here anything belonging to him, let him take it." What a great man, how excellently rich will he be, if after this speech he possesses as much as he had before! I say, then, that if he can safely and confidently submit his accounts to the scrutiny of the people, and no one can find in them any item upon which he can lay hands, such a man may boldly and unconcealedly enjoy his riches. The wise man will not allow a single ill-won penny to cross his threshold: yet he will not refuse or close his door against great riches, if they are the gift of fortune and the product of virtue: what reason has he for grudging them good quarters: let them come and be his guests: he will neither brag of them nor hide them away: the one is the part of a silly, the other of a cowardly and paltry spirit, which, as it were, muffles up a good thing in its lap. Neither will he, as I said before, turn them out of his house: for what will he say? will he say, "You are useless," or "I do not know how to use riches?" As he is capable of

performing a journey upon his own feet, but yet would prefer to mount a carriage, just so he will be capable of being poor, yet will wish to be rich; he will own wealth, but will view it as an uncertain possession which will some day fly away from him. He will not allow it to be a burden either to himself or to any one else: he will give it—why do you prick up your ears? why do you open your pockets?—he will give it either to good men or to those whom it may make into good men. He will give it after having taken the utmost pains to choose those who are fittest to receive it, as becomes one who bears in mind that he ought to give an account of what he spends as well as of what he receives. He will give for good and commendable reasons, for a gift ill bestowed counts as a shameful loss: he will have an easily opened pocket, but not one with a hole in it, so that much may be taken out of it, yet nothing may fall out of it.

XXIV. He who believes giving to be an easy matter, is mistaken: it offers very great difficulties, if we bestow our bounty rationally, and do not scatter it impulsively and at random. I do this man a service, I requite a good turn done me by that one: I help this other, because I pity him: this man, again, I teach to be no fit object for poverty to hold down or degrade. I shall not give some men anything, although they are in want, because, even if I do give to them they will still be in want: I shall proffer my bounty to some, and shall forcibly thrust it upon others: I cannot be neglecting my own interests while I am doing this: at no time do I make more people in my debt than when I am giving things away. “What?” say you, “do you give that you may receive again?” At any rate I do not give that I may throw my bounty away: what I give should be so placed that although I cannot ask for its return, yet it may be given back to me. A benefit should be invested in the same manner as a treasure buried deep in the earth, which you would not dig up unless actually obliged. Why, what opportunities of conferring benefits the mere house of a rich man affords? for who considers generous behaviour due only to those who wear the toga? Nature bids me do good to mankind—what difference does it make whether they be slaves or freemen, free-born or emancipated, whether their freedom be legally acquired or betowed by arrangement among friends? Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a benefit: consequently, money may be distributed even within one’s own threshold, and a field may be found there for the practice of freehandedness, which is not so called because it is our duty towards free men, but because it takes its rise in a free-born mind. In the case of the wise man, this never falls upon base and unworthy recipients, and never becomes so exhausted as not, whenever it finds a worthy object, to flow as if its store was undiminished. You have, therefore, no grounds for misunderstanding the honourable, brave, and spirited language which you hear from those who are studying wisdom: and first of all observe this, that a student of wisdom is not the same thing as a man who has made himself perfect in wisdom. The former will say to you, “In my talk I express the most admirable sentiments, yet I am still weltering amid countless ills. You must not force me to act up to my rules: at the present time I am forming myself, moulding my character, and striving to rise myself to the

height of a great example. If I should ever succeed in carrying out all that I have set myself to accomplish, you may then demand that my words and deeds should correspond," But he who has reached the summit of human perfection will deal otherwise with you, and will say, "In the first place, you have no business to allow yourself to sit in judgment upon your betters:" I have already obtained one proof of my righteousness in having become an object of dislike to bad men: however, to make you a rational answer, which I grudge to no man, listen to what I declare, and at what price I value all things. Riches, I say, are not a good thing; for if they were, they would make men good: now since that which is found even among bad men cannot be termed good, I do not allow them to be called so: nevertheless I admit that they are desirable and useful and contribute great comforts to our lives.

XXV. Learn, then, since we both agree that they are desirable, what my reason is amongst counting them among good things, and in what respects I should behave differently to you if I possessed them. Place me as master in the house of a very rich man: place me where gold and silver plate is used for the commonest purposes; I shall not think more of myself because of things which even though they are in my house are yet no part of me. Take me away to the wooden bridge[5] and put me down there among the beggars: I shall not despise myself because I am sitting among those who hold out their hands for alms: for what can the lack of a piece of bread matter to one who does not lack the power of dying? Well, then? I prefer the magnificent house to the beggar's bridge. Place me among magnificent furniture and all the appliances of luxury: I shall not think myself any happier because my cloak is soft, because my guests rest upon purple. Change the scene: I shall be no more miserable if my weary head rests upon a bundle of hay, if I lie upon a cushion from the circus, with all the stuffing on the point of coming out through its patches of threadbare cloth. Well, then? I prefer, as far as my feelings go, to show myself in public dressed in woollen and in robes of office, rather than with naked or half-covered shoulders: I should like every day's business to turn out just as I wish it to do, and new congratulations to be constantly following upon the former ones: yet I will not pride myself upon this: change all this good fortune for its opposite, let my spirit be distracted by losses, grief, various kinds of attacks: let no hour pass without some dispute: I shall not on this account, though beset by the greatest miseries, call myself the most miserable of beings, nor shall I curse any particular day, for I have taken care to have no unlucky days. What, then, is the upshot of all this? it is that I prefer to have to regulate joys than to stifle sorrows. The great Socrates would say the same thing to you. "Make me," he would say, "the conqueror of all nations: let the voluptuous car of Bacchus bear me in triumph to Thebes from the rising of the sun: let the kings of the Persians receive laws from me: yet I shall feel myself to be a man at the very moment when all around salute me as a God. Straightway connect this lofty height with a headlong fall into misfortune: let me be placed upon a foreign chariot that I may grace the triumph of a proud and savage conqueror: I will follow another's car with no more humility than I showed when I stood in my own. What

then? In spite of all this, I had rather be a conqueror than a captive. I despise the whole dominion of Fortune, but still, if I were given my choice, I would choose its better parts. I shall make whatever befals me become a good thing, but I prefer that what befals me should be comfortable and pleasant and unlikely to cause me annoyance: for you need not suppose that any virtue exists without labour, but some virtues need spurs, while others need the curb. As we have to check our body on a downward path, and to urge it to climb a steep one; so also the path of some virtues leads down hill, that of others uphill. Can we doubt that patience, courage, constancy, and all the other virtues which have to meet strong opposition, and to trample Fortune under their feet, are climbing, struggling, winning their way up a steep ascent? Why! is it not equally evident that generosity, moderation, and gentleness glide easily downhill? With the latter we must hold in our spirit, lest it run away with us: with the former we must urge and spur it on. We ought, therefore, to apply these energetic, combative virtues to poverty, and to riches those other more thrifty ones which trip lightly along, and merely support their own weight. This being the distinction between them, I would rather have to deal with those which I could practise in comparative quiet, than those of which one can only make trial through blood and sweat. “Wherefore,” says the sage, “I do not talk one way and live another: but you do not rightly understand what I say: the sound of my words alone reaches your ears, you do not try to find out their meaning.”

XXVI. “What difference, then, is there between me, who am a fool, and you, who are a wise man?” “All the difference in the world: for riches are slaves in the house of a wise man, but masters in that of a fool. You accustom yourself to them and cling to them as if somebody had promised that they should be yours for ever, but a wise man never thinks so much about poverty as when he is surrounded by riches. No general ever trusts so implicitly in the maintenance of peace as not to make himself ready for a war, which, though it may not actually be waged, has nevertheless been declared; you are rendered over-proud by a fine house, as though it could never be burned or fall down, and your heads are turned by riches as though they were beyond the reach of all dangers and were so great that Fortune has not sufficient strength to swallow them up. You sit idly playing with your wealth and do not foresee the perils in store for it, as savages generally do when besieged, for, not understanding the use of siege artillery, they look on idly at the labours of the besiegers and do not understand the object of the machines which they are putting together at a distance: and this is exactly what happens to you: you go to sleep over your property, and never reflect how many misfortunes loom menacingly around you on all sides, and soon will plunder you of costly spoils, but if one takes away riches from the wise man, one leaves him still in possession of all that is his: for he lives happy in the present, and without fear for the future. The great Socrates, or any one else who had the same superiority to and power to withstand the things of this life, would say, ‘I have no more fixed principle than that of not altering the course of my life to suit your prejudices: you may pour your accustomed talk upon me from all sides: I shall not think that you

are abusing me, but that you are merely wailing like poor little babies.' " This is what the man will say who possesses wisdom, whose mind, being free from vices, bids him reproach others, not because he hates them, but in order to improve them: and to this he will add, "Your opinion of me affects me with pain, not for my own sake but for yours, because to hate perfection and to assail virtue is in itself a resignation of all hope of doing well. You do me no harm; neither do men harm the gods when they overthrow their altars: but it is clear that your intention is an evil one and that you will wish to do harm even where you are not able. I bear with your prating in the same spirit in which Jupiter, best and greatest, bears with the idle tales of the poets, one of whom represents him with wings, another with horns, another as an adulterer staying out all night, another is dealing harshly with the gods, another as unjust to men, another as the seducer of noble youths whom he carries off by force, and those, too, his own relatives, another as a parricide and the conqueror of another's kingdom, and that his father's. The only result of such tales is that men feel less shame at committing sin if they believe the gods to be guilty of such actions. But although this conduct of yours does not hurt me, yet, for your own sakes, I advise you, respect virtue: believe those who having long followed her cry aloud that what they follow is a thing of might, and daily appears mightier. Reverence her as you would the gods, and reverence her followers as you would the priests of the gods: and whenever any mention of sacred writings is made, favete linguis, favour us with silence: this word is not derived, as most people imagine, from favour, but commands silence, that divine service may be performed without being interrupted by any words of evil omen. It is much more necessary that you should be ordered to do this, in order that whenever utterance is made by that oracle, you may listen to it with attention and in silence. Whenever any one beats a sistrum,[6] pretending to do so by divine command, any proficient in grazing his own skin covers his arms and shoulders with blood from light cuts, any one crawls on his knees howling along the street, or any old man clad in linen comes forth in daylight with a lamp and laurel branch and cries out that one of the gods is angry, you crowd round him and listen to his words, and each increases the other's wonderment by declaring him to be divinely inspired.

XXVII. Behold! from that prison of his, which by entering he cleansed from shame and rendered more honourable than any senate house, Socrates addresses you, saying: "What is this madness of yours? what is this disposition, at war alike with gods and men, which leads you to calumniate virtue and to outrage holiness with malicious accusations? Praise good men, if you are able: if not, pass them by in silence: if indeed you take pleasure in this offensive abusiveness, fall foul of one another: for when you rave against Heaven, I do not say that you commit sacrilege, but you waste your time. I once afforded Aristophanes with the subject of a jest: since then all the crew of comic poets have made me a mark for their envenomed wit: my virtue has been made to shine more brightly by the very blows which have been aimed at it, for it is to its advantage to be brought before the public and exposed to temptation,

nor do any people understand its greatness more than those who by their assaults have made trial of its strength. The hardness of flint is known to none so well as to those who strike it. I offer myself to all attacks, like some lonely rock in a shallow sea, which the waves never cease to beat upon from whatever quarter they may come, but which they cannot thereby move from its place nor yet wear away, for however many years they may unceasingly dash against it. Bound upon me, rush upon me, I will overcome you by enduring your onset: whatever strikes against that which is firm and unconquerable merely injures itself by its own violence. Wherefore, seek some soft and yielding object to pierce with your darts. But have you leisure to peer into other men's evil deeds and to sit in judgment upon anybody? to ask how it is that this philosopher has so roomy a house, or that one so good a dinner? Do you look at other people's pimples while you yourselves are covered with countless ulcers? This is as though one who was eaten up by the mange were to point with scorn at the moles and warts on the bodies of the handsomest men. Reproach Plato with having sought for money, reproach Aristotle with having obtained it, Democritus with having disregarded it, Epicurus with having spent it: cast Phaedrus and Alcibiades in my own teeth, you who reach the height of enjoyment whenever you get an opportunity of imitating our vices! Why do you not rather cast your eyes around yourselves at the ills which tear you to pieces on every side, some attacking you from without, some burning in your own bosoms? However little you know your own place, mankind has not yet come to such a pass that you can have leisure to wag your tongues to the reproach of your betters.

XXVIII. This you do not understand, and you bear a countenance which does not befit your condition, like many men who sit in the circus or the theatre without having learned that their home is already in mourning: but I, looking forward from a lofty standpoint, can see what storms are either threatening you, and will burst in torrents upon you somewhat later, or are close upon you and on the point of sweeping away all that you possess. Why, though you are hardly aware of it, is there not a whirling hurricane at this moment spinning round and confusing your minds, making them seek and avoid the very same things, now raising them aloft and now dashing them below? . . . . . ."

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[1] Lipsius's conjecture, "those who are dressed in white as well as those who are dressed in coloured clothes,' alluding to the white robes of candidates for office, seems reasonable.

[2] The Latin words are literally "to divide" their vote, that is, "to separate things of different kinds comprised in a single vote so that they might be voted for separately."—Andrews.

Séneque fait allusion ici à une coutume pratiquée dans les assemblées du Sénat; et il nous I'explique lui-même ailleurs d'un manière très claire: "Si quelqu'un dans le Sénat," dit il, "ouvre un avis, dont une partie me convienne, je le somme de la detacher du reste, et j'y adhère."—Ep. 21, La Grange.

[3] Parentatur seems to mean where an offering is made to luxury—where they sacrifice to luxury. Perfumes were used at funerals. Lipsius suggests that these feasts were like funerals because the guests were carried away from them dead drunk.

[4] The quotation is from the epitaph on Phaeton.—See Ovid, Met. II, 327.

[5] The "Pons Sublicius," or "pile bridge," was built over the Tiber by Ancus Martius, one of the early kings of Rome, and was always kept in repair out of a superstitious feeling.

[6] Sistrum. A metallic rattle used by the Egyptians in celebrating the rites of Isis, &c.—Andrews.

THE EIGHTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO SERENUS.

OF LEISURE.

I. . . . . why do they with great unanimity recommend vices to us? even though we attempt nothing else that would do us good, yet retirement in itself will be beneficial to us: we shall be better men when taken singly—and if so, what an advantage it will be to retire into the society of the best of men, and to choose some example by which we may guide our lives! This cannot be done without leisure: with leisure we can carry out that which we have once for all decided to be best, when there is no one to interfere with us and with the help of the mob pervert our as yet feeble judgment: with leisure only can life, which we distract by aiming at the most incompatible objects, flow on in a single gentle stream. Indeed, the worst of our various ills is that we change our very vices, and so we have not even the advantage of dealing with a well-known form of evil: we take pleasure first in one and then in another, and are, besides, troubled by the fact that our opinions are not only wrong, but lightly formed; we toss as it were on waves, and clutch at one thing after another: we let go what we just now sought for, and strive to recover what we have let go. We oscillate between desire and remorse, for we depend entirely upon the opinions of others, and it is that which many people praise and seek after, not that which

deserves to be praised and sought after, which we consider to be best. Nor do we take any heed of whether our road be good or bad in itself, but we value it by the number of footprints upon it, among which there are none of any who have returned. You will say to me, “Seneca, what are you doing? do you desert your party? I am sure that our Stoic philosophers say we must be in motion up to the very end of our life, we will never cease to labour for the general good; to help individual people, and when stricken in years to afford assistance even to our enemies. We are the sect that gives no discharge for any number of years’ service, and in the words of the most eloquent of poets:—

‘We wear the helmet when our locks are grey.’[1]

We are they who are so far from indulging in any leisure until we die, that if circumstances permit it, we do not allow ourselves to be at leisure even when we are dying. Why do you preach the maxims of Epicurus in the very headquarters of Zeno? nay, if you are ashamed of your party, why do you not go openly altogether over to the enemy rather than betray your own side?” I will answer this question straightway: What more can you wish than that I should imitate my leaders? What then follows? I shall go whither they lead me, not whither they send me.

II. Now I will prove to you that I am not deserting the tenets of the Stoics: for they themselves have not deserted them: and yet I should be able to plead a very good excuse even if I did follow, not their precepts, but their examples. I shall divide what I am about to say into two parts: first, that a man may from the very beginning of his life give himself up entirely to the contemplation of truth; secondly, that a man when he has already completed his term of service, has the best of rights, that of his shattered health, to do this, and that he may then apply his mind to other studies after the manner of the Vestal virgins, who allot different duties to different years, first learn how to perform the sacred rites, and when they have learned them teach others.

III. I will show that this is approved of by the Stoics also, not that I have laid any commandment upon myself to do nothing contrary to the teaching of Zeno and Chrysippus, but because the matter itself allows me to follow the precepts of those men; for if one always follows the precepts of one man, one ceases to be a debater and becomes a partizan. Would that all things were already known, that truth were unveiled and recognized, and that none of our doctrines required modification! but as it is we have to seek for truth in the company of the very men who teach it. The two sects of Epicureans and Stoics differ widely in most respects, and on this point among the rest, nevertheless, each of them consigns us to leisure, although by a different road. Epicurus says, “The wise man will not take part in politics, except upon some special occasion;”

Zeno says, “The wise man will take part in politics, unless prevented by some special circumstance.” The one makes it his aim in life to seek for leisure, the other seeks it only when he has reasons for so doing: but this word “reasons” has a wide signification. If the state is so rotten as to be past helping, if evil has entire dominion over it, the wise man will not labour in vain or waste his strength in unprofitable efforts. Should he be deficient in influence or bodily strength, if the state refuse to submit to his guidance, if his health stand in the way, then he will not attempt a journey for which he is unfit, just as he would not put to sea in a worn-out ship, or enlist in the army if he were an invalid. Consequently, one who has not yet suffered either in health or fortune has the right, before encountering any storms, to establish himself in safety, and thenceforth to devote himself to honourable industry and inviolate leisure, and the service of those virtues which can be practised even by those who pass the quietest of lives. The duty of a man is to be useful to his fellow-men; if possible, to be useful to many of them; failing this, to be useful to a few; failing this, to be useful to his neighbours, and, failing them, to himself: for when he helps others, he advances the general interests of mankind. Just as he who makes himself a worse man does harm not only to himself but to all those to whom he might have done good if he had made himself a better one, so he who deserves well of himself does good to others by the very fact that he is preparing what will be of service to them.

IV. Let us grasp the fact that there are two republics, one vast and truly “public,” which contains alike gods and men, in which we do not take account of this or that nook of land, but make the boundaries of our state reach as far as the rays of the sun: and another to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth. This may be that of the Athenians or Carthaginians, or of any other city which does not belong to all men but to some especial ones. Some men serve both of these states, the greater and the lesser, at the same time; some serve only the lesser, some only the greater. We can serve the greater commonwealth even when we are at leisure; indeed I am not sure that we cannot serve it better when we are at leisure to inquire into what virtue is, and whether it be one or many: whether it be nature or art that makes men good: whether that which contains the earth and sea and all that in them is be one, or whether God has placed therein many bodies of the same species: whether that out of which all things are made be continuous and solid, or containing interstices and alternate empty and full spaces: whether God idly looks on at His handiwork, or directs its course: whether He is without and around the world, or whether He pervades its entire surface: whether the world be immortal, or doomed to decay and belonging to the class of things which are born only for a time? What service does he who meditates upon these questions render to God? He prevents these His great works having no one to witness them.

V. We have a habit of saying that the highest good is to live according to nature: now nature has produced us for both purposes, for contemplation and for action. Let us now prove what we said

before: nay, who will not think this proved if he bethinks himself how great a passion he has for discovering the unknown? how vehemently his curiosity is roused by every kind of romantic tale. Some men make long voyages and undergo the toils of journeying to distant lands for no reward except that of discovering something hidden and remote. This is what draws people to public shows, and causes them to pry into everything that is closed, to puzzle out everything that is secret, to clear up points of antiquity, and to listen to tales of the customs of savage nations. Nature has bestowed upon us an inquiring disposition, and being well aware of her own skill and beauty, has produced us to be spectators of her vast works, because she would lose all the fruits of her labour if she were to exhibit such vast and noble works of such complex construction, so bright and beautiful in so many ways, to solitude alone. That you may be sure that she wishes to be gazed upon, not merely looked at, see what a place she has assigned to us: she has placed us in the middle of herself and given us a prospect all around. She has not only set man erect upon his feet, but also with a view to making it easy for him to watch the heavens, she has raised his head on high and connected it with a pliant neck, in order that he might follow the course of the stars from their rising to their setting, and move his face round with the whole heaven. Moreover, by carrying six constellations across the sky by day, and six by night, she displays every part of herself in such a manner that by what she brings before man’s eyes she renders him eager to see the rest also. For we have not beheld all things, nor yet the true extent of them, but our eyesight does but open to itself the right path for research, and lay the foundation, from which our speculations may pass from what is obvious to what is less known, and find out something more ancient than the world itself, from whence those stars came forth: inquire what was the condition of the universe before each of its elements were separated from the general mass: on what principle its confused and blended parts were divided: who assigned their places to things, whether it was by their own nature that what was heavy sunk downwards, and what was light flew upwards, or whether besides the stress and weight of bodies some higher power gave laws to each of them: whether that greatest proof that the spirit of man is divine be true, the theory, namely, that some parts and as it were sparks of the stars have fallen down upon earth and stuck there in a foreign substance. Our thought bursts through the battlements of heaven, and is not satisfied with knowing only what is shown to us: “I investigate,” it says, “that which lies without the world, whether it be a bottomless abyss, or whether it also is confined within boundaries of its own: what the appearance of the things outside may be, whether they be shapeless and vague, extending equally in every direction, or whether they also are arranged in a certain kind of order: whether they are connected with this world of ours, or are widely separated from it and welter about in empty space: whether they consist of distinct atoms, of which everything that is and that is to be, is made, or whether their substance is uninterrupted and all of it capable of change: whether the elements are naturally opposed to one another, or whether they are not at variance, but work towards the same end by different means.” Since man was born for such speculations as these, consider

how short a time he has been given for them, even supposing that he makes good his claims to the whole of it, allows no part of it to be wrested from him through good nature, or to slip away from him through carelessness; though he watches over all his hours with most miserly care, though he live to the extreme confines of human existence, and though misfortune take nothing away from what Nature bestowed upon him, even then man is too mortal for the comprehension of immortality. I live according to Nature, therefore, if I give myself entirely up to her, and if I admire and reverence her. Nature, however, intended me to do both, to practise both contemplation and action: and I do both, because even contemplation is not devoid of action.

VI. “But,” say you, “it makes a difference whether you adopt the contemplative life for the sake of your own pleasure, demanding nothing from it save unbroken contemplation without any result: for such a life is a sweet one and has attractions of its own.” To this I answer you: It makes just as much difference in what spirit you lead the life of a public man, whether you are never at rest, and never set apart any time during which you may turn your eyes away from the things of earth to those of Heaven. It is by no means desirable that one should merely strive to accumulate property without any love of virtue, or do nothing but hard work without any cultivation of the intellect, for these things ought to be combined and blended together; and, similarly, virtue placed in leisure without action is but an incomplete and feeble good thing, because she never displays what she has learned. Who can deny that she ought to test her progress in actual work, and not merely think what ought to be done, but also sometimes use her hands as well as her head, and bring her conceptions into actual being? But if the wise man be quite willing to act thus, if it be the things to be done, not the man to do them that are wanting, will you not then allow him to live to himself? What is the wise man’s purpose in devoting himself to leisure? He knows that in leisure as well as in action he will accomplish something by which he will be of service to posterity. Our school at any rate declares that Zeno and Chrysippus have done greater things than they would have done had they been in command of armies, or filled high offices, or passed laws: which latter indeed they did pass, though not for one single state, but for the whole human race. How then can it be unbecoming to a good man to enjoy a leisure such as this, by whose means he gives laws to ages to come, and addresses himself not to a few persons but to all men of all nations, both now and hereafter? To sum up the matter, I ask you whether Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Zeno lived in accordance with their doctrine? I am sure that you will answer that they lived in the manner in which they taught that men ought to live: yet no one of them governed a state. “They had not,” you reply, “the amount of property or social position which as a rule enables people to take part in public affairs.” Yet for all that they did not live an idle life: they found the means of making their retirement more useful to mankind than the perspirings and runnings to and fro of other men: wherefore these persons are thought to have done great things, in spite of their having done nothing of a public character.

VII. Morever, there are three kinds of life, and it is a stock question which of the three is the best: the first is devoted to pleasure, the second to contemplation, the third to action. First, let us lay aside all disputatiousness and bitterness of feeling, which, as we have stated, causes those whose paths in life are different to hate one another beyond all hope of reconciliation, and let us see whether all these three do not come to the same thing, although under different names: for neither he who decides for pleasure is without contemplation, nor is he who gives himself up to contemplation without pleasure: nor yet is he, whose life is devoted to action, without contemplation. “It makes,” you say, “all the difference in the world, whether a thing is one’s main object in life, or whether it be merely an appendage to some other object.” I admit that the difference is considerable, nevertheless the one does not exist apart from the other: the one man cannot live in contemplation without action, nor can the other act without contemplation: and even the third, of whom we all agree in having a bad opinion, does not approve of passive pleasure, but of that which he establishes for himself by means of reason: even this pleasure-seeking sect itself, therefore, practises action also. Of course it does, since Epicurus himself says that at times he would abandon pleasure and actually seek for pain, if he became likely to be surfeited with pleasure, or if he thought that by enduring a slight pain he might avoid a greater one. With what purpose do I state this? To prove that all men are fond of contemplation. Some make it the object of their lives: to us it is an anchorage, but not a harbour.

VIII. Add to this that, according to the doctrine of Chrysippus, a man may live at leisure: I do not say that he ought to endure leisure, but that he ought to choose it. Our Stoics say that the wise man would not take part in the government of any state. What difference does it make by what path the wise man arrives at leisure, whether it be because the state is wanting to him, or he is wanting to the state? If the state is to be wanting to all wise men (and it always will be found wanting by refined thinkers), I ask you, to what state should the wise man betake himself; to that of the Athenians, in which Socrates is condemned to death, and from which Aristotle goes into exile lest he should be condemned to death? where virtues are borne down by jealousy? You will tell me that no wise man would join such a state. Shall then the wise man go to the commonwealth of the Carthaginians, where faction never ceases to rage, and liberty is the foe of all the best men, where justice and goodness are held of no account, where enemies are treated with inhuman cruelty and natives are treated like enemies: he will flee from this state also. If I were to discuss each one separately, I should not be able to find one which the wise man could endure, or which could endure the wise man. Now if such a state as we have dreamed of cannot be found on earth, it follows that leisure is necessary for every one, because the one thing which might be preferred to leisure is nowhere to be found. If any one says that to sail is the best of things, and then says that we ought not to sail in a sea in which shipwrecks were common occurrences, and where sudden storms often arise which drive the pilot back from his

course, I should imagine that this man, while speaking in praise of sailing, was really forbidding me to unmoor my ship . . . .

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[1] Virg. “Aen.” ix. 612. Compare Sir Walter Scott, “Lay of the Last Minstrel,” canto iv.:—

“And still, in age, he spurned at rest,

And still his brows the helmet pressed.

Albeit the blanched locks below

Were white as Dinlay’s spotless snow,” &c.

THE NINTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO SERENUS.

OF PEACE OF MIND.

I. [Serenus.]

When I examine myself, Seneca, some vices appear on the surface, and so that I can lay my hands upon them, while others are less distinct and harder to reach, and some are not always present, but recur at intervals: and these I should call the most troublesome, being like a roving enemy that assails one when he sees his opportunity, and who will neither let one stand on one’s guard as in war, nor yet take one’s rest without fear as in peace. The position in which I find myself more especially (for why should I not tell you the truth as I would to a physician), is that of neither being thoroughly set free from the vices which I fear and hate, nor yet quite in bondage to them: my state of mind, though not the worst possible, is a particularly discontented and sulky one: I am neither ill nor well, It is of no use for you to tell me that all virtues are weakly at the outset, and that they acquire strength and solidity by time, for I am well aware that even those which do but help our outward show, such as grandeur, a reputation for eloquence, and everything that appeals to others, gain power by time. Both those which afford us real strength and those which do but trick us out in a more attractive form, require long years before they gradually are

adapted to us by time. But I fear that custom, which confirms most things, implants this vice more and more deeply in me. Long acquaintance with both good and bad people leads one to esteem them all alike. What this state of weakness really is, when the mind halts between two opinions without any strong inclination towards either good or evil, I shall be better able to show you piecemeal than all at once. I will tell you what befalls me, you must find out the name of the disease. I have to confess the greatest possible love of thrift: I do not care for a bed with gorgeous hangings, nor for clothes brought out of a chest, or pressed under weights and made glossy by frequent manglings, but for common and cheap ones, that require no care either to keep them or to put them on. For food I do not want what needs whole troops of servants to prepare it and admire it, nor what is ordered many days before and served up by many hands, but something handy and easily come at, with nothing far-fetched or costly about it, to be had in every part of the world, burdensome neither to one's fortune nor one's body, not likely to go out of the body by the same path by which it came in. I like[1] a rough and unpolished homebred servant, I like my servant born in my house: I like my country-bred father's heavy silver plate stamped with no maker's name: I do not want a table that is beauteous with dappled spots, or known to all the town by the number of fashionable people to whom it has successively belonged, but one which stands merely for use, and which causes no guest's eye to dwell upon it with pleasure or to kindle at it with envy. While I am well satisfied with this, I am reminded of the clothes of a certain schoolboy, dressed with no ordinary care and splendour, of slaves bedecked with gold and a whole regiment of glittering attendants. I think of houses too, where one treads on precious stones, and where valuables lie about in every corner, where the very roof is brilliantly painted, and a whole nation attends and accompanies an inheritance on the road to ruin. What shall I say of waters, transparent to the very bottom, which flow round the guests, and banquets worthy of the theatre in which they take place? Coming as I do from a long course of dull thrift, I find myself surrounded by the most brilliant luxury, which echoes around me on every side: my sight becomes a little dazzled by it: I can lift up my heart against it more easily than my eyes. When I return from seeing it I am a sadder, though not a worse man, I cannot walk amid my own paltry possessions with so lofty a step as before, and silently there steals over me a feeling of vexation, and a doubt whether that way of life may not be better than mine. None of these things alter my principles, yet all of them disturb me. At one time I would obey the maxims of our school and plunge into public life, I would obtain office and become consul, not because the purple robe and lictor's axes attract me, but in order that I may be able to be of use to my friends, my relatives, to all my countrymen, and indeed to all mankind. Ready and determined, I follow the advice of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, all of whom bid one take part in public affairs, though none of them ever did so himself: and then, as soon as something disturbs my mind, which is not used to receiving shocks, as soon as something occurs which is either disgraceful, such as often occurs in all men's lives, or which does not proceed quite easily, or when subjects of very little importance require me

to devote a great deal of time to them, I go back to my life of leisure, and, just as even tired cattle go faster when they are going home, I wish to retire and pass my life within the walls of my house. “No one,” I say, “that will give me no compensation worth such a loss shall ever rob me of a day. Let my mind be contained within itself and improve itself: let it take no part with other men’s affairs, and do nothing which depends on the approval of others: let me enjoy a tranquillity undisturbed by either public or private troubles.” But whenever my spirit is roused by reading some brave words, or some noble example spurs me into action, I want to rush into the law courts, to place my voice at one man’s disposal, my services at another’s, and to try to help him even though I may not succeed, or to quell the pride of some lawyer who is puffed up by ill-deserved success: but I think, by Hercules, that in philosophical speculation it is better to view things as they are, and to speak of them on their own account, and as for words, to trust to things for them, and to let one’s speech simply follow whither they lead. “Why do you want to construct a fabric that will endure for ages? Do you not wish to do this in order that posterity may talk of you: yet you were born to die, and a silent death is the least wretched. Write something therefore in a simple style, merely to pass the time, for your own use, and not for publication. Less labour is needed when one does not look beyond the present.” Then again, when the mind is elevated by the greatness of its thoughts, it becomes ostentatious in its use of words, the loftier its aspirations, the more loftily it desires to express them, and its speech rises to the dignity of its subject. At such times I forget my mild and moderate determination and soar higher than is my wont, using a language that is not my own. Not to multiply examples, I am in all things attended by this weakness of a well-meaning mind, to whose level I fear that I shall be gradually brought down, or, what is even more worrying, that I may always hang as though about to fall, and that there may be more the matter with me than I myself perceive: for we take a friendly view of our own private affairs, and partiality always obscures our judgment. I fancy that many men would have arrived at wisdom had they not believed themselves to have arrived there already, had they not purposely deceived themselves as to some parts of their character, and passed by others with their eyes shut: for you have no grounds for supposing that other people’s flattery is more ruinous to us than our own. Who dares to tell himself the truth? Who is there, by however large a troop of caressing courtiers he may be surrounded, who in spite of them is not his own greatest flatterer? I beg you, therefore, if you have any remedy by which you could stop this vacillation of mine, to deem me worthy to owe my peace of mind to you. I am well aware that these oscillations of mind are not perilous and that they threaten me with no serious disorder: to express what I complain of by an exact simile, I am not suffering from a storm, but from sea-sickness. Take from me, then, this evil, whatever it may be, and help one who is in distress within sight of land.

II. [Seneca.] I have long been silently asking myself, my friend Serenus, to what I should liken such a condition of mind, and I find that nothing more closely resembles it than the conduct of those

who, after having recovered from a long and serious illness, occasionally experience slight touches and twinges, and, although they have passed through the final stages of the disease, yet have suspicions that it has not left them, and though in perfect health yet hold out their pulse to be felt by the physician, and whenever they feel warm suspect that the fever is returning. Such men, Serenus, are not unhealthy, but they are not accustomed to being healthy; just as even a quiet sea or lake nevertheless displays a certain amount of ripple when its waters are subsiding after a storm. What you need, therefore, is, not any of those harsher remedies to which allusion has been made, not that you should in some cases check yourself, in others be angry with yourself, in others sternly reproach yourself, but that you should adopt that which comes last in the list, have confidence in yourself, and believe that you are proceeding on the right path, without being led aside by the numerous divergent tracks of wanderers which cross it in every direction, some of them circling about the right path itself. What you desire, to be undisturbed, is a great thing, nay, the greatest thing of all, and one which raises a man almost to the level of a god. The Greeks call this calm steadiness of mind euthymia, and Democritus's treatise upon it is excellently written: I call it peace of mind: for there is no necessity for translating so exactly as to copy the words of the Greek idiom: the essential point is to mark the matter under discussion by a name which ought to have the same meaning as its Greek name, though perhaps not the same form. What we are seeking, then, is how the mind may always pursue a steady, unruffled course, may be pleased with itself, and look with pleasure upon its surroundings, and experience no interruption of this joy, but abide in a peaceful condition without being ever either elated or depressed: this will be "peace of mind." Let us now consider in a general way how it may be attained: then you may apply as much as you choose of the universal remedy to your own case. Meanwhile we must drag to light the entire disease, and then each one will recognize his own part of it: at the same time you will understand how much less you suffer by your self-depreciation than those who are bound by some showy declaration which they have made, and are oppressed by some grand title of honour, so that shame rather than their own free will forces them to keep up the pretence. The same thing applies both to those who suffer from fickleness and continual changes of purpose, who always are fondest of what they have given up, and those who merely yawn and dawdle: add to these those who, like bad sleepers, turn from side to side, and settle themselves first in one manner and then in another, until at last they find rest through sheer weariness: in forming the habits of their lives they often end by adopting some to which they are not kept by any dislike of change, but in the practice of which old age, which is slow to alter, has caught them living: add also those who are by no means fickle, yet who must thank their dulness, not their consistency for being so, and who go on living not in the way they wish, but in the way they have begun to live. There are other special forms of this disease without number, but it has but one effect, that of making people dissatisfied with themselves. This arises from a distemperature of mind and from desires which one is afraid to express or unable to

fulfil, when men either dare not attempt as much as they wish to do, or fail in their efforts and depend entirely upon hope: such people are always fickle and changeable, which is a necessary consequence of living in a state of suspense: they take any way to arrive at their ends, and teach and force themselves to use both dishonourable and difficult means to do so, so that when their toil has been in vain they are made wretched by the disgrace of failure, and do not regret having longed for what was wrong, but having longed for it in vain. They then begin to feel sorry for what they have done, and afraid to begin again, and their mind falls by degrees into a state of endless vacillation, because they can neither command nor obey their passions, of hesitation, because their life cannot properly develope itself, and of decay, as the mind becomes stupefied by disappointments. All these symptoms become aggravated when their dislike of a laborious misery has driven them to idleness and to secret studies, which are unendurable to a mind eager to take part in public affairs, desirous of action and naturally restless, because, of course, it finds too few resources within itself: when therefore it loses the amusement which business itself affords to busy men, it cannot endure home, loneliness, or the walls of a room, and regards itself with dislike when left to itself. Hence arises that weariness and dissatisfaction with oneself, that tossing to and fro of a mind which can nowhere find rest, that unhappy and unwilling endurance of enforced leisure. In all cases where one feels ashamed to confess the real cause of one’s suffering, and where modesty leads one to drive one’s sufferings inward, the desires pent up in a little space without any vent choke one another. Hence comes melancholy and drooping of spirit, and a thousand waverings of the unsteadfast mind, which is held in suspense by unfulfilled hopes, and saddened by disappointed ones: hence comes the state of mind of those who loathe their idleness, complain that they have nothing to do, and view the progress of others with the bitterest jealousy: for an unhappy sloth favours the growth of envy, and men who cannot succeed themselves wish every one else to be ruined. This dislike of other men’s progress and despair of one’s own produces a mind angered against fortune, addicted to complaining of the age in which it lives, to retiring into corners and brooding over its misery, until it becomes sick and weary of itself: for the human mind is naturally nimble and apt at movement: it delights in every opportunity of excitement and forgetfulness of itself, and the worse a man’s disposition the more he delights in this, because he likes to wear himself out with busy action, just as some sores long for the hands that injure them and delight in being touched, and the foul itch enjoys anything that scratches it. Similarly I assure you that these minds, over which desires have spread like evil ulcers, take pleasure in toils and troubles, for there are some things which please our body while at the same time they give it a certain amount of pain, such as turning oneself over and changing one’s side before it is wearied, or cooling oneself in one position after another. It is like Homer’s Achilles, lying first upon its face, then upon its back, placing itself in various attitudes, and, as sick people are wont, enduring none of them for long, and using changes as though they were remedies. Hence men undertake aimless wanderings, travel along distant shores, and at

one time at sea, at another by land, try to soothe that fickleness of disposition which always is dissatisfied with the present. “Now let us make for Campania: now I am sick of rich cultivation: let us see wild regions, let us thread the passes of Bruttii and Lucania: yet amid this wilderness one wants something of beauty to relieve our pampered eyes after so long dwelling on savage wastes: let us seek Tarentum with its famous harbour, its mild winter climate, and its district, rich enough to support even the great hordes of ancient times. Let us now return to town: our ears have too long missed its shouts and noise: it would be pleasant also to enjoy the sight of human bloodshed.” Thus one journey succeeds another, and one sight is changed for another. As Lucretius says:—

“Thus every mortal from himself doth flee;”

but what does he gain by so doing if he does not escape from himself? he follows himself and weighs himself down by his own most burdensome companionship. We must understand, therefore, that what we suffer from is not the fault of the places but of ourselves: we are weak when there is anything to be endured, and cannot support either labour or pleasure, either one’s own business or any one else’s for long. This has driven some men to death, because by frequently altering their purpose they were always brought back to the same point, and had left themselves no room for anything new. They had become sick of life and of the world itself, and as all indulgences palled upon them they began to ask themselves the question, “How long are we to go on doing the same thing?”

III. You ask me what I think we had better make use of to help us to support this ennui. “The best thing,” as Athenodorus says, “is to occupy oneself with business with the management of affairs of state and the duties of a citizen: for as some pass the day in exercising themselves in the sun and in taking care of their bodily health, and athletes find it most useful to spend the greater part of their time in feeding up the muscles and strength to whose cultivation they have devoted their lives; so too for you who are training your mind to take part in the struggles of political life, it is far more honourable to be thus at work than to be idle. He whose object is to be of service to his countrymen and to all mortals, exercises himself and does good at the same time when he is engrossed in business and is working to the best of his ability both in the interests of the public and of private men. But,” continues he, “because innocence is hardly safe among such furious ambitions and so many men who turn one aside from the right path, and it is always sure to meet with more hindrance than help, we ought to withdraw ourselves from the forum and from public life, and a great mind even in a private station can find room wherein to expand freely. Confinement in dens restrains the springs of lions and wild creatures, but this does not apply to human beings, who often effect the most important works in retirement. Let a man, however, withdraw

himself only in such a fashion that wherever he spends his leisure his wish may still be to benefit individual men and mankind alike, both with his intellect, his voice, and his advice. The man that does good service to the state is not only he who brings forward candidates for public office, defends accused persons, and gives his vote on questions of peace and war, but he who encourages young men in well-doing, who supplies the present dearth of good teachers by instilling into their minds the principles of virtue, who seizes and holds back those who are rushing wildly in pursuit of riches and luxury, and, if he does nothing else, at least checks their course—such a man does service to the public though in a private station. Which does the most good, he who decides between foreigners and citizens (as praetor peregrinus), or, as praetor urbanus, pronounces sentence to the suitors in his court at his assistant's dictation, or he who shows them what is meant by justice, filial feeling, endurance, courage, contempt of death and knowledge of the gods, and how much a man is helped by a good conscience? If then you transfer to philosophy the time which you take away from the public service, you will not be a deserter or have refused to perform your proper task. A soldier is not merely one who stands in the ranks and defends the right or the left wing of the army, but he also who guards the gates—a service which, though less dangerous, is no sinecure—who keeps watch, and takes charge of the arsenal: though all these are bloodless duties, yet they count as military service. As soon as you have devoted yourself to philosophy, you will have overcome all disgust at life: you will not wish for darkness because you are weary of the light, nor will you be a trouble to yourself and useless to others: you will acquire many friends, and all the best men will be attracted towards you: for virtue, in however obscure a position, cannot be hidden, but gives signs of its presence: any one who is worthy will trace it out by its footsteps: but if we give up all society, turn our backs upon the whole human race, and live communing with ourselves alone, this solitude without any interesting occupation will lead to a want of something to do: we shall begin to build up and to pull down, to dam out the sea, to cause waters to flow through natural obstacles, and generally to make a bad disposal of the time which Nature has given us to spend: some of us use it grudgingly, others wastefully; some of us spend it so that we can show a profit and loss account, others so that they have no assets remaining: than which nothing can be more shameful. Often a man who is very old in years has nothing beyond his age by which he can prove that he has lived a long time."

IV. To me, my dearest Serenus, Athenodorus seems to have yielded too completely to the times, to have fled too soon: I will not deny that sometimes one must retire, but one ought to retire slowly, at a foot's pace, without losing one's ensigns or one's honour as a soldier: those who make terms with arms in their hands are more respected by their enemies and more safe in their hands. This is what I think ought to be done by virtue and by one who practises virtue: if Fortune get the upper hand and deprive him of the power of action, let him not straightway turn his back to the enemy, throw away his arms, and run away seeking for a hiding-place, as if there were any place whither Fortune could not pursue him, but let him be

more sparing in his acceptance of public office, and after due deliberation discover some means by which he can be of use to the state. He is not able to serve in the army: then let him become a candidate for civic honours: must he live in a private station? then let him be an advocate: is he condemned to keep silence? then let him help his countrymen with silent counsel. Is it dangerous for him even to enter the forum? then let him prove himself a good comrade, a faithful friend, a sober guest in people's houses, at public shows, and at wine-parties. Suppose that he has lost the status of a citizen; then let him exercise that of a man: our reason for magnanimously refusing to confine ourselves within the walls of one city, for having gone forth to enjoy intercourse with all lands and for professing ourselves to be citizens of the world is that we may thus obtain a wider theatre on which to display our virtue. Is the bench of judges closed to you, are you forbidden to address the people from the hustings, or to be a candidate at elections? then turn your eyes away from Rome, and see what a wide extent of territory, what a number of nations present themselves before you. Thus, it is never possible for so many outlets to be closed against your ambition that more will not remain open to it: but see whether the whole prohibition does not arise from your own fault. You do not choose to direct the affairs of the state except as consul or prytanis[2] or meddix[3] or sufes:[4] what should we say if you refused to serve in the army save as general or military tribune? Even though others may form the first line, and your lot may have placed you among the veterans of the third, do your duty there with your voice, encouragement, example, and spirit: even though a man's hands be cut off, he may find means to help his side in a battle, if he stands his ground and cheers on his comrades. Do something of that sort yourself: if Fortune removes you from the front rank, stand your ground nevertheless and cheer on your comrades, and if somebody stops your mouth, stand nevertheless and help your side in silence. The services of a good citizen are never thrown away: he does good by being heard and seen, by his expression, his gestures, his silent determination, and his very walk. As some remedies benefit us by their smell as well as by their their taste and touch, so virtue even when concealed and at a distance sheds usefulness around. Whether she moves at her ease and enjoys her just rights, or can only appear abroad on sufferance and is forced to shorten sail to the tempest, whether it be unemployed, silent, and pent up in a narrow lodging, or openly displayed, in whatever guise she may appear, she always does good. What? do you think that the example of one who can rest nobly has no value? It is by far the best plan, therefore, to mingle leisure with business, whenever chance impediments or the state of public affairs forbid one's leading an active life: for one is never so cut off from all pursuits as to find no room left for honourable action.

V. Could you anywhere find a [more] miserable city than that of Athens when it was being torn to pieces by the thirty tyrants? they slew thirteen hundred citizens, all the best men, and did not leave off because they had done so, but their cruelty became stimulated by exercise. In the city which possessed that most reverend tribunal, the Court of the Areopagus, which possessed a Senate, and a popular

assembly which was like a Senate, there met daily a wretched crew of butchers, and the unhappy Senate House was crowded with tyrants. A state, in which there were so many tyrants that they would have been enough to form a bodyguard for one, might surely have rested from the struggle; it seemed impossible for men's minds even to conceive hopes of recovering their liberty, nor could they see any room for a remedy for such a mass of evil: for whence could the unhappy state obtain all the Harmodiuses it would need to slay so many tyrants? Yet Socrates was in the midst of the city, and consoled its mourning Fathers, encouraged those who despaired of the republic, by his reproaches brought rich men, who feared that their wealth would be their ruin, to a tardy repentance of their avarice, and moved about as a great example to those who wished to imitate him, because he walked a free man in the midst of thirty masters. However, Athens herself put him to death in prison, and Freedom herself could not endure the freedom of one who had treated a whole band of tyrants with scorn: you may know, therefore, that even in an oppressed state a wise man can find an opportunity for bringing himself to the front, and that in a prosperous and flourishing one wanton insolence, jealousy, and a thousand other cowardly vices bear sway. We ought, therefore, to expand or contract ourselves according as the state presents itself to us, or as Fortune offers us opportunities: but in any case we ought to move and not to become frozen still by fear: nay, he is the best man who, though peril menaces him on every side and arms and chains beset his path, nevertheless neither impairs nor conceals his virtue: for to keep oneself safe does not mean to bury oneself. I think that Curius Dentatus spoke truly when he said that he would rather be dead than alive: the worst evil of all is to leave the ranks of the living before one dies: yet it is your duty, if you happen to live in an age when it is not easy to serve the state, to devote more time to leisure and to literature. Thus, just as though you were making a perilous voyage, you may from time to time put into harbour, and set yourself free from public business without waiting for it to do so.

VI. We ought, however, first to examine our own selves, next the business which we propose to transact, next those for whose sake or in whose company we transact it.

It is above all things necessary to form a true estimate of oneself, because as a rule we think that we can do more than we are able: one man is led too far through confidence in his eloquence, another demands more from his estate than it can produce, another burdens a weakly body with some toilsome duty. Some men are too shamefaced for the conduct of public affairs, which require an unblushing front: some men's obstinate pride renders them unfit for courts: some cannot control their anger, and break into unguarded language on the slightest provocation: some cannot rein in their wit or resist making risky jokes: for all these men leisure is better than employment: a bold, haughty and impatient nature ought to avoid anything that may lead it to use a freedom of speech which will bring it to ruin. Next we must form an estimate of the matter which we mean to deal with, and compare our strength with the deed we are about to attempt: for the bearer ought always to be more powerful

than his load: indeed, loads which are too heavy for their bearer must of necessity crush him: some affairs also are not so important in themselves as they are prolific and lead to much more business, which employments, as they involve us in new and various forms of work, ought to be refused. Neither should you engage in anything from which you are not free to retreat: apply yourself to something which you can finish, or at any rate can hope to finish: you had better not meddle with those operations which grow in importance, while they are being transacted, and which will not stop where you intended them to stop.

VII. In all cases one should be careful in one's choice of men, and see whether they be worthy of our bestowing a part of our life upon them, or whether we shall waste our own time and theirs also: for some even consider us to be in their debt because of our services to them. Athenodorus said that "he would not so much as dine with a man who would not be grateful to him for doing so": meaning, I imagine, that much less would he go to dinner with those who recompense the services of their friends by their table, and regard courses of dishes as donatives, as if they overate themselves to do honour to others. Take away from these men their witnesses and spectators: they will take no pleasure in solitary gluttony. You must decide whether your disposition is better suited for vigorous action or for tranquil speculation and contemplation, and you must adopt whichever the bent of your genius inclines you for. Isocrates laid hands upon Ephorus and led him away from the forum, thinking that he would be more usefully employed in compiling chronicles; for no good is done by forcing one's mind to engage in uncongenial work: it is vain to struggle against Nature. Yet nothing delights the mind so much as faithful and pleasant friendship: what a blessing it is when there is one whose breast is ready to receive all your secrets with safety, whose knowledge of your actions you fear less than your own conscience, whose conversation removes your anxieties, whose advice assists your plans, whose cheerfulness dispels your gloom, whose very sight delights you! We should choose for our friends men who are, as far as possible, free from strong desires: for vices are contagious, and pass from a man to his neighbour, and injure those who touch them. As, therefore, in times of pestilence we have to be careful not to sit near people who are infected and in whom the disease is raging, because by so doing, we shall run into danger and catch the plague from their very breath; so, too, in choosing our friends' dispositions, we must take care to select those who are as far as may be unspotted by the world; for the way to breed disease is to mix what is sound with what is rotten. Yet I do not advise you to follow after or draw to yourself no one except a wise man: for where will you find him whom for so many centuries we have sought in vain? in the place of the best possible man take him who is least bad. You would hardly find any time that would have enabled you to make a happier choice than if you could have sought for a good man from among the Platos and Xenophons and the rest of the produce of the brood of Socrates, or if you had been permitted to choose one from the age of Cato: an age which bore many men worthy to be born in Cato's time (just as it also bore many men worse than were ever known before, planners of the blackest crimes: for it needed both

classes in order to make Cato understood: it wanted both good men, that he might win their approbation, and bad men, against whom he could prove his strength): but at the present day, when there is such a dearth of good men, you must be less squeamish in your choice. Above all, however, avoid dismal men who grumble at whatever happens, and find something to complain of in everything. Though he may continue loyal and friendly towards you, still one's peace of mind is destroyed by a comrade whose mind is soured and who meets every incident with a groan.

VIII. Let us now pass on to the consideration of property, that most fertile source of human sorrows: for if you compare all the other ills from which we suffer—deaths, sicknesses, fears, regrets, endurance of pains and labours— with those miseries which our money inflicts upon us, the latter will far outweigh all the others. Reflect, then, how much less a grief it is never to have had any money than to have lost it: we shall thus understand that the less poverty has to lose, the less torment it has with which to afflict us: for you are mistaken if you suppose that the rich bear their losses with greater spirit than the poor: a wound causes the same amount of pain to the greatest and the smallest body. It was a neat saying of Bion's, "that it hurts bald men as much as hairy men to have their hairs pulled out": you may be assured that the same thing is true of rich and poor people, that their suffering is equal: for their money clings to both classes, and cannot be torn away without their feeling it: yet it is more endurable, as I have said, and easier not to gain property than to lose it, and therefore you will find that those upon whom Fortune has never smiled are more cheerful than those whom she has deserted. Diogenes, a man of infinite spirit, perceived this, and made it impossible that anything should be taken from him. Call this security from loss poverty, want, necessity, or any contemptuous name you please: I shall consider such a man to be happy, unless you find me another who can lose nothing. If I am not mistaken, it is a royal attribute among so many misers, sharpers, and robbers, to be the one man who cannot be injured. If any one doubts the happiness of Diogenes, he would doubt whether the position of the immortal gods was one of sufficient happiness. because they have no farms or gardens, no valuable estates let to strange tenants, and no large loans in the money market. Are you not ashamed of yourself, you who gaze upon riches with astonished admiration? Look upon the universe: you will see the gods quite bare of property, and possessing nothing though they give everything. Do you think that this man who has stripped himself of all fortuitous accessories is a pauper, or one like to the immortal gods? Do you call Demetrius, Pompeius's freedman, a happier man, he who was not ashamed to be richer than Pompeius, who was daily furnished with a list of the number of his slaves, as a general is with that of his army, though he had long deserved that all his riches should consist of a pair of underlings, and a roomier cell than the other slaves? But Diogenes's only slave ran away from him, and when he was pointed out to Diogenes, he did not think him worth fetching back. "It is a shame," he said, "that Manes should be able to live without Diogenes, and that Diogenes should not be able to live without Manes." He seems to me to have said, "Fortune, mind

your own business: Diogenes has nothing left that belongs to you. Did my slave run away? nay, he went away from me as a free man." A household of slaves requires food and clothing: the bellies of so many hungry creatures have to be filled: we must buy raiment for them, we must watch their most thievish hands, and we must make use of the services of people who weep and execrate us. How far happier is he who is indebted to no man for anything except for what he can deprive himself of with the greatest ease! Since we, however, have not such strength of mind as this, we ought at any rate to diminish the extent of our property, in order to be less exposed to the assaults of fortune: those men whose bodies can be within the shelter of their armour, are more fitted for war than those whose huge size everywhere extends beyond it, and exposes them to wounds: the best amount of property to have is that which is enough to keep us from poverty, and which yet is not far removed from it.

IX. We shall be pleased with this measure of wealth if we have previously taken pleasure in thrift, without which no riches are sufficient, and with which none are insufficient, especially as the remedy is always at hand, and poverty itself by calling in the aid of thrift can convert itself into riches. Let us accustom ourselves to set aside mere outward show, and to measure things by their uses, not by their ornamental trappings: let our hunger be tamed by food, our thirst quenched by drinking, our lust confined within needful bounds; let us learn to use our limbs, and to arrange our dress and way of life according to what was approved of by our ancestors, not in imitation of new-fangled models: let us learn to increase our continence, to repress luxury, to set bounds to our pride, to assuage our anger, to look upon poverty without prejudice, to practise thrift, albeit many are ashamed to do so, to apply cheap remedies to the wants of nature, to keep all undisciplined hopes and aspirations as it were under lock and key, and to make it our business to get our riches from ourselves and not from Fortune. We never can so thoroughly defeat the vast diversity and malignity of misfortune with which we are threatened as not to feel the weight of many gusts if we offer a large spread of canvas to the wind: we must draw our affairs into a small compass, to make the darts of Fortune of no avail. For this reason, sometimes slight mishaps have turned into remedies, and more serious disorders have been healed by slighter ones. When the mind pays no attention to good advice, and cannot be brought to its senses by milder measures, why should we not think that its interests are being served by poverty, disgrace, or financial ruin being applied to it? one evil is balanced by another. Let us then teach ourselves to be able to dine without all Rome to look on, to be the slaves of fewer slaves, to get clothes which fulfil their original purpose, and to live in a smaller house. The inner curve is the one to take, not only in running races and in the contests of the circus, but also in the race of life; even literary pursuits, the most becoming thing for a gentleman to spend money upon, are only justifiable as long as they are kept within bounds. What is the use of possessing numberless books and libraries, whose titles their owner can hardly read through in a lifetime? A student is overwhelmed by such a mass, not instructed, and it is much better to devote yourself to a few writers than to

skim through many. Forty thousand books were burned at Alexandria: some would have praised this library as a most noble memorial of royal wealth, like Titus Livius, who says that it was “a splendid result of the taste and attentive care of the kings.”[5] It had nothing to do with taste or care, but was a piece of learned luxury, nay, not even learned, since they amassed it, not for the sake of learning, but to make a show, like many men who know less about letters than a slave is expected to know, and who uses his books not to help him in his studies but to ornament his dining-room. Let a man, then, obtain as many books as he wants, but none for show. “It is more respectable,” say you, “to spend one’s money on such books than on vases of Corinthian brass and paintings.” Not so: everything that is carried to excess is wrong. What excuses can you find for a man who is eager to buy bookcases of ivory and citrus wood, to collect the works of unknown or discredited authors, and who sits yawning amid so many thousands of books, whose backs and titles please him more than any other part of them? Thus in the houses of the laziest of men you will see the works of all the orators and historians stacked upon book-shelves reaching right up to the ceiling. At the present day a library has become as necessary an appendage to a house as a hot and cold bath. I would excuse them straightway if they really were carried away by an excessive zeal for literature; but as it is, these costly works of sacred genius, with all the illustrations that adorn them, are merely bought for display and to serve as wall-furniture.

X. Suppose, however, that your life has become full of trouble, and that without knowing what you were doing you have fallen into some snare which either public or private Fortune has set for you, and that you can neither untie it nor break it: then remember that fettered men suffer much at first from the burdens and clogs upon their legs: afterwards, when they have made up their minds not to fret themselves about them, but to endure them, necessity teaches them to bear them bravely, and habit to bear them easily. In every station of life you will find amusements, relaxations, and enjoyments; that is, provided you be willing to make light of evils rather than to hate them. Knowing to what sorrows we were born, there is nothing for which Nature more deserves our thanks than for having invented habit as an alleviation of misfortune, which soon accustoms us to the severest evils. No one could hold out against misfortune if it permanently exercised the same force as at its first onset. We are all chained to Fortune: some men’s chain is loose and made of gold, that of others is tight and of meaner metal: but what difference does this make? we are all included in the same captivity, and even those who have bound us are bound themselves, unless you think that a chain on the left side is lighter to bear: one man may be bound by public office, another by wealth: some have to bear the weight of illustrious, some of humble birth: some are subject to the commands of others, some only to their own: some are kept in one place by being banished thither, others by being elected to the priesthood. All life is slavery: let each man therefore reconcile himself to his lot, complain of it as little as possible, and lay hold of whatever good lies within his reach. No condition can be so wretched that an impartial mind can find no compensations

in it. Small sites, if ingeniously divided, may be made use of for many different purposes, and arrangement will render ever so narrow a room habitable. Call good sense to your aid against difficulties: it is possible to soften what is harsh, to widen what is too narrow, and to make heavy burdens press less severely upon one who bears them skilfully. Moreover, we ought not to allow our desires to wander far afield, but we must make them confine themselves to our immediate neighbourhood, since they will not endure to be altogether locked up. We must leave alone things which either cannot come to pass or can only be effected with difficulty, and follow after such things as are near at hand and within reach of our hopes, always remembering that all things are equally unimportant, and that though they have a different outward appearance, they are all alike empty within. Neither let us envy those who are in high places: the heights which look lofty to us are steep and rugged. Again, those whom unkind fate has placed in critical situations will be safer if they show as little pride in their proud position as may be, and do all they are able to bring down their fortunes to the level of other men’s. There are many who must needs cling to their high pinnacle of power, because they cannot descend from it save by falling headlong: yet they assure us that their greatest burden is being obliged to be burdensome to others, and that they are nailed to their lofty post rather than raised to it: let them then, by dispensing justice, clemency, and kindness with an open and liberal hand, provide themselves with assistance to break their fall, and looking forward to this maintain their position more hopefully. Yet nothing sets us free from these alternations of hope and fear so well as always fixing some limit to our successes, and not allowing Fortune to choose when to stop our career, but to halt of our own accord long before we apparently need do so. By acting thus certain desires will rouse up our spirits, and yet being confined within bounds, will not lead us to embark on vast and vague enterprises.

XI. These remarks of mine apply only to imperfect, commonplace, and unsound natures, not to the wise man, who needs not to walk with timid and cautious gait: for he has such confidence in himself that he does not hesitate to go directly in the teeth of Fortune, and never will give way to her. Nor indeed has he any reason for fearing her, for he counts not only chattels, property, and high office, but even his body, his eyes, his hands, and everything whose use makes life dearer to us, nay, even his very self, to be things whose possession is uncertain; he lives as though he had borrowed them, and is ready to return them cheerfully whenever they are claimed. Yet he does not hold himself cheap, because he knows that he is not his own, but performs all his duties as carefully and prudently as a pious and scrupulous man would take care of property left in his charge as trustee. When he is bidden to give them up, he will not complain of Fortune, but will say, “I thank you for what I have had possession of: I have managed your property so as largely to increase it, but since you order me, I give it back to you and return it willingly and thankfully. If you still wish me to own anything of yours, I will keep it for you: if you have other views, I restore into your hands and make restitution of all my wrought and coined silver, my house and my household. Should Nature recall what

she previously entrusted us with, let us say to her also: ‘Take back my spirit, which is better than when you gave it me: I do not shuffle or hang back. Of my own free will I am ready to return what you gave me before I could think: take me away,’ ” What hardship can there be in returning to the place from whence one came? a man cannot live well if he knows not how to die well. We must, therefore, take away from this commodity its original value, and count the breath of life as a cheap matter. “We dislike gladiators,” says Cicero, “if they are eager to save their lives by any means whatever: but we look favourably upon them if they are openly reckless of them,” You may be sure that the same thing occurs with us: we often die because we are afraid of death. Fortune, which regards our lives as a show in the arena for her own enjoyment, says, “Why should I spare you, base and cowardly creature that you are? you will be pierced and hacked with all the more wounds because you know not how to offer your throat to the knife: whereas you, who receive the stroke without drawing away your neck or putting up your hands to stop it, shall both live longer and die more quickly,” He who fears death will never act as becomes a living man: but he who knows that this fate was laid upon him as soon as he was conceived will live according to it, and by this strength of mind will gain this further advantage, that nothing can befal him unexpectedly: for by looking forward to everything which can happen as though it would happen to him, he takes the sting out of all evils, which can make no difference to those who expect it and are prepared to meet it: evil only comes hard upon those who have lived without giving it a thought and whose attention has been exclusively directed to happiness. Disease, captivity, disaster, conflagration, are none of them unexpected: I always knew with what disorderly company Nature had associated me. The dead have often been wailed for in my neighbourhood: the torch and taper have often been borne past my door before the bier of one who has died before his time: the crash of falling buildings has often resounded by my side: night has snatched away many of those with whom I have become intimate in the forum, the Senate-house, and in society, and has sundered the hands which were joined in friendship: ought I to be surprised if the dangers which have always been circling around me at last assail me? How large a part of mankind never think of storms when about to set sail? I shall never be ashamed to quote a good saying because it comes from a bad author. Publilius, who was a more powerful writer than any of our other playwrights, whether comic or tragic, whenever he chose to rise above farcical absurdities and speeches addressed to the gallery, among many other verses too noble even for tragedy, let alone for comedy, has this one:—

“What one hath suffered may befall us all.”

If a man takes this into his inmost heart and looks upon all the misfortunes of other men, of which there is always a great plenty, in this spirit, remembering that there is nothing to prevent their

coming upon him also, he will arm himself against them long before they attack him. It is too late to school the mind to endurance of peril after peril has come. “I did not think this would happen,” and “Would you ever have believed that this would have happened?” say you. But why should it not? Where are the riches after which want, hunger, and beggary do not follow? what office is there whose purple robe, augur’s staff, and patrician reins have not as their accompaniment rags and banishment, the brand of infamy, a thousand disgraces, and utter reprobation? what kingdom is there for which ruin, trampling under foot, a tyrant and a butcher are not ready at hand? nor are these matters divided by long periods of time, but there is but the space of an hour between sitting on the throne ourselves and clasping the knees of some one else as suppliants. Know then that every station of life is transitory, and that what has ever happened to anybody may happen to you also. You are wealthy: are you wealthier than Pompeius?[6] Yet when Gaius,[7] his old relative and new host, opened Caesar’s house to him in order that he might close his own, he lacked both bread and water: though he owned so many rivers which both rose and discharged themselves within his dominions, yet he had to beg for drops of water: he perished of hunger and thirst in the palace of his relative, while his heir was contracting for a public funeral for one who was in want of food. You have filled public offices: were they either as important, as unlooked for, or as all-embracing as those of Sejanus? Yet on the day on which the Senate disgraced him, the people tore him to pieces: the executioner[8] could find no part left large enough to drag to the Tiber, of one upon whom gods and men had showered all that could be given to man. You are a king: I will not bid you go to Croesus for an example, he who while yet alive saw his funeral pile both lighted and extinguished, being made to outlive not only his kingdom but even his own death, nor to Jugurtha, whom the people of Rome beheld as a captive within the year in which they had feared him. We have seen Ptolemaeus King of Africa, and Mithridates King of Armenia, under the charge of Gaius’s[9] guards: the former was sent into exile, the latter chose it in order to make his exile more honourable. Among such continual topsy-turvy changes, unless you expect that whatever can happen will happen to you, you give adversity power against you, a power which can be destroyed by any one who looks at it beforehand.

XII. The next point to these will be to take care that we do not labour for what is vain, or labour in vain: that is to say, neither to desire what we are not able to obtain, nor yet, having obtained our desire too late, and after much toil to discover the folly of our wishes: in other words, that our labour may not be without result, and that the result may not be unworthy of our labour: for as a rule sadness arises from one of these two things, either from want of success or from being ashamed of having succeeded. We must limit the running to and fro which most men practise, rambling about houses, theatres, and market-places. They mind other men’s business, and always seem as though they themselves had something to do. If you ask one of them as he comes out of his own door, “Whither are you going?” he will answer, “By Hercules, I do not know: but I shall see some people and do something.” They wander purposelessly seeking

for something to do, and do, not what they have made up their minds to do, but what has casually fallen in their way. They move uselessly and without any plan, just like ants crawling over bushes, which creep up to the top and then down to the bottom again without gaining anything. Many men spend their lives in exactly the same fashion, which one may call a state of restless indolence. You would pity some of them when you see them running as if their house was on fire: they actually jostle all whom they meet, and hurry along themselves and others with them, though all the while they are going to salute some one who will not return their greeting, or to attend the funeral of some one whom they did not know: they are going to hear the verdict on one who often goes to law, or to see the wedding of one who often gets married: they will follow a man's litter, and in some places will even carry it: afterwards returning home weary with idleness, they swear that they themselves do not know why they went out, or where they have been, and on the following day they will wander through the same round again. Let all your work, therefore, have some purpose, and keep some object in view: these restless people are not made restless by labour, but are driven out of their minds by mistaken ideas: for even they do not put themselves in motion without any hope: they are excited by the outward appearance of something, and their crazy mind cannot see its futility. In the same way every one of those who walk out to swell the crowd in the streets, is led round the city by worthless and empty reasons; the dawn drives him forth, although he has nothing to do, and after he has pushed his way into many men's doors, and saluted their nomenclators one after the other, and been turned away from many others, he finds that the most difficult person of all to find at home is himself. From this evil habit comes that worst of all vices, talebearing and prying into public and private secrets, and the knowledge of many things which it is neither safe to tell nor safe to listen to.

XIII. It was, I imagine, following out this principle that Democritis taught that "he who would live at peace must not do much business either public or private," referring of course to unnecessary business: for if there be any necessity for it we ought to transact not only much but endless business, both public and private; in cases, however, where no solemn duty invites us to act, we had better keep ourselves quiet: for he who does many things often puts himself in Fortune's power, and it is safest not to tempt her often, but always to remember her existence, and never to promise oneself anything on her security. I will set sail unless anything happens to prevent me, I shall be praetor, if nothing hinders me, my financial operations will succeed, unless anything goes wrong with them. This is why we say that nothing befals the wise man which he did not expect—we do not make him exempt from the chances of human life, but from its mistakes, nor does everything happen to him as he wished it would, but as he thought it would: now his first thought was that his purpose might meet with some resistance, and the pain of disappointed wishes must affect a man's mind less severely if he has not been at all events confident of success.

XIV. Moreover, we ought to cultivate an easy temper, and not become over fond of the lot which fate has assigned to us, but transfer ourselves to whatever other condition chance may lead us to, and fear no alteration, either in our purposes or our position in life, provided that we do not become subject to caprice, which of all vices is the most hostile to repose: for obstinacy, from which Fortune often wrings some concession, must needs be anxious and unhappy, but caprice, which can never restrain itself, must be more so. Both of these qualities, both that of altering nothing, and that of being dissatisfied with everything, are energies to repose. The mind ought in all cases to be called away from the contemplation of external things to that of itself: let it confide in itself, rejoice in itself, admire its own works; avoid as far as may be those of others, and devote itself to itself; let it not feel losses, and put a good construction even upon misfortunes. Zeno, the chief of our school, when he heard the news of a shipwreck, in which all his property had been lost, remarked, “Fortune bids me follow philosophy in lighter marching order.” A tyrant threatened Theodorus with death, and even with want of burial. “You are able to please yourself,” he answered, “my half pint of blood is in your power: for, as for burial, what a fool you must be if you suppose that I care whether I rot above ground or under it.” Julius Kanus, a man of peculiar greatness, whom even the fact of his having been born in this century does not prevent our admiring, had a long dispute with Gaius, and when as he was going away that Phalaris of a man said to him, “That you may not delude yourself with any foolish hopes, I have ordered you to be executed,” he answered, “I thank you, most excellent prince.” I am not sure what he meant: for many ways of explaining his conduct occur to me. Did he wish to be reproachful, and to show him how great his cruelty must be if death became a kindness? or did he upbraid him with his accustomed insanity? for even those whose children were put to death, and whose goods were confiscated, used to thank him: or was it that he willingly received death, regarding it as freedom? Whatever he meant, it was a magnanimous answer. Some one may say, “After this Gaius might have let him live.” Kanus had no fear of this: the good faith with which Gaius carried out such orders as these was well known. Will you believe that he passed the ten intervening days before his execution without the slightest despondency? it is marvellous how that man spoke and acted, and how peaceful he was. He was playing at draughts when the centurion in charge of a number of those who where going to be executed bade him join them: on the summons he counted his men and said to his companion, “Mind you do not tell a lie after my death, and say that you won;” then, turning to the centurion, he said “You will bear me witness that I am one man ahead of him.” Do you think that Kanus played upon that draught-board? nay, he played with it. His friends were sad at being about to lose so great a man: “Why,” asked he, “are you sorrowful? you are enquiring whether our souls are immortal, but I shall presently know.” Nor did he up to the very end cease his search after truth, and raised arguments upon the subject of his own death. His own teacher of philosophy accompanied him, and they were not far from the hill on which the daily sacrifice to Caesar our god was offered, when he said, “What are you thinking of now, Kanus? or what are your ideas?” “I have

decided," answered Kanus, "at that most swiftly-passing moment of all to watch whether the spirit will be conscious of the act of leaving the body." He promised, too, that if he made any discoveries, he would come round to his friends and tell them what the condition of the souls of the departed might be. Here was peace in the very midst of the storm: here was a soul worthy of eternal life, which used its own fate as a proof of truth, which when at the last step of life experimented upon his fleeting breath, and did not merely continue to learn until he died, but learned something even from death itself. No man has carried the life of a philosopher further. I will not hastily leave the subject of a great man, and one who deserves to be spoken of with respect: I will hand thee down to all posterity, thou most noble heart, chief among the many victims of Gaius.

XV. Yet we gain nothing by getting rid of all personal causes of sadness, for sometimes we are possessed by hatred of the human race. When you reflect how rare simplicity is, how unknown innocence, how seldom faith is kept, unless it be to our advantage, when you remember such numbers of successful crimes, so many equally hateful losses and gains of lust, and ambition so impatient even of its own natural limits that it is willing to purchase distinction by baseness, the mind seems as it were cast into darkness, and shadows rise before it as though the virtues were all overthrown and we were no longer allowed to hope to possess them or benefited by their possession. We ought therefore to bring ourselves into such a state of mind that all the vices of the vulgar may not appear hateful to us, but merely ridiculous, and we should imitate Democritus rather than Heraclitus. The latter of these, whenever be appeared in public, used to weep, the former to laugh: the one thought all human doings to be follies, the other thought them to be miseries. We must take a higher view of all things, and bear with them more easily: it better becomes a man to scoff at life than to lament over it. Add to this that he who laughs at the human race deserves better of it than he who mourns for it, for the former leaves it some good hopes of improvement, while the latter stupidly weeps over what he has given up all hopes of mending. He who after surveying the universe cannot control his laughter shows, too, a greater mind than he who cannot restrain his tears, because his mind is only affected in the slightest possible degree, and he does not think that any part of all this apparatus is either important, or serious, or unhappy. As for the several causes which render us happy or sorrowful, let every one describe them for himself, and learn the truth of Bion's saying, "That all the doings of men were very like what he began with, and that there is nothing in their lives which is more holy or decent than their conception." Yet it is better to accept public morals and human vices calmly without bursting into either laughter or tears; for to be hurt by the sufferings of others is to be for ever miserable, while to enjoy the sufferings of others is an inhuman pleasure, just as it is a useless piece of humanity to weep and pull a long face because some one is burying his son. In one's own misfortunes, also, one ought so to conduct oneself as to bestow upon them just as much sorrow as reason, not as much as custom requires: for many shed tears in order to show them, and whenever no one is

looking at them their eyes are dry, but they think it disgraceful not to weep when every one does so. So deeply has this evil of being guided by the opinion of others taken root in us, that even grief, the simplest of all emotions, begins to be counterfeited.

XVI. There comes now a part of our subject which is wont with good cause to make one sad and anxious: I mean when good men come to bad ends; when Socrates is forced to die in prison, Rutilius to live in exile, Pompeius and Cicero to offer their necks to the swords of their own followers, when the great Cato, that living image of virtue, falls upon his sword and rips up both himself and the republic, one cannot help being grieved that Fortune should bestow her gifts so unjustly: what, too, can a good man hope to obtain when he sees the best of men meeting with the worst fates. Well, but see how each of them endured his fate, and if they endured it bravely, long in your heart for courage as great as theirs; if they died in a womanish and cowardly manner, nothing was lost: either they deserved that you should admire their courage, or else they did not deserve that you should wish to imitate their cowardice: for what can be more shameful than that the greatest men should die so bravely as to make people cowards. Let us praise one who deserves such constant praises, and say, “The braver you are the happier you are! You have escaped from all accidents, jealousies, diseases: you have escaped from prison: the gods have not thought you worthy of ill-fortune, but have thought that fortune no longer deserved to have any power over you”: but when any one shrinks back in the hour of death and looks longingly at life, we must lay hands upon him. I will never weep for a man who dies cheerfully, nor for one who dies weeping: the former wipes away my tears, the latter by his tears makes himself unworthy that any should be shed for him. Shall I weep for Hercules because he was burned alive, or for Regulus because he was pierced by so many nails, or for Cato because he tore open his wounds a second time? All these men discovered how at the cost of a small portion of time they might obtain immortality, and by their deaths gained eternal life.

XVII. It also proves a fertile source of troubles if you take pains to conceal your feelings and never show yourself to any one undisguised, but, as many men do, live an artificial life, in order to impose upon others: for the constant watching of himself becomes a torment to a man, and he dreads being caught doing something at variance with his usual habits, and, indeed, we never can be at our ease if we imagine that every one who looks at us is weighing our real value: for many things occur which strip people of their disguise, however reluctantly they may part with it, and even if all this trouble about oneself is successful, still life is neither happy nor safe when one always has to wear a mask. But what pleasure there is in that honest straight-forwardness which is its own ornament, and which conceals no part of its character? Yet even this life, which hides nothing from any one runs some risk of being despised; for there are people who disdain whatever they come close to: but there is no danger of virtue’s becoming contemptible when she is brought near our eyes, and it is better to be scorned for one’s simplicity than to bear the burden of unceasing hypocrisy.

Still, we must observe moderation in this matter, for there is a great difference between living simply and living slovenly. Moreover, we ought to retire a great deal into ourselves: for association with persons unlike ourselves upsets all that we had arranged, rouses the passions which were at rest, and rubs into a sore any weak or imperfectly healed place in our minds. Nevertheless we ought to mix up these two things, and to pass our lives alternately in solitude and among throngs of people; for the former will make us long for the society of mankind, the latter for that of ourselves, and the one will counteract the other: solitude will cure us when we are sick of crowds, and crowds will cure us when we are sick of solitude. Neither ought we always to keep the mind strained to the same pitch, but it ought sometimes to be relaxed by amusement. Socrates did not blush to play with little boys, Cato used to refresh his mind with wine after he had wearied it with application to affairs of state, and Scipio would move his triumphal and soldierly limbs to the sound of music, not with a feeble and halting gait, as is the fashion now-a-days, when we sway in our very walk with more than womanly weakness, but dancing as men were wont in the days of old on sportive and festal occasions, with manly bounds, thinking it no harm to be seen so doing even by their enemies. Men's minds ought to have relaxation: they rise up better and more vigorous after rest. We must not force crops from rich fields, for an unbroken course of heavy crops will soon exhaust their fertility, and so also the liveliness of our minds will be destroyed by unceasing labour, but they will recover their strength after a short period of rest and relief: for continuous toil produces a sort of numbness and sluggishness. Men would not be so eager for this, if play and amusement did not possess natural attractions for them, although constant indulgence in them takes away all gravity and all strength from the mind: for sleep, also, is necessary for our refreshment, yet if you prolong it for days and nights together it will become death. There is a great difference between slackening your hold of a thing and letting it go. The founders of our laws appointed festivals, in order that men might be publicly encouraged to be cheerful, and they thought it necessary to vary our labours with amusements, and, as I said before, some great men have been wont to give themselves a certain number of holidays in every month, and some divided every day into play-time and work-time. Thus, I remember that great orator Asinius Pollio would not attend to any business after the tenth hour: he would not even read letters after that time for fear some new trouble should arise, but in those two hours[10] used to get rid of the weariness which he had contracted during the whole day. Some rest in the middle of the day, and reserve some light occupation for the afternoon. Our ancestors, too, forbade any new motion to be made in the Senate after the tenth hour. Soldiers divide their watches, and those who have just returned from active service are allowed to sleep the whole night undisturbed. We must humour our minds and grant them rest from time to time, which acts upon them like food, and restores their strength. It does good also to take walks out of doors, that our spirits may be raised and refreshed by the open air and fresh breeze: sometimes we gain strength by driving in a carriage, by travel, by change of air, or by social meals and a more generous

allowance of wine: at times we ought to drink even to intoxication, not so as to drown, but merely to dip ourselves in wine: for wine washes away troubles and dislodges them from the depths of the mind, and acts as a remedy to sorrow as it does to some diseases. The inventor of wine is called Liber, not from the licence which he gives to our tongues, but because he liberates the mind from the bondage of cares, and emancipates it, animates it, and renders it more daring in all that it attempts. Yet moderation is wholesome both in freedom and in wine. It is believed that Solon and Arcesilaus used to drink deep. Cato is reproached with drunkenness: but whoever casts this in his teeth will find it easier to turn his reproach into a commendation than to prove that Cato did anything wrong: however, we ought not to do it often, for fear the mind should contract evil habits, though it ought sometimes to be forced into frolic and frankness, and to cast off dull sobriety for a while. If we believe the Greek poet, “it is sometimes pleasant to be mad”; again, Plato always knocked in vain at the door of poetry when he was sober; or, if we trust Aristotle, no great genius has ever been without a touch of insanity. The mind cannot use lofty language, above that of the common herd, unless it be excited. When it has spurned aside the commonplace environments of custom, and rises sublime, instinct with sacred fire, then alone can it chant a song too grand for mortal lips: as long as it continues to dwell within itself it cannot rise to any pitch of splendour: it must break away from the beaten track, and lash itself to frenzy, till it gnaws the curb and rushes away bearing up its rider to heights whither it would fear to climb when alone.

I have now, my beloved Serenus, given you an account of what things can preserve peace of mind, what things can restore it to us, what can arrest the vices which secretly undermine it: yet be assured, that none of these is strong enough to enable us to retain so fleeting a blessing, unless we watch over our vacillating mind with intense and unremitting care.

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[1] Cf. Juv. ii. 150.

[2] The chief magistrate of the Greeks.

[3] The chief magistrate of the Oscans.

[4] The chief magistrate of the Carthaginians.

[5] “Livy himself styled the Alexandrian library elegantiae regum curaeque egregium opus: a liberal encomium, for which he is pertly criticised by the narrow stoicism of Seneca (Tranq., ch. ix.), whose wisdom, on this occasion, deviates into nonsense.”—Gibbon, “Decline and Fall,” ch. li, note.

[6] Haase reads Ptolemaeus.

[7] Caligula.

[8] It was the duty of the executioner to fasten a hook to the neck of condemned criminals, by which they were dragged to the Tiber.

[9] Caligula.

[10] The Romans reckoned twelve hours from sunrise to sunset. These “two hours” were therefore the two last of the day.

THE TENTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO PAULINUS.[1]

OF THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

I. The greater part of mankind, my Paulinus, complains of the unkindness of Nature, because we are born only for a short space of time, and that this allotted period of life runs away so swiftly, nay so hurriedly, that with but few exceptions men’s life comes to an end just as they are preparing to enjoy it: nor is it only the common herd and the ignorant vulgar who mourn over this universal misfortune, as they consider it to be: this reflection has wrung complaints even from great men. Hence comes that well-known saying of physicians, that art is long but life is short: hence arose that quarrel, so unbefitting a sage, which Aristotle picked with Nature, because she had indulged animals with such length of days that some of them lived for ten or fifteen centuries, while man, although born for many and such great exploits, had the term of his existence cut so much shorter. We do not have a very short time assigned to us, but we lose a great deal of it: life is long enough to carry out the most important projects: we have an ample portion, if we do but arrange the whole of it aright: but when it all runs to waste through luxury and carelessness, when it is not devoted to any good purpose, then at the last we are forced to feel that it is all over, although we never noticed how it glided away. Thus it is: we do not receive a short life, but we make it a short one, and we are not poor in days, but wasteful of them. When great and kinglike riches fall into the hands of a bad master, they are dispersed straightway, but even a moderate fortune, when bestowed upon a wise guardian, increases by use: and in like manner our life has great opportunities for one who knows how to dispose of it to the best advantage.

II. Why do we complain of Nature? she has dealt kindly with us. Life is long enough, if you know how to use it. One man is possessed by an avarice which nothing can satisfy, another by a laborious diligence in doing what is totally useless: another is sodden by wine: another is benumbed by sloth: one man is exhausted by an ambition which makes him court the good will of others[2]: another, through his eagerness as a merchant, is led to visit every land and every sea by the hope of gain: some are plagued by the love of soldiering, and are always either endangering other men's lives or in trembling for their own: some wear away their lives in that voluntary slavery, the unrequited service of great men: many are occupied either in laying claim to other men's fortune or in complaining of their own: a great number have no settled purpose, and are tossed from one new scheme to another by a rambling, inconsistent, dissatisfied, fickle habit of mind: some care for no object sufficiently to try to attain it, but lie lazily yawning until their fate comes upon them: so that I cannot doubt the truth of that verse which the greatest of poets has dressed in the guise of an oracular response—

"We live a small part only of our lives."

But all duration is time, not life: vices press upon us and surround us on every side, and do not permit us to regain our feet, or to raise our eyes and gaze upon truth, but when we are down keep us prostrate and chained to low desires. Men who are in this condition are never allowed to come to themselves: if ever by chance they obtain any rest, they roll to and fro like the deep sea, which heaves and tosses after a gale, and they never have any respite from their lusts. Do you suppose that I speak of those whose ills are notorious? Nay, look at those whose prosperity all men run to see: they are choked by their own good things. To how many men do riches prove a heavy burden? how many men's eloquence and continual desire to display their own cleverness has cost them their lives?[3] how many are sallow with constant sensual indulgence? how many have no freedom left them by the tribe of clients that surges around them? Look through all these, from the lowest to the highest:—this man calls his friends to support him, this one is present in court, this one is the defendant, this one pleads for him, this one is on the jury: but no one lays claim to his own self, every one wastes his time over some one else. Investigate those men, whose names are in every one's mouth: you will find that they bear just the same marks: A is devoted to B, and B to C: no one belongs to himself. Moreover some men are full of most irrational anger: they complain of the insolence of their chiefs, because they have not granted them an audience when they wished for it; as if a man had any right to complain of being so haughtily shut out by another, when he never has leisure to give his own conscience a hearing. This chief of yours, whoever he is, though he may look at you in an offensive manner, still will some day look at you, open his ears to your

words, and give you a seat by his side: but you never design to look upon yourself, to listen to your own grievances. You ought not, then, to claim these services from another, especially since while you yourself were doing so, you did not wish for an interview with another man, but were not able to obtain one with yourself.[4]

III. Were all the brightest intellects of all time to employ themselves on this one subject, they never could sufficiently express their wonder at this blindness of men's minds: men will not allow any one to establish himself upon their estates, and upon the most trifling dispute about the measuring of boundaries, they betake themselves to stones and cudgels: yet they allow others to encroach upon their lives, nay, they themselves actually lead others in to take possession of them. You cannot find any one who wants to distribute his money; yet among how many people does every one distribute his life? men covetously guard their property from waste, but when it comes to waste of time, they are most prodigal of that of which it would become them to be sparing. Let us take one of the elders, and say to him, "We perceive that you have arrived at the extreme limits of human life: you are in your hundredth year, or even older. Come now, reckon up your whole life in black and white: tell us how much of your time has been spent upon your creditors, how much on your mistress, how much on your king, how much on your clients, how much in quarrelling with your wife, how much in keeping your slaves in order, how much in running up and down the city on business. Add to this the diseases which we bring upon us with our own hands, and the time which has laid idle without any use having been made of it; you will see that you have not lived as many years as you count. Look back in your memory and see how often you have been consistent in your projects, how many days passed as you intended them to do when you were at your own disposal, how often you did not change colour and your spirit did not quail, how much work you have done in so long a time, how many people have without your knowledge stolen parts of your life from you, how much you have lost, how large a part has been taken up by useless grief, foolish gladness, greedy desire, or polite conversation; how little of yourself is left to you: you will then perceive that you will die prematurely." What, then, is the reason of this? It is that people live as though they would live for ever: you never remember your human frailty; you never notice how much of your time has already gone by: you spend it as though you had an abundant and overflowing store of it, though all the while that day which you devote to some man or to some thing is perhaps your last. You fear everything, like mortals as you are, and yet you desire everything as if you were immortals. You will hear many men say, "After my fiftieth year I will give myself up to leisure: my sixtieth shall be my last year of public office": and what guarantee have you that your life will last any longer? who will let all this go on just as you have arranged it? are you not ashamed to reserve only the leavings of your life for yourself, and appoint for the enjoyment of your own right mind only that time which you cannot devote to any business? How late it is to begin life just when we have to be leaving it! What a foolish forgetfulness of our mortality, to put off wholesome counsels until our fiftieth or sixtieth year, and to choose that our lives shall

begin at a point which few of us ever reach.

IV. You will find that the most powerful and highly-placed men let fall phrases in which they long for leisure, praise it, and prefer it to all the blessings which they enjoy. Sometimes they would fain descend from their lofty pedestal, if it could be safely done: for Fortune collapses by its own weight, without any shock or interference from without. The late Emperor Augustus, upon whom the gods bestowed more blessings than on any one else, never ceased to pray for rest and exemption from the troubles of empire: he used to enliven his labours with this sweet, though unreal consolation, that he would some day live for himself alone. In a letter which he addressed to the Senate, after promising that his rest shall not be devoid of dignity nor discreditable to his former glories, I find the following words:—"These things, however, it is more honourable to do than to promise: but my eagerness for that time, so earnestly longed for, has led me to derive a certain pleasure from speaking about it, though the reality is still far distant."[5] He thought leisure so important, that though he could not actually enjoy it, yet he did so by anticipation and by thinking about it. He, who saw everything depending upon himself alone, who swayed the fortunes of men and of nations, thought that his happiest day would be that on which he laid aside his greatness. He knew by experience how much labour was involved in that glory that shone through all lands, and how much secret anxiety was concealed within it: he had been forced to assert his rights by war, first with his countrymen, next with his colleagues, and lastly with his own relations, and had shed blood both by sea and by land: after marching his troops under arms through Macedonia, Sicily, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and almost all the countries of the world, when they were weary with slaughtering Romans he had directed them against a foreign foe. While he was pacifying the Alpine regions, and subduing the enemies whom he found in the midst of the Roman empire, while he was extending its boundaries beyond the Rhine, the Euphrates, and the Danube, at Rome itself the swords of Murena, Caepio, Lepidus, Egnatius, and others were being sharpened to slay him. Scarcely had he escaped from their plot, when his already failing age was terrified by his daughter and all the noble youths who were pledged to her cause by adultery with her by way of oath of fidelity. Then there was Paulus and Antonius's mistress, a second time to be feared by Rome: and when he had cut out these ulcers from his very limbs, others grew in their place: the empire, like a body overloaded with blood, was always breaking out somewhere. For this reason he longed for leisure: all his labours were based upon hopes and thoughts of leisure: this was the wish of him who could accomplish the wishes of all other men.

V. While tossed hither and thither by Catiline and Clodius, Pompeius and Crassus, by some open enemies and some doubtful friends, while he struggled with the struggling republic and kept it from going to ruin, when at last he was banished, being neither able to keep silence in prosperity nor to endure adversity with patience, how often must Marcus Cicero have cursed that consulship of his which he never ceased to praise, and which nevertheless deserved it? What piteous expressions he uses in a letter to Atticus when Pompeius the

father had been defeated, and his son was recruiting his shattered forces in Spain? “Do you ask,” writes he, “what I am doing here? I am living in my Tusculan villa almost as a prisoner.” He adds more afterwards, wherein he laments his former life, complains of the present, and despairs of the future. Cicero called himself “half a prisoner,” but, by Hercules, the wise man never would have come under so lowly a title: he never would be half a prisoner, but would always enjoy complete and entire liberty, being free, in his own power, and greater than all others: for what can be greater than the man who is greater than Fortune?

VI. When Livius Drusus, a vigorous and energetic man, brought forward bills for new laws and radical measures of the Gracchus pattern, being the centre of a vast mob of all the peoples of Italy, and seeing no way to solve the question, since he was not allowed to deal with it as he wished, and yet was not free to throw it up after having once taken part in it, complained bitterly of his life, which had been one of unrest from the very cradle, and said, we are told, that “he was the only person who had never had any holidays even when he was a boy.” Indeed, while he was still under age and wearing the praetexta, he had the courage to plead the cause of accused persons in court, and to make use of his influence so powerfully that it is well known that in some causes his exertions gained a verdict. Where would such precocious ambition stop? You may be sure that one who showed such boldness as a child would end by becoming a great pest both in public and in private life: it was too late for him to complain that he had had no holidays, when from his boyhood he had been a firebrand and a nuisance in the courts. It is a stock question whether he committed suicide: for he fell by a sudden wound in the groin, and some doubted whether his death was caused by his own hand, though none disputed its having happened most seasonably. It would be superfluous to mention more who, while others thought them the happiest of men, have themselves borne true witness to their own feelings, and have loathed all that they have done for all the years of their lives: yet by these complaints they have effected no alteration either in others or in themselves: for after these words have escaped them their feelings revert to their accustomed frame. By Hercules, that life of you great men, even though it should last for more than a thousand years, is still a very short one: those vices of yours would swallow up any extent of time: no wonder if this our ordinary span, which, though Nature hurries on, can be enlarged by common sense, soon slips away from you: for you do not lay hold of it or hold it back, and try to delay the swiftest of all things, but you let it pass as though it were a useless thing and you could supply its place.

VII. Among these I reckon in the first place those who devote their time to nothing but drinking and debauchery: for no men are busied more shamefully: the others, although the glory which they pursue is but a counterfeit, still deserve some credit for their pursuit of it —though you may tell me of misers, of passionate men, of men who hate and who even wage war without a cause—yet all such men sin like men: but the sin of those who are given up to gluttony and lust is a disgraceful one. Examine all the hours of their lives: consider how

much time they spend in calculation, how much in plotting, how much in fear, how much in giving and deceiving flattery, how much in entering into recognizances for themselves or for others, how much in banquets, which indeed become a serious business, you will see that they are not allowed any breathing time either by their pleasures or their pains. Finally, all are agreed that nothing, neither eloquence nor literature, can be done properly by one who is occupied with something else; for nothing can take deep root in a mind which is directed to some other subject, and which rejects whatever you try to stuff into it. No man knows less about living than a business man: there is nothing about which it is more difficult to gain knowledge. Other arts have many folk everywhere who profess to teach them: some of them can be so thoroughly learned by mere boys, that they are able to teach them to others: but one's whole life must be spent in learning how to live, and, which may perhaps surprise you more, one's whole life must be spent in learning how to die. Many excellent men have freed themselves from all hindrances, have given up riches, business, and pleasure, and have made it their duty to the very end of their lives to learn how to live: and yet the larger portion of them leave this life confessing that they do not yet know how to live, and still less know how to live as wise men. Believe me, it requires a great man and one who is superior to human frailties not to allow any of his time to be filched from him: and therefore it follows that his life is a very long one, because he devotes every possible part of it to himself: no portion lies idle or uncultivated, or in another man's power; for he finds nothing worthy of being exchanged for his time, which he husbands most grudgingly. He, therefore, had time enough: whereas those who gave up a great part of their lives to the people of necessity had not enough. Yet you need not suppose that the latter were not sometimes conscious of their loss: indeed, you will hear most of those who are troubled with great prosperity every now and then cry out amid their hosts of clients, their pleadings in court, and their other honourable troubles, "I am not allowed to live my own life." Why is he not allowed? because all those who call upon you to defend them, take you away from yourself. How many of your days have been spent by that defendant? by that candidate for office? by that old woman who is weary with burying her heirs? by that man who pretends to be ill, in order to excite the greed of those who hope to inherit his property? by that powerful friend of yours, who uses you to swell his train, not to be his friend? Balance your account, and run over all the days of your life; you will see that only a very few days, and only those which were useless for any other purpose, have been left to you. He who has obtained the fasces[6] for which he longed, is eager to get rid of them, and is constantly saying, "When will this year be over?" another exhibits public games, and once would have given a great deal for the chance of doing so, but now "when," says he, "shall I escape from this?" another is an advocate who is fought for in all the courts, and who draws immense audiences, who crowd all the forum to a far greater distance than they can hear him; "When," says he, "will vacation-time come?" Every man hurries through his life, and suffers from a yearning for the future, and a weariness of the present: but he who disposes of all his time for his own purposes,

who arranges all his days as though he were arranging the plan of his life, neither wishes for nor fears the morrow: for what new pleasure can any hour now bestow upon him? he knows it all, and has indulged in it all even to satiety. Fortune may deal with the rest as she will, his life is already safe from her: such a man may gain something, but cannot lose anything: and, indeed, he can only gain anything in the same way as one who is already glutted and filled can get some extra food which he takes although he does not want it. You have no grounds, therefore, for supposing that any one has lived long, because he has wrinkles or grey hairs: such a man has not lived long, but has only been long alive. Why! would you think that a man had voyaged much if a fierce gale had caught him as soon as he left his port, and he had been driven round and round the same place continually by a succession of winds blowing from opposite quarters? such a man has not travelled much, he has only been much tossed about.

VIII. I am filled with wonder when I see some men asking others for their time, and those who are asked for it most willing to give it: both parties consider the object for which the time is given, but neither of them thinks of the time itself, as though in asking for this one asked for nothing, and in giving it one gave nothing: we play with what is the most precious of all things: yet it escapes men’s notice, because it is an incorporeal thing, and because it does not come before our eyes; and therefore it is held very cheap, nay, hardly any value whatever is put upon it. Men set the greatest store upon presents or pensions, and hire out their work, their services, or their care in order to gain them: no one values time: they give it much more freely, as though it cost nothing. Yet you will see these same people clasping the knees of their physician as suppliants when they are sick and in present peril of death, and if threatened with a capital charge willing to give all that they possess in order that they may live: so inconsistent are they. Indeed, if the number of every man’s future years could be laid before him, as we can lay that of his past years, how anxious those who found that they had but few years remaining would be to make the most of them? Yet it is easy to arrange the distribution of a quantity, however small, if we know how much there is: what you ought to husband most carefully is that which may run short you know not when. Yet you have no reason to suppose that they do not know how dear a thing time is: they are wont to say to those whom they especially love that they are ready to give them a part of their own years. They do give them, and know not that they are giving them; but they give them in such a manner that they themselves lose them without the others gaining them. They do not, however, know whence they obtain their supply, and therefore they are able to endure the waste of what is not seen: yet no one will give you back your years, no one will restore them to you again: your life will run its course when once it has begun, and will neither begin again or efface what it has done. It will make no disturbance, it will give you no warning of how fast it flies: it will move silently on: it will not prolong itself at the command of a king, or at the wish of a nation: as it started on its first day, so it will run: it will never turn aside, never delay. What follows, then? Why! you are busy, but life

is hurrying on: death will be here some time or other, and you must attend to him, whether you will or no.

IX. Can anything be mentioned which is more insane than the ideas of leisure of those people who boast of their worldly wisdom? They live laboriously, in order that they may live better; they fit themselves out for life at the expense of life itself, and cast their thoughts a long way forwards: yet postponement is the greatest waste of life: it wrings day after day from us, and takes away the present by promising something hereafter: there is no such obstacle to true living as waiting, which loses to-day while it is depending on the morrow. You dispose of that which is in the hand of Fortune, and you let go that which is in your own. Whither are you looking, whither are you stretching forward? everything future is uncertain: live now straightway. See how the greatest of bards cries to you and sings in wholesome verse as though inspired with celestial fire:—

“The best of wretched mortals’ days is that

Which is the first to fly.”

Why do you hesitate, says he, why do you stand back? unless you seize it it will have fled: and even if you do seize it, it will still fly. Our swiftness in making use of our time ought therefore to vie with the swiftness of time itself, and we ought to drink of it as we should of a fast-running torrent which will not be always running. The poet, too, admirably satirizes our boundless thoughts, when he says, not “the first age,” but “the first day.” Why are you careless and slow while time is flying so fast, and why do you spread out before yourself a vision of long months and years, as many as your greediness requires? he talks with you about one day, and that a fast-fleeting one. There can, then, be no doubt that the best days are those which fly first for wretched, that is, for busy mortals, whose minds are still in their childhood when old age comes upon them, and they reach it unprepared and without arms to combat it. They have never looked forward: they have all of a sudden stumbled upon old age: they never noticed that it was stealing upon them day by day. As conversation, or reading, or deep thought deceives travellers, and they find themselves at their journey’s end before they knew that it was drawing near, so in this fast and never-ceasing journey of life, which we make at the same pace whether we are asleep or awake, busy people never notice that they are moving till they are at the end of it.

X. If I chose to divide this proposition into separate steps, supported by evidence, many things occur to me by which I could prove that the lives of busy men are the shortest of all. Fabianus, who was none of your lecture-room philosophers, but one of the true antique pattern, used to say, “We ought to fight against the passions by main force, not by skirmishing, and upset their line of

battle by a home charge, not by inflicting trifling wounds: I do not approve of dallying with sophisms; they must be crushed, not merely scratched.” Yet, in order that sinners may be confronted with their errors, they must be taught, and not merely mourned for. Life is divided into three parts: that which has been, that which is, and that which is to come: of these three stages, that which we are passing through is brief, that which we are about to pass is uncertain, and that which we have passed is certain: this it is over which Fortune has lost her rights, and which can fall into no other man’s power: and this is what busy men lose: for they have no leisure to look back upon the past, and even if they had, they take no pleasure in remembering what they regret: they are, therefore, unwilling to turn their minds to the contemplation of ill-spent time, and they shrink from reviewing a course of action whose faults become glaringly apparent when handled a second time, although they were snatched at when we were under the spell of immediate gratification. No one, unless all his acts have been submitted to the infallible censorship of his own conscience, willingly turns his thoughts back upon the past. He who has ambitiously desired, haughtily scorned, passionately vanquished, treacherously deceived, greedily snatched, or prodigally wasted much, must needs fear his own memory; yet this is a holy and consecrated part of our time, beyond the reach of all human accidents, removed from the dominion of Fortune, and which cannot be disquieted by want, fear, or attacks of sickness: this can neither be troubled nor taken away from one: we possess it for ever undisturbed. Our present consists only of single days, and those, too, taken one hour at a time: but all the days of past times appear before us when bidden, and allow themselves to be examined and lingered over, albeit busy men cannot find time for so doing. It is the privilege of a tranquil and peaceful mind to review all the parts of its life: but the minds of busy men are like animals under the yoke, and cannot bend aside or look back. Consequently, their life passes away into vacancy, and as you do no good however much you may pour into a vessel which cannot keep or hold what you put there, so also it matters not how much time you give men if it can find no place to settle in, but leaks away through the chinks and holes of their minds. Present time is very short, so much so that to some it seems to be no time at all; for it is always in motion, and runs swiftly away: it ceases to exist before it comes, and can no more brook delay than can the universe or the host of heaven, whose unresting movement never lets them pause on their way. Busy men, therefore, possess present time, alone, that being so short that they cannot grasp it, and when they are occupied with many things they lose even this.

XI. In a word, do you want to know for how short a time they live? see how they desire to live long: broken-down old men beg in their prayers for the addition of a few more years: they pretend to be younger than they are: they delude themselves with their own lies, and are as willing to cheat themselves as if they could cheat Fate at the same time: when at last some weakness reminds them that they are mortal, they die as it were in terror: they may rather be said to be dragged out of this life than to depart from it. They loudly exclaim that they have been fools and have not lived their lives,

and declare that if they only survive this sickness they will spend the rest of their lives at leisure: at such times they reflect how uselessly they have laboured to provide themselves with what they have never enjoyed, and how all their toil has gone for nothing: but those whose life is spent without any engrossing business may well find it ample: no part of it is made over to others, or scattered here and there; no part is entrusted to Fortune, is lost by neglect, is spent in ostentatious giving, or is useless: all of it is, so to speak, invested at good interest. A very small amount of it, therefore, is abundantly sufficient, and so, when his last day arrives, the wise man will not hang back, but will walk with a steady step to meet death.

XII. Perhaps you will ask me whom I mean by “busy men”? you need not think that I allude only to those who are hunted out of the courts of justice with dogs at the close of the proceedings, those whom you see either honourably jostled by a crowd of their own clients or contemptuously hustled in visits of ceremony by strangers, who call them away from home to hang about their patron’s doors, or who make use of the praetor’s sales by auction to acquire infamous gains which some day will prove their own ruin. Some men’s leisure is busy: in their country house or on their couch, in complete solitude, even though they have retired from all men’s society, they still continue to worry themselves: we ought not to say that such men’s life is one of leisure, but their very business is sloth. Would you call a man idle who expends anxious finicking care in the arrangement of his Corinthian bronzes, valuable only through the mania of a few connoisseurs? and who passes the greater part of his days among plates of rusty metal? who sits in the palaestra (shame, that our very vices should be foreign) watching boys wrestling? who distributes his gangs of fettered slaves into pairs according to their age and colour? who keeps athletes of the latest fashion? Why, do you call those men idle, who pass many hours at the barber’s while the growth of the past night is being plucked out by the roots, holding councils over each several hair, while the scattered locks are arranged in order and those which fall back are forced forward on to the forehead? How angry they become if the shaver is a little careless, as though he were shearing a man! what a white heat they work themselves into if some of their mane is cut away, if some part of it is ill-arranged, if all their ringlets do not lie in regular order! who of them would not rather that the state were overthrown than that his hair should be ruffled? who does not care more for the appearance of his head than for his health? who would not prefer ornament to honour? Do you call these men idle, who make a business of the comb and looking-glass? what of those who devote their lives to composing, hearing, and learning songs, who twist their voices, intended by Nature to sound best and simplest when used straightforwardly, through all the turns of futile melodies: whose fingers are always beating time to some music on which they are inwardly meditating; who, when invited to serious and even sad business may be heard humming an air to themselves?—such people are not at leisure, but are busy about trifles. As for their banquets, by Hercules, I cannot reckon them among their unoccupied times when I see with what anxious care they set out their plate, how

laboriously they arrange the girdles of their waiters' tunics, how breathlessly they watch to see how the cook dishes up the wild boar, with what speed, when the signal is given, the slave-boys run to perform their duties, how skilfully birds are carved into pieces of the right size, how painstakingly wretched youths wipe up the spittings of drunken men. By these means men seek credit for taste and grandeur, and their vices follow them so far into their privacy that they can neither eat nor drink without a view to effect. Nor should I count those men idle who have themselves carried hither and thither in sedans and litters, and who look forward to their regular hour for taking this exercise as though they were not allowed to omit it: men who are reminded by some one else when to bathe, when to swim, when to dine: they actually reach such a pitch of languid effeminacy as not to be able to find out for themselves whether they are hungry. I have heard one of these luxurious folk—if indeed, we ought to give the name of luxury to unlearning the life and habits of a man—when he was carried in men's arms out of the bath and placed in his chair, say inquiringly, "Am I seated?" Do you suppose that such a man as this, who did not know when he was seated, could know whether he was alive, whether he could see, whether he was at leisure? I can hardly say whether I pity him more if he really did not know or if he pretended not to know this. Such people do really become unconscious of much, but they behave as though they were unconscious of much more: they delight in some failings because they consider them to be proofs of happiness: it seems the part of an utterly low and contemptible man to know what he is doing. After this, do you suppose that playwrights draw largely upon their imaginations in their burlesques upon luxury: by Hercules, they omit more than they invent; in this age, inventive in this alone, such a number of incredible vices have been produced, that already you are able to reproach the playwrights with omitting to notice them. To think that there should be any one who had so far lost his senses through luxury as to take some one else's opinion as to whether he was sitting or not? This man certainly is not at leisure: you must bestow a different title on him: he is sick, or rather dead: he only is at leisure who feels that he is at leisure: but this creature is only half alive, if he wants some one to tell him what position his body is in. How can such a man be able to dispose of any time?

XIII. It would take long to describe the various individuals who have wasted their lives over playing at draughts, playing at ball, or toasting their bodies in the sun: men are not at leisure if their pleasures partake of the character of business, for no one will doubt that those persons are laborious triflers who devote themselves to the study of futile literary questions, of whom there is already a great number in Rome also. It used to be a peculiarly Greek disease of the mind to investigate how many rowers Ulysses had, whether the Iliad or the Odyssey was written first, and furthermore, whether they were written by the same author, with other matters of the same stamp, which neither please your inner consciousness if you keep them to yourself, nor make you seem more learned, but only more troublesome, if you publish them abroad. See, already this vain longing to learn what is useless has taken hold of the Romans: the other day I heard somebody telling who was the first

Roman general who did this or that: Duillius was the first who won a sea-fight, Curius Dentatus was the first who drove elephants in his triumph: moreover, these stories, though they add nothing to real glory, do nevertheless deal with the great deeds of our countrymen: such knowledge is not profitable, yet it claims our attention as a fascinating kind of folly. I will even pardon those who want to know who first persuaded the Romans to go on board ship. It was Claudius, who for this reason was surnamed Caudex, because any piece of carpentry formed of many planks was called caudex by the ancient Romans, for which reason public records are called Codices, and by old custom the ships which ply on the Tiber with provisions are called codicariae. Let us also allow that it is to the point to tell how Valerius Corvinus was the first to conquer Messana, and first of the family of the Valerii transferred the name of the captured city to his own, and was called Messana, and how the people gradually corrupted the pronunciation and called him Messalla: or would you let any one find interest in Lucius Sulla having been the first to let lions loose in the circus, they having been previously exhibited in chains, and hurlers of darts having been sent by King Bocchus to kill them? This may be permitted to their curiosity: but can it serve any useful purpose to know that Pompeius was the first to exhibit eighteen elephants in the circus, who were matched in a mimic battle with some convicts? The leading man in the state, and one who, according to tradition, was noted among the ancient leaders of the state for his transcendent goodness of heart, thought it a notable kind of show to kill men in a manner hitherto unheard of. Do they fight to the death? that is not cruel enough: are they torn to pieces? that is not cruel enough: let them be crushed flat by animals of enormous bulk. It would be much better that such a thing should be forgotten, for fear that hereafter some potentate might hear of it and envy its refined barbarity. O, how doth excessive prosperity blind our intellects! at the moment at which he was casting so many troops of wretches to be trampled on by outlandish beasts, when he was proclaiming war between such different creatures, when he was shedding so much blood before the eyes of the Roman people, whose blood he himself was soon to shed even more freely, he thought himself the master of the whole world; yet he afterwards, deceived by the treachery of the Alexandrians, had to offer himself to the dagger of the vilest of slaves, and then at last discovered what an empty boast was his surname of “The Great.” But to return to the point from which I have digressed, I will prove that even on this very subject some people expend useless pains. The same author tells us that Metellus, when he triumphed after having conquered the Carthaginians in Sicily, was the only Roman who ever had a hundred and twenty captured elephants led before his car: and that Sulla was the last Roman who extended the pomoerium,[7] which it was not the custom of the ancients to extend on account of the conquest of provincial, but only of Italian territory. Is it more useful to know this, than to know that the Mount Aventine, according to him, is outside of the pomoerium, for one of two reasons, either because it was thither that the plebeians seceded, or because when Remus took his auspices on that place the birds which he saw were not propitious: and other stories without number of the like sort, which are either actual falsehoods or much the same as falsehoods?

for even if you allow that these authors speak in all good faith, if they pledge themselves for the truth of what they write, still, whose mistakes will be made fewer by such stories? whose passions will be restrained? whom will they make more brave, more just, or more gentlemanly? My friend Fabianus used to say that he was not sure that it was not better not to apply oneself to any studies at all than to become interested in these.

XIV. The only persons who are really at leisure are those who devote themselves to philosophy: and they alone really live: for they do not merely enjoy their own lifetime, but they annex every century to their own: all the years which have passed before them belong to them. Unless we are the most ungrateful creatures in the world, we shall regard these noblest of men, the founders of divine schools of thought, as having been born for us, and having prepared life for us: we are led by the labour of others to behold most beautiful things which have been brought out of darkness into light; we are not shut out from any period, we can make our way into every subject, and, if only we can summon up sufficient strength of mind to overstep the narrow limit of human weakness, we have a vast extent of time wherein to disport ourselves: we may argue with Socrates, doubt with Carneades, repose with Epicurus, overcome human nature with the Stoics, out-herod it with the Cynics. Since Nature allows us to commune with every age, why do we not abstract ourselves from our own petty fleeting span of time, and give ourselves up with our whole mind to what is vast, what is eternal, what we share with better men than ourselves? Those who gad about in a round of calls, who worry themselves and others, after they have indulged their madness to the full, and crossed every patron's threshold daily, leaving no open door unentered, after they have hawked about their interested greetings in houses of the most various character,—after all, how few people are they able to see out of so vast a city, divided among so many different ruling passions: how many will be moved by sloth, self-indulgence, or rudeness to deny them admittance: how many, after they have long plagued them, will run past them with feigned hurry? how many will avoid coming out through their entrance-hall with its crowds of clients, and will escape by some concealed backdoor? as though it were not ruder to deceive their visitor than to deny him admittance! —how many, half asleep and stupid with yesterday's debauch, can hardly be brought to return the greeting of the wretched man who has broken his own rest in order to wait on that of another, even after his name has been whispered to them for the thousandth time, save by a most offensive yawn of his half-opened lips. We may truly say that those men are pursuing the true path of duty, who wish every day to consort on the most familiar terms with Zeno, Pythagoras, Democritus, and the rest of those high priests of virtue, with Aristotle and with Theophrastus. None of these men will be "engaged," none of these will fail to send you away after visiting him in a happier frame of mind and on better terms with yourself,

none of them will let you leave him empty-handed: yet their society may be enjoyed by all men, and by night as well as by day.

XV. None of these men will force you to die, but all of them will teach you how to die: none of these will waste your time, but will add his own to it. The talk of these men is not dangerous, their friendship will not lead you to the scaffold, their society will not ruin you in expenses: you may take from them whatsoever you will; they will not prevent your taking the deepest draughts of their wisdom that you please. What blessedness, what a fair old age awaits the man who takes these for his patrons! he will have friends with whom he may discuss all matters, great and small, whose advice he may ask daily about himself, from whom he will hear truth without insult, praise without flattery, and according to whose likeness he may model his own character. We are wont to say that we are not able to choose who our parents should be, but that they were assigned to us by chance; yet we may be born just as we please: there are several families of the noblest intellects: choose which you would like to belong to: by your adoption you will not receive their name only, but also their property, which is not intended to be guarded in a mean and miserly spirit: the more persons you divide it among the larger it becomes. These will open to you the path which leads to eternity, and will raise you to a height from whence none shall cast you down. By this means alone can you prolong your mortal life, nay, even turn it into an immortal one. High office, monuments, all that ambition records in decrees or piles up in stone, soon passes away: lapse of time casts down and ruins everything; but those things on which Philosophy has set its seal are beyond the reach of injury: no age will discard them or lessen their force, each succeeding century will add somewhat to the respect in which they are held: for we look upon what is near us with jealous eyes, but we admire what is further off with less prejudice. The wise man’s life, therefore, includes much: he is not hedged in by the same limits which confine others: he alone is exempt from the laws by which mankind is governed: all ages serve him like a god. If any time be past, he recals it by his memory; if it be present, he uses it; if it be future, he anticipates it: his life is a long one because he concentrates all times into it.

XVI. Those men lead the shortest and unhappiest lives who forget the past, neglect the present, and dread the future: when they reach the end of it the poor wretches learn too late that they were busied all the while that they were doing nothing. You need not think, because sometimes they call for death, that their lives are long: their folly torments them with vague passions which lead them into the very things of which they are afraid: they often, therefore, wish for death because they live in fear. Neither is it, as you might think, a proof of the length of their lives that they often find the days long, that they often complain how slowly the hours pass until the appointed time arrives for dinner: for whenever they are left without their usual business, they fret helplessly in their idleness, and know not how to arrange or to spin it out. They betake themselves, therefore, to some business, and all the intervening time is irksome to them; they would wish, by Hercules, to skip over

it, just as they wish to skip over the intervening days before a gladiatorial contest or some other time appointed for a public spectacle or private indulgence: all postponement of what they wish for is grievous to them. Yet the very time which they enjoy is brief and soon past, and is made much briefer by their own fault: for they run from one pleasure to another, and are not able to devote themselves consistently to one passion: their days are not long, but odious to them: on the other hand, how short they find the nights which they spend with courtezans or over wine? Hence arises that folly of the poets who encourage the errors of mankind by their myths, and declare that Jupiter to gratify his voluptuous desires doubled the length of the night. Is it not adding fuel to our vices to name the gods as their authors, and to offer our distempers free scope by giving them deity for an example? How can the nights for which men pay so dear fail to appear of the shortest? they lose the day in looking forward to the night, and lose the night through fear of the dawn.

XVII. Such men’s very pleasures are restless and disturbed by various alarms, and at the most joyous moment of all there rises the anxious thought: “How long will this last?” This frame of mind has led kings to weep over their power, and they have not been so much delighted at the grandeur of their position, as they have been terrified by the end to which it must some day come. That most arrogant Persian king,[8] when his army stretched over vast plains and could not be counted but only measured, burst into tears at the thought that in less than a hundred years none of all those warriors would be alive: yet their death was brought upon them by the very man who wept over it, who was about to destroy some of them by sea, some on land, some in battle, and some in flight, and who would in a very short space of time put an end to those about whose hundredth year he showed such solicitude. Why need we wonder at their very joys being mixed with fear? they do not rest upon any solid grounds, but are disturbed by the same emptiness from which they spring. What must we suppose to be the misery of such times as even they acknowledge to be wretched, when even the joys by which they elevate themselves and raise themselves above their fellows are of a mixed character. All the greatest blessings are enjoyed with fear, and no thing is so untrustworthy as extreme prosperity: we require fresh strokes of good fortune to enable us to keep that which we are enjoying, and even those of our prayers which are answered require fresh prayers. Everything for which we are dependent on chance is uncertain: the higher it rises, the more opportunities it has of falling. Moreover, no one takes any pleasure in what is about to fall into ruin: very wretched, therefore, as well as very short must be the lives of those who work very hard to gain what they must work even harder to keep: they obtain what they wish with infinite labour, and they hold what they have obtained with fear and trembling. Meanwhile they take no account of time, of which they will never have a fresh and larger supply: they substitute new occupations for old ones, one hope leads to another, one ambition to another: they do not seek for an end to their wretchedness, but they change its subject. Do our own preferments trouble us? nay, those of other men occupy more of our time. Have we ceased from our labours

in canvassing? then we begin others in voting. Have we got rid of the trouble of accusation? then we begin that of judging. Has a man ceased to be a judge? then he becomes an examiner. Has he grown old in the salaried management of other people's property? then he becomes occupied with his own. Marius is discharged from military service; he becomes consul many times: Quintius is eager to reach the end of his dictatorship; he will be called a second time from the plough: Scipio marched against the Carthaginians before he was of years sufficient for so great an undertaking; after he has conquered Hannibal, conquered Antiochus, been the glory of his own consulship and the surety for that of his brother, he might, had he wished it, have been set on the same pedestal with Jupiter; but civil factions will vex the saviour of the state, and he who when a young man disdained to receive divine honours, will take pride as an old man in obstinately remaining in exile. We shall never lack causes of anxiety, either pleasurable or painful: our life will be pushed along from one business to another: leisure will always be wished for, and never enjoyed.

XVIII. Whefore, my dearest Paulinus, tear yourself away from the common herd, and since you have seen more rough weather than one would think from your age, betake yourself at length to a more peaceful haven: reflect what waves you have sailed through, what storms you have endured in private life, and brought upon yourself in public. Your courage has been sufficiently displayed by many toilsome and wearisome proofs; try how it will deal with leisure: the greater, certainly the better part of your life, has been given to your country; take now some part of your time for yourself as well. I do not urge you to practise a dull or lazy sloth, or to drown all your fiery spirit in the pleasures which are dear to the herd: that is not rest: you can find greater works than all those which you have hitherto so manfully carried out, upon which you may employ yourself in retirement and security. You manage the revenues of the entire world, as unselfishly as though they belonged to another, as laboriously as if they were your own, as scrupulously as though they belonged to the public: you win love in an office in which it is hard to avoid incurring hatred; yet, believe me, it is better to understand your own mind than to understand the corn-market. Take away that keen intellect of yours, so well capable of grappling with the greatest subjects, from a post which may be dignified, but which is hardly fitted to render life happy, and reflect that you did not study from childhood all the branches of a liberal education merely in order that many thousand tons of corn might safely be entrusted to your charge: you have given us promise of something greater and nobler than this. There will never be any want of strict economists or of laborious workers: slow-going beasts of burden are better suited for carrying loads than well-bred horses, whose generous swiftness no one would encumber with a heavy pack. Think, moreover, how full of risk is the great task which you have undertaken: you have to deal with the human stomach: a hungry people will not endure reason, will not be appeased by justice, and will not hearken to any prayers. Only just a few days ago, when G. Caesar perished, grieving for nothing so much (if those in the other world can feel grief) as that the Roman people did not die with him,

there was said to be only enough corn for seven or eight days' consumption: while he was making bridges with ships[9] and playing with the resources of the empire, want of provisions, the worst evil that can befall even a besieged city, was at hand: his imitation of a crazy outlandish and misproud king very nearly ended in ruin, famine, and the general revolution which follows famine. What must then have been the feelings of those who had the charge of supplying the city with corn, who were in danger of stoning, of fire and sword, of Gaius himself? With consummate art they concealed the vast internal evil by which the state was menaced, and were quite right in so doing; for some diseases must be cured without the patient's knowledge: many have died through discovering what was the matter with them.

XIX. Betake yourself to these quieter, safer, larger fields of action: do you think that there can be any comparison between seeing that corn is deposited in the public granary without being stolen by the fraud or spoilt by the carelessness of the importer, that it does not suffer from damp or overheating, and that it measures and weighs as much as it ought, and beginning the study of sacred and divine knowledge, which will teach you of what elements the gods are formed, what are their pleasures, their position, their form? to what changes your soul has to look forward? where Nature will place us when we are dismissed from our bodies? what that principle is which holds all the heaviest particles of our universe in the middle, suspends the lighter ones above, puts fire highest of all, and causes the stars to rise in their courses, with many other matters, full of marvels? Will you not[10] cease to grovel on earth and turn your mind's eye on these themes? nay, while your blood still flows swiftly, before your knees grow feeble, you ought to take the better path. In this course of life there await you many good things, such as love and practice of the virtues, forgetfulness of passions, knowledge of how to live and die, deep repose. The position of all busy men is unhappy, but most unhappy of all is that of those who do not even labour at their own affairs, but have to regulate their rest by another man's sleep, their walk by another man's pace, and whose very love and hate, the freest things in the world, are at another's bidding. If such men wish to know how short their lives are, let them think how small a fraction of them is their own.

XX. When, therefore, you see a man often wear the purple robes of office, and hear his name often repeated in the forum, do not envy him: he gains these things by losing so much of his life. Men throw away all their years in order to have one year named after them as consul: some lose their lives during the early part of the struggle, and never reach the height to which they aspired: some after having submitted to a thousand indignities in order to reach the crowning dignity, have the miserable reflexion that the only result of their labours will be the inscription on their tombstone. Some, while telling off extreme old age, like youth, for new aspirations, have found it fail from sheer weakness amid great and presumptuous enterprises. It is a shameful ending, when a man's breath deserts him in a court of justice, while, although well stricken in years,

he is still striving to gain the sympathies of an ignorant audience for some obscure litigant: it is base to perish in the midst of one's business, wearied with living sooner than with working; shameful, too, to die in the act of receiving payments, amid the laughter of one's long-expectant heir. I cannot pass over an an instance which occurs to me: Turannius was an old man of the most painstaking exactitude, who after entering upon his ninetieth year, when he had by G. Caesar's own act been relieved of his duties as collector of the revenue, ordered himself to be laid out on his bed and mourned for as though he were dead. The whole house mourned for the leisure of its old master, and did not lay aside its mourning until his work was restored to him. Can men find such pleasure in dying in harness? Yet many are of the same mind: they retain their wish for labour longer than their capacity for it, and fight against their bodily weakness; they think old age an evil for no other reason than because it lays them on the shelf. The law does not enrol a soldier after his fiftieth year, or require a senator's attendance after his sixtieth: but men have more difficulty in obtaining their own consent than that of the law to a life of leisure. Meanwhile, while they are plundering and being plundered, while one is disturbing another's repose, and all are being made wretched alike, life remains without profit, without pleasure, without any intellectual progress: no one keeps death well before his eyes, no one refrains from far-reaching hopes. Some even arrange things which lie beyond their own lives, such as huge sepulchral buildings, the dedication of public works, and exhibitions to be given at their funeral-pyre, and ostentatious processions: but, by Hercules, the funerals of such men ought to be conducted by the light of torches and wax tapers,[11] as though they had lived but a few days.

* * *

[1] "On croit que ce Paulin étoit frère de Pauline, épouse de Sénéque." —La Grange.

[2] "L'un se consume en projets d'ambition, dont le succès depend du suffrage de l'autrui."—La Grange.

[3] "Combien d'orateurs qui s'épuisent de sang et de forces pour faire montrer de leur génie!"—La Grange.

[4] "Pour vous, jamais vous ne daignâtes vous regarder seulement, ou vous entendre. Ne faites pas non plus valoir votre condescendance a écouter les autres. Lorsque vous vous y prêtez, ce n'est pas que vous aimiez a vous communiquer aux autres; c'est que vous craignez de vous trouver avec vous-même."—La Grange.

"It is a folly therefore beyond Sence,

When great men will not give us Audience

To count them proud; how dare we call it pride

When we the same have to ourselves deny’d.

Yet they how great, how proud so e’re, have bin

Sometimes so courteous as to call thee in.

And hear thee speak; but thou could’st nere afford

Thyself the leisure of a look or word.

Thou should’st not then herein another blame,

Because when thou thyself do’st do the same.

Thou would’st not be with others, but we see

Plainly thou can’st not with thine own self be.”

“L. ANNAEUS SENECA, the Philosopher, his book of the Shortness of Life, translated into an English Poem. Imprinted at London, by William Goldbird, for the Author, mdclxiii.”

[5] “Dans une lettre qu’il envoya au Sénat apres avoir promis que son repos n’aura rièn indigne de la gloire de ses premières années, il ajoute: Mais l’execution y mettra un prix, que ne peuvent y mettre les promesses. J’obeis cependant a la vive passion que j’ai, de me voir a ce temps si désiré; et puisque l’heureuse situation d’affaires m’en tient encore éloigné, j’ai voulu du moins me satisfaire en partie, par la douceur que je trouve à vous en parler.”—La Grange.

“Such words I find. But these things rather ought

Be done, then said; yet so far hath the thought

Of that wish’d time prevail’d, that though the glad

Fruition of the thing be not yet had.

Yet I," &c.

[6] Fasces, the rods carried by the lictors as symbols of office. See Smith's "Diet, of Antiquities," s.v.

[7] See Smith's "Dict. of Antiquities."

[8] Xerxes.

[9] "Sénéque parle ici du pont que Caligula fit construire sur le golphe de Baies, l'an de Rome 791, 40 de J. C. . . . . rassembla et fit entrer dans la construction de son pont tous les vaisseaux qui se trouverent dans les ports d'Italie et des contrées voisines. Il n'excepta pas même ceux qui etoient destinés a y apporter des grains étrangers," &c.—LaGrange.

[10] For vis tu see Juv. v., vis tu consuetis, &c. Mayor's note.

[11] As those of children were.

THE ELEVENTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO HIS MOTHER, HELVIA.

OF CONSOLATION.

I. My best of mothers, I have often felt eager to console you, and have as often checked that impulse. Many things urged me to make the attempt: in the first place, I thought that if, though I might not be able to restrain your tears, yet that if I could even wipe them away, I should set myself free from all my own sorrows: then I was quite sure that I should rouse you from your grief with more authority if I had first shaken it off myself. I feared, too, lest Fortune, though overcome by me, might nevertheless overcome some one of my family. Then I endeavoured to crawl and bind up your wounds in the best way I could, holding my hand over my own wound; but then again other considerations occurred to me which held me back: I knew that I must not oppose your grief during its first transports, lest my very attempts at consolation might irritate it, and add fuel to it: for in diseases, also, there is nothing more hurtful than medicine applied too soon. I waited, therefore, until it exhausted itself by its own violence, and being weakened by time, so that it

was able to bear remedies, would allow itself to be handled and touched. Beside this, while turning over all the works which the greatest geniuses have composed, for the purpose of soothing and pacifying grief, I could not find any instance of one who had offered consolation to his relatives, while he himself was being sorrowed over by them. Thus, the subject being a new one, I hesitated and feared that instead of consoling, I might embitter your grief. Then there was the thought that a man who had only just raised his head after burying his child, and who wished to console his friends, would require to use new phrases not taken from our common every-day words of comfort: but every sorrow of more than usual magnitude must needs prevent one's choosing one's words, seeing that it often prevents one's using one's very voice. However this may be, I will make the attempt, not trusting in my own genius, but because my consolation will be most powerful since it is I who offer it. You never would deny me anything, and I hope, though all grief is obstinate, that you will surely not refuse me this request, that you will allow me to set bounds to your sorrow.

II. See how far I have presumed upon your indulgence: I have no doubts about my having more power over you than your grief, than which nothing has more power over the unhappy. In order, therefore, to avoid encountering it straightway, I will at first take its part and offer it every encouragement: I will rip up and bring to light again wounds already scarred. Some one may say, "What sort of consolation is this, for a man to rake up buried evils, and to bring all its sorrows before a mind which scarcely can bear the sight of one?" but let him reflect that diseases which are so malignant that they do but gather strength from ordinary remedies, may often be cured by the opposite treatment: I will, therefore, display before your grief all its woes and miseries: this will be to effect a cure, not by soothing measures, but by cautery and the knife. What shall I gain by this? I shall make the mind that could overcome so many sorrows, ashamed to bewail one wound more in a body so full of scars. Let those whose feeble minds have been enervated by a long period of happiness, weep and lament for many days, and faint away on receiving the slightest blow: but those whose years have all been passed amid catastrophes should bear the severest losses with brave and unyielding patience. Continual misfortune has this one advantage, that it ends by rendering callous those whom it is always scourging. Ill fortune has given you no respite, and has not left even your birthday free from the bitterest grief: you lost your mother as soon as you were born, nay, while you were being born, and you came into life, as it were, an outcast: you grew up under a step-mother, whom you made into a mother by all the obedience and respect which even a real daughter could have bestowed upon her: and even a good step-mother costs every one dear. You lost your most affectionate uncle, a brave and excellent man, just when you were awaiting his return: and, lest Fortune should weaken its blows by dividing them, within a month you lost your beloved husband, by whom you had become the mother of three children. This sorrowful news was brought you while you were already in mourning, while all your children were absent, so that all your misfortunes seemed to have been purposely brought upon you at a time when your grief could

nowhere find any repose. I pass over all the dangers and alarms which you have endured without any respite: it was but the other day that you received the bones of three of your grandchildren in the bosom from which you had sent them forth: less than twenty days after you had buried my child, who perished in your arms and amid your kisses, you heard that I had been exiled: you wanted only this drop in your cup, to have to weep for those who still lived.

III. The last wound is, I admit, the severest that you have ever yet sustained: it has not merely torn the skin, but has pierced you to the very heart: yet as recruits cry aloud when only slightly wounded, and shudder more at the hands of the surgeon than at the sword, while veterans even when transfixed allow their hurts to be dressed without a groan, and as patiently as if they were in some one else's body, so now you ought to offer yourself courageously to be healed. Lay aside lamentations and wailings, and all the usual noisy manifestations of female sorrow: you have gained nothing by so many misfortunes, if you have not learned how to suffer. Now, do I seem not to have spared you? nay, I have not passed over any of your sorrows, but have placed them all together in a mass before you.

IV. I have done this by way of a heroic remedy: for I have determined to conquer this grief of yours, not merely to limit it; and I shall conquer it, I believe, if in the first place I can prove that I am not suffering enough to entitle me to be called unhappy, let alone to justify me in rendering my family unhappy: and, secondly, if I can deal with your case and prove that even your misfortune, which comes upon you entirely through me, is not a severe one.

The point to which I shall first address myself is that of which your motherly love longs to hear, I mean, that I am not suffering: if I can, I will make it clear to you that the events by which you think that I am overwhelmed, are not unendurable: if you cannot believe this, I at any rate shall be all the more pleased with myself for being happy under circumstances which could make most men miserable. You need not believe what others say about me: that you may not be puzzled by any uncertainty as to what to think, I distinctly tell you that I am not miserable: I will add, for your greater comfort, that it is not possible for me to be made miserable.

V. We are born to a comfortable position enough, if we do not afterwards lose it: the aim of Nature has been to enable us to live well without needing a vast apparatus to enable us to do so: every man is able by himself to make himself happy. External circumstances have very little importance either for good or for evil: the wise man is neither elated by prosperity nor depressed by adversity; for he has always endeavoured to depend chiefly upon himself and to derive all his joys from himself. Do I, then, call myself a wise man? far from it: for were I able to profess myself wise, I should not only say that I was not unhappy, but should avow myself to be the most fortunate of men, and to be raised almost to the level of a god: as it is, I have applied myself to the society of wise men,

which suffices to lighten all sorrows, and, not being as yet able to rely upon my own strength, I have betaken myself for refuge to the camp of others, of those, namely, who can easily defend both themselves and their friends. They have ordered me always to stand as it were on guard, and to mark the attacks and charges of Fortune long before she delivers them; she is only terrible to those whom she catches unawares; he who is always looking out for her assault, easily sustains it: for so also an invasion of the enemy overthrows those by whom it is unexpected, but those who have prepared themselves for the coming war before it broke out, stand in their ranks fully equipped and repel with ease the first, which is always the most furious onset. I never have trusted in Fortune, even when she seemed most peaceful. I have accepted all the gifts of wealth, high office, and influence, which she has so bountifully bestowed upon me, in such a manner that she can take them back again without disturbing me: I have kept a great distance between them and myself: and therefore she has taken them, not painfully torn them away from me. No man loses anything by the frowns of Fortune unless he has been deceived by her smiles: those who have enjoyed her bounty as though it were their own heritage for ever, and who have chosen to take precedence of others because of it, lie in abject sorrow when her unreal and fleeting delights forsake their empty childish minds, that know nothing about solid pleasure: but he who has not been puffed up by success, does not collapse after failure: he possesses a mind of tried constancy, superior to the influences of either state; for even in the midst of prosperity he has experimented upon his powers of enduring adversity. Consequently I have always believed that there was no real good in any of those things which all men desire: I then found that they were empty, and merely painted over with artificial and deceitful dyes, without containing anything within which corresponds to their outside: I now find nothing so harsh and fearful as the common opinion of mankind threatened me with in this which is known as adversity: the word itself, owing to the prevalent belief and ideas current about it, strikes somewhat unpleasantly upon one’s ears, and thrills the hearers as something dismal and accursed, for so hath the vulgar decreed that it should be: but a great many of the decrees of the vulgar are reversed by the wise.

VI. Setting aside, then, the verdict of the majority, who are carried away by the first appearance of things and the usual opinion about them, let us consider what is meant by exile: clearly a changing from one place to another. That I may not seem to be narrowing its force, and taking away its worst parts, I must add, that this changing of place is accompanied by poverty, disgrace, and contempt. Against these I will combat later on: meanwhile I wish to consider what there is unpleasant in the mere act of changing one’s place of abode.

”It is unbearable,” men say, “to lose one’s native land.” Look, I pray you, on these vast crowds, for whom all the countless roofs of Rome can scarcely find shelter: the greater part of those crowds have lost their native land: they have flocked hither from their country towns and colonies, and in fine from all parts of the world.

Some have been brought by ambition, some by the exigencies of public office, some by being entrusted with embassies, some by luxury which seeks a convenient spot, rich in vices, for its exercise, some by their wish for a liberal education, others by a wish to see the public shows. Some have been led hither by friendship, some by industry, which finds here a wide field for the display of its powers. Some have brought their beauty for sale, some their eloquence: people of every kind assemble themselves together in Rome, which sets a high price both upon virtues and vices. Bid them all to be summoned to answer to their names, and ask each one from what home he has come: you will find that the greater part of them have left their own abodes, and journeyed to a city which, though great and beauteous beyond all others, is nevertheless not their own. Then leave this city, which may be said to be the common property of all men, and visit all other towns: there is not one of them which does not contain a large proportion of aliens. Pass away from those whose delightful situation and convenient position attracts many settlers: examine wildernesses and the most rugged islands, Sciathus and Seriphus, Gyarus and Corsica: you will find no place of exile where some one does not dwell for his own pleasure. What can be found barer or more precipitous on every side than this rock? what more barren in respect of food? what more uncouth in its inhabitants? more mountainous in its configuration? or more rigorous in its climate? yet even here there are more strangers than natives. So far, therefore, is the mere change of place from being irksome, that even this place has allured some away from their country. I find some writers who declare that mankind has a natural itch for change of abode and alteration of domicile: for the mind of man is wandering and unquiet; it never stands still, but spreads itself abroad and sends forth its thoughts into all regions, known or unknown; being nomadic, impatient of repose, and loving novelty beyond everything else. You need not be suprised at this, if you reflect upon its original source: it is not formed from the same elements as the heavy and earthly body, but from heavenly spirit: now heavenly things are by their nature always in motion, speeding along and flying with the greatest swiftness. Look at the luminaries which light the world: none of them stands still. The sun is perpetually in motion, and passes from one quarter to another, and although he revolves with the entire heaven, yet nevertheless he has a motion in the contrary direction to that of the universe itself, and passes through all the constellations without remaining in any: his wandering is incessant, and he never ceases to move from place to place. All things continually revolve and are for ever changing; they pass from one position to another in accordance with natural and unalterable laws: after they have completed a certain circuit in a fixed space of time, they begin again the path which they had previously trodden. Be not surprised, then, if the human mind, which is formed from the same seeds as the heavenly bodies, delights in change and wandering, since the divine nature itself either takes pleasure in constant and exceeding swift motion or perhaps even preserves its existence thereby.

VII. Come now, turn from divine to human affairs: you will see that whole tribes and nations have changed their abodes. What is the

meaning of Greek cities in the midst of barbarous districts? or of the Macedonian language existing among the Indians and the Persians? Scythia and all that region which swarms with wild and uncivilized tribes boasts nevertheless Achaean cities along the shores of the Black Sea. Neither the rigours of eternal winter, nor the character of men as savage as their climate, has prevented people migrating thither. There is a mass of Athenians in Asia Minor. Miletus has sent out into various parts of the world citizens enough to populate seventy-five cities. That whole coast of Italy which is washed by the Lower Sea is a part of what once was "Greater Greece." Asia claims the Tuscans as her own: there are Tyrians living in Africa, Carthaginians in Spain; Greeks have pushed in among the Gauls, and Gauls among the Greeks. The Pyrenees have proved no barrier to the Germans: human caprice makes its way through pathless and unknown regions: men drag along with them their children, their wives, and their aged and worn-out parents. Some have been tossed hither and thither by long wanderings, until they have become too wearied to choose an abode, but have settled in whatever place was nearest to them: others have made themselves masters of foreign countries by force of arms: some nations while making for parts unknown have been swallowed up by the sea: some have established themselves in the place in which they were originally stranded by utter destitution. Nor have all men had the same reasons for leaving their country and for seeking for a new one: some have escaped from their cities when destroyed by hostile armies, and having lost their own lands have been thrust upon those of others: some have been cast out by domestic quarrels: some have been driven forth in consequence of an excess of population, in order to relieve the pressure at home: some have been forced to leave by pestilence, or frequent earthquakes, or some unbearable defects of a barren soil: some have been seduced by the fame of a fertile and over-praised clime. Different people have been led away from their homes by different causes; but in all cases it is clear that nothing remains in the same place in which it was born: the movement of the human race is perpetual: in this vast world some changes take place daily. The foundations of new cities are laid, new names of nations arise, while the former ones die out, or become absorbed by more powerful ones. And yet what else are all these general migrations but the banishments of whole peoples? Why should I lead you through all these details? what is the use of mentioning Antenor the founder of Padua, or Evander who established his kingdom of Arcadian settlers on the banks of the Tiber? or Diomedes and the other heroes, both victors and vanquished, whom the Trojan war scattered over lands which were not their own? It is a fact that the Roman Empire itself traces its origin back to an exile as its founder, who, fleeing from his country after its conquest, with what few relics he had saved from the wreck, had been brought to Italy by hard necessity and fear of his conqueror, which bade him seek distant lands. Since then, how many colonies has this people sent forth into every province? wherever the Roman conquers, there he dwells. These migrations always found people eager to take part in them, and veteran soldiers desert their native hearths and follow the flag of the colonists across the sea. The matter does not need illustrations by any more examples: yet I will add one more which I have before my eyes: this very island[1] has often changed its

inhabitants. Not to mention more ancient events, which have become obscure from their antiquity, the Greeks who inhabit Marseilles at the present day, when they left Phocaea, first settled here, and it is doubtful what drove them hence, whether it was the rigour of the climate, the sight of the more powerful land of Italy, or the want of harbours on the coast: for the fact of their having placed themselves in the midst of what were then the most savage and uncouth tribes of Gaul proves that they were not driven hence by the ferocity of the natives. Subsequently the Ligurians came over into this same island, and also the Spaniards,[2] which is proved by the resemblance of their customs: for they wear the same head-coverings and the same sort of shoes as the Cantabrians, and some of their words are the same: for by association with Greeks and Ligurians they have entirely lost their native speech. Hither since then have been brought two Roman colonies, one by Marius, the other by Sulla: so often has the population of this barren and thorny rock been changed. In fine, you will scarcely find any land which is still in the hands of its original inhabitants: all peoples have become confused and intermingled: one has come after another: one has wished for what another scorned: some have been driven out of the land which they took from another. Thus fate has decreed that nothing should ever enjoy an uninterrupted course of good fortune.

VIII. Varro, that most learned of all the Romans, thought that for the mere change of place, apart from the other evils attendant on exile, we may find a sufficient remedy in the thought that wherever we go we always have the same Nature to deal with. Marcus Brutus thought that there was sufficient comfort in the thought that those who go into exile are permitted to carry their virtues thither with them. Though one might think that neither of these alone were able to console an exile, yet it must be confessed that when combined they have great power: for how very little it is that we lose! whithersoever we betake ourselves two most excellent things will accompany us, namely, a common Nature and our own especial virtue. Believe me, this is the work of whoever was the Creator of the universe, whether he be an all-powerful deity, an incorporeal mind which effects vast works, a divine spirit by which all things from the greatest to the smallest are equally pervaded, or fate and an unalterable connected sequence of events, this, I say, is its work, that nothing above the very lowest can ever fall into the power of another: all that is best for a man’s enjoyment lies beyond human power, and can neither be bestowed or taken away: this world, the greatest and the most beautiful of Nature’s productions, and its noblest part, a mind which can behold and admire it, are our own property, and will remain with us as long as we ourselves endure. Let us therefore briskly and cheerfully hasten with undaunted steps whithersoever circumstances call us: let us wander over whatever countries we please; no place of banishment can be found in the whole world in which man cannot find a home. I can raise my eyes from the earth to the sky in one place as well as in another; the heavenly bodies are everywhere equally near to mankind: accordingly, as long as my eyes are not deprived of that spectacle of which they never can have their fill, as long as I am allowed to gaze on the sun and moon, to dwell upon the other stars, to speculate upon their

risings and settings, their periods, and the reasons why they move faster or slower, to see so many stars glittering throughout the night, some fixed, some not moving in a wide orbit but revolving in their own proper track, some suddenly diverging from it, some dazzling our eyes by a fiery blaze as though they were falling, or flying along drawing after them a long trail of brilliant light: while I am permitted to commune with these, and to hold intercourse, as far as a human being may, with all the company of heaven, while I can raise my spirit aloft to view its kindred sparks above, what does it matter upon what soil I tread?

IX. “But this country does not produce beautiful or fruit-bearing trees; it is not watered by the courses of large or navigable rivers; it bears nothing which other nations would covet, since its produce barely suffices to support its inhabitants: no precious marbles are quarried here, no veins of gold and silver are dug out.” What of that! It must be a narrow mind that takes pleasure in things of the earth: it ought to be turned away from them to the contemplation of those which can be seen everywhere, which are equally brilliant everywhere: we ought to reflect, also, that these vulgar matters by a mistaken perversion of ideas prevent really good things reaching us: the further men stretch out their porticos, the higher they raise their towers, the more widely they extend their streets, the deeper they sink their retreats from the heats of summer, the more ponderous the roofs with which they cover their banqueting halls, the more there will be to obstruct their view of heaven. Fortune has cast you into a country in which there is no lodging more splendid than a cottage: you must indeed have a poor spirit, and one which seeks low sources of consolation, if you endure this bravely because you have seen the cottage of Romulus: say, rather, “Should that lowly barn be entered by the virtues, it will straightway become more beautiful than any temple, because within it will be seen justice, self-restraint, prudence, love, a right division of all duties, a knowledge of all things on earth and in heaven. No place can be narrow, if it contains such a company of the greatest virtues; no exile can be irksome in which one can be attended by these companions. Brutus, in the book which he wrote upon virtue, says that he saw Marcellus in exile at Mytilene, living as happily as it is permitted to man to live, and never keener in his pursuit of literature than at that time. He consequently adds the reflexion: ‘I seemed rather to be going into exile myself when I had to return without him, than to be leaving him in exile.’ O how much more fortunate was Marcellus at that time, when Brutus praised him for his exile, than when Rome praised him for his consulship! what a man that must have been who made any one think himself exiled because he was leaving him in exile! what a man that must have been who attracted the admiration of one whom even his friend Cato admired! Brutus goes on to say:— ‘Gaius Caesar sailed past Mytilene without landing, because he could not bear to see a fallen man.’ The Senate did indeed obtain his recall by public petition, being so anxious and sorrowful the while, that you would have thought that they all were of Brutus’s mind that day, and were not pleading the cause of Marcellus, but their own, that they might not be sent into exile by being deprived of him: yet he gained far greater glory on

the day when Brutus could not bear to leave him in exile, and Caesar could not bear to see him: for each of them bore witness to his worth: Brutus grieved, and Caesar blushed at going home without Marcellus. Can you doubt that so great a man as Marcellus frequently encouraged himself to endure his exile patiently in some such terms as these: “The loss of your country is no misery to you: you have so steeped yourself in philosophic lore, as to know that all the world is the wise man’s country? What! was not this very man who banished you absent from his country for ten successive years? he was, no doubt, engaged in the extension of the empire, but for all that he was absent from his country. Now see how his presence is required in Africa, which threatens to re-kindle the war, in Spain which is nursing up again the strength of the broken and shattered opposite faction, in treacherous Egypt, in fine, in all the parts of the world, for all are watching their opportunity to seize the empire at a disadvantage. Which will he go to meet first? which part of the universal conspiracy will he first oppose? His victory will drag him through every country in the world. Let nations look up to him and worship him: do thou live satisfied with the admiration of Brutus.”

X. Marcellus, then, nobly endured his exile, and his change of place made no change in his mind, even though it was accompanied by poverty, in which every man who has not fallen into the madness of avarice and luxury, which upset all our ideas, sees no harm. Indeed, how very little is required to keep a man alive? and who, that has any virtue whatever, will find this fail him? As for myself, I do not feel that I have lost my wealth, but my occupation: the wants of the body are few: it wants protection from the cold, and the means of allaying hunger and thirst: all desires beyond these are vices, not necessities. There is no need for prying into all the depths of the sea, for loading one’s stomach with heaps of slaughtered animals, or for tearing up shell-fish[3] from the unknown shore of the furthest sea: may the gods and goddesses bring ruin upon those whose luxury transcends the bounds of an empire which is already perilously wide. They want to have their ostentatious kitchens supplied with game from the other side of the Phasis, and though Rome has not yet obtained satisfaction from the Parthians, they are not ashamed to obtain birds from them: they bring together from all regions everything, known or unknown, to tempt their fastidious palate: food, which their stomach, worn out with delicacies, can scarcely retain, is brought from the most distant ocean: they vomit that they may eat, and eat that they may vomit, and do not even deign to digest the banquets which they ransack the globe to obtain. If a man despises these things, what harm can poverty do him? If he desires them, then poverty even does him good, for he is cured in spite of himself, and though he will not receive remedies even upon compulsion, yet while he is unable to fulfil his wishes he is as though he had them not. Gaius Caesar, whom in my opinion Nature produced in order to show what unlimited vice would be capable of when combined with unlimited power, dined one day at a cost of ten millions of sesterces: and though in this he had the assistance of the intelligence of all his subjects, yet he could hardly find how to make one dinner out of the tribute-money of three provinces. How unhappy are they whose appetite can only be aroused by costly food!

and the costliness of food depends not upon its delightful flavour and sweetness of taste, but upon its rarity and the difficulty of procuring it: otherwise, if they chose to return to their sound senses, what need would they have of so many arts which minister to the stomach? of so great a commerce? of such ravaging of forests? of such ransacking of the depths of the sea? Food is to be found everywhere, and has been placed by Nature in every part the world, but they pass it by as though they were blind, and wander through all countries, cross the seas, and excite at a great cost the hunger which they might allay at a small one. One would like to say: Why do you launch ships? why do you arm your hands for battle both with men and wild beasts? why do you run so riotously hither and thither? why do you amass fortune after fortune? Are you unwilling to remember how small our bodies are? is it not frenzy and the wildest insanity to wish for so much when you can contain so little? Though you may increase your income, and extend the boundaries of your property, yet you never can enlarge your own bodies: when your business transactions have turned out well, when you have made a successful campaign, when you have collected the food for which you have hunted through all lands, you will have no place in which to bestow all these superfluities. Why do you strive to obtain so much? Do you think that our ancestors, whose virtue supports our vices even to the present day, were unhappy, though they dressed their food with their own hands, though the earth was their bed, though their roofs did not yet glitter with gold, nor their temples with precious stones? and so they used then to swear with scrupulous honesty by earthenware gods; those who called these gods to witness would go back to the enemy for certain death rather than break their word.[4] Do you suppose that our dictator who granted an audience to the ambassadors of the Samnites, while he roasted the commonest food before the fire himself with that very hand with which he had so often smitten the enemy, and with which he had placed his laurel wreath upon the lap of Capitolian Jove, enjoyed life less than the Apicius who lived in our own days, whose habits tainted the entire century, who set himself up as a professor of gastronomy in that very city from which philosophers once were banished as corrupters of youth? It is worth while to know his end. After he had spent a hundred millions of sesterces on his kitchen, and had wasted on each single banquet a sum equal to so many presents from the reigning emperors, and the vast revenue which he drew from the Capitol, being overburdened with debt, he then for the first time was forced to examine his accounts: he calculated that he would have ten millions left of his fortune, and, as though he would live a life of mere starvation on ten millions, put an end to his life by poison. How great must the luxury of that man have been, to whom ten millions signified want? Can you think after this that the amount of money necessary to make a fortune depends upon its actual extent rather than on the mind of the owner? Here was a man who shuddered at the thought of a fortune of ten million sesterces, and escaped by poison from a prospect which other men pray for. Yet, for a mind so diseased, that last draught of his was the most wholesome: he was really eating and drinking poisons when he was not only enjoying, but boasting of his enormous banquets, when he was flaunting his vices, when he was causing his country to follow his example, when

he was inviting youths to imitate him, albeit youth is quick to learn evil, without being provided with a model to copy. This is what befalls those who do not use their wealth according to reason, which has fixed limits, but according to vicious fashion, whose caprices are boundless and immeasurable. Nothing is sufficient for covetous desire, but Nature can be satisfied even with scant measure. The poverty of an exile, therefore, causes no inconvenience, for no place of exile is so barren as not to produce what is abundantly sufficient to support a man.

XI. Next, need an exile regret his former dress and house? If he only wishes for these things because of their use to him, he will want neither roof nor garment, for it takes as little to cover the body as it does to feed it: Nature has annexed no difficult conditions to anything which man is obliged to do. If, however, he sighs for a purple robe steeped in floods of dye, interwoven with threads of gold and with many coloured artistic embroideries, then his poverty is his own fault, not that of Fortune: even though you restored to him all that he has lost, you would do him no good; for he would have more unsatisfied ambitions, if restored, than he had unsatisfied wants when he was an exile. If he longs for furniture glittering with silver vases, plate which boasts the signature of antique artists, bronze which the mania of a small clique has rendered costly, slaves enough to crowd however large a house, purposely overfed horses, and precious stones of all countries: whatever collections he may make of these, he never will satisfy his insatiable appetite, any more than any amount of liquor will quench a thirst which arises not from the need of drink but from the burning heat within a man; for this is not thirst but disease. Nor does this take place only with regard to money and food, but every want which is caused by vice and not by necessity is of this nature: however much you supply it with you do not quench it but intensify it. He who restrains himself within the limits prescribed by nature, will not feel poverty; he who exceeds them will always be poor, however great his wealth may be. Even a place of exile suffices to provide one with necessaries; whole kingdoms do not suffice to provide one with superfluities. It is the mind which makes men rich: this it is that accompanies them into exile, and in the most savage wildernesses, after having found sufficient sustenance for the body, enjoys its own overflowing resources: the mind has no more connexion with money than the immortal gods have with those things which are so highly valued by untutored intellects, sunk in the bondage of the flesh. Gems, gold, silver, and vast polished round tables are but earthly dross, which cannot be loved by a pure mind that is mindful of whence it came, is unblemished by sin, and which, when released from the body, will straightway soar aloft to the highest heaven: meanwhile, as far as it is permitted by the hindrances of its mortal limbs and this heavy clog of the body by which it is surrounded, it examines divine things with swift and airy thought. From this it follows that no free-born man, who is akin to the gods, and fit for any world and any age, can ever be in exile: for his thoughts are directed to all the heavens and to all times past and future: this trumpery body, the prison and fetter of the spirit, may be tossed to this place or to that; upon it tortures, robberies, and diseases may

work their will: but the spirit itself is holy and eternal, and upon it no one can lay hands.

XII. That you may not suppose that I merely use the maxims of the philosophers to disparage the evils of poverty, which no one finds terrible, unless he thinks it so; consider in the first place how many more poor people there are than rich, and yet you will not find that they are sadder or more anxious than the rich: nay, I am not sure that they are not happier, because they have fewer things to distract their minds. From these poor men, who often are not unhappy at their poverty, let us pass to the rich. How many occasions there are on which they are just like poor men! When they are on a journey their baggage is cut down, whenever they are obliged to travel fast their train of attendants is dismissed. When they are serving in the army, how small a part of their property can they have with them, since camp discipline forbids superfluities! Nor is it only temporary exigences or desert places that put them on the same level as poor men: they have some days on which they become sick of their riches, dine reclining on the ground, put away all their gold and silver plate, and use earthenware. Madmen! they are always afraid of this for which they sometimes wish. O how dense a stupidity, how great an ignorance of the truth they show when they flee from this thing and yet amuse themselves by playing with it! Whenever I look back to the great examples of antiquity, I feel ashamed to seek consolation for my poverty, now that luxury has advanced so far in the present age, that the allowance of an exile is larger than the inheritance of the princes of old. It is well known that Homer had one slave, that Plato had three, and that Zeno, who first taught the stern and masculine doctrine of the Stoics, had none: yet could any one say that they lived wretchedly without himself being thought a most pitiable wretch by all men? Menenius Agrippa, by whose mediation the patricians and plebeians were reconciled, was buried by public subscription. Attilius Regulus, while he was engaged in scattering the Carthaginians in Africa, wrote to the Senate that his hired servant had left him, and that consequently his farm was deserted: whereupon it was decreed that as long as Regulus was absent, it should be cultivated at the expense of the state. Was it not worth his while to have no slave, if thereby he obtained the Roman people for his farm-bailiff? Scipio’s daughters received their dowries from the Treasury, because their father had left them none: by Hercules, it was right for the Roman people to pay tribute to Scipio for once, since he had exacted it for ever from Carthage. O how happy were those girls’ husbands, who had the Roman people for their father-in-law. Can you think that those whose daughters dance in the ballet, and marry with a settlement of a million sesterces, are happier than Scipio, whose children received their dowry of old-fashioned brass money from their guardian the Senate? Can any one despise poverty, when she has such a noble descent to boast of? can an exile be angry at any privation, when Scipio could not afford a portion for his daughters, Regulus could not afford a hired labourer, Menenius could not afford a funeral? when all these men’s wants were supplied in a manner which rendered them a source of additional honour? Poverty, when such men as these plead its cause, is not only harmless, but positively attractive.

XIII. To this one may answer: “Why do you thus ingeniously divide what can indeed be endured if taken singly, but which all together are overwhelming? Change of place can be borne if nothing more than one’s place be changed: poverty can be borne if it be without disgrace, which is enough to cow our spirits by itself.” If any one were to endeavour to frighten me with the number of my misfortunes, I should answer him as follows: If you have enough strength to resist any one part of your ill-fortune, you will have enough to resist it all. If virtue has once hardened your mind, it renders it impervious to blows from any quarter: if avarice, that greatest pest of the human race, has left it, you will not be troubled by ambition: if you regard the end of your days not as a punishment, but as an ordinance of nature, no fear of anything else will dare to enter the breast which has cast out the fear of death. If you consider sexual passion to have been bestowed on mankind not for the sake of pleasure, but for the continuance of the race, all other desires will pass harmlessly by one who is safe even from this secret plague, implanted in our very bosoms. Reason does not conquers vices one by one, but all together: if reason is defeated, it is utterly defeated once for all. Do you suppose that any wise man, who relies entirely upon himself, who has set himself free from the ideas of the common herd, can be wrought upon by disgrace? A disgraceful death is worse even than disgrace: yet Socrates bore the same expression of countenance with which he had rebuked thirty tyrants, when he entered the prison and thereby took away the infamous character of the place; for the place which contained Socrates could not be regarded as a prison. Was any one ever so blind to the truth as to suppose that Marcus Cato was disgraced by his double defeat in his candidature for the praetorship and the consulship? that disgrace fell on the praetorship and consulship which Cato honoured by his candidature. No one is despised by others unless he be previously despised by himself: a grovelling and abject mind may fall an easy prey to such contempt: but he who stands up against the most cruel misfortunes, and overcomes those evils by which others would have been crushed—such a man, I say, turns his misfortunes into badges of honour, because we are so constituted as to admire nothing so much as a man who bears adversity bravely. At Athens, when Aristides was being led to execution, every one who met him cast down his eyes and groaned, as though not merely a just man but justice herself was being put to death. Yet one man was found who spat in his face: he might have been disturbed at this, since he knew it could only be a foul-mouthed fellow that would have the heart to do so; he, however, wiped his face, and with a smile asked the magistrate who accompanied him to warn that man not to open his mouth so rudely again. To act thus was to treat contumely itself with contempt. I know that some say that there is nothing more terrible than disgrace, and that they would prefer death. To such men I answer that even exile is often accompanied by no disgrace whatever: if a great man falls, he remains a great man after his fall, you can no more suppose that he is disgraced than when people tread upon the walls of a ruined temple, which the pious treat with as much respect as when they were standing.

XIV. Since, then, my dearest mother, you have no reason for endless weeping on my account, it follows that your tears must flow on your own: there are two causes for this, either your having lost my protection, or your not being able to bear the mere fact of separation. The first of these I shall only touch upon lightly, for I know that your heart loves nothing belonging to your children except themselves. Let other mothers look to that, who make use of their sons' authority with a woman's passion, who are ambitious through their sons because they cannot bear office themselves, who spend their sons' inheritance, and yet are eager to inherit it, and who weary their sons by lending their eloquence to others: you have always rejoiced exceedingly in the successes of your sons, and have made no use of them whatever: you have always set bounds to our generosity, although you set none to your own: you, while a minor under the power of the head of the family, still used to make presents to your wealthy sons: you managed our inheritances with as much care as if you were working for your own, yet refrained from touching them as scrupulously as if they belonged to strangers: you have spared to use our influence, as though you enjoyed other means of your own, and you have taken no part in the public offices to which we have been elected beyond rejoicing in our success and paying our expenses: your indulgence has never been tainted by any thought of profit, and you cannot regret the loss of your son for a reason which never had any weight with you before his exile.

XV. All my powers of consolation must be directed to the other point, the true source of your maternal grief. You say, "I am deprived of the embraces of my darling son, I cannot enjoy the pleasure of seeing him and of hearing him talk. Where is he at whose sight I used to smooth my troubled brow, in whose keeping I used to deposit all my cares? Where is his conversation, of which I never could have enough? his studies, in which I used to take part with more than a woman's eagerness, with more than a mother's familiarity? Where are our meetings? the boyish delight which he always showed at the sight of his mother?" To all this you add the actual places of our merrymakings and conversation, and, what must needs have more power to move you than anything else, the traces of our late social life, for Fortune treated you with the additional cruelty of allowing you to depart on the very third day before my ruin, without a trace of anxiety, and not fearing anything of the kind. It was well that we had been separated by a vast distance: it was well that an absence of some years had prepared you to bear this blow: you came home, not to take any pleasure in your son, but to get rid of the habit of longing for him. Had you been absent long before, you would have borne it more bravely, as the very length of your absence would have moderated your longing to see me: had you never gone away, you would at any rate have gained one last advantage in seeing your son for two days longer: as it was, cruel Fate so arranged it that you were not present with me during my good fortune, and yet have not become accustomed to my absence. But the harder these things are to bear, the more virtue you must summon to your aid, and the more bravely you must struggle as it were with an enemy whom you know well, and whom you have already often conquered. This blood did not flow from a body previously unhurt: you have been

struck through the scar of an old wound.

XVI. You have no grounds for excusing yourself on the ground of being a woman, who has a sort of right to weep without restraint, though not without limit. For this reason our ancestors allotted a space of ten months' mourning for women who had lost their husbands, thus settling the violence of a woman's grief by a public ordinance. They did not forbid them to mourn, but they set limits to their grief: for while it is a foolish weakness to give way to endless grief when you lose one of those dearest to you, yet it shows an unnatural hardness of heart to express no grief at all: the best middle course between affection and hard common sense is both to feel regret and to restrain it. You need not look at certain women whose sorrow, when once begun, has been ended only by death: you know some who after the loss of their sons have never laid aside the garb of mourning: you are constitutionally stronger than these, and from you more is required. You cannot avail yourself of the excuse of being a woman, for you have no womanish vices. Unchastity, the greatest evil of the age, has never classed you with the majority of women; you have not been tempted either by gems or by pearls; riches have not allured you into thinking them the greatest blessing that man can own; respectably brought up as you were in an old-fashioned and strict household, you have never been led astray by that imitation of others which is so full of danger even to virtuous women. You have never been ashamed of your fruitfulness as though it were a reproach to your youth: you never concealed the signs of pregnancy as though it were an unbecoming burden, nor did you ever destroy your expected child within your womb after the fashion of many other women, whose attractions are to be found in their beauty alone. You never defiled your face with paints or cosmetics: you never liked clothes which showed the figure as plainly as though it were naked: your sole ornament has been a consummate loveliness which no time can impair, your greatest glory has been your modesty. You cannot, therefore, plead your womanhood as an excuse for your grief, because your virtues have raised you above it: you ought to be as superior to womanish tears as you are to womanish vices. Even women would not allow you to pine away after receiving this blow, but would bid you quickly and calmly go through the necessary amount of mourning, and then to arise and shake it off: I mean, if you are willing to take as your models those women whose eminent virtue has given them a place among even great men. Misfortune reduced the number of Cornelia's children from twelve to two: if you count the number of their deaths, Cornelia had lost ten: if you weigh them, she had lost the Gracchi: nevertheless, when her friends were weeping around her and using too bitter imprecations against her fate, she forbade them to blame fortune for having deprived[5] her of her sons the Gracchi. Such ought to have been the mother of him who, when speaking in the Forum, said, "Would you speak evil of the mother who bore me?" The mother's speech seems to me to show a far greater spirit: the son set a high value on the birth of the Gracchi; the mother set an equal value on their deaths. Rutilia followed her son Cotta into exile, and was so passionately attached to him that she could bear exile better than absence from him; nor did she return home before her son did so: after he had been

restored, and had been raised to honour in the republic, she bore his death as bravely as she had borne his exile. No one saw any traces of tears upon her cheeks after she had buried her son: she displayed her courage when he was banished, her wisdom when he died: she allowed no considerations either to interfere with her affection, or to force her to protract a useless and foolish mourning. These are the women with whom I wish you to be numbered: you have the best reasons for restraining and suppressing your sorrow as they did, because you have always imitated their lives.

XVII. I am aware that this is a matter which is not in our power, and that none of the passions, least of all that which arises from grief, are obedient to our wishes; indeed, it is overbearing and obstinate, and stubbornly rejects all remedies: we sometimes wish to crush it, and to swallow our emotion, but, nevertheless, tears flow over our carefully arranged and made-up countenance. Sometimes we occupy our minds with public spectacles and shows of gladiators; but during the very sights by which it is amused, the mind is wrung by slight touches of sorrow. It is better, therefore, to conquer it than to cheat it; for a grief which has been deceived and driven away either by pleasure or by business rises again, and its period of rest does but give it strength for a more terrible attack; but a grief which has been conquered by reason is appeased for ever. I shall not, then, give you the advice which so many, I know, adopt, that you should distract your thoughts by a long journey, or amuse them by a beautiful one; that you should spend much of your time in the careful examination of accounts, and the management of your estate, and that you should keep constantly engaging in new enterprises: all these things avail but little, and do not cure, but merely obstruct our sorrow. I had rather it should be brought to an end than that it should be cheated: and, therefore, I would fain lead you to the study of philosophy, the true place of refuge for all those who are flying from the cruelty of Fortune: this will heal your wounds and take away all your sadness: to this you would now have to apply yourself, even though you had never done so before; but as far as my father’s old-fashioned strictness permitted, you have gained a superficial, though not a thorough knowledge of all liberal studies. Would that my father, most excellent man that he was, had been less devoted to the customs of our ancestors, and had been willing to have you thoroughly instructed in the elements of philosophy, instead of receiving a mere smattering of it! I should not now need to be providing you with the means of struggling against Fortune, but you would offer them to me: but he did not allow you to pursue your studies far, because some women use literature to teach them luxury instead of wisdom. Still, thanks to your keen intellectual appetite, you learned more than one could have expected in the time: you laid the foundations of all good learning: now return to them: they will render you safe, they will console you, and charm you. If once they have thoroughly entered into your mind, grief, anxiety, the distress of vain suffering will never gain admittance thither: your breast will not be open to any of these; against all other vices it has long been closed. Philosophy is your most trustworthy guardian, and it alone can save you from the attacks of Fortune.

XVIII. Since, however, you require something to lean upon until you can reach that haven of rest which philosophy offers to you, I wish in the meantime to point out to you the consolations which you have. Look at my two brothers—while they are safe, you have no grounds for complaint against Fortune; you can derive pleasure from the virtues of each of them, different as they are; the one has gained high office by attention to business, the other has philosophically despised it. Rejoice in the great place of one of your sons, in the peaceful retirement of the other, in the filial affection of both. I know my brothers' most secret motives: the one adorns his high office in order to confer lustre upon you, the other has withdrawn from the world into his life of quiet and contemplation, that he may have full enjoyment of your society. Fortune has consulted both your safety and your pleasure in her disposal of your two sons: you may be protected by the authority of the one, and delighted by the literary leisure of the other. They will vie with one another in dutiful affection to you, and the loss of one son will be supplied by the love of two others. I can confidently promise that you will find nothing wanting in your sons except their number. Now, then, turn your eyes from them to your grandchildren; to Marcus, that most engaging child, whose sight no sorrow can withstand. No grief can be so great or so fresh in any one's bosom as not to be charmed away by his presence. Where are the tears which his joyousness could not dry? whose heart is so nipped by sorrow that his animation would not cause it to dilate? who would not be rendered mirthful by his playfulness? who would not be attracted and made to forget his gloomy thoughts by that prattle to which no one can ever be weary of listening? I pray the gods that he may survive us: may all the cruelty of fate exhaust itself on me and go no further; may all the sorrow destined for my mother and my grandmother fall upon me; but let all the rest flourish as they do now: I shall make no complaints about my childlessness or my exile, if only my sacrifice may be received as a sufficient atonement, and my family suffer nothing more. Hold in your bosom Novatilla, who soon will present you with great-grandchildren, she whom I had so entirely adopted and made my own, that, now that she has lost me, she seems like an orphan, even though her father is alive. Love her for my sake as well as for her own: Fortune has lately deprived her of her mother: your affection will be able to prevent her really feeling the loss of the mother whom she mourns. Take this opportunity of forming and strengthening her principles; nothing sinks so deeply into the mind as the teaching which we receive in our earliest years; let her become accustomed to hearing your discourses; let her character be moulded according to your pleasure: she will gain much even if you give her nothing more than your example. This continually recurring duty will be a remedy in itself: for when your mind is full of maternal sorrow, nothing can distract it from its grief except either philosophic argument or honourable work. I should count your father among your greatest consolations, were he not absent: as it is, judge from your affection for me what his affection is for you, and then you will see how much more just it is that you should be preserved for him than that you should be sacrificed to me. Whenever your keenest paroxysms of grief assail you and bid you give way to

them, think of your father. By giving him so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren you have made yourself no longer his only daughter; but you alone can crown his prosperous life by a happy end: as long as he is alive it is impiety for you to regret having been born.

XIX. I have hitherto said nothing of your chief source of consolation, your sister, that most faithful heart which shares all your sorrows as fully as your own, and who feels for all of us like a mother. With her you have mingled your tears, on her bosom you have tasted your first repose: she always feels for your troubles, and when I am in the case she does not grieve for you alone. It was in her arms that I was carried into Rome: by her affectionate and motherly nursing I regained my strength after a long period of sickness: she enlarged her influence to obtain the office of quaestor for me, and her fondness for me made her conquer a shyness which at other times made her shrink from speaking to, or loudly greeting her friends. Neither her retired mode of life, nor her country-bred modesty, at a time when so many women display such boldness of manner, her placidity, nor her habits of solitary seclusion prevented her from becoming actually ambitious on my account. Here, my dearest mother, is a source from which you may gain true consolation: join yourself, as far as you are able, to her, bind yourself to her by the closest embraces. Those who are in sorrow are wont to flee from those who are dearest to them, and to seek liberty for the indulgence of their grief: do you let her share your every thought: if you wish to nurse your grief, she will be your companion, if you wish to lay it aside she will bring it to an end. If, however, I rightly understand the wisdom of that most perfect woman, she will not suffer you to waste your life in unprofitable mourning, and will tell you what happened in her own instance, which I myself witnessed. During a sea-voyage she lost a beloved husband, my uncle, whom she married when a maiden; she endured at the same time grief for him and fear for herself, and at last, though shipwrecked, nevertheless rescued his body from the vanquished tempest. How many noble deeds are unknown to fame! If only she had had the simple-minded ancients to admire her virtues, how many brilliant intellects would have vied with one another in singing the praises of a wife who forgot the weakness of her sex, forgot the perils of the sea, which terrify even the boldest, exposed herself to death in order to lay him in the earth, and who was so eager to give him decent burial that she cared nothing about whether she shared it or no. All the poets have made the wife[6] famous who gave herself to death instead of her husband: my aunt did more when she risked her life in order to give her husband a tomb: it shows greater love to endure the same peril for a less important end. After this, no one need wonder that for sixteen years, during which her husband governed the province of Egypt, she was never beheld in public, never admitted any of the natives to her house, never begged any favour of her husband, and never allowed anyone to beg one of her. Thus it came to pass that a gossiping province, ingenious in inventing scandal about its rulers, in which even the blameless often incurred disgrace, respected her as a singular example of uprightness,[7] never made free with her name,—a

remarkable piece of self-restraint among a people who will risk everything rather than forego a jest,—and that at the present time it hopes for another governor's wife like her, although it has no reasonable expectation of ever seeing one. It would have been greatly to her credit if the province had approved her conduct for a space of sixteen years: it was much more creditable to her that it knew not of her existence. I do not remind you of this in order to celebrate her praises, for to take such scanty notice of them is to curtail them, but in order that you may understand the magnanimity of a woman who has not yielded either to ambition or to avarice, those twin attendants and scourges of authority, who, when her ship was disabled and her own death was impending, was not restrained by fear from keeping fast hold of her husband's dead body, and who sought not how to escape from the wreck, but how to carry him out of it with her. You must now show a virtue equal to hers, recall your mind from grief, and take care that no one may think that you are sorry that you have borne a son.

XX. However, since it is necessary, whatever you do, that your thoughts should sometimes revert to me, and that I should now be present to your mind more often than your other children, not because they are less dear to you, but because it is natural to lay one's hands more often upon a place that pains one; learn how you are to think of me: I am as joyous and cheerful as in my best days: indeed these days are my best, because my mind is relieved from all pressure of business and is at leisure to attend to its own affairs, and at one time amuses itself with lighter studies, at another eagerly presses its inquiries into its own nature and that of the universe: first it considers the countries of the world and their position: then the character of the sea which flows between them, and the alternate ebbings and flowings of its tides; next it investigates all the terrors which hang between heaven and earth, the region which is torn asunder by thunderings, lightnings, gusts of wind, vapour, showers of snow and hail. Finally, having traversed every one of the realms below, it soars to the highest heaven, enjoys the noblest of all spectacles, that of things divine, and, remembering itself to be eternal, reviews all that has been and all that will be for ever and ever.

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[1] Corsica.

[2] Seneca himself was of Spanish extraction.

[3] Qu., oysters from Britain.

[4] The allusion is evidently to Regulus.

[5] I think Madvig's ademisset spoils the sense. Dedisset means:

“when you bid me mourn the loss of the Gracchi you bid me blame fortune for having given me such sons.” “’Tis better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all.”—J. E. B. M.

[6] Alcestis.

[7] The context shows that sanctitas is opposed to “rapacity,” “taking bribes,” like the Celaeno of Juv. viii.—J. E. B. M.

THE TWELFTH BOOK OF THE DIALOGUES

OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA,

ADDRESSED TO POLYBIUS.

OF CONSOLATION.

I. .... compared with ours is firm and lasting; but if you transfer it to the domain of Nature, which destroys everything and calls everything back to the place from whence it came, it is transitory. What, indeed, have mortal hands made that is not mortal? The seven wonders of the world, and any even greater wonders which the ambition of later ages has constructed, will be seen some day levelled with the ground. So it is: nothing lasts for ever, few things even last for long: all are susceptible of decay in one way or another. The ways in which things come to an end are manifold, but yet everything that has a beginning has an end also. Some threaten the world with death, and, though you may think the thought to be impious, this entire universe, containing gods and men and all their works will some day be swept away and plunged a second time into its original darkness and chaos. Weep, if you can, after this, over the loss of any individual life! Can we mourn the ashes of Carthage, Numantia, Corinth, or any city that has fallen from a high estate, when we know that the world must perish, albeit it has no place into which it can fall. Weep, if you can, because Fate has not spared you, she who some day will dare to work so great a wickedness! Who can be so haughtily and peevishly arrogant as to expect that this law of nature by which everything is brought to an end will be set aside in his own case, and that his own house will be exempted from the ruin which menaces the whole world itself? It is, therefore, a great consolation to reflect that what has happened to us has happened to every one before us and will happen to every one after us. In my opinion, nature has made her cruellest acts affect all men alike, in order that the universality of their lot might console them for its hardship.

II. It will also be no small assistance to you to reflect that grief can do no good either to him whom you have lost or to yourself, and you would not wish to protract what is useless: for if we could gain

anything by sorrow, I should not refuse to bestow upon your misfortunes whatever tears my own have left at my disposal: I would force some drops to flow from these eyes, exhausted as they are with weeping over my own domestic afflictions, were it likely to be of any service to you. Why do you hesitate? let us lament together, and I will even make this quarrel my own:—"Fortune, whom every one thinks most unjust, you seemed hitherto to have restrained yourself from attacking one who by your favour had become the object of such universal respect that—rare distinction for any one—his prosperity had excited no jealousy: but now, behold! you have dealt him the cruellest wound which, while Caesar lives, he could receive, and after reconnoitring him from all sides you have discovered that on this point alone he was exposed to your strokes. What else indeed could you have done to him? should you take away his wealth? he never was its slave: now he has even as far as possible put it away from him, and the chief thing that he has gained by his unrivalled facilities for amassing money has been to despise it. Should you take away his friends? you knew that he was of so loveable a disposition that he could easily gain others to replace those whom he might lose: for of all the powerful officers of the Imperial household he seems to me to be the only one whom all men wish to have for their friend without considering how advantageous his friendship would be. Should you take away his reputation? it is so firmly established, that even you could not shake it. Should you take away his health? you knew that his mind was so grounded on philosophical studies, in whose schools he was born as well as bred, that it would rise superior to any sufferings of the body. Should you take away his breath? how small an injury would that be to him? fame promised his genius one of the longest of lives: he himself has taken care that his better part should remain alive, and has guarded himself against death by the composition of his admirable works of eloquence: as long as literature shall be held in any honour, as long as the vigour of the Latin or the grace of the Greek language shall endure, he will flourish together with their greatest writers, with whose genius he has measured, or, if his modesty will not let me say this, has connected his own. This, then, was the only means you could devise of doing him a great injury. The better a man is, the more frequently he is wont to suffer from your indiscriminate rage, you who are to be feared even when you are bestowing benefits upon one. How little it would have cost you to avert this blow from one upon whom your favours seemed to be conferred according to some regular plan, and not to be flung at random in your wonted fashion!"

III. Let us add, if you please, to these grounds of complaint the disposition of the youth himself, cut off in the midst of its first growth. He was worthy to be your brother: you most certainly did not deserve to be given any pain through your brother, even though he had been unworthy. All men alike bear witness to his merits: he is regretted for your sake, and is praised for his own. He had no qualities which you would not be glad to recognize. You would indeed have been good to a worse brother, but to him your fraternal love was given all the more freely because in him it found so fitting a field for its exercise. No one ever was made to feel his influence by receiving wrongs at his hands, he never used the fact of your

being his brother to threaten any one: he had moulded his character after the pattern of your modesty, and reflected how great a glory and how great a burden you were to your family: the burden he was able to sustain; but, O pitiless Fate, always unjust to virtue—before your brother could taste the happiness of his position, he was called away. I am well aware that I express my feelings inadequately; for nothing is harder than to find words which adequately represent great grief: still, let us again lament for him, if it be of any use to do so:—"What did you mean, Fortune, by being so unjust and so savage? did you so soon repent you of your favour? What cruelty it was to fall upon brothers, to break up so loving a circle by so deadly an attack; why did you bring mourning into a house so plenteously stocked with admirable youths, in which no brother came short of the high standard of the rest, and without any cause pluck one of them away? So, then, scrupulous innocency of life, old-fashioned frugality, the power of amassing vast wealth wielded with the greatest self-denial, a true and imperishable love of literature, a mind free from the least spot of sin, all avail nothing: Polybius is in mourning, and, warned by the fate of one brother what he may have to dread for the rest, he fears for the very persons who soothe his grief. O shame! Polybius is in mourning, and mourns even though he still enjoys the favour of Caesar. No doubt, Fortune, what you aimed at in your impotent rage was to prove that no one could be protected from your attacks, not even by Caesar himself."

IV. We might go on blaming fate much longer, but we cannot alter it: it stands harsh and inexorable: no one can move it by reproaches, by tears, or by justice. Fate never spares any one, never makes allowances to any one. Let us, then, refrain from unprofitable tears: for our grief will carry us away to join him sooner than it will bring him back to us: and if it tortures us without helping us, we ought to lay it aside as soon as possible, and restore the tone of our minds after their indulgence in that vain solace and the bitter luxury of woe: for unless reason puts an end to our tears, fortune will not do so. Look around, I pray you, upon all mortals: everywhere there is ample and constant reason for weeping: one man is driven to daily labour by toilsome poverty, another is tormented by never-resting ambition, another fears the very riches that he once wished for, and suffers from the granting of his own prayer: one man is made wretched by loneliness, another by labour, another by the crowds which always besiege his antechamber. This man mourns because he has children, that one because he has lost them. Tears will fail us sooner than causes for shedding them. Do you not see what sort of a life it must be that Nature has promised to us men when she makes us weep as soon as we are born? We begin life in this fashion, and all the chain of years that follow it is in harmony with it. Thus we pass our lives, and consequently we ought to be sparing in doing what we have to do so often, and when we look back upon the mass of sorrows that hangs over us, we ought, if not to end our tears, at any rate to reserve them. There is nothing that we ought to husband more carefully than this, which we are so often obliged to expend.

V. It will also be no small assistance to you to consider that there is no one to whom your grief is more offensive than he upon whom it is nominally bestowed: he either does not wish you to suffer or does not understand why you suffer. There is, therefore, no reason for a service which is useless if it is not felt by him who is the object of it, and which is displeasing to him if it is. I can boldly affirm that there is no one in the whole world who derives any pleasure from your tears. What then? do you suppose that your brother has a feeling against you which no one else has, that he wishes you to be injured by your self-torture, that he desires to separate you from the business of your life, that is, from philosophy and from Caesar? that is not likely: for he always gave way to you as a brother, respected you as a parent, courted you as a superior. He wishes to be fondly remembered by you, but not to be a source of agony to you. Why, then, should you insist upon pining away with a grief which, if the dead have any feelings, your brother wishes to bring to an end? If it were any other brother about whose affection there could be any question, I should put all this vaguely, and say, “If your brother wishes you to be tortured with endless mourning, he does not deserve such affection: if he does not wish it, dismiss the grief which affects you both: an unnatural brother ought not, a good brother would not wish to be so mourned for,” but with one whose brotherly love has been so clearly proved, we may be quite sure that nothing could hurt him more than that you should be hurt by his loss, that it should agonize you, that your eyes, most undeserving as they are of such a fate, should be by the same cause continually filled and drained of never-ceasing tears.

Nothing however will restrain your loving nature from these useless tears so effectually as the reflexion that you ought to show your brothers an example by bearing this outrage of fortune bravely. You ought to imitate great generals in times of disaster, when they are careful to affect a cheerful demeanour, and conceal misfortunes by a counterfeited joyousness, lest, if the soldiers saw their leader cast down, they should themselves become dispirited. This must now be done by you also. Put on a countenance that does not reflect your feelings, and if you possibly can, cast out conceal it within you and hide it away so that it may not be seen, and take care that your brothers, who will think everything honourable that they see you doing, imitate you in this and take courage from the sight of your looks. It is your duty to be both their comfort and their consoler; but you will have no power to check their grief if you humour your own.

VI. It may also keep you from excessive grief if you remind yourself that nothing which you do can be done in secret: all men agree in regarding you as an important personage, and you must keep up this character: you are encompassed by all that mass of offerers of consolation who all are peering into your mind to learn how much strength it has to resist grief, and whether you merely know how to avail yourself cunningly of prosperity, or whether you can also bear adversity with a manly spirit: the expression of your very eyes is watched. Those who are able to conceal their feelings may indulge them more freely; but you are not free to have any secresy: your

fortune has set you in so brilliant a position, that nothing which you do can be hid: all men will know how you have borne this wound of yours, whether you laid down your arms at the first shock or whether you stood your ground. Long ago the love of Caesar raised you, and your own literary pursuits brought you, to the highest rank in the state: nothing vulgar, nothing mean befits you: yet what can be meaner or more womanish than to make oneself a victim to grief? Although your sorrow is as great as that of your brothers, yet you may not indulge it as much as they: the ideas which the public have formed about your philosophic learning and your character make many things impossible for you. Men demand much, and expect much from you: you ought not to have drawn all eyes upon yourself, if you wished to be allowed to act as you pleased: as it is, you must make good that of which you have given promise. All those, who praise the works of your genius, who make copies of them, who need your genius if they do not need your fortune, are as guards set over your mind: you cannot, therefore, ever do anything unworthy of the character of a thorough philosopher and sage, without many men feeling sorry that they ever admired you. You may not weep beyond reason: nor is this the only thing that you may not do: you may not so much as remain asleep after daybreak, or retreat from the noisy troubles of public business to the peaceful repose of the country, or refresh yourself with a pleasure tour when wearied by constant attendance to the duties of your toilsome post, or amuse yourself with beholding various shows, or even arrange your day according to your own wish. Many things are forbidden to you which are permitted to the poorest beggars that lie about in holes and corners. A great fortune is a great slavery; you may not do anything according to your wish: you must give audiences to all those thousands of people, you must take charge of all those petitions: you must cheer yourself up, in order that all this mass of business which flows hither from every part of the world may be offered in due order for the consideration of our excellent emperor. I repeat, you yourself are forbidden to weep, that you may be able to listen to so many weeping petitioners: your own tears must be dried, in order that the tears of those who are in peril and who desire to obtain the gracious pardon of the kindest-hearted of Caesars may be dried.

VII. These reflexions will serve you as partial remedies for your grief, but if you wish to forget it altogether, remember Caesar: think with what loyalty, with what industry you are bound to requite the favours which he has shown you: you will then see that you can no more sink beneath your burden than could he of whom the myths tells us, he whose shoulders upheld the world. Even Caesar, who may do all things, may not do many things for this very reason: his watchfulness protects all men’s sleep, his labour guarantees their leisure, his toil ensures their pleasures, his work preserves their holidays. On the day on which Caesar devoted his services to the universe, he lost them for himself, and like the planets which ever unrestingly pursue their course, he can never halt or attend to any affair of his own. After a certain fashion this prohibition is imposed upon you also; you may not consider your own interests, or devote yourself to your own studies: while Caesar owns the world, you cannot allow either joy or grief, or anything else to occupy any

part of you: you owe your entire self to Caesar. Add to this that, since you have always declared that Caesar was dearer to you than your own life, you have no right to complain of misfortune as long as Caesar is alive: while he is safe all your friends are alive, you have lost nothing, your eyes ought not only to be dry, but glad. In him is your all, he stands in the place of all else to you: you are not grateful enough for your present happy state (which God forbid that one of your most wise and loyal disposition should be) if you permit yourself to weep at all while Caesar is safe.

VIII. I will now point out to you yet another remedy, of a more domestic, though not of a more efficacious character. Your sorrow is most to be feared when you have retired to your own home: for as long as your divinity is before your eyes, it can find no means of access to you, but Caesar will possess your entire being; when you have left his presence, grief, as though it then had an opportunity of attack, will lie in ambush for you in your loneliness, and creep by degrees over your mind as it rests from its labours. You ought not, therefore, to allow any moment to be unoccupied by literary pursuits: at such times let literature repay to you the debt which your long and faithful love has laid upon it, let it claim you for its high priest and worshipper: at such times let Homer[1] and Virgil be much in your company, those poets to whom the human race owes as much as every one owes to you, and they especially, because you have made them known to a wider circle than that for which they wrote. All time which you entrust to their keeping will be safe. At such times, as far as you are able, compile an account of your Caesar’s acts, that they may be read by all future ages in a panegyric written by one of his own household: for he himself will afford you both the noblest subject and the noblest example for putting together and composing a history. I dare not go so far as to advise you to write in your usual elegant style a version of Aesop’s fables, a work which no Roman intellect has hitherto attempted. It is hard, no doubt, for a mind which has received so rude a shock to betake itself so quickly to these livelier pursuits: but if it is able to pass from more serious studies to these lighter ones, you must regard it as a proof that it has recovered its strength, and is itself again. In the former case, although it may suffer and hang back, still it will be led on by the serious nature of the subject under consideration to take an interest in it: but, unless it has thoroughly recovered, it will not endure to treat of subjects which must be written of in a cheerful spirit. You ought, therefore, first to exercise your mind upon grave studies, and then to enliven it with gayer ones.

IX. It will also be a great solace to you if you often ask yourself: “Am I grieving on my own account or on that of him who is gone? if on my own, I have no right to boast of my affectionate sensibility; grief is only excusable as long as it is honourable; but when it is only caused by personal interests, it no longer springs from tenderness: nothing can be less becoming to a good man than to make a calculation about his grief for his brother. If I grieve on his account, I must necessarily take one of the two following views: if the dead retain no feeling whatever, my brother has escaped from all

the troubles of life, has been restored to the place which he occupied before his birth, and, being free from every kind of ill, can neither fear, nor desire, nor suffer: what madness then for me never to cease grieving for one who will never grieve again? If the dead have any feeling, then my brother is now like one who has been let out of a prison in which he has long been confined, who at last is free and his own master, and who enjoys himself, amuses himself with viewing the works of Nature, and looks down from above the earth upon all human things, while he looks at things divine, whose meaning he has long sought in vain, from a much nearer standpoint. Why then am I wasting away with grief for one who is either in bliss or non-existent? it would be envy to weep for one who is in bliss, it would be madness to weep for one who has no existence whatever." Are you affected by the thought that he appears to have been deprived of great blessings just at the moment when they came crowding upon him? after thinking how much he has lost, call to mind how much more he has ceased to fear: anger will never more wring his heart, disease will not crush him, suspicion will not disquiet him, the gnawing pain of envy which we feel at the successes of others will not attend him, terror will not make him wretched, the fickleness of fortune who quickly transfers her favours from one man to another will not alarm him. If you reckon it up properly, he has been spared more than he has lost. He will not enjoy wealth, or your influence at Court, or his own: he will not receive benefits, and will not confer them: do you imagine him to be unhappy, because he has lost these things, or happy because he does not miss them? Believe me, he who does not need good fortune is happier than he on whom it attends: all those good things which charm us by the attractive but unreal pleasures which they afford, such as money, high office, influence, and many other things which dazzle the stupid greed of mankind, require hard labour to keep, are regarded by others with bitter jealousy, and are more of a menace than an advantage to those who are bedecked and encumbered by them. They are slippery and uncertain; one never can enjoy them in comfort; for, even setting aside anxiety about the future, the present management of great prosperity is an uneasy task. If we are to believe some profound seekers after truth, life is all torment: we are flung, as it were, into this deep and rough sea, whose tides ebb and flow, at one time raising us aloft by sudden accessions of fortune, at another bringing down low by still greater losses, and for ever tossing us about, never letting us rest on firm ground. We roll and plunge upon the waves, and sometimes strike against one another, sometimes are shipwrecked, always are in terror. For those who sail upon this stormy sea, exposed as it is to every gale, there is no harbour save death. Do not, then, grudge your brother his rest: he has at last become free, safe, and immortal: he leaves surviving him Caesar and all his family, yourself, and his and your brothers. He left Fortune before she had ceased to regard him with favour, while she stood still by him, offering him gifts with a full hand. He now ranges free and joyous through the boundless heavens; he has left this poor and low-lying region, and has soared upwards to that place, whatever it may be, which receives in its happy bosom the souls which have been set free from the chains of matter: he now roams there at liberty, and enjoys with the keenest delight all the

blessings of Nature. You are mistaken! your brother has not lost the light of day, but has obtained a more enduring light: whither he has gone, we all alike must go: why then do we weep for his fate? He has not left us, but has gone on before us. Believe me, there is great happiness in a happy death. We cannot be sure of anything even for one whole day: since the truth is so dark and hard to come at, who can tell whether death came to your brother out of malice or out of kindness?

X. One who is as just in all things as you are, must find comfort in the thought that no wrong has been done you by the loss of so noble a brother, but that you have received a benefit by having been permitted for so long a time to enjoy his affection. He who will not allow his benefactor to choose his own way of bestowing a gift upon him, is unjust: he who does not reckon what he receives as gain, and yet reckons what he gives back again as loss, is greedy: he who says that he has been wronged, because his pleasure has come to an end, is ungrateful: he who thinks that we gain nothing from good things beyond the present enjoyment of them, is a fool, because he finds no pleasure in past joys, and does not regard those which are gone as his most certain possessions, since he need not fear that they will come to an end. A man limits his pleasures too narrowly if he believes that he enjoys those things only which he touches and sees, if he counts the having enjoyed them for nothing: for all pleasure quickly leaves us, seeing that it flows away, flits across our lives, and is gone almost before it has come. We ought, therefore, to make our mind travel back over past time, to bring back whatever we once took pleasure in, and frequently to ruminate over it in our thoughts: the remembrance of pleasures is truer and more trustworthy than their reality. Regard it, then, among your greatest blessings that you have had an excellent brother: you need not think for how much longer you might have had him, but for how long you did have him. Nature gave him to you, as she gives others to other brothers, not as an absolute property, but as a loan: afterwards when she thought proper she took him back again, and followed her own rules of action, instead of waiting until you had indulged your love to satiety. If any one were to be indignant at having to repay a loan of money, especially if he had been allowed to use it without having to pay any interest, would he not be thought an unreasonable man? Nature gave your brother his life, just as she gave you yours: exercising her lawful rights, she has chosen to ask one of you to repay her loan before the other: she cannot be blamed for this, for you knew the conditions on which you received it: you must blame the greedy hopes of mortal men’s minds, which every now and then forget what Nature is, and never remember their own lot unless reminded of it. Rejoice, then, that you have had so good a brother, and be grateful for having had the use and enjoyment of him, though it was for a shorter time than you wished. Reflect that what you have had of him was most delightful, that your having lost him is an accident common to mankind. There is nothing more inconsistent than that a man should grieve that so good a brother was not long enough with him, and should not rejoice that he nevertheless has been with him.

XI. “But,” you say, “he was taken away unexpectedly.” Every man is

deceived by his own willingness to believe what he wishes, and he chooses to forget that those whom he loves are mortal: yet Nature gives us clear proofs that she will not suspend her laws in favour of any one: the funeral processions of our friends and of strangers alike pass daily before our eyes, yet we take no notice of them, and when an event happens which our whole life warns us will some day happen, we call it sudden. This is not, therefore, the injustice of fate, but the perversity and insatiable universal greediness of the human mind, which is indignant at having to leave a place to which it was only admitted on sufferance. How far more righteous was he who, on hearing of the death of his son, made a speech worthy of a great man, saying: “When I begat him, I knew that he would die some day.” Indeed, you need not be surprised at the son of such a man being able to die bravely. He did not receive the tidings of his son’s death as news: for what is there new in a man’s dying, when his whole life is merely a journey towards death? “When I begat him, I knew that he would die some day,” said he: and then he added, what showed even more wisdom and courage, “It was for this that I brought him up.” It is for this that we have all been brought up: every one who is brought into life is intended to die. Let us enjoy what is given to us, and give it back when it is asked for: the Fates lay their hands on some men at some times, and on other men at other times, but they will never pass any one by altogether. Our mind ought always to be on the alert, and while it ought never to fear what is certain to happen, it ought always to be ready for what may happen at any time. Why need I tell you of generals and the children of generals, of men ennobled by many consulships and triumphs, who have succumbed to pitiless fate? whole kingdoms together with their kings, whole nations with all their component tribes, have all submitted to their doom. All men, nay, all things look forward to an end of their days: yet all do not come to the same end: one man loses his life in the midst of his career, another at the very beginning of it, another seems hardly able to free himself from it when worn out with extreme old age, and eager to be released: we are all going to the same place, but we all go thither at different times, I know not whether it is more foolish not to know the law of mortality, or more presumptuous to refuse to obey it. Come, take into your hands the poems[2] of whichever you please of those two authors upon whom your genius has expended so much labour, whom you have so well paraphrased, that although the structure of the verse be removed, its charm nevertheless is preserved; for you have transferred them from one language to another so well as to effect the most difficult matter of all, that of making all the beauties of the original reappear in a foreign speech: among their works you will find no volume which will not offer you numberless instances of the vicissitudes of human life, of the uncertainty of events, and of tears shed for various reasons. Read with what fire you have thundered out their swelling phrases: you will feel ashamed of suddenly failing and falling short of the elevation of their magnificent language. Do not commit the fault of making every one, who according to his ability admires your writings, ask how so frail a mind can have formed such stable and well-connected ideas.

XII. Turn yourself away from these thoughts which torment you, and

look rather at those numerous and powerful sources of consolation which you possess: look at your excellent brothers, look at your wife and your son. It is to guarantee the safety of all these that Fortune[3] has struck you in this quarter: you have many left in whom you can take comfort. Guard yourself from the shame of letting all men think that a single grief has more power with you than these many consolations. You see all of them cast down into the same despondency as yourself, and you know that they cannot help you, nay, that on the other hand they look to you to encourage them: wherefore, the less learning and the less intellect they possess, the more vigorously you ought to withstand the evil which has fallen upon you all. The very fact of one's grief being shared by many persons acts as a consolation, because if it be distributed among such a number the share of it which falls upon you must be small. I shall never cease to recall your thoughts to Caesar. While he governs the earth, and shows how far better the empire may be maintained by kindnesses than by arms, while he presides over the affairs of mankind, there is no danger of your feeling that you have lost anything: in this fact alone you will find ample help and ample consolation; raise yourself up, and fix your eyes upon Caesar whenever tears rise to them; they will become dry on beholding that greatest and most brilliant light; his splendour will attract them and firmly attach them to himself, so that they are able to see nothing else. He whom you behold both by day and by night, from whom your mind never deviates to meaner matters, must occupy your thoughts and be your defence against Fortune; indeed, so kind and gracious as he is towards all his followers that he has already, I doubt not, laid many healing balms upon this wound of yours, and furnished you with many antidotes for your sorrow. Why, even had he done nothing of the kind, is not the mere sight and thought of Caesar in itself your greatest consolation? May the gods and goddesses long spare him to the earth: may he rival the deeds of the Emperor Augustus, and surpass him in length of days! as long as he remains among mortals, may he never be reminded that any of his house are mortal: may he train up his son by long and faithful service to be the ruler of the Roman people, and see him share his father's power before he succeeds to it: may the day on which his kindred shall claim him for heaven be far distant, and may our grandchildren alone be alive to see it.

XIII. Fortune, refrain your hands from him, and show your power over him only in doing him good: allow him to heal the long sickness from which mankind has suffered; to replace and restore whatever has been shattered by the frenzy of our late sovereign: may this star, which has shed its rays upon a world overthrown and cast into darkness, ever shine brightly: may he give peace to Germany, open Britain to us, and lead through the city triumphs, both over the nations whom his fathers conquered, and over new ones. Of these his clemency, the first of his many virtues, gives me hopes of being a spectator: for he has not so utterly cast me down that he will never raise me up again; nay, he has not cast me down at all; rather he has supported me when I was struck by evil fortune and was tottering, and has gently used his godlike hand to break my headlong fall: he pleaded with the Senate on my behalf, and not only gave me my life but even

begged it for me. He will see to my cause: let him judge my cause to be such as he would desire; let his justice pronounce it good or his clemency so regard it: his kindness to me will be equal in either case, whether he knows me to be innocent or chooses that I should be thought so. Meanwhile it is a great comfort to me for my own miseries to behold his pardons travelling throughout the world: even from the corner in which I am confined his mercy has unearthed and restored to light many exiles who had been buried and forgotten here for long years, and I have no fear that I alone shall be passed over by it. He best knows the time at which he ought to show favour to each man: I will use my utmost efforts to prevent his having to blush when he comes to me. O how blessed is your clemency, Caesar, which makes exiles live more peacefully during your reign than princes did in that of Gaius! We do not tremble or expect the fatal stroke every hour, nor are we terrified whenever a ship comes in sight: you have set bounds to the cruelty of Fortune towards us, and have given us present peace and hopes of a happier future. You may indeed be sure that those thunderbolts alone are just which are worshipped even by those who are struck by them.

XIV. Thus this prince, who is the universal consoler of all men, has, unless I am altogether mistaken, already revived your spirit and applied more powerful remedies to so severe a wound than I can: he has already strengthened you in every way: his singularly retentive memory has already furnished you with all the examples which will produce tranquillity: his practised eloquence has already displayed before you all the precepts of sages. No one therefore could console you as well as he: when he speaks his words have greater weight, as though they were the utterances of an oracle: his divine authority will crush all the strength of your grief. Think, then, that he speaks to you as follows:—“Fortune has not chosen you as the only man in the world to receive so severe a blow: there is no house in all the earth, and never has been one, that has not something to mourn for: I will pass over examples taken from the common herd, which, while they are of less importance, are also endless in number, and I will direct your attention to the Calendar and the State Chronicles. Do you see all these images which fill the hall of the Caesars? there is not one of these men who was not especially afflicted by domestic sorrows: no one of those men who shine there as the ornament of the ages was not either tortured by grief for some of his family or most bitterly mourned for by those whom he left behind. Why need I remind you of Scipio Africanus, who heard the news of his brother’s death when he was himself in exile? he who saved his brother from prison could not save him from his fate. Yet all men saw how impatient Africanus’s brotherly affection was even of equal law: on the same day on which Scipio Africanus rescued his brother from the hands of the apparitor, he, although not holding any office, protested against the action of the tribune of the people. He mourned for his brother as magnanimously as he had defended him. Why need I remind you of Scipio Aemilianus,[4] who almost at one and the same time beheld his father’s triumph and the funeral of his two brothers? yet, although a stripling and hardly more than a boy, he bore the sudden bereavement which befel his family at the very time of Paulus’s triumph with all the courage

which beseemed one who was born that Rome might not be without a Scipio and that she might be without a Carthage.

XV. Why should I speak of the intimacy of the two Luculli, which was broken only by their death? or of the Pompeii? whom the cruelty of Fortune did not even allow to perish by the same catastrophe; for Sextus Pompeius in the first place survived his sister,[5] by whose death the firmly knit bond of peace in the Roman empire was broken, and he also survived his noble brother, whom Fortune had raised so high in order that she might cast him down from as great a height as she had already cast down his father; yet after this great misfortune Sextus Pompeius was able not only to endure his grief but even to make war. Innumerable instances occur to me of brothers who were separated by death: indeed on the other hand we see very few pairs of brothers growing old together: however, I shall content myself with examples from my own family. No one can be so devoid of feeling or of reason as to complain of Fortune's having thrown him into mourning when he learns that she has coveted the tears of the Caesars themselves. The Emperor Augustus lost his darling sister Octavia, and though Nature destined him for heaven, yet she did not relax her laws to spare him from mourning while on earth: nay, he suffered every kind of bereavement, losing his sister's son,[6] who was intended to be his heir. In fine, not to mention his sorrows in detail, he lost his son-in-law, his children, and his grandchildren, and, while he remained among men, no mortal was more often reminded that he was a man. Yet his mind, which was able to bear all things, bore all these heavy sorrows, and the blessed Augustus was the conqueror, not only of foreign nations, but also of his own sorrows. Gaius Caesar,[7] the grandson of the blessed Augustus, my maternal great uncle, in the first years of manhood, when Prince of the Roman Youth, as he was preparing for the Parthian war, lost his darling brother Lucius[8] who was also 'Prince of the Roman Youth,' and suffered more thereby in his mind than he did afterwards in his body, though he bore both afflictions with the greatest piety and fortitude. Tiberius Caesar, my paternal uncle, lost his younger brother Drusus Germanicus,[9] my father, when he was opening out the innermost fastnesses of Germany, and bringing the fiercest tribes under the dominion of the Roman empire; he embraced him and received his last kiss, but he nevertheless restrained not only his own grief but that of others, and when the whole army, not merely sorrowful but heartbroken, claimed the corpse of their Drusus for themselves, he made them grieve only as it became Romans to grieve, and taught them that they must observe military discipline not only in fighting but also in mourning. He could not have checked the tears of others had he not first repressed his own.

XVI. "Marcus Antonius, my grandfather, who was second to none save his conqueror, received the news of his brother's execution at the very time when the state was at his disposal, and when, as a member of the triumvirate, he saw no one in the world superior to himself in power, nay, when, with the exception of his two colleagues, every man was subordinate to himself. O wanton Fortune, what sport you make for yourself out of human sorrows! At the very time when Marcus Antonius was enthroned with power of life and death over his

countrymen, Marcus Antonius’s brother was being led to his death: yet Antonius bore this cruel wound with the same greatness of mind with which he had endured all his other crosses; and he mourned for his brother by offering the blood of twenty legions to his manes. However, to pass by all other instances, not to speak of the other deaths which have occurred in my own house. Fortune has twice assailed me through the death of a brother; she has twice learned that she could wound me but could not overthrow me. I lost my brother Germanicus, whom I loved in a manner which any one will understand if he thinks how affectionate brothers love one another; yet I so restrained my passion of grief as neither to leave undone anything which a good brother could be called upon to do, nor yet to do anything which a sovereign could be blamed for doing.”

Think, then, that our common parent quotes these instances to you, and that he points out to you how nothing is respected or held inviolable by Fortune, who actually dares to send out funeral processions from the very house in which she will have to look for gods: so let no one be surprised at her committing any act of cruelty or injustice; for how could she show any humanity or moderation in her dealings with private families, when her pitiless fury has so often hung the very throne[10] itself with black? She will not change her habits even though reproached, not by my voice alone, but by that of the entire nation: she will hold on her course in spite of all prayers and complaints. Such has Fortune always been, and such she ever will be in connexion with human affairs: she has never shrunk from attacking anything, and she will never let anything alone: she will rage everywhere terribly, as she has always been wont to do: she will dare to enter for evil purposes into those houses whose entrance lies through the temples of the gods, and will hang signs of mourning upon laurelled door-posts. However, if she has not yet determined to destroy the human race: if she still looks with favour upon the Roman nation, may our public and private prayers prevail upon her to regard as sacred from her violence this prince, whom all men think to be sacred, who has been granted them by heaven to give them rest after their misfortunes: let her learn clemency from him, and let the mildest of all sovereigns teach her mildness.

XVII. You ought, therefore, to fix your eyes upon all the persons whom I have just mentioned, who have either been deified or were nearly related to those who have been deified, and when Fortune lays her hands upon you to bear it calmly, seeing that she does not even respect those by whose names we swear. It is your duty to imitate their constancy in enduring and triumphing over suffering, as far as it is permitted to a mere man to follow in the footsteps of the immortals. Albeit in all other matters rank and birth make great distinctions between men, yet virtue is open to all; she despises no one provided he thinks himself worthy to possess her. Surely you cannot do better than follow the example of those who, though they might have been angry at not being exempt from this evil, nevertheless have decided to regard this, the only thing which brings them down to the level of other men, not as a wrong done to themselves, but as the law of our mortal nature, and to bear what

befals them without undue bitterness and wrath, and yet in no base or cowardly spirit: for it is not human not to feel our sorrows, while it is unmanly not to bear them. When I glance through the roll of all the Caesars whom fate has bereaved of sisters or brothers, I cannot pass over that one who is unworthy to figure on the list of Caesars, whom Nature produced to be the ruin and the shame of the human race, who utterly wrecked and destroyed the state which is now recovering under the gentle rule of the most benign of princes. On losing his sister Drusilla, Gaius Caesar, a man who could neither mourn nor rejoice as becomes a prince, shrank from seeing and speaking to his countrymen, was not present at his sister's funeral, did not pay her the conventional tribute of respect, but tried to forget the sorrows caused by this most distressing death by playing at dice in his Alban villa, and by sitting on the judgment-seat, and the like customary engagements. What a disgrace to the Empire! a Roman emperor solaced himself by gambling for his grief at the loss of his sister! This same Gaius, with frantic levity, at one time let his beard and hair grow long, at another wandered aimlessly along the coast of Italy and Sicily. He never clearly made up his mind whether he wished his sister to be mourned for or to be worshipped, and during all the time that he was raising temples and shrines[11] in her honour he punished those who did not manifest sufficient sorrow with the most cruel tortures:[12] for his mind was so ill-balanced, that he was as much cast down by adversity as he was unbecomingly elated and puffed up by success. Far be it from every Roman to follow such an example, either to divert his mind from his grief by unreasonable amusements, to stimulate it by unseemly squalor and neglect, or to be so inhuman as to console himself by taking pleasure in the sufferings of others.

XVIII. You, however, need change none of your ordinary habits, since you have taught yourself to love those studies which, while they are pre-eminently fitted for perfecting our happiness, at the same time teach us how we may bear misfortune most lightly, and which are at the same time a man's greatest honour and greatest comfort. Now, therefore, immerse yourself even more deeply in your studies, now surround your mind with them like fortifications, so that grief may not find any place at which it can gain entrance. At the same time, prolong the remembrance of your brother by inserting some memoir of him among your other writings: for that is the only sort of monument that can be erected by man which no storm can injure, no time destroy. The others, which consist of piles of stone, masses of marble, or huge mounds of earth heaped on high, cannot preserve his memory for long, because they themselves perish; but the memorials which genius raises are everlasting. Lavish these upon your brother, embalm him in these: you will do better to immortalise him by an everlasting work of genius than to mourn over him with useless grief. As for Fortune herself, although I cannot just now plead her cause before you, because all that she has given us is now hateful to you, because she has taken something away from you, yet I will plead her cause as soon as time shall have rendered you a more impartial judge of her action: indeed she has bestowed much upon you to make amends for the injury which she has done you, and she will give more hereafter by way of atonement for it: and, after all, it

was she herself who gave you this brother whom she has taken away. Forbear, then, to display your abilities against your own self, or to take part with your grief against yourself: your eloquence, can, no doubt, make trifles appear great, and, conversely, can disparage and depreciate great things until they seem the merest trifles; but let it reserve those powers and use them on some other subject, and at the present time devote its entire strength to the task of consoling you. Yet see whether even this task be not unnecessary. Nature demands from us a certain amount of grief, our imagination adds some more to it; but I will never forbid you to mourn at all. I know, indeed, that there are some men, whose wisdom is of a harsh rather than a brave character, who say that the wise man never would mourn. It seems to me that they never can have been in the position of mourners, for otherwise their misfortune would have shaken all their haughty philosophy out of them, and, however much against their will, would have forced them to confess their sorrow. Reason will have done enough if she does but cut off from our grief all that is superfluous and useless: as for her not allowing us to grieve at all, that we ought neither to expect nor to wish for. Let her rather restrain us within the bounds of a chastened grief, which partakes neither of indifference nor of madness, and let her keep our minds in that attitude which becomes affection without excitement: let your tears flow, but let them some day cease to flow: groan as deeply as you will, but let your groans cease some day: regulate your conduct so that both philosophers and brothers may approve of it. Make yourself feel pleasure in often thinking about your brother, talk constantly about him, and keep him ever present in your memory; which you cannot succeed in doing unless you make the remembrance of him pleasant rather than sad: for it is but natural that the mind should shrink from a subject which it cannot contemplate without sadness. Think of his retiring disposition, of his abilities for business, his diligence in carrying it out, his loyalty to his word. Tell other men of all his sayings and doings, and remind your own self of them: think how good he was and how great you hoped he might become: for what success is there which you might not safely have wagered that such a brother would win?

I have thrown together these reflexions in the best way that I could, for my mind is dimmed and stupefied with the tedium of my long exile: if, therefore, you should find them unworthy of the consideration of a person of your intelligence, or unable to console you in your grief, remember how impossible it is for one who is full of his own sorrows to find time to minister to those of others, and how hard it is to express oneself in the Latin language, when all around one hears nothing but a rude foreign jargon, which even barbarians of the more civilised sort regard with disgust.

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[1] “The Latins had four versions of Homer (Fabric, tom. i. 1. ii.

ch. 3, p. 297), yet, in spite of the phraises of Seneca, Consol, ch. 26 (viii.), they appear to have been more successful in imitating than in translating the Greek poets."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," ch. 41, ad init., note. Polybius had made a prose translation of Homer, and a prose paraphrase of Virgil.

[2] See note ante, ch. viii.

[3] "Fortune hath parted stakes with thee, in taking away thy brother, and leaving thee all the rest in securitie and safetie."—Lodge.

[4] See "On Benefits," v. 16.

[5] Scipio Africanus minor, the son of Paulus Aemilius.

[6] Marcellus. See "Virgil's well-known lines, Aen. VI., 869, sqq., and "Consolatio ad Marciam," 2.

[7] G. Caesar, d. at Limyra, a.d. 4.

[8] Lucius Caesar, d. at Marseilles, A.D. 2.

[9] Drusus died by a fall from his horse, B.C. 9. "A monument was erected in his honour at Moguntiacum (Mayence), and games and military spectacles were exhibited there on the anniversary of his death. An altar had already been raised in his honour on the banks of the Lippe." Tac. Ann. ii. 7. "The soldiers began now to regard themselves as a distinct people, with rites and heroes of their own. Augustus required them to surrender the body of their beloved chief as a matter of discipline." Merivale, ch. 36.

[10] Pulvinaria. See note, ch. xvii.

[11] Pulvinaria. This word properly means "a couch made of cushions, and spread over with a splendid covering, for the gods or persons who received divine honours."

[12] Merivale, following Suetonius and Dion Cassius, says: "He declared that if any man dared to mourn for his sister's death, he should be punished, for she had become a goddess: if any one ventured to rejoice at her deification, he should be punished also, for she was dead." The passage in the text, he remarks, gives a less extravagant turn to the story.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE DIALOGUE OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA, ADDRESSED TO NERO CAESAR.

ON CLEMENCY.

I. I have determined to write a book upon clemency, Nero Caesar, in order that I may as it were serve as a mirror to you, and let you see yourself arriving at the greatest of all pleasures. For although the true enjoyment of good deeds consists in the performance of them, and virtues have no adequate reward beyond themselves, still it is worth your while to consider and investigate a good conscience from every point of view, and afterwards to cast your eyes upon this enormous mass of mankind— quarrelsome, factious, and passionate as they are; likely, if they could throw off the yoke of your government, to take pleasure alike in the ruin of themselves and of one another —and thus to commune with yourself:—"Have I of all mankind been chosen and thought fit to perform the office of a god upon earth? I am the arbiter of life and death to mankind: it rests with me to decide what lot and position in life each man possesses: fortune makes use of my mouth to announce what she bestows on each man: cities and nations are moved to joy by my words: no region anywhere can flourish without my favour and good will: all these thousands of swords now restrained by my authority, would be drawn at a sign from me: it rests with me to decide which tribes shall be utterly exterminated, which shall be moved into other lands, which shall receive and which shall be deprived of liberty, what kings shall be reduced to slavery and whose heads shall be crowned, what cities shall be destroyed and what new ones shall be founded. In this position of enormous power I am not tempted to punish men unjustly by anger, by youthful impulse, by the recklessness and insolence of men, which often overcomes the patience even of the best regulated minds, not even that terrible vanity, so common among great sovereigns, of displaying my power by inspiring terror. My sword is sheathed, nay, fixed in its sheath: I am sparing of the blood even of the lowest of my subjects: a man who has nothing else to recommend him, will nevertheless find favour in my eyes because he is a man. I keep harshness concealed, but I have clemency always at hand: I watch myself as carefully as though I had to give an account of my actions to those laws which I have brought out of darkness and neglect into the light of day. I have been moved to compassion by the youth of one culprit, and the age of another: I have spared one man because of his great place, another on account of his insignificance: when I could find no reason for showing mercy, I have had mercy upon myself. I am prepared this day, should the gods demand it, to render to them an account of the human race." You, Caesar, can boldly say that everything which has come into your charge has been kept safe, and that the state has neither openly nor secretly suffered any loss at your hands. You have coveted a glory which is most rare, and which has been obtained by no emperor before you, that of innocence. Your remarkable goodness is not thrown away, nor is it ungratefully or spitefully undervalued. Men feel gratitude towards you: no one person ever was so dear to another as you are to the people of Rome, whose great and enduring benefit you are. You have, however, taken upon yourself a mighty burden: no one any longer speaks of the good times of the late Emperor Augustus, or the first years of the reign of Tiberius, or proposes for your imitation any model outside yourself: yours is a pattern reign. This would

have been difficult had your goodness of heart not been innate, but merely adopted for a time; for no one can wear a mask for long, and fictitious qualities soon give place to true ones. Those which are founded upon truth, and which, so to speak, grow out of a solid basis, only become greater and better as time goes on. The Roman people were in a state of great hazard as long as it was uncertain how your generous[1] disposition would turn out; now, however, the prayers of the community are sure of an answer, for there is no fear that you should suddenly forget your own character. Indeed, excess of happiness makes men greedy, and our desires are never so moderate as to be bounded by what they have obtained: great successes become the stepping-stones to greater ones, and those who have obtained more than they hoped, entertain even more extravagant hopes than before; yet by all your countrymen we hear it admitted that they are now happy, and moreover, that nothing can be added to the blessings that they enjoy, except that they should be eternal. Many circumstances force this admission from them, although it is the one which men are least willing to make: we enjoy a profound and prosperous peace, the power of the law has been openly asserted in the sight of all men, and raised beyond the reach of any violent interference: the form of our government is so happy, as to contain all the essentials of liberty except the power of destroying itself. It is nevertheless your clemency which is most especially admired by the high and low alike: every man enjoys or hopes to enjoy the other blessings of your rule according to the measure of his own personal good fortune, whereas from your clemency all hope alike: no one has so much confidence in his own innocence, as not to feel glad that in your presence stands a clemency which is ready to make allowance for human errors.

II. I know, however, that there are some who imagine that clemency only saves the life of every villain, because clemency is useless except after conviction, and alone of all the virtues has no function among the innocent. But in the first place, although a physician is only useful to the sick, yet he is held in honour among the healthy also; and so clemency, though she be invoked by those who deserve punishment, is respected by innocent people as well. Next, she can exist also in the person of the innocent, because sometimes misfortune takes the place of crime; indeed, clemency not only succours the innocent, but often the virtuous, since in the course of time it happens that men are punished for actions which deserve praise. Besides this, there is a large part of mankind which might return to virtue if the hope of pardon were not denied them. Yet it is not right to pardon indiscriminately; for when no distinction is made between good and bad men, disorder follows, and all vices break forth; we must therefore take care to distinguish those characters which admit of reform from those which are hopelessly depraved. Neither ought we to show an indiscriminate and general, nor yet an exclusive clemency; for to pardon every one is as great cruelty as to pardon none; we must take a middle course; but as it is difficult to find the true mean, let us be careful, if we depart from it, to do so upon the side of humanity.

III. But these matters will be treated of better in their own place.

I will now divide this whole subject into three parts. The first will be of gentleness of temper:[2] the second will be that which explains the nature and disposition of clemency; for since there are certain vices which have the semblance of virtue, they cannot be separated unless you stamp upon them the marks which distinguish them from one another: in the third place we shall inquire how the mind may be led to practise this virtue, how it may strengthen it, and by habit make it its own.

That clemency, which is the most humane of virtues, is that which best befits a man, is necessarily an axiom, not only among our own sect, which regards man as a social animal, born for the good of the whole community, but even among those philosophers who give him up entirely to pleasure, and whose words and actions have no other aim than their own personal advantage. If man, as they argue, seeks for quiet and repose, what virtue is there which is more agreeable to his nature than clemency, which loves peace and restrains him from violence? Now clemency becomes no one more than a king or a prince; for great power is glorious and admirable only when it is beneficent; since to be powerful only for mischief is the power of a pestilence. That man's greatness alone rests upon a secure foundation, whom all men know to be as much on their side as he is above them, of whose watchful care for the safety of each and all of them they receive daily proofs, at whose approach they do not fly in terror, as though some evil and dangerous animal had sprung out from its den, but flock to him as they would to the bright and health-giving sunshine. They are perfectly ready to fling themselves upon the swords of conspirators in his defence, to offer their bodies if his only path to safety must be formed of corpses: they protect his sleep by nightly watches, they surround him and defend him on every side, and expose themselves to the dangers which menace him. It is not without good reason that nations and cities thus agree in sacrificing their lives and property for the defence and the love of their king whenever their leader's safety demands it; men do not hold themselves cheap, nor are they insane when so many thousands are put to the sword for the sake of one man, and when by so many deaths they save the life of one man alone, who not unfrequently is old and feeble. Just as the entire body is commanded by the mind, and although the body be so much larger and more beautiful while the mind is impalpable and hidden, and we are not certain as to where it is concealed, yet the hands, feet, and eyes work for it, the skin protects it; at its bidding we either lie still or move restlessly about; when it gives the word, if it be an avaricious master, we scour the sea in search of gain, or if it be ambitious we straightway place our right hand in the flames like Mucius, or leap into the pit like Curtius, so likewise this enormous multitude which surrounds one man is directed by his will, is guided by his intellect, and would break and hurl itself into ruin by its own strength, if it were not upheld by his wisdom.

IV. Men therefore love their own safety, when they draw up vast legions in battle on behalf of one man, when they rush to the front, and expose their breasts to wounds, for fear that their leader's standards should be driven back. He is the bond which fastens the

commonwealth together, he is the breath of life to all those thousands, who by themselves would become merely an encumbrance and a source of plunder if that directing mind were withdrawn:—

Bees have but one mind, till their king doth die,

But when he dies, disorderly they fly.

Such a misfortune will be the end of the peace of Rome, it will wreck the prosperity of this great people; the nation will be free from this danger as long as it knows how to endure the reins: should it ever break them, or refuse to have them replaced if they were to fall off by accident, then this mighty whole, this complex fabric of government will fly asunder into many fragments, and the last day of Rome's empire will be that upon which it forgets how to obey. For this reason we need not wonder that princes, kings, and all other protectors of a state, whatever their titles may be, should be loved beyond the circle of their immediate relatives; for since right-thinking men prefer the interests of the state to their own, it follows that he who bears the burden of state affairs must be dearer to them than their own friends. Indeed, the emperor long ago identified himself so thoroughly with the state, that neither of them could be separated without injury to both, because the one requires power, while the other requires a head.

V. My argument seems to have wandered somewhat far from the subject, but, by Hercules, it really is very much to the point. For if, as we may infer from what has been said, you are the soul of the state, and the state is your body, you will perceive, I imagine, how necessary clemency is; for when you appear to spare another, you are really sparing yourself. You ought therefore to spare even blameworthy citizens, just as you spare weakly limbs; and when blood-letting becomes necessary, you must hold your hand, lest you should cut deeper than you need. Clemency therefore, as I said before, naturally befits all mankind, but more especially rulers, because in their case there is more for it to save, and it is displayed upon a greater scale. Cruelty in a private man can do but very little harm; but the ferocity of princes is war. Although there is a harmony between all the virtues, and no one is better or more honourable than another, yet some virtues befit some persons better than others. Magnanimity befits all mortal men, even the humblest of all; for what can be greater or braver than to resist ill fortune? Yet this virtue of magnanimity occupies a wider room in prosperity, and shows to greater advantage on the judgment seat than on the floor of the court. On the other hand, clemency renders every house into which it is admitted happy and peaceful; but though it is more rare, it is on that account even more admirable in a palace. What can be more remarkable than that he whose anger might be indulged without fear of the consequences, whose decision, even though a harsh one, would be approved even by those who were to suffer by it,

whom no one can interrupt, and of whom indeed, should he become violently enraged, no one would dare to beg for mercy, should apply a check to himself and use his power in a better and calmer spirit, reflecting: “Any one may break the law to kill a man, no one but I can break it to save him”? A great position requires a great mind, for unless the mind raises itself to and even above the level of its station, it will degrade its station and draw it down to the earth; now it is the property of a great mind to be calm and tranquil and to look down upon outrages and insults with contempt. It is a womanish thing to rage with passion; it is the part of wild beasts, and that, too, not of the most noble ones, to bite and worry the fallen. Elephants and lions pass by those whom they have struck down; inveteracy is the quality of ignoble animals. Fierce and implacable rage does not befit a king, because he does not preserve his superiority over the man to whose level he descends by indulging in rage; but if he grants their lives and honours to those who are in jeopardy and who deserve to lose them, he does what can only be done by an absolute ruler; for life may be torn away even from those who are above us in station, but can never be granted save to those who are below us. To save men’s lives is the privilege of the loftiest station, which never deserves admiration so much as when it is able to act like the gods, by whose kindness good and bad men alike are brought into the world. Thus a prince, imitating the mind of a god, ought to look with pleasure on some of his countrymen because they are useful and good men, while he ought to allow others to remain to fill up the roll; he ought to be pleased with the existence of the former, and to endure that of the latter.

VI. Look at this city of Rome, in which the widest streets become choked whenever anything stops the crowds which unceasingly pour through them like raging torrents, in which the people streaming to three theatres demand the roads at the same time, in which the produce of the entire world is consumed, and reflect what a desolate waste it would become if only those were left in it whom a strict judge would acquit. How few magistrates are there who ought not to be condemned by the very same laws which they administer? How few prosecutors are themselves faultless? I imagine, also, that few men are less willing to grant pardon, than those who have often had to beg it for themselves. We have all of us sinned, some more deeply than others, some of set purpose, some either by chance impulse or led away by the wickedness of others; some of us have not stood bravely enough by our good resolutions, and have lost our innocence, although unwillingly and after a struggle; nor have we only sinned, but to the very end of our lives we shall continue to sin. Even if there be any one who has so thoroughly cleansed his mind that nothing can hereafter throw him into disorder or deceive him, yet even he has reached this state of innocence through sin.

VII. Since I have made mention of the gods, I shall state the best model on which a prince may mould his life to be, that he deal with his countrymen as he would that the gods may deal with himself. Is it then desirable that the gods should show no mercy upon sins and mistakes, and that they should harshly pursue us to our ruin? In that case what king will be safe? Whose limbs will not be torn

asunder and collected by the soothsayers? If, on the other hand, the gods are placable and kind, and do not at once avenge the crimes of the powerful with thunderbolts, is it not far more just that a man set in authority over other men should exercise his power in a spirit of clemency and should consider whether the condition of the world is more beauteous and pleasant to the eyes on a fine calm day, or when everything is shaken with frequent thunder-claps and when lightning flashes on all sides! Yet the appearance of a peaceful and constitutional reign is the same as that of the calm and brilliant sky. A cruel reign is disordered and hidden in darkness, and while all shake with terror at the sudden explosions, not even he who caused all this disturbance escapes unharmed. It is easier to find excuses for private men who obstinately claim their rights; possibly they may have been injured, and their rage may spring from their wrongs; besides this, they fear to be despised, and not to return the injuries which they have received looks like weakness rather than clemency; but one who can easily avenge himself, if he neglects to do so, is certain to gain praise for goodness of heart. Those who are born in a humble station may with greater freedom exercise violence, go to law, engage in quarrels, and indulge their angry passions; even blows count for little between two equals; but in the case of a king, even loud clamour and unmeasured talk are unbecoming.

VIII. You think it a serious matter to take away from kings the right of free speech which the humblest enjoy. “This,” you say, “is to be a subject, not a king.” What, do you not find that we have the command, you the subjection? Your position is quite different to that of those who lie hid in the crowd which they never leave, whose very virtues cannot be manifested without a long struggle, and whose vices are shrouded in obscurity; rumour catches up your acts and sayings, and therefore no persons ought to be more careful of their reputation than those who are certain to have a great one, whatsoever one they may have deserved. How many things there are that you may not do which, thanks to you, we may do! I am able to walk alone without fear in any part of Rome whatever, although no companion accompanies me, though there is no guard at my house no sword by my side. You must live armed in the peace which you maintain.[3] You cannot stray away from your position; it besets you, and follows you with mighty pomp wherever you go. This slavery of not being able to sink one’s rank belongs to the highest position of all; yet it is a burden which you share with the gods. They too are held fast in heaven, and it is no more possible for them to come down than it is safe[4] for you; you are chained to your lofty pinnacle. Of our movements few persons are aware; we can go forth and return home and change our dress without its being publicly known; but you are no more able to hide yourself than the sun. A strong light is all around you, the eyes of all are turned towards it. Do you think you are leaving your house? nay, you are dawning upon the world. You cannot speak without all nations everywhere hearing your voice; you cannot be angry, without making everything tremble, because you can strike no one without shaking all around him. Just as thunderbolts when they fall endanger few men but terrify all, so the chastisement inflicted by great potentates

terrify more widely than they injure, and that for good reasons; for in the case of one whose power is absolute, men do not think of what he has done, so much as of what he may do. Add to this that private men endure wrongs more tamely, because they have already endured others; the safety of kings on the other hand is more surely founded on kindness, because frequent punishment may crush the hatred of a few, but excites that of all. A king ought to wish to pardon while he has still grounds for being severe; if he acts otherwise, just as lopped trees sprout forth again with numberless boughs, and many kinds of crops are cut down in order that they may grow more thickly, so a cruel king increases the number of his enemies by destroying them; for the parents and children of those who are put to death, and their relatives and friends, step into the place of each victim.

IX. I wish to prove the truth of this by an example drawn from your own family. The late Emperor Augustus was a mild prince, if in estimating his character one reckons from the era of his reign; yet he appealed to arms while the state was shared among the triumvirate. When he was just of your age, at the end of his twenty-second year, he had already hidden daggers under the clothes of his friends, he had already conspired to assassinate Marcus Antonius, the consul, he had already taken part in the proscription. But when he had passed his sixtieth[5] year, and was staying in Gaul, intelligence was brought to him that Lucius Cinna, a dull man, was plotting against him: the plot was betrayed by one of the conspirators, who told him where, when, and in what manner Cinna meant to attack him. Augustus determined to consult his own safety against this man, and ordered a council of his own friends to be summoned. He passed a disturbed night, reflecting that he would be obliged to condemn to death a youth of noble birth, who was guilty of no crime save this one, and who was the grandson of Gnaeus Pompeius. He, who had sat at dinner and heard M. Antonius[6] read aloud his edict for the proscription, could not now bear to put one single man to death. With groans he kept at intervals making various inconsistent exclamations:—"What! shall I allow my assassin to walk about at his ease while I am racked by fears? Shall the man not be punished who has plotted not merely to slay but actually to sacrifice at the altar" (for the conspirators intended to attack him when he was sacrificing), "now when there is peace by land and sea, that life which so many civil wars have sought in vain, which has passed unharmed through so many battles of fleets and armies?"

Then, after an interval of silence, he would say to himself in a far louder, angrier tone than he had used to Cinna, "Why do you live, if it be to so many men's advantage that you should die? Is there no end to these executions? to this bloodshed? I am a figure set up for nobly-born youths to sharpen their swords on. Is life worth having, if so many must perish to prevent my losing it?" At last his wife Livia interrupted him, saying: "Will you take a woman's advice? Do as the physicians do, who, when the usual remedies fail, try their opposites. Hitherto you have gained nothing by harsh measures: Salvidienus has been followed by Lepidus, Lepidus by Muraena, Muraena by Caepio, and Caepio by Egnatius, not to mention others of

whom one feels ashamed of their having dared to attempt so great a deed. Now try what effect clemency will have: pardon Lucius Cinna. He has been detected, he cannot now do you any harm, and he can do your reputation much good." Delighted at finding some one to support his own view of the case, he thanked his wife, straightway ordered his friends, whose counsel he had asked for, to be told that he did not require their advice, and summoned Cinna alone. After ordering a second seat to be placed for Cinna, he sent every one else out of the room, and said:—"The first request which I have to make of you is, that you will not interrupt me while I am speaking to you: that you will not cry out in the middle of my address to you: you shall be allowed time to speak freely in answer to me. Cinna, when I found you in the enemy's camp, you who had not become but were actually born my enemy, I saved your life, and restored to you the whole of your father's estate. You are now so prosperous and so rich, that many of the victorious party envy you, the vanquished one: when you were a candidate for the priesthood I passed over many others whose parents had served with me in the wars, and gave it to you: and now, after I have deserved so well of you, you have made up your mind to kill me." When at this word the man exclaimed that he was far from being so insane, Augustus replied, "You do not keep your promise, Cinna; it was agreed upon between us that you should not interrupt me. I repeat, you are preparing to kill me." He then proceeded to tell him of the place, the names of his accomplices, the day, the way in which they had arranged to do the deed, and which of them was to give the fatal stab. When he saw Cinna's eyes fixed upon the ground, and that he was silent, no longer because of the agreement, but from consciousness of his guilt, he said, "What is your intention in doing this? is it that you yourself may be emperor? The Roman people must indeed be in a bad way if nothing but my life prevents your ruling over them. You cannot even maintain the dignity of your own house: you have recently been defeated in a legal encounter by the superior influence of a freedman: and so you can find no easier task than to call your friends to rally round you against Caesar. Come, now, if you think that I alone stand in the way of your ambition; will Paulus and Fabius Maximus, will the Cossi and the Servilii and all that band of nobles, whose names are no empty pretence, but whose ancestry really renders them illustrious—will they endure that you should rule over them?" Not to fill up the greater part of this book by repeating the whole of his speech—for he is known to have spoken for more than two hours, lengthening out this punishment, which was the only one which he intended to inflict—he said at last: "Cinna, I grant you your life for the second time: when I gave it you before you were an open enemy, you are now a secret plotter and parricide.[7] From this day forth let us be friends: let us try which of us is the more sincere, I in giving you your life, or you in owing your life to me." After this he of his own accord bestowed the consulship upon him, complaining of his not venturing to offer himself as a candidate for that office, and found him ever afterwards his most grateful and loyal adherent. Cinna made the emperor his sole heir, and no one ever again formed any plot against him.

X. Your great-great-grandfather spared the vanquished: for whom

could he have ruled over, had he not spared them? He recruited Sallustius, the Cocoeii, the Deillii, and the whole inner circle of his court from the camp of his opponents. Soon afterwards his clemency gave him a Domitius, a Messala, an Asinius, a Cicero, and all the flower of the state. For what a long time he waited for Lepidus to die: for years he allowed him to retain all the insignia of royalty, and did not allow the office of pontifex maximus to be conferred upon himself until after Lepidus's death; for he wished it to be called a honourable office rather than a spoil stripped from a vanquished foe. It was this clemency which made him end his days in safety and security: this it was which rendered him popular and beloved, although he had laid his hands on the neck of the Romans when they were still unused to bearing the yoke: this gives him even at the present day a reputation such as hardly any prince has enjoyed during his own lifetime. We believe him to be a god, and not merely because we are bidden to do so. We declare that Augustus was a good emperor, and that he was well worthy to bear his parent's name, for no other reason than because he did not even show cruelty in avenging personal insults, which most princes feel more keenly than actual injuries; because he smiled at scandalous jests against himself, because it was evident that he himself suffered when he punished others, because he was so far from putting to death even those whom he had convicted of intriguing with his daughter, that when they were banished he gave them passports to enable them to travel more safely. When you know that there will be many who will take your quarrel upon themselves, and will try to gain your favour by the murder of your enemies, you do indeed pardon them if you not only grant them their lives but ensure that they shall not lose them.

XI. Such was Augustus when an old man, or when growing old: in his youth he was hasty and passionate, and did many things upon which he looked back with regret. No one will venture to compare the rule of the blessed Augustus to the mildness of your own, even if your youth be compared with his more than ripe old age: he was gentle and placable, but it was after he had dyed the sea at Actium with Roman blood; after he had wrecked both the enemy's fleet and his own at Sicily; after the holocaust of Perusia and the proscriptions. But I do not call it clemency to be wearied of cruelty; true clemency, Caesar, is that which you display, which has not begun from remorse at its past ferocity, on which there is no stain, which has never shed the blood of your countrymen: this, when combined with unlimited power, shows the truest self-control and all-embracing love of the human race as of one's self, not corrupted by any low desires, any extravagant ideas, or any of the bad examples of former emperors into trying, by actual experiment, how great a tyranny you would be allowed to exercise over his countrymen, but inclining rather to blunting your sword of empire. You, Caesar, have granted us the boon of keeping our state free from bloodshed, and that of which you boast, that you have not caused one single drop of blood to flow in any part of the world, is all the more magnanimous and marvellous because no one ever had the power of the sword placed in his hands at an earlier age. Clemency, then, makes princes safer as well as more respected, and is a glory to empires besides being

their most trustworthy means of preservation. Why have legitimate sovereigns grown old on the throne, and bequeathed their power to their children and grandchildren, while the sway of despotic usurpers is both hateful and shortlived l? What is the difference between the tyrant and the king—for their outward symbols of authority and their powers are the same—except it be that tyrants take delight in cruelty, whereas kings are only cruel for good reasons and because they cannot help it.[8]

XII. “What, then,” say you, “do not kings also put men to death?” They do, but only when that measure is recommended by the public advantage: tyrants enjoy cruelty. A tyrant differs from a king in deeds, not in title: for the elder Dionysius deserves to be preferred before many kings, and what can prevent our styling Lucius Sulla a tyrant, since he only left off slaying because he had no more enemies to slay? Although he laid down his dictatorship and resumed the garb of a private citizen, yet what tyrant ever drank human blood as greedily as he, who ordered seven thousand Roman citizens to be butchered, and who, on hearing the shrieks of so many thousands being put to the sword as he sat in the temple of Bellona, said to the terror-stricken Senate, “Let us attend to our business, Conscript Fathers; it is only a few disturbers of the public peace who are being put to death by my orders.” In saying this he did not lie: they really seemed few to Sulla. But we shall speak of Sulla presently, when we consider how we ought to feel anger against our enemies, at any rate when our own countrymen, members of the same community as ourselves, have been torn away from it and assumed the name of enemies: in the meanwhile, as I was saying, clemency is what makes the great distinction between kings and tyrants. Though each of them may be equally fenced around by armed soldiers, nevertheless the one uses his troops to safeguard the peace of his kingdom, the other uses them to quell great hatred by great terror: and yet he does not look with any confidence upon those to whose hands he entrusts himself. He is driven in opposite directions by conflicting passions: for since he is hated because he is feared, he wishes to be feared because he is hated: and he acts up to the spirit of that odious verse, which has cast so many headlong from their thrones—

“Why, let them hate me, if they fear me too!”—

not knowing how frantic men become when their hatred becomes excessive: for a moderate amount of fear restrains men, but a constant and keen apprehension of the worst tortures rouses up even the most grovelling spirits to deeds of reckless courage, and causes them to hesitate at nothing. Just so a string stuck full of feathers[9] will prevent wild beasts escaping: but should a horseman begin to shoot at them from another quarter, they will attempt to escape over the very thing that scared them, and will trample the cause of their alarm underfoot. No courage is so great as that which is born of utter desperation. In order to keep people down by

terror, you must grant them a certain amount of security, and let them see that they have far more to hope for than to fear: for otherwise, if a man is in equal peril whether he sits still or takes action, he will feel actual pleasure in risking his life, and will fling it away as lightly as though it were not his own.

XIII. A calm and peaceful king trusts his guards, because he makes use of them to ensure the common safety of all his subjects, and his soldiers, who see that the security of the state depends upon their labours, cheerfully undergo the severest toil and glory in being the protectors of the father of their country: whereas your harsh and murderous tyrant must needs be disliked even by his own janissaries. No man can expect willing and loyal service from those whom he uses like the rack and the axe, as instruments of torture and death, to whom he casts men as he would cast them to wild beasts. No prisoner at the bar is so full of agony and anxiety as a tyrant; for while he dreads both gods and men because they have witnessed, and will avenge his crimes, he has at the same time so far committed himself to this course of action that he is not able to alter it. This is perhaps the very worst quality of cruelty: a man must go on exercising it, and it is impossible for him to retrace his steps and start in a better path; for crimes must be safeguarded by fresh crimes. Yet who can be more unhappy than he who is actually compelled to be a villain? How greatly he ought to be pitied: I mean, by himself, for it would be impious for others to pity a man who has made use of his power to murder and ravage, who has rendered himself mistrusted by every one at home and abroad, who fears the very soldiers to whom he flees for safety, who dare not rely upon the loyalty of his friends or the affection of his children: who, whenever he considers what he has done, and what he is about to do, and calls to mind all the crimes and torturings with which his conscience is burdened, must often fear death, and yet must often wish for it, for he must be even more hateful to himself than he is to his subjects. On the other hand, he who takes an interest in the entire state, who watches over every department of it with more or less care, who attends to all the business of the state as well as if it were his own, who is naturally inclined to mild measures, and shows, even when it is to his advantage to punish, how unwilling he is to make use of harsh remedies; who has no angry or savage feelings, but wields his authority calmly and beneficially, being anxious that even his subordinate officers shall be popular with his countrymen, who thinks his happiness complete if he can make the nation share his prosperity, who is courteous in language, whose presence is easy of access, who looks obligingly upon his subjects, who is disposed to grant all their reasonable wishes, and does not treat their unreasonable wishes with harshness—such a prince is loved, protected, and worshipped by his whole empire. Men talk of such a one in private in the same words which they use in public: they are eager to bring up families under his reign, and they put an end to the childlessness which public misery had previously rendered general: every one feels that he will indeed deserve that his children should be grateful to him for having brought them into so happy an age. Such a prince is rendered safe by his own beneficence; he has no need of guards, their arms serve him merely as

decorations.

XIV. What, then, is his duty? It is that of good parents, who sometimes scold their children goodnaturedly, sometimes threaten them, and sometimes even flog them. No man in his senses disinherits his son for his first offence: he does not pass this extreme sentence upon him unless his patience has been worn out by many grievous wrongs, unless he fears that his son will do something worse than that which he punishes him for having done; before doing this he makes many attempts to lead his son's mind into the right way while it is still hesitating between good and evil and has only taken its first steps in depravity; it is only when its case is hopeless that he adopts this extreme measure. No one demands that people should be executed until after he has failed to reform them. This which is the duty of a parent, is also that of the prince whom with no unmeaning flattery we call "The Father of our Country." Other names are given as titles of honour: we have styled some men "The Great," "The Fortunate," or "The August," and have thus satisfied their passion for grandeur by bestowing upon them all the dignity that we could: but when we style a man "The Father of his Country" we give him to understand that we have entrusted him with a father's power over us, which is of the mildest character, for a father takes thought for his children and subordinates his own interests to theirs. It is long before a father will cut off a member of his own body: even after he has cut it off he longs to replace it, and in cutting it off he laments and hesitates much and long: for he who condemns quickly is not far from being willing to condemn; and he who inflicts too great punishment comes very near to punishing unjustly.

XV. Within my own recollection the people stabbed in the forum with their writing-styles a Roman knight named Tricho, because he had flogged his son to death: even the authority of Augustus Caesar could hardly save him from the angry clutches of both fathers and sons: but every one admired Tarius, who, on discovering that his son meditated parricide, tried him, convicted him, and was then satisfied with punishing him by exile, and that, too, to that pleasant place of exile, Marseilles, where he made him the same yearly allowance which he had done while he was innocent: the result of this generosity was that even in a city where every villain finds some one to defend him, no one doubted that he was justly condemned, since even the father who was unable to hate him, nevertheless had condemned him. In this very same instance I will give you an example of a good prince, which you may compare with a good father. Tarius, when about to sit in judgement on his son, invited Augustus Caesar to assist in trying him: Augustus came into his private house, sat beside the father, took part in another man's family council, and did not say, "Nay, let him rather come to my house," because if he had done so, the trial would have been conducted by Caesar and not by the father. When the cause had been heard, after all that the young man pleaded in his own defence and all that was alleged against him had been thoroughly discussed, the emperor begged that each man would write his sentence (instead of pronouncing it aloud), in order that they might not all follow Caesar in giving sentence:

then, before the tablets were opened, he declared that if Tarius, who was a rich man, made him his heir, he would not accept the bequest. One might say “It showed a paltry mind in him to fear that people would think that he condemned the son in order to enable himself to inherit the estate.” I am of a contrary opinion—any one of us ought to have sufficient trust in the consciousness of his own integrity to defend him against calumny, but princes must take great pains to avoid even the appearance of evil. He swore that he would not accept the property. On that day Tarius lost two heirs to his estate, but Caesar gained the liberty of forming an unbiassed judgement: and when he had proved that his severity was disinterested, a point of which a prince should never lose sight, he gave sentence that the son should be banished to whatever place the father might choose. He did not sentence him to the sack and the snakes, or to prison, because he thought, not of who it was upon whom he was passing sentence, but of who it was with whom he was sitting in judgement: he said that a father ought to be satisfied with the mildest form of punishment for his stripling son, who had been seduced into a crime which he had attempted so faintheartedly as to be almost innocent of it, and that he ought to be removed from Rome and out of his father’s sight.

XVI. How worthy was he to be invited by fathers to join their family councils: how worthy to be made co-heir with innocent children! This is the sort of clemency which befits a prince; wherever he goes, let him make every one more charitable. In the king’s sight, no one ought to be so despicable that he should not notice whether he lives or dies: be his character what it may, he is a part of the empire. Let us take examples for great kingdoms from smaller ones. There are many forms of royalty: a prince reigns over his subjects, a father over his children, a teacher over his scholars, a tribune or centurion over his soldiers. Would not he, who constantly punished his children by beating them for the most trifling faults, be thought the worst of fathers? Which is worthier to impart a liberal education: he who flays his scholars alive if their memory be weak, or if their eyes do not run quickly along the lines as they read, or he who prefers to improve and instruct them by kindly warnings and moral influence? If a tribune or a centurion is harsh, he will make men deserters, and one cannot blame them for desertion. It is never right to rule a human being more harshly and cruelly than we rule dumb animals; yet a skilled horse-breaker will not scare a horse by frequent blows, because he will become timid and vicious if you do not soothe him with pats and caresses. So also a huntsman, both when he is teaching puppies to follow the tracks of wild animals, and when he uses dogs already trained to drive them from their lairs and hunt them, does not often threaten to beat them, for, if he does, he will break their spirit, and make them stupid and currish with fear; though, on the other hand, he will not allow them to roam and range about unrestrained. The same is the case with those who drive the slower draught cattle, which, though brutal treatment and wretchedness is their lot from their birth, still, by excessive cruelty may be made to refuse to draw.

XVII. No creature is more self-willed, requires more careful

management, or ought to be treated with greater indulgence than man. What, indeed, can be more foolish than that we should blush to show anger against dogs or beasts of burden, and yet wish one man to be most abominably ill-treated by another? We are not angry with diseases, but apply remedies to them: but this also is a disease of the mind, and requires soothing medicine and a physician who is anything but angry with his patient. It is the part of a bad physician to despair of effecting a cure: he, to whom the care of all men's well-being is entrusted, ought to act like a good physician, and not be in a hurry to give up hope or to declare that the symptoms are mortal: he should wrestle with vices, withstand them, reproach some with their distemper, and deceive others by a soothing mode of treatment, because he will cure his patient more quickly and more thoroughly if the medicines which he administers escape his notice: a prince should take care not only of the recovery of his people, but also that their scars should be honourable. Cruel punishments do a king no honour: for who doubts that he is able to inflict them? but, on the other hand, it does him great honour to restrain his powers, to save many from the wrath of others, and sacrifice no one to his own.

XVIII. It is creditable to a man to keep within reasonable bounds in his treatment of his slaves. Even in the case of a human chattel one ought to consider, not how much one can torture him with impunity, but how far such treatment is permitted by natural goodness and justice, which prompts us to act kindly towards even prisoners of war and slaves bought for a price (how much more towards free-born, respectable gentlemen?), and not to treat them with scornful brutality as human chattels, but as persons somewhat below ourselves in station, who have been placed under our protection rather than assigned to us as servants. Slaves are allowed to run and take sanctuary at the statue of a god, though the laws allows a slave to be ill-treated to any extent, there are nevertheless some things which the common laws of life forbid us to do to a human being. Who does not hate Vedius Pollio[10] more even than his own slaves did, because he used to fatten his lampreys with human blood, and ordered those who had offended him in any way to be cast into his fish-pond, or rather snake-pond? That man deserved to die a thousand deaths, both for throwing his slaves to be devoured by the lampreys which he himself meant to eat, and for keeping lampreys that he might feed them in such a fashion. Cruel masters are pointed at with disgust in all parts of the city, and are hated and loathed; the wrong-doings of kings are enacted on a wider theatre: their shame and unpopularity endures for ages: yet how far better it would have been never to have been born than to be numbered among those who have been born to do their country harm!

XIX. Nothing can be imagined which is more becoming to a sovereign than clemency, by whatever title and right he may be set over his fellow citizens. The greater his power, the more beautiful and admirable he will confess his clemency to be: for there is no reason why power should do any harm, if only it be wielded in accordance with the laws of nature. Nature herself has conceived the idea of a king, as you may learn from various animals, and especially from

bees, among whom the king's cell is the roomiest, and is placed in the most central and safest part of the hive; moreover, he does no work, but employs himself in keeping the others up to their work. If the king be lost, the entire swarm disperses: they never endure to have more than one king at a time, and find out which is the better by making them fight with one another: moreover the king is distinguished by his statelier appearance, being both larger and more brilliantly coloured than the other bees. The most remarkable distinction, however, is the following: bees are very fierce, and for their size are the most pugnacious of creatures, and leave their stings in the wounds which they make, but the king himself has no sting: nature does not wish him to be savage or to seek revenge at so dear a rate, and so has deprived him of his weapon and disarmed his rage. She has offered him as a pattern to great sovereigns: for she is wont to practise herself in small matters, and to scatter abroad tiny models of the hugest structures. We ought to be ashamed of not learning a lesson in behaviour from these small creatures, for a man, who has so much more power of doing harm than they, ought to show a correspondingly greater amount of self-control. Would that human beings were subject to the same law, and that their anger destroyed itself together with its instrument, so that they could only inflict a wound once, and would not make use of the strength of others to carry out their hatreds: for their fury would soon grow faint if it carried its own punishment with it, and could only give rein to its violence at the risk of death. Even as it is, however, no one can exercise it with safety, for he must needs feel as much fear as he hopes to cause, he must watch every one's movements, and even when his enemies are not laying violent hands upon him he must bear in mind that they are plotting to do so, and he cannot have a single moment free from alarm. Would any one endure to live such a life as this, when he might enjoy the privileges of his high station to the general joy of all men, without injuring any one, and for that very reason have no one to fear? for it is a mistake to suppose that the king can be safe in a state where nothing is safe from the king: he can only purchase a life without anxiety for himself by guaranteeing the same for his subjects. He need not pile up lofty citadels, escarp steep hills, cut away the sides of mountains, and fence himself about with many lines of walls and towers: clemency will render a king safe even upon an open plain. The one fortification which cannot be stormed is the love of his countrymen. What can be more glorious than a life which every one spontaneously and without official pressure hopes may last long? to excite men's fears, not their hopes, if one's health gives way a little? to know that no one holds anything so dear that he would not be glad to give it in exchange for the health of his sovereign? "O, may no evil befall him!" they would cry: "he must live for his own sake, not only for ours: his constant proofs of goodness have made him belong to the state instead of the state belonging to him." Who would dare to plot any danger to such a king? Who would not rather, if he could, keep misfortune far from one under whom justice, peace, decency, security and merit flourish, under whom the state grows rich with an abundance of all good things, and looks upon its ruler in the same spirit of adoration and respect with which we should look upon the immortal gods, if they allowed us to behold them as we

behold him? Why! does not that man come very close to the gods who acts in a god-like manner, and who is beneficent, open-handed, and powerful for good? Your aim and your pride ought to lie in being thought the best, as well as the greatest of mankind.

XX. A prince generally inflicts punishment for one of two reasons: he wishes either to assert his own rights or those of another. I will first discuss the case in which he is personally concerned, for it is more difficult for him to act with moderation when he acts under the impulse of actual pain than when he merely does so for the sake of the example. It is unnecessary in this place to remind him to be slow to believe what he hears, to ferret out the truth, to show favour to innocence, and to bear in mind that to prove it is as much the business of the judge as that of the prisoner; for these considerations are connected with justice, not with clemency: what we are now encouraging him to do is not to lose control over his feelings when he receives an unmistakeable injury, and to forego punishing it if he possibly can do so with safety, if not, to moderate the severity of the punishment, and to show himself far more unwilling to forgive wrongs done to others than those done to himself: for, just as the truly generous man is not he who gives away what belongs to others, but he who deprives himself of what he gives to another, so also I should not call a prince clement who looked goodnaturedly upon a wrong done to someone else, but one who is unmoved even by the sting of a personal injury, who understands how magnanimous it is for one whose power is unlimited to allow himself to be wronged, and that there is no more noble spectacle than that of a sovereign who has received an injury without avenging it.

XXI. Vengeance effects two purposes: it either affords compensation to the person to whom the wrong was done, or it ensures him against molestation for the future. A prince is too rich to need compensation, and his power is too evident for him to require to gain a reputation for power by causing any one to suffer. I mean, when he is attacked and injured by his inferiors, for if he sees those who once were his equals in a position of inferiority to himself he is sufficiently avenged. A king may be killed by a slave, or a serpent, or an arrow: but no one can be saved except by some one who is greater than him whom he saves. He, therefore, who has the power of giving and of taking away life ought to use such a great gift of heaven in a spirited manner. Above all, if he once obtains this power over those who he knows were once on a level with himself, he has completed his revenge, and done all that he need to towards the punishment of his adversary: for he who owes his life to another must have lost it, and he who has been cast down from on high and lies at his enemy’s feet with his kingdom and his life depending upon the pleasure of another, adds to the glory of his preserver if he be allowed to live, and increases his reputation much more by remaining unhurt than if he were put out of the way. In the former case he remains as an everlasting testimony to the valour of his conqueror; whereas if led in the procession of a triumph he would have soon passed out of sight.[11] If, however, his kingdom also may be safely left in his hands and he himself replaced upon

the throne from which he has fallen, such a measure confers an immense increase of lustre on him who scorned to take anything from a conquered king beyond the glory of having conquered him. To do this is to triumph even over one's own victory, and to declare that one has found nothing among the vanquished which it was worth the victor's while to take. As for his countrymen, strangers, and persons of mean condition, he ought to treat them with all the less severity because it costs so much less to overcome them. Some you would be glad to spare, against some you would disdain to assert your rights, and would forbear to touch them as you would to touch little insects which defile your hands when you crush them: but in the case of men upon whom all eyes are fixed, whether they be spared or condemned, you should seize the opportunity of making your clemency widely known.

XXII. Let us now pass on to the consideration of wrongs done to others, in avenging which the law has aimed at three ends, which the prince will do well to aim at also: they are, either that it may correct him whom it punishes, or that his punishment may render other men better, or that, by bad men being put out of the way, the rest may live without fear. You will more easily correct the men themselves by a slight punishment, for he who has some part of his fortune remaining untouched will behave less recklessly; on the other hand, no one cares about respectability after he has lost it: it is a species of impunity to have nothing left for punishment to take away. It is conducive, however, to good morals in a state, that punishment should seldom be inflicted: for where there is a multitude of sinners men become familiar with sin, shame is less felt when shared with a number of fellow-criminals, and severe sentences, if frequently pronounced, lose the influence which constitutes their chief power as remedial measures. A good king establishes a good standard of morals for his kingdom and drives away vices if he is long-suffering with them, not that he should seem to encourage them, but to be very unwilling and to suffer much when he is forced to chastise them. Clemency in a sovereign even makes men ashamed to do wrong: for punishment seems far more grievous when inflicted by a merciful man.

XXIII. Besides this, you will find that sins which are frequently punished are frequently committed. Your father sewed up more parricides in sacks during five years, than we hear of in all previous centuries. As long as the greatest of crimes remained without any special law, children were much more timid about committing it. Our wise ancestors, deeply skilled in human nature, preferred to pass over this as being a wickedness too great for belief, and beyond the audacity of the worst criminal, rather than teach men that it might be done by appointing a penalty for doing it: parricides, consequently, were unknown until a law was made against them, and the penalty showed them the way to the crime. Filial affection soon perished, for since that time we have seen more men punished by the sack than by the cross. Where men are seldom punished innocence becomes the rule, and is encouraged as a public benefit. If a state thinks itself innocent, it will be innocent: it will be all the more angry with those who corrupt the

general simplicity of manners if it sees that they are few in number. Believe me, it is a dangerous thing to show a state how great a majority of bad men it contains.

XXIV. A proposal was once made in the Senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their dress: it was then discovered how dangerous it would be for our slaves to be able to count our numbers. Be assured that the same thing would be the case if no one's offence is pardoned: it will quickly be discovered how far the number of bad men exceeds that of the good. Many executions are as disgraceful to a sovereign as many funerals are to a physician: one who governs less strictly is better obeyed. The human mind is naturally self-willed, kicks against the goad, and sets its face against authority; it will follow more readily than it can be led. As well-bred and high-spirited horses are best managed with a loose rein, so mercy gives men's minds a spontaneous bias towards innocence, and the public think that it is worth observing. Mercy, therefore, does more good than severity.

XXV, Cruelty is far from being a human vice, and is unworthy of man's gentle mind: it is mere bestial madness to take pleasure in blood and wounds, to cast off humanity and transform oneself into a wild beast of the forest. Pray, Alexander, what is the difference between your throwing Lysimachus into a lion's den and tearing his flesh with your own teeth? it is you that have the lion's maw, and the lion's fierceness. How pleased you would be if you had claws instead of nails, and jaws that were capable of devouring men! We do not expect of you that your hand, the sure murderer of your best friends, should restore health to any one; or that your proud spirit, that inexhaustible source of evil to all nations, should be satisfied with anything short of blood and slaughter: we rather call it mercy that your friend should have a human being chosen to be his butcher. The reason why cruelty is the most hateful of all vices is that it goes first beyond the ordinary limits, and then beyond those of humanity; that it devises new kinds of punishments, calls ingenuity to aid it in inventing devices for varying and lengthening men's torture, and takes delight in their sufferings: this accursed disease of the mind reaches its highest pitch of madness when cruelty itself turns into pleasure, and the act of killing a man becomes enjoyment. Such a ruler is soon cast down from his throne; his life is attempted by poison one day and by the sword the next; he is exposed to as many dangers as there are men to whom he is dangerous, and he is sometimes destroyed by the plots of individuals, and at others by a general insurrection. Whole communities are not roused to action by unimportant outrages on private persons; but cruelty which takes a wider range, and from which no one is safe, becomes a mark for all men's weapons. Very small snakes escape our notice, and the whole country does not combine to destroy them; but when one of them exceeds the usual size and grows into a monster, when it poisons fountains with its spittle, scorches herbage with its breath, and spreads ruin wherever it crawls, we shoot at it with military engines. Trifling evils may cheat us and elude our observation, but we gird up our loins to attack great ones. One sick person does not so much as disquiet the

house in which he lies; but when frequent deaths show that a plague is raging, there is a general outcry, men take to flight and shake their fists angrily at the very gods themselves. If a fire breaks out under one single roof, the family and the neighbours pour water upon it; but a wide conflagration which has consumed many houses must be smothered under the ruins of a whole quarter of a city.

XXVI. The cruelty even of private men has sometimes been revenged by their slaves in spite of the certainty that they will be crucified: whole kingdoms and nations when oppressed by tyrants or threatened by them, have attempted their destruction. Sometimes their own guards have risen in revolt, and have used against their master all the deceit, disloyalty, and ferocity which they have learned from him. What, indeed, can he expect from those whom he has taught to be wicked? A bad man will not long be obedient, and will not do only as much evil as he is ordered. But even if the tyrant may be cruel with safety, how miserable his kingdom must be: it must look like a city taken by storm, like some frightful scene of general panic. Everywhere sorrow, anxiety, disorder; men dread even their own pleasures; they cannot even dine with one another in safety when they have to keep watch over their tongues even when in their cups, nor can they safely attend the public shows when informers are ready to find grounds for their impeachment in their behaviour there. Although the spectacles be provided at an enormous expense, with royal magnificence and with world-famous artists, yet who cares for amusement when he is in prison? Ye gods! what a miserable life it is to slaughter and to rage, to delight in the clanking of chains, and to cut off one’s countrymen’s heads, to cause blood to flow freely wherever one goes, to terrify people, and make them flee away out of one’s sight! It is what would happen if bears or lions were our masters, if serpents and all the most venomous creatures were given power over us. Even these animals, devoid of reason as they are, and accused by us of cruel ferocity, spare their own kind, and wild beasts themselves respect their own likeness: but the fury of tyrants does not even stop short at their own relations, and they treat friends and strangers alike, only becoming more violent the more they indulge their passions. By insensible degrees he proceeds from the slaughter of individuals to the ruin of nations, and thinks it a sign of power to set roofs on fire and to plough up the sites of ancient cities: he considers it unworthy of an emperor to order only one or two people to be put to death, and thinks that his cruelty is unduly restrained if whole troops of wretches are not sent to execution together. True happiness, on the other hand; consists in saving many men’s lives, in calling them back from the very gates of death, and in being so merciful as to deserve a civic crown.[12] No decoration is more worthy or more becoming to a prince’s rank than that crown “for saving the lives of fellow-citizens”: not trophies torn from a vanquished enemy, not chariots wet with their savage owner’s blood, not spoils captured in war. This power which saves men’s lives by crowds and by nations, is godlike: the power of extensive and indiscrimate massacre is the power of downfall and conflagration.

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[1] Nobilis.

[2] The text is corrupt. I have followed Gertz's conjectural emendation, mansuefactionis, but I believe that Lipsius is right in thinking that a great deal more than one word has been lost here.

[3] Pace.

[4] Tutum.

[5] Gertz reads sexagesimum, his sixtieth year, which he calls "the not very audacious conjecture of Wesseling," and adds that he does so because of the words at the beginning of chap. xi. and the authority of Dion Cassius. The ordinary reading is quadragesimum, "his fortieth year," and this is the date to which Cinna's conspiracy is referred to by Merivale, "History of the Romans under the Empire," vol. iv. ch, 37. "A plot," he says, "was formed for his destruction, at the head of which was Cornelius Cinna, described as a son of Faustus Sulla by a daughter of the Great Pompeius." The story of Cinna's conspiracy is told by Seneca, de Clem, i, 9, and Dion iv. 14, foll. They agree in the main fact; but Seneca is our authority for the details of the interview between Augustus and his enemy, while Dion has doubtless invented his long conversation between the emperor and Livia. Seneca, however, calls the conspirator Lucius, and places the event in the fortieth year of Augustus (A.D. 731), the scene in Gaul: Dion, on the other, gives the names of Gnaeus, and supposes the circumstances to have occured twenty-six years later, and at Rome. It may be observed that a son of Faustus Sulla must have been at least fifty at this latter date, nor do we know why he should bear the name of Cinna, though an adoption is not impossible.

[6] See Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," Act IV, Sc. 1.

[7] In allusion to the title of "Father of his country," bestowed by the Senate upon Augustus. See Merivale, ch. 33.

[8] This whole comparison, which reads so meaninglessly both in Latin and in English, is borrowed from the eternal declamations of Plutarch and the Greek philosophers about βασιλεῖς and τύραννοι. See Plutarch, Lives of Philopoemen and Aratus, Plato, Gorgias and Politicus; Arnold, "Appendix to Thucydides," vol. i., and "Dictionary of Antiquities," s.v.

[9] De lra, ii. 11.

[10] Vedius Pollio had a villa on the mountain now called Punta di Posilippo, which projects into the sea between Naples and Puteoli, which he left to Augustus, and which was afterwards possessed by the

Emperor Trajan. He was a freedman by birth, and remarkable for nothing except his riches and his cruelty. Cf. Dion Cassius, liv. 23; Pliny, H. N. ix. 23; and Seneca, “On Anger,” iii. 40, 2.

[11] The conquered princes who were led through Rome in triumphs were as a rule put to death when the procession was over.

[12] The “civic” crown of oak-leaves was bestowed on him who had saved the life of a fellow-citizen in war. It was bestowed upon Augustus, and after him upon the other emperors, as preservers of the state.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE DIALOGUE OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA, ADDRESSED TO NERO CAESAR.

ON CLEMENCY.

I. I have been especially led to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, by a saying of yours, which I remember having heard with admiration and which I afterwards told to others: a noble saying, showing a great mind and great gentleness, which suddenly burst from you without premeditation, and was not meant to reach any ears but your own, and which displayed the conflict which was raging between your natural goodness and your imperial duties. Your prefect Burrus, an excellent man who was born to be the servant of such an emperor as you are, was about to order two brigands to be executed, and was pressing you to write their names and the grounds on which they were to be put to death: this had often been put off, and he was insisting that it should then be done. When he reluctantly produced the document and put it into your equally reluctant hands, you exclaimed: “Would that I had never learned my letters!” O what a speech, how worthy to be heard by all nations, both those who dwell within the Roman Empire, those who enjoy a debatable independence upon its borders, and those who either in will or in deed fight against it! It is a speech which ought to be spoken before a meeting of all mankind, whose words all kings and princes ought to swear to obey: a speech worthy of the days of human innocence, and worthy to bring back that golden age. Now in truth we ought all to agree to love righteousness and goodness; covetousness, which is the root of all evil, ought to be driven away, piety and virtue, good faith and modesty ought to resume their interrupted reign, and the vices which have so long and so shamefully ruled us ought at last to give way to an age of happiness and purity.

II. To a great extent, Caesar, we may hope and expect that this will come to pass. Let your own goodness of heart be gradually spread and diffused throughout the whole body of the empire, and all parts of it will mould themselves into your likeness. Good health proceeds

from the head into all the members of the body: they are all either brisk and erect, or languid and drooping, according as their guiding spirit blooms or withers. Both Romans and allies will prove worthy of this goodness of yours, and good morals will return to all the world: your hands will everywhere find less to do. Allow me to dwell somewhat upon this saying of yours, not because it is a pleasant subject for your ears (indeed, this is not my way; I would rather offend by telling the truth than curry favour by flattery). What, then, is my reason? Besides wishing that you should be as familiar as possible with your own good deeds and good words, in order that what is now untutored impulse may grow into matured decision, I remember that many great but odious sayings have become part of human life and are familiar in men's mouths, such as that celebrated "Let them hate me, provided that they fear me," which is like that Greek verse, ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί, in which a man bids the earth perish in flame after he is dead, and others of the like sort. I know not how it is, but certainly human ingenuity seems to have found it easier to find emphatic and ardent expression for monstrous and cynical sentiments: I have never hitherto heard any spirited saying from a good and gentle person. What, then, is the upshot of all this? It is that, albeit seldom and against your will, and after much hesitation, you sometimes nevertheless must write that which made you hate your letters, but that you ought to do so with great hesitation and after many postponements, even as you now do.

III. But lest the plausible word "mercy" should sometimes deceive us and lead us into the opposite extreme, let us consider what mercy is, what its qualities are, and within what limits it is confined.

Mercy is "a restraining of the mind from vengeance when it is in its power to avenge itself," or it is "gentleness shown by a powerful man in fixing the punishment of a weaker one." It is safer to have more than one definition, since one may not include the whole subject, and may, so to speak, lose its cause: mercy, therefore, may likewise be termed a tendency towards mildness in inflicting punishment. It is possible to discover certain inconsistencies in the definition which comes nearer the truth than all the rest, which is to call mercy "self-restraint, which remits some part of a fine which it deserves to receive and which is due to it." To this it will be objected that no virtue ever gives any man less than his due. However, all men understand mercy to consist in coming short of the penalty which might with justice be inflicted.

IV. The unlearned think that its opposite is strictness: but no virtue is the opposite of another virtue. What, then, is the opposite of mercy? Cruelty: which is nothing more than obstinacy in exacting punishments. "But," say you, "some men do not exact punishments, and nevertheless are cruel, such as those who kill the strangers whom they meet, not in order to rob them, but for killing's sake, and men who are not satisfied with killing, but kill with savage tortures, like the famous Busiris,[1] and Procrustes, and pirates who flog their captives and burn them alive." This appears to be cruelty: but as it is not the result of vengeance (for

it has received no wrong), and is not excited by any offence (for no crime has preceded it), it does not come within our definition, which was limited to “extravagance in exacting the penalties of wrongdoing.” We may say that this is not cruelty, but ferocity, which finds pleasure in savagery: or we may call it madness; for madness is of various kinds, and there is no truer madness than that which takes to slaughtering and mutilating human beings. I shall, therefore, call those persons cruel who have a reason for punishing but who punish without moderation, like Phalaris, who is not said to have tortured innocent men, but to have tortured criminals with inhuman and incredible barbarity. We may avoid hairsplitting by defining cruelty to be “a tendency of the mind towards harsh measures.” Mercy repels cruelty and bids it be far from her: with strictness she is on terms of amity.

At this point it is useful to inquire into what pity is; for many praise it as a virtue, and say that a good man is full of pity. This also is a disease of the mind. Both of these stand close to mercy and to strictness, and both ought to be avoided, lest under the name of strictness we be led into cruelty, and under the name of mercy into pity. It is less dangerous to make the latter mistake, but both lead us equally far away from the truth.

V. Just as the gods are worshipped by religion, but are dishonoured by superstition, so all good men will show mercy and mildness, but will avoid pity, which is a vice incident to weak minds which cannot endure the sight of another’s sufferings. It is, therefore, most commonly found in the worst people; there are old women and girls[2] who are affected by the tears of the greatest criminals, and who, if they could, would let them out of prison. Pity considers a man’s misfortunes and does not consider to what they are due: mercy is combined with reason. I know that the doctrine of the Stoics is unpopular among the ignorant as being excessively severe and not at all likely to give kings and princes good advice; it is blamed because it declares that the wise man knows not how to feel pity or to grant pardon. These doctrines, if taken separately, are indeed odious, for they appear to give men no hope of repairing their mistakes but exact a penalty for every slip. If this were true, how can it be true wisdom to bid us put off human feeling, and to exclude us from mutual help, that surest haven of refuge against the attacks of Fortune? But no school of philosophy is more gentle and benignant, none is more full of love towards man or more anxious to promote the happiness of all, seeing that its maxims are, to be of service and assistance to others, and to consult the interests of each and all, not of itself alone. Pity is a disorder of the mind caused by the sight of other men’s miseries, or it is a sadness caused by the evils with which it believes others to be undeservedly afflicted: but the wise man cannot be affected by any disorder: his mind is calm, and nothing can possibly happen to ruffle it. Moreover, nothing becomes a man more than magnanimity: but magnanimity cannot coexist with sorrow. Sorrow overwhelms men’s minds, casts them down, contracts them: now this cannot happen to the wise man even in his greatest misfortunes, but he will beat back the rage of Fortune and triumph over it: he will always retain the

same calm, undisturbed expression of countenance, which he never could do were he accessible to sorrow.

VI. Add to this, that the wise man provides for the future and always has a distinct plan of action ready: yet nothing clear and true can flow from a disturbed source. Sorrow is awkward at reviewing the position of affairs, at devising useful expedients, avoiding dangerous courses, and weighing the merits of fair and just ones: therefore the wise man will not feel pity, because this cannot happen to a man unless his mind is disturbed. He will do willingly and highmindedly all that those who feel pity are wont to do; he will dry the tears of others, but will not mingle his own with them; he will stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked mariner, will offer hospitality to the exile, and alms to the needy—not in the offensive way in which most of those who wish to be thought tender-hearted fling their bounty to those whom they assist and shrink from their touch, but as one man would give another something out of the common stock—he will restore children to their weeping mothers, will loose the chains of the captive, release the gladiator from his bondage, and even bury the carcase of the criminal, but he will perform all this with a calm mind and unaltered expression of countenance. Thus the wise man will not pity men, but will help them and be of service to them, seeing that he is born to be a help to all men and a public benefit, of which he will bestow a share upon every one. He will even grant a proportional part of his bounty to those sufferers who deserve blame and correction; but he will much more willingly help those whose troubles and adversities are caused by misfortune. Whenever he is able he will interpose between Fortune and her victims: for what better employment can he find for his wealth or his strength than in setting up again what chance has overthrown? He will not show or feel any disgust at a man’s having withered legs, or a flabby wrinkled skin, or supporting his aged body upon a staff; but he will do good to those who deserve it, and will, like a god, look benignantly upon all who are in trouble. Pity borders upon misery: it is partly composed of it and partly derived from it. You know that eyes must be weak, if they fill with rheum at the sight of another’s bleariedness, just as it is not real merriment but hysteria which makes people laugh because others laugh, and yawn whenever others open their jaws: pity is a defect in the mind of people who are extraordinarily affected by suffering, and he who requires a wise man to exhibit it is not far from requiring him to lament and groan when strangers are buried.

VII. But why should he not pardon?[3] Let us decide by exact definition this other slippery matter, the true nature of pardon, and we shall then perceive that the wise man ought not to grant it. Pardon is the remitting of a deserved punishment. The reasons why the wise man ought not to grant this remission are given at length by those of whom this question is specially asked: I will briefly say, as though it were no concern of mine to decide this point, “A man grants pardon to one whom he ought to punish: now the wise man does nothing which he ought not to do, and omits to [do] nothing which he ought to do: he does not, therefore, remit any punishment which he ought to exact. But the wise man will bestow upon you in a

more honourable way that which you wish to obtain by pardon, for he will make allowances for you, will consult your interests, and will correct your bad habits: he will act just as though he were pardoning you, but nevertheless he will not pardon you, because he who pardons admits that in so doing he has neglected a part of his duty. He will only punish some people by reprimanding them, and will inflict no further penalty if he considers that they are of an age which admits of reformation: some people who are undeniably implicated in an odious charge he will acquit, because they were deceived into committing, or were not sober when they committed the offence with which they are charged: he will let his enemies depart unharmed, sometimes even with words of commendation, if they have taken up arms to defend their honour, their covenants with others, their freedom, or on any other honourable ground. All these doings come under the head of mercy, not of pardon. Mercy is free to come to what decision it pleases: she gives her decision, not under any statute, but according to equity and goodness: she may acquit the defendant, or impose what damages she pleases. She does not do any of these things as though she were doing less than justice requires, but as though the justest possible course were that which she adopts. On the other hand, to pardon is not to punish a man whom you have decided ought to be punished; pardon is the remission of a punishment which ought to be inflicted. The first advantage which mercy has over it is that she does not tell those whom she lets off that they ought to have suffered: she is more complete, more honourable than pardon."

In my opinion, this is a mere dispute about words, and we are agreed about the thing itself. The wise man will remit many penalties, and will save many who are wicked, but whose wickedness is not incurable. He will act like good husbandmen, who do not cultivate only straight and tall trees, but also apply props to straighten those which have been rendered crooked by various causes; they trim some, lest the luxuriance of their boughs should hinder their upward growth, they nurse those which have been weakened by being planted in an unsuitable position, and they give air to those which are overshadowed by the foliage of others. The wise man will see the several treatments suitable to several dispositions, and how what is crooked may be straightened. . . .

* * *

[1] A king of Egypt, who sacrificed strangers, and was himself slain by Hercules.

[2] "Three or four wenches where I stood, cried 'Alas, good soul!—' and forgave him with all their hearts: but there's no heed to be taken of them; if Caesar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less."—"Julius Caesar," act i. sc. 2.

[3] See above, chap. v.

THE END.

INDEX.

A

Alexander the Great, 78, 98, 135, 141, 411.

Alexandria, Library of, 270.

Anger, 48; signs of, 49; results of, 50; definitions of, 50n; animals not subject to, 52; not natural, 54; should be resisted at the beginning, 57; examples of its results, 60; not necessary against enemies, 60; nor useful, 63; not necessary for punishment, 68; contrasted with reason, 69; creates vain-glory, but not magnanimity, 73; cannot act without the approval of the mind, 77; contrasted with ferocity, 80; the wise man will never be angry, 81; anger and fear, 87; anger ought to be done away with, 88; must never become a habit, 90; remedies for, 93; some men more prone to, than others, 93; influence of education, 95; and of prosperity, 96; cause of, 97; effect of trifles, 99; delay the best remedy, 104; anger caused by ignorance or arrogance, 106; or by desire for revenge, 108; its hideousness and danger, 111; its power, 114; contrasted with other vices and passions, 116; how to avoid it, 120; examples of anger indulged in, Cambyses, 131, 139; Astyages, 133; Darius, 135; Xerxes, 135; Alexander, 135; Lysimachus, 136; Caligula, 137, 139; Rhinocolura, 138; Cyrus, 139; examples of anger controlled, Antigonus, 140; Philip, 141; Augustus, 142; how injuries ought to be bourne, 144; better to heal than to avenge them, 146; the evils of anger, 147; its trifling beginnings, 149; money, 151; other causes, 152; value of self-examination, 154; how to soothe the anger of others, 156; Augustus and Vedius, 158; anger should be got rid of altogether, 159.

Animals, anger in, 49, 52.

Antigonus (monophthalmus), 141.

Antisthenes, 45.

Antonius, M., 374, 391.

Aristides, 341.

Aristotle, 51n, 52, 58, 68, 118, 135, 287, 288.

Apicius, the glutton, 217, 336.

Asinius Pollio, 142, 285.

Astyages, King of Persia, 133.

Augustus. See Caesar.

Avarice, conquered by anger, 114.

Athenodorus, quoted, 259, 265.

B

Bees, 405.

Bibulus, L., 181.

Bion, quoted, 267, 282.

Books, should be bought to read, not for show, 270.

Brutus, L. Junius, 183.

Brutus, M. Junius, 330.

Burrus, prefect of Nero, 415.

C

Caelius (Antipater), 125.

Caesar, Augustus, 142, 158, 165, 182, 293, 372, 391, 393, 401.

Caesar, Claudius, 360, 369, 370.

Caesar, Gaius (Caligula), 44, 74, 109, 137, 140, 276, 280, 316, 334, 376.

Caesar, Gaius, grandson of Augustus, 373.

Caesar, Gaius Julius, 98, 149, 181, 333.

Caesar, Germanicus, brother of Claudius, 374.

Caesar, Lucius, grandson of Augustus, 373.

Caesar, Nero, 382, 396, 415.

Caesar, Tiberius, 11, 182, 373.

Caligula. See Caesar, Gaius.

Calmness, a sign of wisdom, 27.

Cambyses, 131, 139.

Cato, M., 5, 7, 10, 23, 31, 40, 108, 156, 192, 196, 228, 285, 286, 341.

Chaerea, 44.

Chrysippus, 242, 247, 248, 252.

Cicero, 192, 274, 295.

Cimber, Tillius, 149.

Cinna, L., 392.

Claudius Caudex, 307,

Cleanthes, 247, 252.

Clemency, 380; becomes no one more than a king, 384, 386; clemency of Augustus, 391; and of Nero, 396; distinguishes between kings and tyrants, 397; makes a king beloved, 399; Tarius, 401; clemency towards slaves, 404; the king-bee, 405; clemency in inflicting punishment, 407; makes men ashamed to do wrong, 410; clemency of Nero, 415; definitions of Mercy, 417; of cruelty, 417; of pity, 418; of pardon, 421.

Clitus, killed by Alexander, 135.

Cloelia, 183.

Comfort, excess of, 13.

Consolation, 162, 320, 353.

Contempt, 36.

Cordus, A. Cremutius, 162, 196, 197.

Cornelia, wife of L. Drusus, 183.

Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, 183, 345.

Corvinus, M. Valerius, 307.

Cotta, C. Aurelius, 345.

Courage, aims high, 18; born of desperation, 398.

Cruelty, caused by anger, 80; cannot be left off, if once begun, 399; inhumanity of, 411; shown in kings, 411; and in private men, 412; the opposite of mercy, 417.

Cyrus (the elder), 139.

D

Darius, 135.

Death, quickness of, 21; not an evil, 23; a release from pain, 190. 191.

Delay, a remedy for anger, 104, 115, 129; and for grief, 172.

Demetrius the Cynic, quoted, 7, 16.

Demetrius Poliorcetes, 28.

Democharis (Parrhesiastes), 141 142.

Democritus, 18, 85, 122, 255, 278.

Dentatus, Curius, 264, 307.

Desperation, breeds courage, 398.

Diodorus, the Epicurean, 255.

Diogenes, the Cynic, 225, 267, 268,

Diogenes, the Stoic, 156,

Dionysius, of Syracuse, 186, 397,

Drusilla, 376.

Drusus, Livius, 183, 295.

Drusus, N. Claudius, senior, 373.

Drusus, N. Claudius, 166, 169.

Duillius, C. 307.

E

Education, should be carefully regulated, 95.

Epicurus, and Epicureans, 41, 42, 218, 219, 242, 248.

Exile, 325.

F

Fabianus (Papirius), quoted, 302, 309.

Fabius (Cunctator), 61, 106.

Fabricius, 7, 8.

Fear, felt by those who inspire it, 87; in moderation restrains men, 398.

Ferocity, contrasted with anger, 80; and with cruelty, 418.

Firmness, the, of a wise man, 22, sqq.

Friendship, 265.

G

Good, the highest, definition of, 208. 212, 215, 221, 244.

Gracchi, the, 183, 345.

Grief, examples of, 165; extreme grief unnatural, 171; cured by time, 172; counterfeited, 282; should be countered by reason, 346; its unprofitableness, 357; cannot co-exist with magnanimity, 419.

H

Hannibal, 61, 78, 80.

Happiness, 204; how to gain it, 206; definitions of, 208; in connexion with pleasure, 211; consists in virtue, 222; excess makes men greedy, 382.

Harpagus, 133.

Heraclitus, 85.

Hieronymus, quoted, 71.

Hippias, 98.

I

Injury, cannot touch a wise man, 25, 32, 41, 42; distinguished from insult, 27, 35; can be endured, 144.

Insult, distinguished from injury, 27, 35; how received by Diogenes and Cato, 156.

Irascibility, contrasted with anger, 53, 71.

J

Julia Augusta (title of Livia), 168.

K

Kanus, Julius, 280, 281.

L

Laberius, quoted, 87.

Lacedaemonians, the, 13.

Leisure, advantages of, 240, sqq.

Life, shortness of, 160, 161, 175, 193, 288; its misery, 175; three kinds of, 248; divided into three parts, 302.

Livia, wife of Augustus (afterwards Julia Augusta), 165, 168, 392.

Livius, T., quoted, 74, 270.

Love, conquered by anger, 114.

Lucretia. 183.

Lucretius, quoted, 258.

Luxury, 218, 306.

Lysimachus, 136, 411.

M

Maecenas, 9.

Magnanimity, repels insult, 36; not caused by anger, 73, 122; does not feel blows, 144; befits all men, 387; cannot co-exist with sorrow, 419.

Marcellus, M. Claudius, 332.

Marcellus, M. Claudius, son of Octavia, 165, 373.

Mercy, inclines men to innocence, 411; definitions of, 417; distinguished from pardon, 422.

Metellus, L. Caecilius, 309.

Mindyrides, the Sybarite, 99.

Misfortunes, how regarded by the wise man, 3; are to the advantage of those to whom they happen, 6; are the test of brave men, 11, 12, 17; generally come unexpectedly, 173; attack all alike, 178; alleviated by habit, 271, 322.

Money, evils of, 151. See Riches.

Mucius, 7.

N

Nero. See Caesar.

Nomentanus, 217.

O

Octavia, sister of Augustus, 165, 372.

Oeobazus, 135.

Ovid, quoted, 18, 52, 84, 228.

P

Pardon, definition of, 421.

Pastor, 109.

Paulus, L. Aemilius, 180.

Peace of mind, definition of, 122, 255; how to attain it, etc., 255, sqq.

Peripatetics, the, 50n.

Phaethon, 18.

Phalaris, 418.

Philip, of Macedon, 141, 142.

Philip, physician of Alexander, 98

Pisistratus, 128.

Piso, Gnaeus, 70.

Pity, definition of, 418, 419; borders on misery, 421.

Plato, 55, 72, 95, 97, 129, 198 286.

Pleasure, has no connexion with virtue, 211, 212; belongs to good and bad alike, 213; not the aim of virtue, 214; pleasures of bad men, 216; and of the wise, 217; the Epicurean doctrine, 218; all pleasure is short-lived, 365.

Pollio, Asinius, 142, 285.

Pollio, Vedius, 158, 402.

Pompeius, 78n, 98, 150, 181, 192, 276, 308.

Pompeius, Sextus, 372.

Posidonius, his definition of anger, 50n.

Poverty, 333; no inconvenience to an exile, 337.

Praexaspes, 131.

Predestination, 194.

Property, 267. See Riches.

Prosperity, 4, 10; fosters anger, 96.

Providence, 1, sqq.

Publilius, quoted, 275.

Pulvillus, 179.

Punishment, why inflicted, 407; should not be frequent, 410.

Pythagoras, 126.

Pythias, 135.

R

Rage, does not befit kings, 317.

Reason, only strong apart from the passions, 56; its power, 69; contrasted with anger, 70; cannot overcome some habits, 80.

Regulus, 7, 9, 339.

Relaxation, necessity for, 285.

Revenge, a cause of anger, 108, 146; has two effects, 408.

Rhinocolura, why so called, 138.

Riches, how regarded by the wise man, 229; and by the fool, 235; better never to possess, than to lose, 267.

Rutilia, mother of C. Cotta, 345.

Rutilius, 7, 8, 196.

S

Scipio Africanus, 61, 371.

Scipio Africanus Minor, 61, 180, 285, 339, 372.

Sejanus, 162, 182, 196, 197, 276.

Self-examination, value of, 154, 206, 264.

Self-love, 106.

Sextius, Q., a Stoic, 113, 154.

Socrates, 7, 9, 31, 45, 65, 128, 130, 196, 234, 236, 238, 262, 285, 341.

Sorrow. See Grief.

Stilbo, 28.

Stoics and Stoicism, 22, 23, 41, 42, 50n, 94, 207, 218, 241, 242, 248, 419.

Sulkiness, a form of irascibility, 53.

Sulla, L., 8, 73, 78, 110, 179, 309, 397.

Suspicion, a cause of anger, 99.

T

Tarius, 401.

Telesphorus, the Rhodian, 136.

Theodorus, (Cyrenaicus), 279.

Theophrastus, quoted, 62, 64.

Thrift, advantage of, 269.

Tillius Cimber, 149.

Timagenes, 142.

Trifles, anger caused by, 99, 100, 106, 149, 152.

Triumphus, 11.

Turannius, 318.

Tyrant, compared with king, 396, 397.

V

Valerius, Asiaticus, 44.

Valour, greedy of danger, 11.

Varro, M. Terentius, 330.

Vatinius, 43.

Vedius Pollio, 158, 402.

Vengeance, 408. See Revenge.

Virgil, quoted, 112, 185, 241.

Virtue, not given by fortune, 28; its natural function to rejoice, 81; is infectious, 124; has no connexion with pleasure, 211, 212; and does not aim at it, 214, 215; is a sure guide, 219; brings true happiness, 222; should be reverenced, 237; cannot be hidden, 260, 262.

Volesus, cruelty of, 81.

W

Weakness of mind, a cause of anger, 62.

Wine, 286.

X

Xanthippe, wife of Socrates, 45.

Xerxes, 26, 135, 313.

Z

Zeno, 68, 242, 247, 252, 279.

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