THE WISDOM OF THE STOICS

Selections from Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius

Edited and with an Introduction by
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INTRODUCTION

The Stoic philosophy was founded by Zeno, a Phoenician (c. 320-c. 250 B.C.), but nothing by him has come down to us except a few fragmentary quotations. He was followed by Cleanthes, then by Chrysippus, and still later by Panaetius and Posidonius. But though Chrysippus, for example, is said to have written 705 books, practically nothing is extant by any of these philosophers except in second-hand accounts. Only three of the ancient Stoics, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, survive in complete books.

None of the three has ever had a large audience. The history of their reputations is curious. In the seventeenth century Seneca was certainly the best known. Then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he was almost completely forgotten, and popularity alternated between Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Under the influence of Matthew Arnold, the latter became a sort of cultural "must" for mid-Victorians. As an example of what was being written in the early years of this century, I quote from one of the self-improvement books written by the novelist Arnold Bennett:

I suppose there are some thousands of authors who have written with more or less sincerity on the management of the human machine. But the two which, for me, stand out easily above all the rest are Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Epictetus.... Aurelius is assuredly regarded as the greatest of writers in the human machine school, and not to read him daily is considered by many to be a bad habit. As a confession his work stands alone. But as a practical 'Bradshaw' of existence, I would put the discourses of Epictetus before M. Aurelius....He is brimming over
with actuality for readers of the year 1908. Nevertheless [Aurelius] is of course to be read, and re-read continually. When you have gone through Epictetus -- a single page or paragraph per day, well masticated and digested, suffices -- you can go through M. Aurelius, and then you can return to Epictetus, and so on, morning by morning, or night by night, till your life's end. 1

Two things are worth remarking about this passage. First, it presents both writers simply as guides to living; it nowhere mentions their Stoic philosophy or its implications. And second, it nowhere mentions Seneca. In this it was typical not only of Arnold Bennett's own frequent references to the two later Stoics but to the references of his contemporaries and those of other writers down to the present day. Yet Seneca was the first of the three great Stoic philosophers whose writings are still extant. He lived half a century before Epictetus and more than a century before Marcus. His output was far greater than that of either of his successors, and he surpassed them in purely literary gifts. In his writings on philosophy one memorable aphorism follows another. There are almost none of the obscurities that one so often encounters in Epictetus and Marcus. His long neglect seems all but unaccountable.

It is the purpose of this volume to make available generous selections from all three of the great Stoic philosophers. So far as the editors know, this has not been done elsewhere. There are only one or two books that even bring reasonably adequate excerpts of Epictetus and Marcus together; most often readers have had to find them in separate volumes. And adequate selections from Seneca's writings on Stoicism do not seem to exist in any book at present in print.

Moreover, most readers today, we are convinced, will much prefer to read selections from each of the

1 The Human Machine, 1908.
great Stoics rather than have to confront their output in its entirety. Because of the very way in which their work was composed or reported, it is full of repetitions. The Meditations of Marcus, for example, were apparently a journal, kept solely for his own eyes, in which he put down each evening or morning some reflection, resolve, or piece of advice to himself, without looking back to see whether he had written substantially the same thing a week or a month before. Again, nothing that has come down to us from Epictetus was written by him directly; it is the record of his discourses taken down by his disciple Arrian. In consequence, when Epictetus delivered very similar harangues to different audiences on different occasions, we have the record of each. Seneca, finally, repeated himself again and again and was conscious of it. He excused himself by remarking that "he does but inculcate over and over the same counsels to those that over and over commit the same faults."

So selection seemed to the present editors both necessary and desirable, not only greatly to reduce repetition or to minimize obscurities but in order to concentrate on what is most representative or most memorable.

Of course there is no way of selecting "the best" objectively. Selection must necessarily depend to a large extent on the judgment and taste of the editors; and with so much richness to choose from, many decisions on what to put in or leave out had to be arbitrary. We can only plead that we have been as conscientious and "objective" as we know how.

We have taken approximately equal selections from Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, but a slightly greater amount from Seneca, to compensate for the comparative inaccessibility of his work and for the previous undeserved neglect into which it has fallen.

The three great Stoics came from astonishingly different backgrounds. Seneca (c. 4 B.C. to A.D. 65) was a Spaniard who was brought to Rome at an early age. He studied rhetoric and philosophy, and soon gained a reputation at the Bar. He was banished in A.D. 41 by the Emperor Claudius, but recalled eight
years later by Agrippina to become tutor to her son Domitius, afterwards the Emperor Nero, then 11 years old. When Nero came to the throne at 17, Seneca's power was still further increased. Though a Stoic, professedly despising riches, he amassed a huge fortune. This was probably a mistake. His presence in time became irksome to Nero, and his enormous wealth excited his cupidity. Finally, in A.D. 65 Nero charged Seneca with complicity in a conspiracy against him, and ordered him to commit suicide. Tacitus describes the scene:

"Undismayed, he asked for tablets to make his will. When this was refused by the centurion, he turned to his friends and said that, since he was prevented from rewarding their services, he would leave them the only thing, and yet the best thing, that he had to leave -- the pattern of his life....At the same time he reminded his weeping friends of their duty to be strong....asking them what had become of the precepts of wisdom, of the philosophy which for so many years they had studied in the face of impending evils....Then he embraced his wife" -- and slit his wrists.

He was very prolific, and wrote altogether the equivalent of more than twenty volumes, including, in addition to his essays on practical ethics and other works on philosophy, nine tragedies, many satires and epigrams, and books on natural science, astronomy and meteorology.

Little is known about Epictetus. There is no agreement even about the years of his birth or death. The first has been set by various writers anywhere between A.D. 50 and 60, and the second between A.D. 100 and 135. He was probably from Hierapolis in Phrygia. As a boy he was a slave in Rome in the house of Epaphroditus, a favorite of Nero's. On receiving his freedom, he became a professor of philosophy, which he had learned from attending the lectures of the Stoic Musonius Rufus.

He taught at Rome, but was expelled with other philosophers by Domitian in A.D. 90, and then went to
Nicopolis in Epirus, where he appears to have spent the rest of his life.

He was lame, weak, and chronically poor. A story has it that one day his master started to twist his leg. Epictetus, smiling, told him: "If you go on, you will break my leg." This happened; and Epictetus continued, just as calmly: "Did I not tell you that you would break my leg?" Whether this actually happened we do not know; but it would be fully in accord with what we do know of the philosopher's character.

Epictetus wrote nothing. His teaching was transmitted by a pupil, Arrian, who recorded his discourses and compiled the short manual, the Enchiridion.

Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121 to 180) was at the other end of the social scale. He was the adopted son of the Emperor Antoninus Pius. He was privately educated, but abandoned the study of literature for that of philosophy and law under the Stoics Rusticus and Moecianus. He became Emperor in A.D. 161, but his reign from the beginning was a tragically unlucky one, and he was forced to spend most of his time fighting frontier wars, putting down insurrections, and combatting the effects of plague and demoralization. Notwithstanding all this, he found time to write his famous Meditations.

There has been much dispute among critics as to which of the three great Stoics was the best writer; but most present-day readers will be content to relish their variety. Seneca has the most copious vocabulary, is the richest in aphorisms, writes the most finished prose, and appeals by his strong and consistent common sense. Epictetus (as transcribed by Arrian) is the wittiest and most humorous, but also the most harshly uncompromising, and while he always keeps his reader awake, he also tends to put him off by his apparent coldness. Marcus lacks some of the gifts of either of his predecessors, but writes with a nobility and sincerity that has few equals in the whole realm of literature.

Though Stoicism expounded an elaborate cosmology, it was essentially a guide to the conduct of life. Man should live in accordance with nature. By
this the Stoics meant not at all, however, that he should yield to his bodily appetites, but that he should be ruled by Reason. The highest good was the virtuous life. Virtue alone is happiness. Virtue is its own sufficient reward, and vice its own punishment. Good must be found by every man within himself. All outward things that are commonly regarded as good or bad, such as wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain, health and sickness, are matters of indifferences to the true Stoic. He can be as happy stretched upon a rack as reposing on a bed of roses.

The Stoics made a sharp distinction between things that are in our power and things that are not. Desire and dislike, opinion and affection, are within the power of the will; health, wealth, position, reputation, and the like are commonly not.

The Stoics strongly insisted on the unity of the universe, and on man's duty as part of a great whole. They were the first to preach "cosmopolitanism." "There is no difference between Greeks and barbarians; the world is our city." They were also apparently the first who pronounced positive beneficence a virtue. "Love of one's neighbor" for example, was enjoined by Marcus Aurelius. The Stoics deeply influenced the later morality of Christianity.

The three great Stoics represented here preached essentially the same doctrines, though colored by their individual experience and temperaments.

In comparison with the two others, the wealthy Seneca expounded only a modified Stoicism, with a much greater admixture of worldly wisdom. Yet it was he who reminded his readers: "If what you have seems insufficient to you, then, though you possess the world, you will yet be miserable." And he tells us also that "the sum of human duty" is "patience, where we are to suffer, and prudence in the things we do."

When we come to Epictetus, there is no compromise with worldliness: "Let death and exile be daily before your eyes." "Better to die in hunger, exempt from grief and fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation."

Marcus is not as unfeeling as Epictetus sometimes appears to be, yet such consolation as he
offers must be bought at a high price. "Let it make no difference to thee whether thou art cold or warm, if thou art doing thy duty." He even tells himself at one point: "Do not then consider life a thing of any value."

These quotations, we must add in fairness, give far too grim an impression of the bulk of the writings of the Stoics, most of whose advice on the conduct of life is not widely different from that given to this day by many non-Stoic philosophers. But the quotations do point to an apparent contradiction in the Stoic system. If we are to take literally its contentions that happiness as ordinarily understood is not necessary, and pain no evil, what is the point in morality or in any human striving whatever?

For many modern readers, in fact, it may be hard to see what there was in the doctrines of Stoicism to attract adherents. Epicureans were told they could look for pleasure or at least tranquillity in the present life. Rationalists could recognize that if they refrained from overindulgence in their physical appetites they could probably enjoy better health and longer life, and that peaceful cooperation with others would bring great benefits to themselves as well as to their fellow men. Christians were promised at least future rewards for goodness or future punishment for sins. But the Stoic was told only that the reward of virtue was that of being virtuous.

Yet Stoicism did in fact appeal to the noblest among the ancients, and it has held that appeal for more than two thousand years. It is one of the permanent philosophies of life. In fact, it is still an indispensable element in any rational philosophy. For all men must eventually face death; and before that, the loss of loved ones; and nearly all, no matter how prudently or wisely they try to manage their lives, must at some time suffer disappointment, hardship, accident, defeat, ingratitude, rejection, affronts, humiliation, pain, and even periods of agony. There will always be times when men have need for patience, endurance and fortitude. These are the great virtues that the Stoic philosophy instills. And when men need these virtues most, they will want to turn to the calm wisdom of Seneca, to the stern admonishments of Epictetus, or to the lofty serenity
of the Marcus Meditations, to renew their own courage and strength.

A note on the sources of the excerpts: The selections from Seneca are taken from the seventeenth-century translation by Sir Roger L'Estrange was published in Burt's Home Library series in the early 1900s. It is hard to believe that this translation was not modernized by someone sometime along the way, for it is amazingly smooth and clear. For Epictetus we have chosen the Elizabeth Carter translation of 1758 as still the most satisfactory. In addition to the numerous short excerpts, we have taken the whole of the Enchiridion, as this seems to have been specifically designed as a summary of his philosophy. For Marcus Aurelius we have for the most part used the George Long translation of 1862 -- though in just a few passages we have returned to the old Meric Casaubon text of 1634, where we thought it clearer or more colorful.

In the selections from both Epictetus and Marcus we have retained the same "Book" numeration as in the full editions; but for the individual thoughts the selected numbering is our own, and has been adopted purely for convenience in reference.
SENECA
There is not anything in this world, perhaps, that is more talked of, and less understood, than the business of a happy life. It is every man's wish and design; and yet not one of a thousand that knows wherein that happiness consists. We live, however, in a blind and eager pursuit of it; and the more haste we make in a wrong way, the further we are from our journey's end.

Let us therefore, first, consider what it is we should be at; and, secondly, which is the readiest way to compass it. If we be right, we shall find every day how much we improve; but if we either follow the cry, or the track, of people that are out of the way, we must expect to be misled, and to continue our days in wandering and error. Wherefore, it highly concerns us to take along with us a skillful guide; for it is not in this, as in other voyages, where the highway brings us to our place of repose; or if a man should happen to be out, where the inhabitants might set him right again; but on the contrary, the beaten road is here the most dangerous, and the people, instead of helping us, misguide us. Let us therefore not follow, like beasts, but rather govern ourselves by reason, than by example.

It fares with us in human life as in a routed army; one stumbles first, and then another falls upon him, and so they follow, one upon the neck of another, until the whole field comes to be but one heap of miscarriages. And the mischief is that the number of the multitude carries it against truth and justice. So that we must leave the crowd if we would be happy; for the question of a happy life is not to be decided by vote: nay, so far from it, that plurality of voices is still an argument of the wrong; the common people find it easier to believe than to judge, and content themselves with what is usual, never examining whether it is good or not.

By the common people is intended the man of title as well as the clouted shoe: for I do not
distinguish them by the eye, but by the mind, which is the proper judge of the man. Worldly felicity, I know, makes the head giddy; but if ever a man comes to himself again he will confess that whatsoever he has done, he wishes undone; and that the things he feared were better than those he prayed for.

The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations; to understand our duties toward God and man; to enjoy the present without any anxious dependence upon the future. Not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient; for he that is so wants nothing. The great blessings of mankind are within us, and within our reach; but we shut our eyes and, like people in the dark, we fall foul upon the very thing we search for without finding it.

Tranquility is a certain equality of mind, which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress. Nothing can make it less, for it is the state of human perfection: it raises us as high as we can go; and makes every man his own supporter. Whereas he that is borne up by anything else may fall. He that judges aright, and perseveres in it, enjoys a perpetual calm: he takes a true prospect of things; he observes an order, measure, a decorum in all his actions; he has a benevolence in his nature; he squares his life in accordance with reason; and draws to himself love and admiration: but he that always wills or nills the same things is undoubtedly in the right.

Liberty and serenity of mind must necessarily ensue upon the mastering of those things which either allure or affright us when, instead of those flashy pleasures (which even at the best are both vain and hurtful together), we shall find ourselves possessed of joy transporting and everlasting.

It must be a sound mind that makes a happy man; there must be a constancy in all conditions, a care for the things of this world, but without trouble; and such an indifferency for the bounties of fortune, that either with them, or without them, we may live contentedly. There must be neither lamentation, nor quarrelling, nor sloth, nor fear; for it makes a discord in a man's life. He that fears, serves.
The joy of a wise man stands firm without interruption. In all places, at all times and in all conditions, his thoughts are cheerful and quiet. As it never came in to him from without, so it will never leave him; but it is born within him, and inseparable from him. It is a solicitous life that is egged on with the hope of anything, though never so open and easy, nay, though a man should never suffer any sort of disappointment. I do not speak this either as a bar to the fair enjoyment of lawful pleasures, or to the gentle flatteries of reasonable expectations; but, on the contrary, I would have men to be always in good humor, provided that it arises from their own souls, and be cherished in their own breasts. Other delights are trivial; they may smooth the brow, but they do not fill and affect the heart.

True joy is a serene and sober motion, and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing. The seat of it is within, and there is no cheerfulness like the resolution of a brave mind, that has fortune under his feet. He that can look death in the face and bid it welcome; open his door to poverty, and bridle his appetites; this is the man whom Providence has established in the possession of inviolable delights.

The pleasures of the vulgar are ungrounded, thin, and superficial; but the other are solid and eternal. As the body itself is rather a necessary thing than a great, so the comforts of it are but temporary and vain; besides that, without extraordinary moderation, their end is only pain and repentance; whereas a peaceful conscience, honest thoughts, virtuous actions, and an indifference for casual events, are blessings without end, satiety, or measure.

This consummated state of felicity is only a submission to the dictate of right nature. The foundation of it is wisdom and virtue; the knowledge of what we ought to do, and the conformity of the will to that knowledge.

Happiness Founded Upon Wisdom

Taking for granted that human happiness is founded upon wisdom and virtue, we shall treat of
these two points in order as they lie: and, first, of wisdom; not in the latitude of its various operations, but as it has only a regard to a good life, and the happiness of mankind.

Wisdom is a right understanding, a faculty of discerning good from evil; what is to be chosen and what rejected; a judgment grounded upon the value of things, and not the common opinion of them; an equality of force, and a strength of resolution. It sets a watch over our words and deeds, it takes us up with the contemplation of the works of nature, and makes us invincible by either good or evil fortune. It is large and spacious, and requires a great deal of room to work in; it ransacks heaven and earth; it has for its object things past and to come, transitory and eternal. It examines all the circumstances of time, what it is, when it began, and how long it will continue: and so for the mind; whence it came; what it is; when it begins; how long it lasts; whether or not it passes from one form to another, or serves only one, and wanders when it leaves us; whether it abides in a state of separation, and what the action of it; what use it makes of its liberty; whether or not it retains the memory of things past, and comes to the knowledge of itself.

To be wise is the use of wisdom, as seeing is the use of eyes, and well-speaking the use of eloquence. He that is perfectly wise is perfectly happy; nay, the very beginning of wisdom makes life easy to us. Neither is it enough to know this, unless we print it in our minds by daily meditation, and so bring a good-will to a good habit.

And we must practice what we preach: for philosophy is not a subject for popular ostentation; nor does it rest in words, but in things. It is not an entertainment taken up for delight, or to give a taste to our leisure; but it fashions the mind, governs our actions, tells us what we are to do, and what not. It sits at the helm, and guides us through all hazards: nay, we cannot be safe without it, for every hour gives us occasion to make use of it. It informs us in all the duties of life, piety to our parents, faith to our friends, charity to the miserable, judgment in counsel; it gives us peace by fearing nothing, and riches by coveting nothing.
There is no condition of life that excludes a wise man from discharging his duty. If his fortune be good, he tempers it; if bad, he masters it; if he has an estate, he will exercise his virtue in plenty; if none, in poverty: if he cannot do it in his country, he will do it in banishment; if he has no command, he will do the office of a common soldier.

Wisdom does not teach our fingers, but our minds: fiddling and dancing, arms and fortifications, were the works of luxury and discord; but wisdom instructs us in the way of nature, and in the arts of unity and concord, not in the instruments, but in the government of life; not to make us live only, but to live happily. She teaches us what things are good, what evil, and what only appear so; and to distinguish betwixt true greatness and tumor. She clears our minds of dross and vanity; she raises up our thoughts to heaven, and carries them down to hell: she discourses of the nature of the soul, the powers and faculties of it; the first principles of things; the order of Providence: she exalts us from things corporeal to things incorporeal and retrieves the truth of all; she searches nature, gives laws to life; and tells us that it is not enough to know God, unless we obey him. She looks upon all accidents as acts of Providence: sets a true value upon things; delivers us from false opinions, and condemns all pleasures that are attended with repentance. She allows nothing to be good that will not be so for ever: no man to be happy but he that needs no other happiness than what he has within himself; no man to be great or powerful that is not master of himself.

This is the felicity of human life; a felicity that can neither be corrupted nor extinguished: it inquires into the nature of the heavens, the influence of the stars; how far they operate upon our minds and bodies: which thoughts, though they do not form our manners, they do yet raise and dispose us for glorious things.

It is agreed upon at all hands, that right reason is the perfection of human nature, and wisdom only the dictate of it. The greatness that arises from it is solid and unmovable, the resolutions of wisdom being free, absolute, and constant; whereas folly is never long pleased with the same thing, but still shifting of counsels and sick of itself. There can be no happiness without constancy and prudence.
He that demurs and hesitates is not yet composed: but wherever virtue interposes upon the main, there must be concord and consent in the parts: for all virtues are in agreement, as well as all vices are at variance.

A wise man, in what condition soever he is, will be still happy; for he subjects all things to himself, because he submits himself to reason, and governs his actions by counsel, not by passion. He is not moved with the utmost violences of fortune, nor with the extremities of fire and sword; whereas a fool is afraid of his own shadow, and surprised at ill accidents, as if they were all leveled at him. He does nothing unwillingly: for whatever he finds necessary, he makes it his choice. He propounds to himself the certain scope and end of human life; he follows that which conduces to it, and avoids that which hinders it. He is content with his lot, whatever it be, without wishing what he has not; though of the two, he had rather abound than want.

The great business of his life, like that of nature, is performed without tumult or noise. He neither fears danger, nor provokes it; but it is his caution, not any want of courage; for captivity, wounds and chains he only looks upon as false and lymphatical terrors. He does not pretend to go through with whatever he undertakes; but to do that well which he does. Arts are but the servants, wisdom commands; and where the matter fails, it is none of the workman's fault. He is cautious in doubtful cases, in prosperity temperate, and resolute in adversity; still making the best of every condition, and improving all occasions to make them serviceable to his fate.

Some accidents there are, which I confess may affect him, but not overthrow him; as bodily pains, loss of children and friends; the ruin and desolation of a man's country. One must be made of stone, or iron, not to be sensible of these calamities; and besides, it were no virtue to bear them, if a body did not feel them.

There are three degrees of proficients in the school of wisdom. The first are those that come within sight of it, but not up to it; they have learned what they ought to do, but they have not put
their knowledge in practice: they are past the hazard of a relapse, but they have still the grudges of a disease, though they are out of the danger of it. By a disease, I do understand an obstinacy in evil, or an ill habit, that makes us over-eager upon things which are either not much to be desired, or not at all. A second sort are those that have subjected their appetites for a season, but are yet in fear of falling back. A third sort are those that are clear of many vices, but not of all. They are not covetous, but perhaps they are choleric; not lustful, but perchance ambitious; they are firm enough in some cases, but weak in others; there are many that despise death, and yet shrink at pain.

There are diversities in wise men, but no inequalities; one is more affable, another more ready, a third a better speaker: but the felicity of them all is equal. It is in this, as in heavenly bodies; there is a certain state in greatness.

In civil and domestic affairs, a wise man may stand in need of counsel, as of a physician, an advocate, a solicitor; but in greater matters, the blessing of wise men rests in the joy they take in the communication of their virtues.

If there were nothing else in it, a man would apply himself of wisdom, because it settles him in a perpetual tranquillity of mind.

Happiness Founded Upon Virtue

Virtue is that perfect good, which is the complement of a happy life; the only immortal thing that belongs to mortality; it is the knowledge both of others and itself; it is an invincible greatness of mind, not to be elevated nor dejected with good or ill fortune. It is sociable and gentle, free, steady, and fearless; content within itself; full of inexhaustible delights; and it is valued for itself.

One may be a good physician, a good grammarian, without being a good man; so that all things from without are only accessories: for the seat of it is a pure and holy mind. It consists of a congruity of actions which we can never expect so long as we are distracted by our passions.
Not but that a man may be allowed to change color and countenance, and suffer such impressions as are properly a kind of natural force upon the body, and not under the dominion of the mind: but all this while I will have his judgment firm, and he shall act steadily and boldly, without wavering betwixt the motions of his body and those of his mind.

It is not a thing indifferent, I know, whether a man lie at ease upon a bed, or in a torment upon a wheel; and yet the former may be the worse of the two, if he suffers the latter with honor, and enjoys the other with infamy.

It is not the matter, but the virtue, that makes the action good or ill; and he that is led in triumph may be yet greater than his conqueror. When we come once to value our flesh above our honesty, we are lost; and yet I would not press upon dangers, no, not so much as upon inconveniences, unless where the man and the brute come in competition: and in such case, rather than make a forfeiture of my credit, my reason, or my faith, I would run all extremities.

They are great blessings to have tender parents, dutiful children, and to live under a just and well-ordered government. Now, would it not trouble even a virtuous man to see his children butchered before his eyes, his father made a slave, and his country overrun by a barbarous enemy? There is a great difference betwixt the simple loss of a blessing, and the succeeding of a great mischief into the place of it over and above. The loss of health is followed with sickness, and the loss of sight with blindness: but this does not hold in the loss of friends and children, where there is rather something to the contrary to supply that loss; that is to say, virtue, which fills the mind, and takes away the desire of what we have not. What matters it whether the water be stopped or not, so long as the fountain is safe?

Is a man ever the wiser for a multitude of friends, or the more foolish for the loss of them? So neither is he the happier nor the more miserable.

Short life, grief, and pain are accessions that have no effect at all upon virtue.

If one could but see the mind of a good man, as
it is illustrated with virtue; the beauty and the majesty of it, which is a dignity not so much as to be thought of without love and veneration; would not a man bless himself at the sight of such an object, as at the encounter of some supernatural power? A power so miraculous that it is a kind of charm upon the souls of those that are truly affected with it. There is so wonderful a grace and authority in it, that even the worst of men approve it, and set up for the reputation of being accounted virtuous themselves. They covet the fruit indeed, and the profit of wickedness; but they hate and are ashamed of the impestation of it. It is by an impression of Nature that all men have a reverence for virtue; they know it, and they have a respect for it, though they do not practice it: nay, for the countenance of their very wickedness they miscall it virtue. Their injuries they call benefits, and expect a man should thank them for doing him a mischief; they cover their most notorious inequities with a pretext of justice.

He that robs upon the highway, had rather find his booty than force it. Ask any of them that live upon rapine, fraud, oppression, if they had not rather enjoy a fortune honestly gotten, and their consciences will not suffer them to deny it. Men are vicious only for the profit of villainy; for at the same time they commit it, they condemn it.

Nay, so powerful is virtue, and so gracious is Providence, that every man has a light set up within him for a guide; which we do all of us see and acknowledge, though we do not pursue it. This is it that makes the prisoner upon the torture happier than the executioner, and sickness better than health, if we bear it without yielding or repining: this is it that overcomes ill fortune, and moderates good; for it marches betwixt the one and the other with an equal contempt of both. It turns like fire all things into itself; our actions and our friendships are tinctured with it, and whatever it touches becomes amiable.

That which is frail and mortal rises and falls, grows, wastes, and varies from itself; but the state of things divine is always the same; and so is virtue, let the matter be what it will. It is never the worse for the difficulty of the action, nor the better for the easiness of it. It is the same in a
rich man as in a poor; in a sickly man as in a sound; in a strong as in a weak. The virtue of the besieged is as great as that of the besiegers.

There are some virtues, I confess, which a good man cannot be without, and yet he had rather have no occasion to employ them. If there were any difference, I should prefer the virtues of patience before those of pleasure; for it is braver to break through difficulties than to temper our delights.

But though the subject of virtue may possibly be against nature, as to be burnt or wounded, yet the virtue itself of an invincible patience is according to nature. We may seem, perhaps to promise more than human nature is able to perform; but we speak with respect to the mind, and not to the body.

If a man does not live up to his own rules, it is something yet to have virtuous meditations and good purposes, even without acting. It is generous, the very adventure of being good, and the bare proposal of an eminent course of life, though beyond the force of human frailty to accomplish. There is something of honor yet in the miscarriage; nay, in the naked contemplation of it. I would receive my own death with as little trouble as I would hear of another man's; I would bear the same mind whether I be rich or poor, whether I get or lose in the world. What I have, I will not either sordidly spare, or prodigally squander away, and I will reckon upon benefits well-placed as the fairest part of my possession: not valuing them by number or weight, but by profit and esteem of the receiver; accounting myself never the poorer for that which I give to a worthy person.

What I do shall be done for conscience, not ostentation. I will eat and drink, not to gratify my palate, or only to fill and empty, but to satisfy nature. I will be cheerful to my friends, mild and placable to my enemies. I will prevent an honest request if I can foresee it, and I will grant it without asking.

I will look upon the whole world as my country, and upon the gods, both as the witnesses and the judges of my words and deeds.
I will live and die with this testimony: that I loved good studies, and a good conscience; that I never invaded another man's liberty; and that I preserved my own. I will govern my life and my thoughts as if the whole world were to see the one, and to read the other; for what does it signify to make any thing a secret to my neighbor, when to God, who is the searcher of our hearts, all our privacies are open.

One part of virtue consists in discipline, the other in exercise; for we must first learn and then practice. The sooner we begin to apply ourselves to it, and the more haste we make, the longer shall we enjoy the comforts of a rectified mind; nay, we have the fruition of it in the very act of forming it: but it is another sort of delight, I must confess, that arises from the contemplation of a soul which is advanced into the possession of wisdom and virtue. If it were so great a comfort to pass from the subjection of our childhood into a state of liberty, how much greater will it be when we come to cast off the boyish levity of our minds, and range ourselves among the philosophers? We are past our minority, it is true, but not our indiscretions; and which is yet worse, we have the authority of seniors, and the weaknesses of children (I might have said of infants, for every little thing frights the one, and every trivial fancy the other). Whoever studies this point well will find that many things are the less to be feared the more terrible they appear.

To think anything good that is not honest were to reproach Providence; for good men suffer many inconveniences. But virtue, like the sun, goes on still with her work, let the air be never so cloudy, and finishes her course, extinguishing likewise all other splendors and oppositions; insomuch that calamity is no more to a virtuous mind than a shower into the sea.

That which is right is not to be valued by quantity, number, or time; a life of a day may be as honest as a life of a hundred years: but yet virtue in one man may have a larger field to show itself in than in another. One man, perhaps, may be in a station to administer unto cities and kingdoms; to contrive good laws, create friendships, and do beneficial offices to mankind. It is another man's fortune to be straitened by poverty, or put out of
the way by banishment: and yet the latter may be as
virtuous as the former, and may have as great a mind,
as exact a prudence, as inviolable a justice, and as
large a knowledge of things, both divine and human,
without which a man cannot be happy.

For virtue is open to all; as well to servants
and exiles as to princes: it is profitable to the
world and to itself at all distances and in all
conditions; and there is no difficulty that can
excuse a man from the exercise of it.

The Stoics hold all virtues to be equal; but yet
there is great variety in the matter they have to
work upon, according as it is larger or narrower,
illustrious or less noble, of more or less extent.
As all good men are equal, that is to say, as they
are good, but yet one may be young, another old; one
may be rich, another poor; one eminent and powerful,
another unknown and obscure. There are many things
which have little or no grace in themselves, and are
yet glorious and remarkable by virtue. Nothing can
be good which gives neither greatness nor security to
the mind; but, on the contrary, infects it with
insolence, arrogance, and tumor. Nor does virtue
dwell upon the tip of the tongue, but in the temple
of a purified heart. He that depends upon any other
good becomes covetous of life and what belongs to it;
which exposes a man to appetites that are vast,
unlimited, and intolerable.

Virtue is free and indefatigible, and accompan-
ied with concord and gracefulness; whereas pleasure
is mean, servile, transitory, tiresome, and sickly,
and scarce outlives the tasting of it. It is the
good of the belly, and not of the man, and only the
felicity of brutes. Who does not know that fools
enjoy their pleasures, and that there is great
variety in the entertainments of wickedness? Nay,
the mind itself has its variety of perverse pleasures
as well as the body: as insolence, self-conceit,
p pride, garrulity, laziness, and the abusive wit of
turning everything into ridicule; whereas virtue
weighs all this, and corrects it. It is the know-
ledge both of others and of itself; it is to be
learned from itself; and the very will itself may be
taught; which will cannot be right, unless the whole
habit of the mind be right from whence the will
comes. It is by the impulse of virtue that we love
virtue, so that the very way to virtue lies by
virtue, which takes in also, at a view, the laws of human life.

Neither are we to value ourselves upon a day, or an hour, or any action, but upon the whole habit of the mind. Some men do one thing bravely, but not another; they will shrink at infamy and bear up against poverty. . . . But the soul is never in the right place until it be delivered from the cares of human affairs. We must labor and climb the hill if we will arrive at virtue, whose seat is upon the top of it.

He that masters avarice, and is truly good, stands firm against ambition; he looks upon his last hour not as a punishment, but as the equity of a common fate.

He that subdues his carnal lusts shall easily keep himself untainted with any other; so that reason does not encounter this or that vice by itself, but beats down all at a blow.

What does he care for ignominy that only values himself upon conscience, and not opinion? Socrates looked a scandalous death in the face with the same constancy that he had before practiced toward the thirty tyrants; his virtue consecrated the very dungeon.

He that is wise will take delight even in an ill opinion that is well gotten. It is ostentation, not virtue, when a man will have his good deeds published; and it is not enough to be just where there is honor to be gotten, but to continue so, in defiance of infamy and danger.

But virtue cannot lie hid, for the time will come that shall raise it again even after it is buried and deliver it from the malignity of the age that oppressed it. Immortal glory is the shadow of it, and keeps it company whether we will or not; but sometimes the shadow goes before the substance, and other whiles it follows it. And the later it comes, the larger it is, when even envy itself shall have given way to it. It was a long time that Democritus was taken for a madman, and before Socrates had any esteem in the world. How long was it before Cato could be understood? Nay, he was affronted, condemned, and rejected; and people never knew the
value of him until they had lost him.

Now as the body is to be kept in upon the down-hill and forced upward, there are some virtues that require the rein and others the spur. In liberality, temperance, gentleness of nature, we are to check ourselves for fear of falling; but in patience, resolution, and perseverance, where we are to mount the hill, we stand in need of encouragement. Upon this division of the matter, I had rather steer the smoother course than pass through the experiments of sweat and blood: I know it is my duty to be content in all conditions; but yet if it were my election, I would choose the fairest.

When a man comes once to stand in need of fortune, his life is anxious, suspicious, timorous, dependent upon every moment, and in fear of all accidents. How can that man resign himself to God, or bear his lot, whatever it be, without murmuring, and cheerfully submit to Providence, that shrinks at every motion of pleasure or pain? It is virtue alone that raises us above griefs, hopes, fears, and chances, and makes us not only patient, but willing, as knowing that whatever we suffer is according to the decree of Heaven.

He that is overcome with pleasure (so contemptible and weak an enemy), what will become of him when he comes to grapple with dangers, necessities, torments, death, and the dissolution of nature itself?

Wealth, honor, and favor may come upon a man by chance; nay, they may even be cast upon him without so much as looking after them; and certainly it is worth the while to purchase that good which brings all others along with it.

A good man is happy within himself, and independent of fortune, kind to his friend, temperate to his enemy, religiously just, indefatigably laborious; and he discharges all duties with a constancy and congruity of actions.

Philosophy the Guide of Life

Socrates places all philosophy in morals, and wisdom in the distinguishing of good and evil.
Philosophy is the art and law of life; it teaches us what to do in all cases and, like good marksmen, to hit the white at any distance. The force of it is incredible; for it gives us in the weakness of a man the security of a spirit: in sickness it is as good as a remedy to us; for whatever eases the mind is profitable also to the body. The physician may prescribe diet and exercise, and accommodate his rule and medicine to the disease, but it is philosophy that must bring us to a contempt of death which is the remedy of all diseases. In poverty it gives us riches, or such a state of mind as makes them superfluous to us. It arms us against all difficulties: one man is pressed with death, another with poverty; some with envy, others are offended at Providence, and unsatisfied with the condition of mankind.

But philosophy prompts us to relieve the prisoner, the infirm, the necessitous, the condemned; to show the ignorant their errors and rectify their affections. It makes us inspect and govern our manners. It rouses us where we are faint and drowsy, it binds up what is loose, and humbles in us that which is contumacious. It delivers the mind from the bondage of the body, and raises it up to the contemplation of its divine origin.

Honors, monuments, and all the works of vanity and ambition, are demolished and destroyed by time; but the reputation of wisdom is venerable to posterity; and those that were envied or neglected in their lives are adored in their memories, and exempted from the very laws of created nature, which has set bounds to all other things. The very shadow of glory carries a man of honor upon all dangers, to the contempt of fire and sword; and it were a shame if right reason should not inspire as generous resolutions into a man of virtue.

Neither is philosophy only profitable to the public, but one wise man helps another, even in the exercise of the virtues. The one has need of the other, both for conversation and counsel; for they kindle a mutual emulation in good offices. We are not so perfect yet, but that many new things remain still to be found out, which will give us the reciprocal advantages of instructing one another; and the more vices are mingled the worse it is -- so is it on the contrary with good men and their virtues.
As men of letters are the most useful and excellent of friends, so are they the best of subjects, as being better judges of the blessings they enjoy under a well-ordered government, and of what they owe to the magistracy for their freedom and protection. They are men of sobriety and learning, and free from boasting and violence. They reprove the vice without reproaching the person; for they have learned to be wise without either pomp or envy.

That which we see in high mountains, we find in philosophers; they seem taller near at hand than at a distance. They are raised above other men, but their greatness is substantial. Nor do they stand upon tiptoe, that they may seem higher than they are, but content with their own stature, they reckon themselves tall enough when fortune cannot reach them.

It is the bounty of nature that we live, but of philosophy that we live well, which is in truth a greater benefit than life itself.

Not but that philosophy is also the gift of Heaven, so far as to the faculty, but not to the science; for that must be the business of industry.

No man is born wise; but wisdom and virtue require a tutor, though we can easily learn to be vicious without a master.

It is philosophy that gives us a veneration for God, a charity for our neighbor, that teaches us our duty to Heaven, and exhorts us to an agreement with one another. It unmasks things that are terrible to us, assuages our lusts, refutes our errors, restrains our luxury, reproves our avarice, and works strangely upon tender natures.

I could never hear Attalus upon the vices of the age and the errors of life, without a compassion for mankind; and in his discourses upon poverty there was something methought that was more human. "More than we use," says he, "is more than we need, and only a burden to the bearer." That saying of his put me out of countenance at the superfluities of my own fortune. And so in his invectives against vain pleasures, he did at such a rate advance the felicities of a sober table, a pure mind, and a chaste body, that a man could not hear him without a love for continence and
moderation. Upon these lectures of his, I denied myself, for a while after, certain delicacies that I had formerly used: but in a short time I fell to them again, though so sparingly, that the proportion came little short of a total abstinence.

Philosophers are the tutors of mankind; if they have found out remedies for the mind, it must be our part to apply them. I cannot think of Cato, Lelius, Socrates, Plato, without veneration: their very names are sacred to me.

Philosophy is the health of the mind. Let us look to that health first, and in the second place to that of the body, which may be had upon easier terms; for a strong arm, a robust constitution or the skill of procuring this, is not a philosopher's business. He does some things as a wise man and other things as he is a man; and he may have strength of body as well as of mind. But if he runs, or casts the sledge, it were injurious to ascribe that to his wisdom which is common to the greatest of fools. He studies rather to fill his mind than his coffers; and he knows that gold and silver were mingled with dirt until avarice or ambition parted them. His life is ordinate, fearless, equal, secure; he stands firm in all extremities, and bears the lot of his humanity with a divine temper.

There is a great difference betwixt the splendor of philosophy and of fortune; the one shines with the original light, the other with a borrowed one; besides that philosophy makes us happy and immortal: for learning shall outlive palaces and monuments.

The house of a wise man is safe, though narrow; there is neither noise nor furniture in it, no porter at the door, nor anything that is either vendible or mercenary, nor any business of fortune; for she has nothing to do where she has nothing to look after. This is the way to Heaven which Nature has chalked out, and it is both secure and pleasant; there needs no train of servants, no pomp or equipage, to make good our passage; no money or letters of credit for expenses upon the voyage; but the graces of an honest mind will serve us upon the way, and make us happy at our journey's end.

To tell you my opinion now of the liberal sciences: I have no great esteem for anything that
terminates in profit or money; and yet I shall allow them to be so far beneficial as they only prepare the understanding without detaining it. They are but the rudiments of wisdom, and only then to be learned when the mind is capable of nothing better, and the knowledge of them is better worth the keeping than the acquiring. They do not so much as pretend to the making of us virtuous, but only to give us an aptitude or disposition to be so.

The grammarian's business lies in a syntax of speech; or if he proceed to history, or the measuring of verse, he is at the end of his line. But what signifies a congruity of periods, the computing of syllables, or the modifying of numbers, to the taming of our passions or the repressing of our lusts? The philosopher proves the body of the sun to be large, but for the true dimensions of it we must ask the mathematician: geometry and music, if they do not teach us to master our hopes and fears, all the rest is to little purpose.

We take a great deal of pains to trace Ulysses in his wanderings; but were it not time as well spent to look to ourselves that we may not wander at all? Are not we ourselves tossed with tempestuous passions, and assaulted by terrible monsters on the one hand, and tempted by sirens on the other?

Teach me my duty to my country, to my father, to my wife, to mankind. What is it to me whether Penelope was honest or not -- teach me to know how to be so myself, and to live according to that knowledge. What am I the better for putting so many parts together in music, and raising a harmony out of so many different tones? Teach me to tune my affections, and to hold constant to myself. Geometry teaches me the art of measuring acres; teach me to measure my appetites, and to know when I have had enough. Teach me to divide with my brother, and to rejoice in the prosperity of my neighbor. You teach me how I may hold my own and keep my estate; but I would rather learn how I may lose it all, and yet be contented.

Were I not a madman to sit wrangling about words, and putting of nice and impertinent questions, when the enemy has already made the breach, the town fired over my head, and the mine ready to play that shall blow me up into the air? Were this a time for
fooleries? Let me rather fortify myself against death and inevitable necessities; let me understand that the good of life does not consist in the length or space, but in the use of it.

When I go to sleep, who knows whether ever I shall wake again; and when I wake, whether I shall ever sleep again? When I go abroad, whether ever I shall come home again; and when I return, whether ever go abroad again? It is not at sea only that life and death are within a few inches one of another; but they are as near everywhere else too, only we do not take so much notice of it. What have we to do with frivolous and captious questions, and impertinent niceties? Let us rather study how to deliver ourselves from sadness, fear, and the burden of all our secret lusts: let us pass over all our most solemn levities, and make haste to a good life, which is a thing that presses us.

Shall a man that goes for a midwife stand gaping upon a post to see what play today? Or, when his house is on fire, stay the curling of a periwig before he calls for help? Our houses are on fire, our country invaded, our goods taken away, our children in danger; and I might add to these the calamities of earthquakes, shipwrecks, and whatever else is most terrible. Is this a time for us now to be playing fast and loose with idle questions, which are in effect so many unprofitable riddles?

Our duty is the cure of the mind rather than the delight of it; but we have only the words of wisdom without the works, and turn philosophy into a pleasure that was given for a remedy.

We are sick and ulcerous, and must be lanced and scarified, and every man has as much business within himself as a physician in a common pestilence.

Misfortunes, in fine, cannot be avoided; but they may be sweetened, if not overcome; and our lives may be made happy by philosophy.

The Force of Precepts

There seems to be so near an affinity betwixt wisdom, philosophy, and good counsels, that it is
rather matter of curiosity than of profit to divide them; philosophy being only a limited wisdom; and good counsels a communication of that wisdom, for the good of others as well as of ourselves, and to posterity, as well as to the present.

The wisdom of the ancients, as to the government of life, was no more than certain precepts, what to do and what not: and men were much better in that simplicity, for as they came to be more learned, they grew less careful of being good. That plain and open virtue is now turned into a dark and intricate science. We are taught to dispute rather than to live. So long as wickedness was simple, simple remedies also were sufficient against it; but now it has taken root and spread, we must make use of stronger.

If a man does what he ought to do, he will never do it constantly or equally without knowing why he does it; and if it be only chance or custom, he that does well by chance, may do ill so too. And farther, a precept may direct us what we ought to do, and yet fall short in the manner of doing it: an expensive entertainment may, in one case, be extravagance or gluttony, and yet a point of honor and discretion in another.

Precepts are idle, if we be not first taught what opinion we are to have of the matter in question: whether it be poverty, riches, disgrace, sickness, banishment, etc. Let us therefore examine them one by one; not what they are called, but what in truth they are.

It is to no purpose to set a high esteem upon prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, if we do not first know what virtue is -- whether one or more, or if he that has one has all, or how they differ.

Precepts are of great weight; and a few useful ones at hand do more toward a happy life than whole volumes or cautions, that we know not where to find. These salutary precepts should be our daily meditation, for they are the rules by which we ought to square our lives.

It is by precept that the understanding is nourished and augmented; the offices of prudence and
It is a great virtue to love, to give, and to follow good counsel; if it does not lead us to honesty, it does at least prompt us to it. As several parts make up one harmony, and the most agreeable music arises from discords, so should a wise man gather many acts, many precepts, and the examples of many arts, to inform his own life.

Our forefathers have left us in charge to avoid three things: hatred, envy, and contempt. Now, it is hard to avoid envy and not incur contempt; for in taking too much care not to usurp upon others, we become many times liable to be trampled upon ourselves.

Good counsel is the most needful service that we can do to mankind; and if we give it to many, it will be sure to profit some: for of many trials, some or other will undoubtedly succeed.

It is an eminent mark of wisdom for a man to be always like himself. You shall have some that keep a thrifty table, and lavish out upon building; profuse upon themselves, and forbid to others; niggardly at home, and lavish abroad. This diversity is vicious, and the effect of a dissatisfied and uneasy mind; whereas every wise man lives by rule.

In all our undertakings, let us first examine our own strength; the enterprise next; and, thirdly, the persons with whom we have to do. The first point is most important; for we are apt to overvalue ourselves, and reckon that we can do more than indeed we can.

We are all slaves to fortune: some only in loose and golden chains, others in strait ones, and coarser: nay, and they that bind us are slaves too themselves, some to honor, others to wealth; some to offices, and others to contempt; some to their superiors, others to themselves. Nay, life itself is a servitude: let us make the best of it then, and with our philosophy mend our fortunes.

Let us covet nothing out of our reach, but content ourselves with things hopeful and at hand; and without envying the advantages of others: for
greatness stands upon a craggy precipice, and it is much safer and quieter living upon a level. How many great men are forced to keep their station upon mere necessity; because they find that there is no coming down from it but headlong? These men should do well to fortify themselves against ill consequences by such virtues and meditation as may make them less anxious for the future. The surest expedient in this case is to bound our desires, and to leave nothing to fortune which we may keep in our own power. Neither will this course wholly compose us, but it shows us at worst the end of our troubles.

It is but a main point to take care that we propose nothing but what is hopeful and honest. For it will be equally troublesome to us, either not to succeed, or to be ashamed of the success. Wherefore let us be sure not to admit any ill design into our hearts; that we may lift up pure hands to heaven, and ask nothing which another shall be a loser by. Let us pray for a good mind, which is a wish to no man's injury.

I will remember always that I am a man, and then consider that if I am happy, it will not last always; if unhappy, I may be other if I please. I will carry my life in my hand, and deliver it up readily when it shall be called for.

I will have a care of being a slave to myself; for it is a perpetual, a shameful, and the heaviest of all servitudes: and this may be done by moderate desires. I will say to myself, "What is it that I labor, sweat, and solicit for, when it is but very little that I want, and it will not be long that I shall need anything?"

He that would make a trial of the firmness of his mind, let him set certain days apart for the practice of his virtues. Let him mortify himself with fasting, coarse clothes, and hard lodging; and then say to himself, "Is this the thing now that I was afraid of?" In a state of security, a man may thus prepare himself against hazards, and in plenty fortify himself against want.

He that would live happily, must neither trust to good fortune nor submit to bad. He must stand upon his guard against all assaults; he must stick to himself, without any dependence upon other people.
Where the mind is tinctured with philosophy, there is no place for grief, anxiety, or superfluous vexations. It is prepossessed with virtue to the neglect of fortune, which brings us to a degree of security not to be disturbed.

It is easier to give counsel than to take it; and a common thing for one choleric man to condemn another. We may be sometimes earnest in advising, but not violent or tedious. Few words, with gentleness and efficacy, are best. The misery is, that the wise do not need counsel, and fools will not take it. A good man, it is true, delights in it; and it is a mark of folly and ill-nature to hate reproof.

To a friend I would be always frank and plain, and rather fail in the success than be wanting in the matter of faith and trust.

Do not tell me what a man should do in health or poverty, but show me the way to be either sound or rich. Teach me to master my vices: for it is to no purpose, so long as I am under their government, to tell me what I must do when I am clear of it.

In case of any avarice a little eased, a luxury moderated, a temerity restrained, a sluggish humor quickened; precepts will then help us forward, and tutor us how to behave ourselves.

He that pretends to a happy life must first lay a foundation of virtue, as a bond upon him, to live and die true to that cause. We do not find felicity in the veins of the earth where we dig for gold, nor in the bottom of the sea where we fish for pearls, but in a pure and untainted mind which, if it were not holy were not fit to entertain the Deity.

He that would be truly happy, must think his own lot best, and so live with men as considering that God sees him, and so speak to God as if men heard him.

No Felicity Like Peace of Conscience

A good conscience is the testimony of a good life, and the reward of it. This is it that fortifies the mind against fortune, when a man has gotten the mastery of his passions, placed his treasure and
his security within himself, learned to be content with his condition, and that death is no evil in itself, but only the end of man.

He that has dedicated his mind to virtue, and to the good of human society, whereof he is a member, has consummated all that is either profitable or necessary for him to know or to do toward the establishment of his peace.

A great, a good, and a right mind is a kind of divinity lodged in flesh, and may be the blessing of a slave as well as of a prince; it came from heaven and to heaven it must return; and it is a kind of heavenly felicity which a pure and virtuous mind enjoys, in some degree, even upon earth: whereas temples of honor are but empty names, which, probably, owe their beginning either to ambition or to violence.

I am strangely transported with the thoughts of eternity; nay, with the belief of it; for I have profound veneration for the opinions of great men, especially when they promise things so much to my satisfaction: for they do promise them, though they do not prove them. In the question of immortality of the soul, it goes very far with me, a general consent to the opinion of a future reward and punishment; which meditation raises me to the contempt of this life, in hopes of a better.

But still, though we know that we have a soul, yet what the soul is, how, and from whence, we are utterly ignorant. This only we understand, that all the good and ill we do is under the dominion of the mind; that a clear conscience states us in an inviolable peace; and that the greatest blessing in Nature is that which every honest man may bestow upon himself.

The body is but the clog and prisoner of the mind, tossed up and down, and persecuted with punishments, violences, and diseases; but the mind itself is sacred and eternal, and exempt from the danger of all actual impression.

There is no man but approves of virtue, though but few pursue it. We see where it is, but we dare not venture to come at it: and the reason is, we overvalue that which we must quit to obtain it.
A good conscience fears no witnesses, but a guilty conscience is anxious even in solitude. If we do nothing but what is honest, let all the world know it; but if otherwise, what does it signify to have nobody else know it, so long as I know it myself: Miserable is he that slights that witness!

Wickedness, it is true, may escape the law, but not the conscience: for a private conviction is the first and the greatest punishment of offenders; so that sin plagues itself; and the fear of vengeance pursues even those that escape the stroke of it. It were ill for good men that iniquity may so easily evade the law, the judge, and the execution, if Nature had not set up torments and gibbets in the consciences of transgressors.

Those are the only certain and profitable delights, which arise from the consciousness of a well-acted life; no matter for noise abroad, so long as we are quiet within. But if our passions be seditious, that is enough to keep us waking without any other tumult.

He that would perfectly know himself, let him set aside his money, his fortune, his dignity, and examine himself naked, without being put to learn from others the knowledge of himself.

It is dangerous for a man too suddenly, or too easily, to believe himself. Wherefore let us examine, watch, observe, and inspect our own hearts; for we ourselves are our own greatest flatterers: we should every night call ourselves to account: "What infirmity have I mastered today? what passion opposed? what temptation resisted? what virtue acquired?" Our vices will abate of themselves, if they be brought every day to the shrift. Oh, the blessed sleep that follows such a diary! Oh, the tranquility, liberty, and greatness of that mind that is a spy upon itself, and a private censor of its own manners!

It is my custom every night, so soon as the candle is out, to run over all the words and actions of the past day; and I let nothing escape me; for why should I fear the sight of my own errors, when I can admonish and forgive myself? "I was a little too hot in such a dispute: my opinion might have been as well
spared, for it gave offense, and did no good at all. The thing was true, but all the truths are not to be spoken at all times. I would I had held my tongue, for there is no contending either with fools or our superiors. I have done ill, but it shall be so no more." If every man would but thus look into himself, it would be the better for us all.

It is a great comfort that we are only condemned to the same fate with the universe. The heavens themselves are mortal as well as our bodies; Nature has made us passive, and to suffer is our lot. While we are in flesh, every man has his chain and his clog, only it is looser and lighter to one man than to another; and he is more at ease that takes it up and carries it, than he that drags it.

We are born to lose and to perish, to hope and to fear, to vex ourselves and others; and there is no antidote against a common calamity but virtue; for the foundation of true joy is in the conscience.

A Good Man Can Never Be Miserable

There is not in the scale of nature a more inseparable connection of cause and effect than in the case of happiness and virtue: nor anything that more naturally produces the one, or more necessarily presupposes the other. For what is it to be happy, but for a man to content himself with his lot, in a quiet and cheerful resignation to the appointments of God?

All the actions of our lives ought to be governed with respect to good and evil; and it is only reason that distinguishes; by which reason we are in such manner influenced, as if a ray of the Divinity were dipped in a mortal body, and that is the perfection of mankind.

It is not health, nobility, riches, that can justify a wicked man; nor is it the want of all these that can discredit a good one.

It is every man's duty to make himself profitable to mankind: if he can, to many; if not, to fewer; if not so neither, to his neighbor; but, however, to himself.
A good man may serve the public, his friend, and himself, in any station: if he be not for the sword, let him take the gown; if the bar does not agree with him, let him try the pulpit; if he is silenced abroad, let him give counsel at home, and discharge the part of a faithful friend and a temperate companion. When he is no longer a citizen, he is yet a man; but the whole world is his country, and human nature never wants matter to work upon. Nay, he that spends his time well, even in a retirement, gives a great example.

We may enlarge indeed, or contract, according to the circumstances of time, place, or abilities; but, above all things, we must be sure to keep ourselves in action; for he that is slothful is dead indeed even while he lives.

Was there ever any state so desperate as that of Athens under the thirty tyrants, where it was capital to be honest, and the senate house was turned into a college of hangmen? Never was any government so wretched and so hopeless; and yet Socrates at the same time preached temperance to the tyrants, and courage to the rest, and afterward died an eminent example of faith and resolution, and a sacrifice for the common good.

Whenever he that lent me myself, and what I have, shall call for all back again, it is not a loss but a restitution, and I must willingly deliver up what most undeservedly was bestowed upon me; and it will become me to return my mind better than I received it.

Demetrius, upon the taking of Megara, asked Stilpo the philosopher what he had lost. "Nothing," says he, "for I had all that I could call my own about me." And yet the enemy had then made himself master of his patrimony, his children, and his country; but these he looked upon only as adventitious goods, and under the command of Fortune.

A good man does his duty, let it be never so painful, so hazardous, or never so great a loss to him. And it is not all the money, the power, and the pleasure in the world, not any force of necessity, that can make him wicked. He considers what he is to do, not what he is to suffer, and will keep on his
course, though there should be nothing but gibbets and torments in the way.

It is a certain mark of a brave mind not to be moved by any accidents. The upper region of the air admits neither clouds nor tempest, the thunder storms and meteors are formed below. And this is the difference betwixt a mean and an exalted mind: the former is rude and tumultuous, the latter is modest, venerable, composed, and always quiet in its station.

In brief, it is the conscience that pronounces upon the man whether he be happy or miserable.

Let wickedness escape as it may at the bar, it never fails of doing justice upon itself. For every guilty person is his own hangman.

Providence the Cure of Misfortunes

It is not possible for us to comprehend what the Power is which has made all things. Some few sparks of that Divinity are discovered, but infinitely the greater part of it lies hid. We are all of us, however, thus far agreed, first, in the acknowledgement and belief of that almighty Being; and, secondly, that we are to ascribe to it all majesty and goodness.

"If there be a Providence," say some, "how comes it to pass that good men labor under affliction and adversity, and wicked men enjoy themselves in ease and plenty?" My answer is, that God deals by us as a good father does by his children. He tries us, he hardens us, and fits us for himself. He keeps a strict hand over those that he loves, and by the rest he does as we do by our slaves; he lets them go on in license and boldness. As the master gives his most hopeful scholars the hardest lessons, so does God deal with the most generous spirits. And the cross encounters of fortune we are not to look upon as a cruelty, but as a contest: the familiarity of dangers brings us to the contempt of them, and that part is strongest which is most exercised. The seaman's hand is callous, the soldier's arm is strong, and the tree that is most exposed to the wind takes the best root.

There is no state of life so miserable but there are in it remissions, diversions, nay, and delights
too. Such is the benignity of Nature toward us, even in the severest accidents of human life. There were no living if adversity should hold on as it begins, and keep up the force of the first impression. All those terrible appearances that make us groan and tremble are but the tribute of life. We are neither to wish, nor to ask, nor to hope to escape them; for it is a kind of dishonesty to pay a tribute unwillingly.

Am I troubled with the stone, or afflicted with continual losses? Nay, is my body in danger? All this is no more than what I prayed for when I prayed for old age. All these things are as familiar in a long life as dust and dirt in a long way. Life is a warfare. And what brave man would not rather choose to be in a tent than in shambles?

It is only in adverse fortune, and in bad times, that we find great examples.

In suffering for virtue, it is not the torment but the cause that we are to consider; and the more pain, the more renown.

When any hardship befalls us, we must look upon it as an act of Providence, which many times suffers particulars to be wounded for the conservation of the whole.

How many casualties and difficulties are there that we dread as insupportable mischiefs, which, upon further thoughts, we find to be mercies and benefits; as, banishment, poverty, loss of relations, sickness, disgrace. Some are cured by the lance, by fire, hunger, thirst, taking out of bones, lopping off limbs, and the like. Nor do we only fear things that are many times beneficial to us; but, on the other side, we hanker after and pursue things that are deadly and pernicious. We are poisoned in the very pleasures of our luxury, and betrayed to a thousand diseases by the indulging of our palate.

No man knows his own strength or value but by being put to the proof. The pilot is tried in a storm, the soldier in a battle, the rich man knows not how to behave himself in poverty. He that has lived in popularity and applause knows not how he would bear infamy and reproach, nor he that never had
children how he would bear the loss of them. Calamity is the occasion of virtue, and a spur to a great mind.

There is nothing falls amiss to a good man that can be charged against Providence; for wicked actions, lewd thoughts, ambitious projects, blind lusts, and insatiable avarice, against all these he is armed by the benefit of reason. And do we expect now that God should look to our luggage too? (I mean our bodies).

Many afflictions may befall a good man, but no evil, for contraries will never incorporate. All the rivers in the world are never able to change the taste or quality of the sea.

Providence and religion are above accidents, and draw good out of everything. Affliction keeps a man in use, and makes him strong, patient, and hardy.

No man can be happy that does not stand firm against all contingencies, and say to himself in all extremities, "I should have been content if it might have been so or so, but since it is otherwise determined, God will provide better."

The more we struggle with our necessities, we draw that knot the harder, and the worse it is with us. And the more the bird flaps and flutters in the snare, the surer she is caught. So that the best way is to submit and lie still, under this double consideration, that the proceedings of God are unquestionable, and his decrees are not to be resisted.

Of Levity of Mind

We have showed what happiness is, and wherein it consists; that it is founded upon wisdom and virtue, for we must first know what we ought to do, and then live according to that knowledge. We have also discoursed the helps of philosophy and precept toward a happy life, the blessing of a good conscience, that a good man can never be miserable nor a wicked man happy, nor any man unfortunate that cheerfully submits to Providence.

We shall now examine how it comes to pass that, when a certain way to happiness lies so fair before
us, men will yet steer their course on the other side, which as manifestly leads to ruin.

There are some that live without any design at all, and only pass in the world like straws upon a river. They do not go, but they are carried. Others only deliberate upon the parts of life, and not upon the whole, which is a great error; for there is no disposing of the circumstances of it, unless we first propound the main scope. How shall any man take his aim without a mark? Or what wind will serve him that is not yet resolved upon his port?

We live as it were by chance, and by chance we are governed. Some there are that torment themselves afresh with the memory of what is past: "Lord! What did I endure? Never was any man in my condition. Everybody gave me over, my very heart was ready to break," etc. Others, again, afflict themselves with the apprehension of evils to come: and very ridiculously both: for the one does not now concern us, and the other not yet. Besides that, there may be remedies for mischiefs likely to happen, for they give us warning by signs and symptoms of their approach.

A rash seaman never considers what wind blows, or what course he steers, but runs at a venture, as if he would brave the rocks and the eddies. Whereas he that is careful and considerate informs himself beforehand where the danger lies, and what weather it is likely to be. He consults his compass, and keeps aloof from those places that are infamous for wrecks and miscarriages. So does a wise man in the common business of life. He keeps out of the way from those that may do him hurt; but it is a point of prudence not to let them take notice that he does it on purpose; for that which a man shuns he tacitly condemns.

There are many proprieties and diversities of vice; but it is one never-failing effect of it to live displeased. We do all of us labor under inordinate desires; we are either timorous and dare not venture, or venturing we do not succeed. Or else we put ourselves upon uncertain hopes, where we are perpetually anxious and in suspense. And when we have taken great pains to no purpose, we come then to repent of our undertakings. We are afraid to go on,
and we can neither master our appetites nor obey them. We live and die restless and irresolute.

This is it that puts us upon rambling voyages. The town pleases us today, the country tomorrow; the splendors of the court at one time, the horrors of a wilderness at another. But all this while we carry our plague about us.

It must be the change of mind, not of the climate, that will remove the heaviness of the heart; our voices go along with us, and we carry in ourselves the causes of our disquiets. There is a great weight lies upon us, and the bare shocking of it makes it the more uneasy. Changing of countries, in this case, is not travelling, but wandering.

We must keep on our course, if we would gain our journey's end. He that cannot live happily anywhere, will live happily nowhere.

What, is a man the better for travelling? As if his cares could not find him out wherever he goes? Is there any retiring from the fear of death, or of torments, or from those difficulties which beset a man wherever he is?

It is only philosophy that makes the mind invincible, and places us out of the reach of fortune, so that all her arrows fall short of us. This it is that reclaims the rage of our lusts, and sweetens the anxiety of our fears. Frequent changing of places or councils shows an instability of mind; and we must fix the body before we can fix the soul. We can hardly stir abroad, or look about us, without encountering something or other that revives our appetites.

As he that would cast off an unhappy love avoids whatsoever may put him in mind of the person, so he that would wholly deliver himself from his beloved lusts must shun all objects that may put them in his head again, and remind him of them.

We travel, as children run up and down after strange sights, for novelty, not profit. We return neither the better nor the sounder. Nay, and the very agitation hurts us. We learn to call towns and places by their names, and to tell stories of moun-
tains and rivers. But had not our time been better spent in the study of wisdom and of virtue? In the learning of what is already discovered, and in the quest of things not yet found out?

It is not the place, I hope, that makes either an orator or a physician. Will any man ask upon the road, Pray, which is the way to prudence, to justice, to temperance, to fortitude?

A great traveller was complaining that he was never the better for his travels. "That is very true," said Socrates, "because you traveled with yourself." Now, had he not better have made himself another man than to transport himself to another place?

We divide our lives betwixt a dislike of the present and a desire of the future. But he that lives as he should orders himself so as neither to fear nor to wish for tomorrow: if it come, it is welcome; but if not, there is nothing lost. For that which is come is but the same over again with what is past.

There are some things we would be thought to desire, which we are so far from desiring that we dread them. We do not deal candidly even with God himself. We should say to ourselves in these cases, "This I have drawn upon myself. I could never be quiet until I had gotten this woman, this place, this estate, this honor, and now see what is come of it."

One sovereign remedy against all misfortunes is constancy of mind. The changing of parties and countenances looks as if a man were driven with the wind. Nothing can be above him that is above fortune.

A Wise Man Proof Against Calamities

It is not violence, reproach, contempt, or whatever else from without that can make a wise man quit his ground, but he is proof against calamities, both great and small. Only our error is, that what we cannot do ourselves, we think nobody else can; so that we judge of the wise by the measures of the weak.
Place me among princes or among beggars, the one shall not make me proud, nor the other ashamed. I can take as sound a sleep in a barn as in a palace, and a bundle of hay makes me as good a lodging as a bed of down. Should every day succeed to my wish, it should not transport me; nor would I think myself miserable if I should not have one quiet hour in my life. I will not transport myself with pain or pleasure. But yet for all that, I could wish that I had an easier game to play, and that I would put rather to moderate my joys than my sorrows. If I were an imperial prince, I had rather take than be taken; and yet I would bear the same mind under the chariot of my conqueror that I had in my own.

It is no great matter to trample upon those things that are most coveted or feared by the common people. There are those that will laugh upon the wheel, and cast themselves upon a certain death, only upon a transport of love, perhaps anger, avarice, or revenge; but how much more than upon an instinct of virtue, which is invincible and steady! If a short obstinacy of mind can do this, how much more shall a composed and deliberate virtue, whose force is equal and perpetual.

To secure ourselves in this world, first, we must aim at nothing that men count worth the wrangling for. Secondly, we must not value the possession of anything that even a common thief would think worth the stealing. A man's body is no booty. Let the way be never so dangerous for robberies, the poor and the naked pass quietly.

Of Sincerity of Manners

A plain dealing sincerity of manners makes a man's life happy, even in despite of scorn and contempt, which is every clear man's fate. But we had better yet be contemned for simplicity than lie perpetually upon the torture of a counterfeit, provided that care be taken not to confound simplicity with negligence. And it is, moreover, an uneasy life, that of a disguise, for a man to seem to be what he is not, to keep a perpetual guard upon himself, and to live in fear of a discovery.

Of all others, a studious life is the least tiresome. It makes us easy to ourselves and to
Happiness Can Never Depend Upon Fortune

Never pronounce any man happy that depends upon fortune for his happiness; for nothing can be more preposterous than to place the good of a reasonable creature in unreasonable things.

It is a common mistake to account those things necessary that are superfluous and to depend upon fortune for the felicity of life, which arises only from virtue. There is no trusting to her smiles. The sea swells and rages in a moment, and the ships are swallowed at night, in the very place where they sported themselves in the morning. And fortune has the same power over princes that it has over empires, over nations that it has over cities, and the same power over cities that it has over private men.

Where is that estate that may not be followed upon the heel with famine and beggary; that dignity which the next moment may not be laid in the dust; that kingdom that is secure from desolation and ruin? The period of all things is at hand, as well that which casts out the fortunate as the other that delivers the unhappy. And that which may fall out at any time may fall out this very day.

What shall come to pass I know not, but what may come to pass I know; so that I will despair of nothing, but expect everything; and whatever Providence remits is clear gain.

Every moment, if it spares me, deceives me. And yet in some sort it does not deceive me, for though I know that anything may happen, yet I know likewise that everything will not. I will hope the best, and provide for the worst.

Methinks we should not find so much fault with fortune for her inconstancy, when we ourselves suffer a change every moment that we live; only other changes make more noise, and this steals upon us like the shadow upon a dial, every jot as certainly, but more insensibly.

Nay, we are to dread our peace and felicity more than violence, because we are here taken unprovided;
unless in a state of peace we do the duty of men in
war, and say to ourselves, Whatever may be, will be.
I am today safe and happy in the love of my country;
I am tomorrow banished. Today in pleasure, peace,
health; tomorrow broken upon a wheel, led in triumph,
and in the agony of sickness. Let us therefore
prepare for a shipwreck in the port, and for a
tempest in a calm.

Wherefore let us set before our eyes the whole
condition of human nature, and consider as well what
may happen as what commonly does. The way to make
future calamities easy to us in the sufferance, is to
make them familiar to us in the contemplation. How
many cities in Asia, Achaia, Assyria, Macedonia, have
been swallowed up by earthquakes? Nay, whole coun-
tries are lost, and large provinces laid under water.
But time brings all things to an end; for all the
works of mortals are mortal; all possessions and
their possessors are uncertain and perishable; and
what wonder is it to lose anything at any time when
we must one day lose all?

That which fortune gives us this hour she may
take away the next; and he that trusts to her favors
shall either find himself deceived, or, if he be not,
he will at least be troubled because he may be so.
There is no defense in walls, fortifications, and
engines, against the power of fortune. We must
provide ourselves within, and when we are safe there,
we are invincible. We may be battered, but not
taken.

But the best of it is, if a man cannot mend his
fortune, he may yet mend his manners, and put himself
so far out of fortune's reach that whether she gives
or takes it shall be all one to us; for we are
neither the greater for one, nor the less for the
other.

What Befalls One May Befall All

We call this a dark room, or that a light one;
when it is in itself neither the one nor the other,
but only as the day and the night render it. And so
it is in riches, strength of body, beauty, honor,
command; and likewise in sickness, pain, banishment,
death, which are in themselves middle and indifferent
things, and only good or bad as they are influenced by virtue.

When Zeno was told that all his goods were drowned, "Why then," says he, "fortune has a mind to make me a philosopher." It is a great matter for a man to advance his mind above her threats or flatteries; for he that has once gotten the better of her is safe forever.

When we see any man banished, beggared, tortured, we are to account that though the mischief fell upon another, it was levelled at us. What wonder is it if, of so many thousands of dangers that are constantly hovering over us, one comes to hit us at last? That which befalls any man, may befall every man.

The things that are often contemned by the inconsiderate, and always by the wise, are in themselves neither good nor evil: as, pleasure and pains, prosperity and adversity, which can only operate upon our outward condition, without any proper and necessary effect upon the mind.

A Sensual Life is a Miserable Life

What if a body might have all the pleasures in the world for the asking; who would so much unman himself as by accepting of them to desert his soul, and become a perpetual slave to his senses?

It is a shame for a man to place his felicity in those entertainments and appetites that are stronger in brutes. Do not beasts eat with a better stomach? Have they not more satisfaction in their lusts? And they have not only a quicker relish of their pleasures, but they enjoy them without either scandal or remorse. If sensuality were happiness, beasts were happier than men; but human felicity is lodged in the soul, not in the flesh.

They that deliver themselves up to luxury are still either tormented with too little, or oppressed with too much; and equally miserable.

So long as our bodies were hardened with labor, or tired with exercise or hunting, our food was plain
and simple; many dishes have made many diseases.

The most miserable mortals are they that deliver themselves up to their palates, or to their lusts. The pleasure is short and turns presently nauseous, and in the end it is either shame or repentance.

It is a brutal entertainment, and unworthy of a man, to place his felicity in the service of his senses.

Deliver me from the superstition of taking those things which are light and vain for felicities.

Of Avarice and Ambition

There is no avarice without some punishment, over and above that which it is to itself. How miserable is it in the desire! How miserable even in the attaining of our ends! For money is a greater torment in the possession than it is in the pursuit. The fear of losing it is a great trouble, the loss of it a greater, and it is made a greater yet by opinion.

Neither does avarice make us only unhappy in ourselves, but malevolent also to mankind. The soldier wishes for war, the husbandman would have his corn dear, the lawyer prays for dissension, the physician for a sickly year.

One man lives by the loss of another. Some few, perhaps, have the fortune to be detected; but they are all wicked alike.

Ambition puffs us up with vanity and wind; and we are equally troubled either to see anybody before us, or nobody behind us; so that we lie under a double envy, for whosoever envies another is also envied himself.

I will never envy those that the people call great and happy. A sound mind is not to be shaken with a popular and vain applause; nor is it in the power of their pride to disturb the state of our happiness.

Nay, in the very moment of our despising servants, we may be made so ourselves.
The Blessings of Temperance and Moderation

There is not anything that is necessary to us but we have it either cheap or gratis. And this is the provision that our heavenly Father has made for us, whose bounty was never wanting to our needs.

He that lives according to reason shall never be poor; and he that governs his life by opinion shall never be rich. If nothing will serve a man but rich clothes and furniture, statues and plate, a numerous train of servants, and the rarities of all nations, it is not fortune's fault, but his own, that he is not satisfied. For his desires are insatiable, and this is not a thirst but a disease.

It is the mind that makes us rich and happy, in what condition whatsoever we are; and money signifies no more to it than it does to the gods.

Coarse bread and water to a temperate man is as good as a feast, and the very herbs of the field yield a nourishment to man as well as to beasts. It was not by choice meats and perfumes that our forefathers recommended themselves, but in virtuous actions, and the sweat of honest, military, and of manly labors.

Nature does not give virtue, and it is a kind of art to become good.

The end of eating and of drinking is satiety. Now what matters it though one eats and drinks more and another less, so long as the one is not a-hungry, nor the other a-thirst? Epicurus, who limits pleasure to nature, as the Stoics do to virtue, is undoubtedly in the right; and those that cite him to authorize their voluptuousness do exceedingly mistake him, and only seek a good authority for an evil cause. For their pleasures of sloth, gluttony, and lust have no affinity at all with his precepts or meaning.

It is the practice of the multitude to bark at eminent men, as little dogs do at strangers, for they look upon other men's virtues as the upbraiding of their own wickedness. We should do well to commend those that are good; if not, let us pass them over.
The Blessings of Friendship

Of all felicities, the most charming is that of a firm and gentle friendship. It sweetens all our cares, dispels our sorrows, and counsels us in all extremities. Nay, if there were no other comfort in it than the bare exercise of so generous a virtue, even for that single reason a man would not be without it. Besides that, it is a sovereign antidote against all calamities, even against the fear of death itself.

That friendship where men's affections are cemented by an equal and by a common love of goodness, it is not either hope or fear, or any private interest, that can ever dissolve it.

My conversation lies among my books, but yet in the letters of a friend, methinks I have his company; and when I answer them I do not only write, but speak. In effect a friend is an eye, a heart, a tongue, a hand, at all distances.

He that is a friend to himself is also a friend to mankind. Even in my very studies, the greatest delight I take in what I learn is the teaching of it to others. For there is no relish, methinks, in the possession of anything without a partner. Nay, if wisdom itself were offered me upon condition only of keeping it to myself, I should undoubtedly refuse it.

Consolations Against Death

This life is only a prelude to eternity, where we are to expect another original, and another state of things. We have no prospect of heaven here but at a distance; let us therefore expect our last hour with courage.

The last, I say, to our bodies, but not to our minds. Our luggage we leave behind us, and return as naked out of the world as we came into it. The day which we fear as our last is but the birthday of our eternity; and it is the only way to it. So that what we fear as a rock, proves to be but a port, in many cases to be desired, never to be refused. And he that dies young has only made a quick voyage of it.

Nay, suppose that all the business of this world
should be forgotten, or my memory traduced, what is all this to me? "I have done my duty."

Why do we not as well lament that we did not live a thousand years ago, as that we shall not be alive a thousand years hence? It is but travelling the great road, and to the place whither we must all go at last. It is but submitting to the law of Nature, and to that lot which the whole world has suffered that has gone before us; and so must they too that are to come after us. Nay, how many thousands, when our time comes, will expire in the same moment with us!

Let us live in our bodies, therefore, as if we were only to lodge in them this night, and leave them tomorrow.

It is the care of a wise and good man to look to his manners and actions; and rather how well he lives than how long. For to die sooner or later is not the business, but to die well or ill; for death brings us to immortality.

It is necessary to provide against hunger, thirst, and cold; and somewhat for a covering to shelter us against other inconveniences; but not a pin matter whether it be of turf or of marble. A man may lie as warm and as dry under a thatched as under a gilded roof. Let the mind be great and glorious, and all other things are despicable in comparison.

The future is uncertain; and I had rather beg of myself not to desire anything, than of fortune to bestow it.

**OF BENEFITS**

A benefit is a good office, done with intention and judgment; that is to say, with a due regard to all the circumstances of what, how, why, when, where, to whom, how much, and the like. Or, otherwise, it is a voluntary and benevolent action, that delights the giver in the comfort it brings to the receiver. The very meditation of it breeds good blood and generous thoughts, and instructs us in all the parts of honor, humanity, friendship, piety, gratitude, prudence and justice.
In short, the art and skill of conferring benefits is, of all human duties, the most absolutely necessary to the well-being both of reasonable nature and of every individual; as the very cement of all communities, and the blessing of particular ones.

He that does good to another man does good also to himself; not only in the consequence, but in the very act of doing it; for the conscience of well-doing is an ample reward.

Of Intentions and Effects

The good-will of the benefactor is the fountain of all benefits; Nay, it is the benefit itself, or at least the stamp that makes it valuable and current. The obligation rests in the mind, not in the matter; and all those advantages which we see, handle, or hold in actual possession by the courtesy of another are but several modes or ways of explaining and putting the good-will in execution.

There needs no great subtlety to prove that both benefits and injuries receive their value from the intention, when even brutes themselves are able to decide this question. Tread upon a dog by chance, or put him to pain upon the dressing of a wound; the one he passes by as an accident, and the other, in his fashion, he acknowledges as a kindness. But offer to strike at him, though you do him no hurt at all, he flies yet in the face of you, even for the mischief that you barely meant him.

My friend is taken by pirates; I redeem him; and after that he falls into other pirates' hands. His obligation to me is the same still as if he had preserved his freedom. And so, if I save a man from any misfortune, and he falls into another; if I give him a sum of money which is afterward taken away by thieves; it comes to the same case. Fortune may deprive us of the matter of a benefit, but the benefit itself remains inviolable.

If the benefit resided in the matter, that which is good for one man would be so for another. Whereas many times the very same thing given to several persons works contrary effects, even to the difference of life or death; and that which is one body's
cure proves another body's poison. Besides that, the timing of it alters the value; and a crust of bread, upon a pinch, is a greater present than an imperial crown.

And the same reason holds good even in religion itself. It is not the incense, or the offering, that is acceptable to God, but the purity and devotion of the worshipper. Neither is the bare will, without action, sufficient, that is, where we have the means of acting; for in that case it signifies as little to wish well without well-doing, as to do good without willing it. There must be effect as well as intention, to make me owe a benefit.

In fine, the conscience alone is the judge, both of benefits and injuries.

And so it is with the good we receive, either without, or beside, or contrary to intention. It is the mind, and not the event, that distinguishes from an injury.

Of Judgment in the Bestowal of Benefits

We are to give by choice, and not by hazard. My inclination bids me oblige one man; I am bound in duty and justice to serve another. Here it is a charity, there it is pity; and elsewhere, perhaps, encouragement.

There are some that want, to whom I would not give; because, if I did, they would still want. To one man I would barely offer a benefit, but I would press it upon another.

To say the truth, we do not employ money to more profit than that which we bestow; and it is not to our friends, our acquaintances or countrymen, nor to this or that condition of men, that we are to restrain our bounties, but wheresoever there is a man, there is a place and an occasion for a benefit. We give to some that are good already; to others, in hope to make them so; but we must do all with discretion. For we are as well answerable for what we give as for what we receive. Nay, the misplacing of a benefit is worse than the not receiving of it; for the one is another man's fault, but the other is mine.
The error of the giver does oft-times excuse the ingratitude of the receiver; for a favor ill-placed is rather a profusion than a benefit.

I will choose a man of integrity, sincere, considerate, grateful, temperate, well-natured, neither covetous nor sordid; and when I have obliged such a man, though not worth a groat in the world, I have gained my end.

If we give only to receive, we lose the fairest objects for our charity: the absent, the sick, the captive, and the needy. When we oblige those that can never pay us again in kind, as a stranger upon his last farewell, or a necessitous person upon his death-bed, we make Providence our debtor, and rejoice in the conscience even of a fruitless benefit. So long as we are affected with passions, and distracted with hopes and fears, and with our pleasures, we are incompetent judges where to place our bounties. But when death presents itself, and that we come to our last will and testament, we leave our fortunes to the most worthy. He that gives nothing but in hopes of receiving, must die intestate.

But what shall I do, you will say, to know whether a man will be grateful or not? I will follow probability, and hope the best. He that sows is not sure to reap, nor the seaman to reach his port, nor the soldier to win the field. He that weds is not sure his wife shall be honest, or his children dutiful. But shall we therefore neither sow, sail, bear arms, nor marry?

Nay, if I knew a man to be incurably thankless, I would yet be so kind as to put him in his way, or let him light a candle at mine, or draw water at my well; which may stand him perhaps in great stead, and yet not be reckoned as a benefit from me; for I do it carelessly and not for his sake but my own, as an office of humanity, without any choice or kindness.

Of the Matter of Obligations

Alexander bestowed a city upon one of his favorites who, modestly excusing himself, "That it was too much for him to receive." "Well, but," says Alexander, "it is not too much for me to give." A haughty certainly and an imprudent speech; for that
which was not fit for the one to take could not be fit for the other to give.

It passes in the world for greatness of mind to be perpetually giving and loading of people with bounties. But it is one thing to know how to give, and another thing not to know how to keep. Give me a heart that is easy and open, but I will have no holes in it. Let it be bountiful with judgment, but I will have nothing run out of it I know not how. How much greater was he that refused the city than the other that offered it.

Those favors are, in some sort, scandalous that make a man ashamed of his patron.

It is a matter of great prudence for the benefactor to suit the benefit to the condition of the receiver, who must be either his superior, his inferior, or his equal; and that which would be the highest obligation imaginable to the one, would perhaps be as great a mockery and affront to the other. A plate of broken meat to a rich man were an indignity, which to a poor man is a charity.

Whatsoever the present be, or to whomsoever we offer it, this general rule must be observed; that we always design the good and satisfaction of the receiver, and never grant anything to his detriment.

I will no more undo a man with his will, than forbear saving him against it. It is a benefit in some cases to grant, and in others to deny; so that we are rather to consider the advantage than the desire of the petitioner. For we may in a passion earnestly beg for (and take it ill to be denied to) that very thing which, upon second thoughts, we may come to curse, as the occasion of a most pernicious bounty.

He that lends a man money to carry to a bawdy-house, or a weapon for his revenge, makes himself a partaker of his crime.

The Manner of Obliging

In the first place, whatsoever we give, let us do it frankly. A kind benefactor makes a man happy as soon as he can, and as much as he can. There
should be no delay in a benefit but the modesty of the receiver. If we cannot foresee the request, let us, however, immediately grant it, and by no means suffer the repeating of it. It is so grievous a thing to say, I BEG. The very word puts a man out of countenance. And it is a double kindness to do the thing, and save an honest man the confusion of a blush. It comes too late that comes for the asking; for nothing costs us so dear as that we purchase with our prayers. It is all we give, even for heaven itself; and even there too, where our petitions are at the fairest, we choose rather to present them in secret ejaculations than by word of mouth. That is the lasting and the acceptable benefit that meets the receiver half-way.

The rule is, we are to give as we would receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation; for there is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers.

It was well said of him that called a good office, that was done harshly, and with an ill will, a stony piece of bread. It is necessary for him that is hungry to receive it, but it almost chokes a man in the going down. There must be no pride, arrogance of looks, or tumor of words in the bestowing of benefits.

Whatsoever we bestow, let it be done with a frank and cheerful countenance. A man must not give with his hand, and deny with his looks. He that gives quickly, gives willingly.

Many benefits are great in show, but little or nothing in effect when they come hard, slow, or at unawares. That which is given with pride and ostentation, is rather an ambition than a bounty.

He must be a wise, a friendly, and a well-bred man that perfectly acquires himself in the art and duty of obliging; for all his actions must be squared according to the measures of civility, good-nature, and discretion.

Of Requital

Diogenes walked naked and unconcerned through the middle of Alexander's treasures and was, as well
in other men's opinions as in his own, even above Alexander himself, who at that time had the whole world at his feet. For there was more that the one scorned to take than the other had it in his power to give; and it is a greater generosity for a beggar to refuse money than for a price to bestow it.

Nor is it to be said that "I cannot requite such a benefactor because I am poor, and have it not." I can give good counsel, a conversation wherein he may take both delight and profit, freedom of discourse without flattery, kind attention, where he deliberates, and faith inviolable where he trusts. I may bring him to a love and knowledge of truth, deliver him from the errors of his credulity, and teach him to distinguish betwixt friends and parasites.

Of How the Receiver Should Act

There are certain rules in common betwixt the giver and the receiver. We must do both cheerfully, that the giver may receive the fruit of his benefit in the very act of bestowing it. The more glorious part, in appearance, is that of the giver; but the receiver has undoubtedly the harder game to play in many regards.

There are some from whom I would not accept a benefit; that is to say, from those upon whom I would not bestow one. For why should I not scorn to receive a benefit where I am ashamed to own it?

It is a pain to an honest and a generous mind to lie under a duty of affection against inclination. I do not speak here of wise men, that love to do what they ought to do, that have their passions at command, that prescribe laws for themselves and keep them when they have done; but of men in a state of imperfection, that may have a good will perhaps to be honest, and yet be overborne by the contumacy of their affections.

We must therefore have a care to whom we become obliged; and I would be much stricter yet in the choice of a creditor for benefits than for money. In the one case, it is but paying what I had, and the debt is discharged. In the other, I do not only owe more, but when I have paid that, I am still in
arrear; and this law is the very foundation of friendship.

To match this scruple of receiving money, with another of keeping it:

There was a certain Pythagorean that contracted with a cobbler for a pair of shoes, and some three or four days after, going to pay him his money, the shop was shut up. When he had knocked a great while at the door, "Friend," says a fellow, "you may hammer your heart out there, for the man that you look for is dead." Upon this the philosopher went away, with his money clinking in his hand, and well enough content to save it. At last, his conscience took check at it; and, upon reflection, "Though the man be dead," says he, "to others, he is alive to thee. Pay him what thou owest him." And so he went back presently and thrust it into his shop through the chink of the door.

Whatever we owe, it is our part to find where to pay it, and do it without asking, too; for whether the creditor be good or bad, the debt is still the same.

But whatever we do, let us be sure always to keep a grateful mind. It is not enough to say, what requital shall a poor man offer to a prince, or a slave to his patron, when it is the glory of gratitude that it depends only upon the good will.

For my own part, when I come to cast up my account, and know what I owe and to whom, though I make my return sooner to some, and later to others, as occasion or fortune will give me leave, yet I will be just to all. I will be grateful to God, to man, to those that have obliged me; nay, even to those that have obliged my friends. I am bound in honor and in conscience to be thankful for what I have received; and if it be not yet full, it is some pleasure still that I may hope for more. For the requital of a favor there must be virtue, occasion, means, and fortune.

Of Ingratitude

The principal causes of ingratitude are pride and self-conceit, avarice, envy, etc. It is a
familiar exclamation, "It is true he did this or that for me, but it came so late, and it was so little, I had even as good have been without it. If he had not given it to me, he must have given it to somebody else; it was nothing out of his own pocket." Nay, we are so ungrateful that he that gives us all we have, if he leaves anything to himself, we reckon that he does us an injury.

Not to return one good office for another is inhuman; but to return evil for good is diabolical. There are too many even of this sort who, the more they owe, the more they hate. There is nothing more dangerous than to oblige those people; for when they are conscious of not paying the debt, they wish the creditor out of the way.

But what is all this to those who are so made, as to dispute even the goodness of Heaven, which gives us all, and expects nothing again, but continues giving to the most unthankful and complaining.

Without the exercise and the commerce of mutual offices we can be neither happy nor safe, for it is only society that secures us. Take us one by one, a prey even to brutes as well as to one another. Nature has brought us into the world naked and unarmed. We have not the teeth or the paws of lions or bears to make ourselves terrible. But by the two blessings of reason and union we secure and defend ourselves against violence and fortune. This it is that makes man the master of all other creatures, who otherwise were scarce a match for the weakest of them. This it is that comforts us in sickness, in age, in misery, in pains, and in the worst of calamities. Take away this combination, and mankind is dissociated and falls to pieces.

Of Anger

Anger is not only a vice, but a vice point-blank against nature, for it divides instead of joining, and, in some measure, frustrates the end of Providence in human society. One man was born to help another. Anger makes us destroy one another. The one unites, the other separates. The one is beneficial to us, the other mischievous. The one succors even strangers, the other destroys even the most intimate
friends. The one ventures all to save another, the other ruins himself to undo another. Nature is bountiful, but anger is pernicious; for it is not fear, but mutual love that binds up mankind.

The bravest man in the world may look pale when he puts on his armor, his knees knock and his heart works before the battle is joined; but these are only motions: whereas anger is an excursion, and proposes revenge or punishment, which cannot be without the mind.

As fear flies, so anger assaults. And it is not possible to resolve either upon violence or caution, without the concurrence of the will.

Suppressing Anger

It is an idle thing to pretend that we cannot govern our anger: for some things that we do are much harder than others that we ought to do. The wildest affections may be tamed by discipline, and there is hardly anything which the mind wills to do but it may do.

It is most certain that we might govern our anger if we would, for the same thing that galls us at home gives us no offense at all abroad. And what is the reason of it, but that we are patient in one place, and forward in another?

It was a strong provocation that was given to Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander. The Athenians sent their ambassadors to him, and they were received with this compliment: "Tell me, gentlemen," says Philip, "what is there that I can do to oblige the Athenians?" Democharas, one of the ambassadors, told him that they would take it for a great obligation if he would be pleased to hang himself. This insolence gave an indignation to the bystanders; but Philip bade them not to meddle with him, but even to let that foul-mouthed fellow go as he came. "And for you, the rest of the ambassadors," says he, "pray tell the Athenians that it is worse to speak such things than to hear and forgive them."

This wonderful patience under contumelies was a great means of Philip's security.
Anger a Short Madness

He was much in the right, whoever he was, that first called anger a short madness; for they have both of them the same symptoms. And there is so wonderful a resemblance betwixt the transports of choler and those of frenzy, that it is a hard matter to know one from the other.

Neither is anger a bare resemblance only of madness, but many times an irrevocable transition into the thing itself. How many persons have we known, read, and heard of that have lost their wits in a passion and never came to themselves again? It is therefore to be avoided, not only for moderation's sake, but also for health.

Now, if the outward appearance of anger be so foul and hideous, how deformed must that miserable mind be that is harrassed with it. For it leaves no place either for counsel or friendship, honesty or good manners; no place either for the exercise of reason, or for the offices of life. If I were to describe it, I would draw a tiger bathed in blood, sharp set, and ready to take a leap at his prey. Or, dress it up as the poets represent the furies, with whips, snakes, and flames.

Anger, alas, is but a wild impetuous blast, an empty tumor, the very infirmity of women and children; a brawling, clamorous evil. And the more noise the less courage, as we find it commonly that the boldest tongues have the faintest hearts.

The Effect of Anger

"It is a sad thing," we cry, "to put up with these injuries, and we are not able to bear them." As if any man that can bear anger could not bear an injury, which is much more supportable.

But "May not an honest man then be allowed to be angry at the murder of his father, or the ravishing of his sister or daughter before his face?" No, not at all. I will defend my parents, and I will repay the injuries done them; but it is my piety, and not my anger, that moves me to it. I will do my duty without fear or confusion, I will not rage, I will
not weep, but discharge the office of a good man without forfeiting the dignity of a man. If my father be assaulted, I will endeavor to rescue him. If he be killed, I will do right to his memory. And in all this, not in any transport of passion, but in honor and conscience.

Reason judges according to right. Anger will have everything seem right, whatever it does, and when it has once pitched upon a mistake, it is never to be convinced, but prefers a pertinacity, even in the greatest evil, before the most necessary repentance.

If anger were sufferable in any case, it might be allowed against an incorrigible criminal under the hand of justice. But punishment is not a matter of anger but of caution. The law is without passion and strikes malefactors as we do serpents and venemous creatures, for fear of greater mischief.

It is not for the dignity of a judge, when he comes to pronounce the fatal sentence, to express any motions of anger in his looks, words, or gestures; for he condemns the vice, not the man, and looks upon the wickedness without anger, as he does upon the prosperity of wicked men without envy. But though he be not angry, I would have him a little moved in point of humanity, but yet without any offense either to his place or wisdom.

Our passions vary, but reason is equal. And it were a great folly, for that which is stable, faithful, and sound, to repair for succor to that which is uncertain, false, and distempered.

If the offender is incurable, take him out of the world, that if he will not be good he may cease to be evil; but this must be without anger too.

A good and wise man is not to be an enemy of wicked men, but a reprover of them. And he is to look upon all the drunkards, the lustful, the thankless, covetous, and ambitious that he meets with, not otherwise than as a physician looks upon his patients.

Besides, if we will needs be quarrelsome, it must be either with our superior, our equal, or inferior. To contend with our superior is folly and madness;
with our equals, it is doubtful and dangerous; and with our inferiors, it is base.

Anger is so potent a passion that Socrates durst not trust himself with it. "Sirrah," says he to his man, "now would I beat you, if I were not angry with you!"

How prone and eager are we in our hatred, and how backward in our love! Were it not much better now to be making of friendships, pacifying of enemies, doing of good offices both private and public, than to be still meditating of mischief, and designing how to wound one man in his fame, another in his fortune, a third in his person? The one being so innocent, and safe, and the other so difficult, impious, and hazardous.

Let this be a rule to us, never to deny a pardon that does not hurt either the giver or receiver.

And, to wind up all in one word, the great lesson of mankind, as well in this as in all other cases, is to do as we would be done by.

EPISTLES

Of Writing and Speaking

No man takes satisfaction in a flux of words without choice, where the noise is more than the value. Nay, let a man have words never so much at will, he will no more speak fast than he will run, for fear his tongue should get before his wit.

The speech of a philosopher should be, like his life, composed, without pressing or stumbling, which is fitter for a mountebank than a man of sobriety and business.

You say well that in speaking the very ordering of the voice (to say nothing of the actions, countenances, and other circumstances accompanying it) is a consideration worthy of a wise man.

He that has a precipitate speech is commonly violent in his manners. And besides that, there is in it much of vanity and emptiness.
Truth and morality should be delivered in words plain, and without affectation; for, like remedies, unless they stay with us, we are never the better for them.

A wantonness and effeminacy of speech denotes luxury, and self-indulgence, for the wit follows the mind: if the latter be sound, composed, temperate, and grave, the wit is dry and sober too; but if the one is corrupted, the other is likewise unsound.

A finical temper is read in the very gestures and clothes. If a man be choleric and violent, it is also discovered in his motions. An angry man speaks short and quick. The speech of an effeminate man is loose and melting. A quaint and solicitous way of speaking is the sign of a weak mind; but a great man speaks with ease and freedom, and with more assurance, though less care.

Speech is the index of the mind.

It does not become a man to be delicate. As it is in drink, the tongue never trips till the mind be overborne, so it is with speech; so long as the mind is whole and sound, the speech is masculine and strong, but if one fails, the other follows.

Some are raised and startled at words, as a horse is at a drum, and indulge the very passion of the speaker. Others are moved with the beauty of things; and when they hear anything bravely urged against death or fortune, they do secretly wish for some occasion of experimenting that generosity in themselves. But not one of a thousand of them that carries the resolution home with him that he had conceived. It is an easy matter to excite an auditory to the love of goodness, having already the foundation and seeds of virtue within themselves; so that it is but awakening the consideration of it, where all men are agreed beforehand upon the main. Who is so sordid as not to be roused at such a speech as this: "The poor man wants many things, but the covetous man wants all." Can any flesh forbear being delighted with this saying, though a satire against his own vice?

In the matter of composition, I would write as I speak, with ease and freedom, for it is more friendly as well as more natural.
If I put my thoughts in good sense, the matter of ornament I shall leave to the orators.

Of authors, be sure to make a choice of the best; and to stick close to them. And though you take up others by and by, reserve some select ones however for your study and retreat. In your reading, you will every day meet with some consolation and support against poverty, death, and other calamities incident to human life. Extract what you like, and then single out some particular from the rest, for that day's meditation.

And so it fares with our studies; so long as they lie whole, they pass into the memory without affecting the understanding; but upon meditation they become our own, and supply us with strength and virtue.

There are some writings that stir up some generous resolutions, and do, as it were, inspire a man with a new soul. They display the blessings of a happy life, and possess me at the same time with admiration and hope. They give me a veneration for the oracles of antiquity, and a claim to them as a common heritage; for they are the treasure of mankind, and it must be my duty to improve the stock, and transmit it to posterity.

I do not pretend all this while to be the master of truth, but I am yet a most obstinate inquisitor after it. I am no man's slave; but as I ascribe much to great men, I challenge something to myself. Our forefathers have left us not only their invention, but matter also for farther inquiry.

Is not this a fine time for us to be fiddling and fooling about words? How many useful and necessary things are there, that we are first to learn, and, secondly, to imprint in our minds. For it is not enough to remember and to understand, unless we do what we know.

Sometimes, all of a sudden, in the middle of my meditations, my ears are struck with the shout of a thousand people together, from some spectacle or other; the noise does not all discompose my thought; it is no more to me than the dashing of waves, or the wind in a wood; but possibly sometimes it may divert them. "Good Lord," think I, "if men would but
exercise their brains as they do their bodies; and take as much pains for virtue as they do for pleasure!". For difficulties strengthen the mind as well as labor does the body.

Upon these thoughts I betake myself to my philosophy; and then, methinks, I am not well unless I put myself into some public employment; not for the honor or the profit of it, but only to place myself in a station where I may be serviceable to my country and to my friends. But when I come, on the other side, to consider the uneasiness, the abuses, and the loss of time, that attend public affairs, I get me home again as fast as I can, and take up a resolution of spending the remainder of my days within the privacy of my own walls.

How great a madness is it to set our hearts upon trifles; especially to the neglect of the most serious offices of our lives, and the most important end of our being!

How miserable, as well as short, is their life, that compass with great labor what they possess with greater; and hold with anxiety what they acquire with trouble!

But we are governed in all things by opinion, and everything is to us as we believe it.

The Knowledge of Virtue

Be true to yourself, and examine yourself whether you be of the same mind to-day that you were yesterday; for that is a sign of perfect wisdom.

It is for young men to gather knowledge, and for old men to use it: and assure yourself that no man gives a fairer account of his time than he that makes it his daily study to make himself better.

There is no age better adapted to virtue than that which comes by many experiments, and long sufferings, to the knowledge of it: for our lusts are then weak, and our judgment strong; and wisdom is the effect of time.

We are led to the understanding of virtue by the congruity we find in such and such actions to nature
and right reason; by the order, grace, and constancy of them, and by a certain majesty and greatness that surpass all other things. From hence proceeds a happy life, to which nothing comes amiss; but, on the contrary, everything succeeds to our very wish.

Shall I tell you now, in a word, the sum of human duty? Patience, where we are to suffer; and prudence in things we do.

That only may properly be said to be the long life that draws all ages into one; and that a short one that forgets the past, neglects the present, and is solicitous for the time to come.

We are best with dangers; and therefore a wise man should have his virtues in continual readiness to encounter them. Whether poverty, loss of friends, pains, sickness, or the like, he still maintains his post; whereas a fool is surprised at everything, and afraid of his very succors; either he makes no resistance at all, or else he does it by halves. He will neither take advice from others, nor look to himself: he reckons upon philosophy as a thing not worth his time; and if he can but get the reputation of a good man among the common people, he takes no farther care, but accounts that he has done his duty.

There are not many men that know their own minds but in the very instant of willing anything. We are for one thing to-day, another thing to-morrow; so that we live and die without coming to any resolution; still seeking elsewhere that which we may give ourselves, that is to say, a good mind.

The time will come when we shall wonder that mankind should be so long ignorant of things that lay so open and so easy to be made known. Truth is offered to all; but we must yet content ourselves with what is already found; and leave some truths to be retrieved by after ages. The exact truth of things is only known to God: but it is yet lawful for us to inquire, and to conjecture, though not with too much confidence, not yet altogether without hope.

The short of the question betwixt you and me is
this, "Whether a man had better part with himself, or something else that belongs to him?" And it is easily resolved, in all competitions betwixt the goods of sense and fortune, and those of honor and conscience. Those things which all men covet are but specious outsides; and there is nothing in them of substantial satisfaction. Nor is there anything so hard and terrible in the contrary.

A wise man either repels or elects, as he sees the matter before him, without fearing the ill which he rejects, or admiring what he chooses. He is never surprised; but in the midst of plenty he prepares for poverty, as a prudent prince does for war in the depth of peace. Our condition is good enough, if we make the best of it; and our felicity is in our own power.

We say commonly, that every man has his weak side: but give me leave to tell you, that he that masters one vice may master all the rest. He that subdues avarice may conquer ambition.

Justice is a natural principle. I must live thus with my friend, thus with my fellow-citizen, thus with my companion: and why? because it is just; not for design or reward: for it is virtue itself, and nothing else, that pleases us. There is no law extant for keeping the secrets of a friend, or for not breaking faith with an enemy; and yet there is just cause of complaint if a body betray a trust. If a wicked man call upon me for money that I owe him, I will make no scruple of pouring it into the lap of a common prostitute, if she be appointed to receive it. For my business is to return the money, not to order him how he shall dispose of it. I must pay it upon demand to a good man when it is expedient, and to a bad when he calls for it.

There is not so disproportionate a mixture in any creature as that is in man, of soul and body. There is intemperance joined with divinity, folly with severity, sloth with activity, and uncleanness with purity: but a good sword is never the worse for an ill scabbard. We are moved more by imaginary fears than truths; for truth has a certainty and foundation; but in the other, we are exposed to the license and conjecture of a distracted mind; and our enemies are not more imperious than our pleasures.
We set our hearts upon transitory things, as if they themselves were everlasting; or we, on the other side, to possess them forever. Why do we not rather advance our thoughts to things that are eternal, and contemplate the heavenly original of all beings? Why do we not, by the divinity of reason, triumph over the weakness of flesh and blood?

The sovereign good of man is a mind that subjects all things to itself, and is itself subject to nothing: his pleasures are modest, severe, and reserved: and rather the sauce or the diversion of life than the entertainment of it. It may be some question whether such a man goes to heaven, or heaven comes to him: for a good man is influenced by God himself, and has a kind of divinity within him. What if one good man lives in pleasure and plenty, and another in want and misery? It is no virtue to contemn superfluities, but necessities: and they are both of them equally good, though under several circumstances, and in different stations.

Who is there that, upon sober thoughts, would not be an honest man, even for the reputation of it. Virtue you shall find in the temple, in the field, or upon walls, covered with dust and blood, in the defence of the public. Pleasures you shall find sneaking in the stews, sweating-houses, powdered and painted, etc. Not that pleasures are wholly to be disclaimed, but to be used with moderation, and to be made subservient to virtue. Good manners always please us; but wickedness is restless, and perpetually changing; not for the better, but for variety. We are torn to pieces betwixt hopes and fears; by which means Providence (which is the greatest blessing of Heaven) is turned into a mischief. Wild beasts, when they see their dangers, fly from them: and when they have escaped them they are quiet: but wretched man is equally tormented, both with things past and to come; for the memory brings back the anxiety of our past fears, and our foresight anticipates the future; whereas the present makes no man miserable. If we fear all things that are possible, we live without any bounds to our miseries.
EPICTETUS
BOOK ONE

1

What, then, is to be done? To make the best of what is in our power, and take the rest as it naturally happens.

2

I must die: and must I die groaning too? - Be fettered. Must it be lamenting too? - Exiled. And what hinders me, then, but that I may go smiling, and cheerful, and serene? - "Betray a secret" - I will not betray it; for this is in my own power. - "Then I will fetter you." - What do you say, man? Fetter me? You will fetter my leg; but not Jupiter himself can get the better of my choice. "I will throw you into prison: I will behead that paltry body of yours." Did I ever tell you, that I alone had a head not liable to be cut off?

3

This it is to have studied what ought to be studied; to have rendered our desires and aversions incapable of being restrained, or incurred. I must die: if instantly, I will die instantly; if in a short time, I will dine first; and when the hour comes, then I will die: How? As becomes one who restores what is not his own.

4

It is you who know yourself, what value you set upon yourself, and at what rate you sell yourself: for different people sell themselves at different prices.

5

Only consider at what price you sell your own will and choice, man: if for nothing else, that you may not sell it for a trifle. Greatness indeed, and excellence, perhaps belong to others, to such as Socrates.

Why, then, as we are born with a like nature, do not all, or the greater number, become such as he?
Why, are all horses swift? Are all dogs sagacious? What then, because nature hath not befriended me, shall I neglect all care of myself? Heaven forbid! Epictetus is inferior to Socrates; but if superior to this is enough for me. I shall never be Milo, and yet I do not neglect my body; nor Croesus, and yet I do not neglect my property: nor, in general, do we omit the care of any thing belonging to us, from a despair of arriving at the highest degree of perfection.

6

If a person could be persuaded of this principle as he ought, that we are all originally descended from God, and that he is the Father of gods and men, I conceive he never would think meanly or degenerately concerning himself. Suppose Caesar were to adopt you, there would be no bearing your haughtily looks: and will you not be elated on knowing yourself to be the son of Jupiter?

7

What is the business of virtue? A prosperous life.

8

Where is improvement, then? If any of you, withdrawing himself from externals, turns to his own faculty of choice, to exercise, and finish, and render it conformable to nature; elevated, free, unrestrained, unhindered, faithful, decent: if he hath learnt too, that whoever desired, or is averse to, things out of his own power, can neither be faithful nor free, but must necessarily be changed and tossed up and down with them; must necessarily too be subject to others, to such as can procure or prevent what he desires or is averse to: if, rising in the morning, he observes and keeps to these rules; bathes and eats as a man of fidelity and honor; and thus, on every subject of action, exercises himself in his principal duty; as a racer, in the business of racing; as a public speaker, in the business of exercising his voice: this is he who truly improves; this is he who hath not travelled in vain. But if he is wholly intent on reading books, and hath labored that point only, and travelled for that: I bid him go home immediately, and not neglect his domestic affairs; for what he travelled for is nothing. The
only real thing is, studying how to rid his life of lamentation, and complaint, and "Alas!" and "I am undone," and misfortune, and disappointment; and to learn what death, what exile, what prison, what poison is: that he may be able to say in a prison, like Socrates, "My dear Crito, if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be"; and not -- "Wretched old man, have I kept my grey hairs for this!".

9

We offer sacrifices on the account of those who have given us corn and the vine; and shall we not give thanks to God, for those who have produced that fruit in the human understanding, by which they proceed to discover to us the true doctrine of happiness?

10

From every event that happens in the world it is easy to celebrate providence, if a person hath but these two circumstances in himself; a faculty of considering what happens to each individual, and a grateful temper. Without the first he will not perceive the usefulness of things which happen, and without the other he will not be thankful for them. If God had made colors, and had not made the faculty of seeing them, what would have been their use? None.

11

Who is it that hath fitted the sword to the scabbard, and the scabbard to the sword? Is it no one? From the very construction of a complete work, we are used to declare positively, that it must be the operation of some artificer, and not the effect of mere chance. Doth every such work, then demonstrate an artificer; and do not visible objects, and the sense of seeing, and Light, demonstrate one? Doth not the difference of the sexes, and their inclination to each other, and the use of their several powers; do not these things, neither, demonstrate an artificer?

Most certainly they do.

12

God hath introduced man as a spectator of himself and his works; and not only as a spectator,
but an interpreter of them. It is therefore shameful
that man should begin and end where irrational
creatures do. He is indeed rather to begin there,
but to end where nature itself hath fixed our end;
and that is in contemplation and understanding, and
in a scheme of life conformable to nature.

Take care, then, not to die without being
spectators of these things. You take a journey to
Olympia to behold the work of Phidias, and each of
you think it a misfortune to die without a knowledge
of such things; and will you have no inclination to
understand and be spectators of those works for which
there is no need to take a journey, but which are
ready and at hand, even to those who bestow no pains?
Will you never perceive, then, either what you are or
for what you were born; nor for what purpose you are
admitted spectators of this sight?

Well, and (in the present case) have not you
received faculties by which you may support every
event? Have not you received greatness of soul?
Have not you received a manly spirit? Have not you
received patience? What signifies to me any thing
that happens, while I have a greatness of soul? What
shall disconcert or trouble or appear grievous to me?
Shall I not make use of my faculties, to that purpose
for which they were granted me, but lament and groan
at what happens?

Oh, but my nose runs.

And what have you hands for, beast, but to wipe
it?

But was there, then, any good reason that there
should be such a dirty thing in the world?

And how much better is it that you should wipe
your nose, than complain?

What is the profession of reasoning? to lay down
true positions; to reject false ones; and to suspend
the judgment in doubtful ones. Is it enough, then,
to have learned merely this? -- Is it enough, then,
for him who would not commit any mistake in the use
of money, merely to have heard that we are to receive
the good pieces, and reject the bad? - This is not
enough. - What must be added besides? - That faculty
which tries and distinguishes what pieces are good,
what bad. - Therefore, in reasoning too, what hath
been already said is not enough; but it is necessary
that we should be able to prove and distinguish
between the true and the false and the doubtful. - It
is necessary.

15

If you ask me, what is the good of man? I have
nothing else to say to you but that it is a certain
regulation of the choice with regard to the appear-
ances of things.

16

Shall kindred to Caesar, or any other of the
great at Rome, enable a man to live secure, above
contempt, and void of all fear whatever; and shall
not the having God for our Maker, and Father, and
Guardian free us from griefs and terrors?

17

This is the work, if any, that ought to employ
your master and preceptor, if you had one; that you
should come to him, and say: "Epictetus, we can no
longer bear being tied down to this paltry body,
feeding and resting and cleaning it, and hurried
about with so many low cares on its account. Are not
these things indifferent, and nothing to us, and
death no evil? Are not we relations of God, and did
we not come from him? Suffer us to go back thither
from whence we came; suffer us, at length, to be
delivered from these fetters, that chain and weigh us
down. Here thieves and robbers, and courts of
judicature, and those who are called tyrants, seem to
have some power over us, on account of the body and
its possessions. Suffer us to show them, that they
have no power."

And in this case it would be my part to answer:
"My friends, wait for God, till he shall give the
signal, and dismiss you from this service; then
return to him. For the present, be content to remain
in this post where he has placed you. The time of
your abode here is short, and easy to such as are
disposed like you. For what tyrant, what robber,
what thief, or what courts of judicature are
formidable to those who thus account the body and its possessions as nothing? Stay. Depart not inconsiderately."

18

True instruction is this: learning to will that things should happen as they do. And how do they happen? As the appointer of them hath appointed. He hath appointed that there should be summer and winter, plenty and dearth, virtue and vice, and all such contrarieties, for the harmony of the whole. To each of us he hath given a body and its parts, and our several properties and companions. Mindful of this appointment, we should enter upon a course of education and instruction not to change the constitution of things, which is neither put within our reach nor for our good; but that, being as they are, and as their nature is with regard to us, we may have our mind accommodated to what exists.

19

So that when you have shut your doors, and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not; but God is within, and your genius is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing?

20

When one consulted him, how he might persuade his brother to forbear treating him ill: Philosophy, answered Epictetus, doth not promise to procure anything external to man, otherwise it would admit something beyond its proper subject-matter. For the subject-matter of a carpenter is wood; of a statuary, brass; and so of the art of living, the subject matter is each person's own life.

21

No great thing is brought to perfection suddenly, when not so much as a bunch of grapes or a fig is. If you tell me that you would at this minute have a fig, I will answer you, that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen. Is then the fruit of a fig-tree not brought to perfection suddenly, and in one hour; and would you possess the fruit of the human mind in so short a time, and without trouble? I tell you, expect no such thing.
Ought we not, whether we are digging, or ploughing, or eating, to sing the hymn to God? Great is God, who has supplied us with these instruments to till the ground: great is God, who has given us hands, a power of swallowing, a stomach: who has given us to grow insensibly, to breathe in sleep. Even these things we ought upon every occasion to celebrate; but to make it the subject of the greatest and most divine hymn, that he has given us the faculty of apprehending them, and using them in a proper way.

Who then is unconquerable? He whom nothing, independent of choice, disconcerts.

The philosophers talk paradoxes. And are there not paradoxes in other arts? What is more paradoxical than the pricking any one's eye to make him see? If a person was to tell this to one ignorant of surgery, would not he laugh at him? Where is the wonder, then, if, in philosophy too, many truths appear paradoxes to the ignorant?

Socrates used to say that we ought not to live a life unexamined.

When you are going to any one of the great, remember, that there is Another, who sees from above what passes; and whom you ought to please rather than man.
BOOK TWO

1
For it is not death or pain that is to be feared; but the fear of pain or death. Hence we commend him who says:

"Death is no ill, but shamefully to die."

2
And thus, this paradox becomes neither impossible nor a paradox, that we must be at once cautious and courageous: courageous in what doth not depend upon choice, and cautious in what doth.

3
Consider, you are going to take your trial, what you wish to preserve, and in what to succeed. Thus Socrates, to one who put him in mind to prepare himself for his trial: "Do not you think," says he, "that I have been preparing myself for this very thing my whole life?" By what kind of preparation? "I have preserved what was in my own power." What do you mean? "I have done nothing unjust, either in public or in private life."

4
Diogenes rightly answered one who desired letters of recommendation from him, "At first sight he will know you to be a man: and whether you are a good or a bad man, if he hath any skill in distinguishing, he will know likewise: and, if he hath not, he will never know it, though I should write a thousand times."

5
How, then shall one preserve intrepidity and tranquility; and at the same time be careful, and neither rash nor indolent?

By imitating those who play at tables. The dice are indifferent; the pieces are indifferent. How do I know what will fall out? But it is my business to manage carefully and dexterously whatever doth fall out. Thus in life, too, this is the chief business;
distinguish and separate things, and say, "Externals are not in my power, choice is. Where shall I seek good and evil? Within; in what is my own." But in what belongs to others, call nothing good, or evil, or profit, or hurt, or anything of that sort.

6

God is beneficial. Good is also beneficial. It should seem, then, that where the essence of God is, there too is the essence of good. What, then, is the essence of God? Flesh? - By no means. An estate? Fame? - by no means. Intelligence? Knowledge? Right reason? - Certainly. Here then, without more ado, seek the essence of good.

7

You are a distinct portion of the essence of God, and contain a certain part of him in yourself. Why, then, are you so ignorant of your noble birth? Why do not you consider whence you came? Why do not you remember, when you are eating, who you are who eat, and whom you feed? When you are in the company of women, when you are conversing, when you are exercising, when you are disputing, do not you know that it is a god you feed, a god you exercise? You carry a god about with you, wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you suppose I mean some god without you, of gold or silver? It is within yourself you carry him, and profane him, without being sensible of it, by impure thoughts and unclean actions. If even the image of God were present, you would not dare to act as you do; and when God himself is within you, and hears and sees all, are not you ashamed to think and act thus, insensible of your own nature and hateful to God?

8

If God had committed some orphan to your charge, would you have been thus careless of him? He hath delivered yourself to your care, and says, "I had no one fitter to be trusted than you: preserve this person for me, such as he is by nature; modest, faithful, sublime, unterrorified, dispassionate, tranquil."
And will you not preserve him?

9

Examine who you are. In the first place, a man:
that is, one who hath nothing superior to the faculty of choice; but all things subject to this; and this itself unenslaved, and unsubjected, to anything. Consider, then, from what you are distinguished by reason. You are distinguished from wild beasts: you are distinguished from cattle. Besides, you are a citizen of the world, and a part of it; not a subservient, but a principal part.

10

But must you lose money, in order to suffer damage; and is there no other thing, the loss of which endamages a man? If you were to part with your skill in grammar, or in music, would you think the loss of these a damage? And, if you part with honor, decency, and gentleness, do you think that no matter? Yet the first are lost by some cause external, and independent on choice; but the last by our own fault. There is no shame either in having, or losing the one; but either not to have, or to lose, the other, is equally shameful and reproachful and unhappy.

11

What, then, shall not I hurt him who hath hurt me? Consider first what hurt is; and remember what you have heard from the Philosophers. For, if both good and evil consist in choice, see whether what you say doth not amount to this: "Since he hath hurt himself by injuring me, shall not I hurt myself by injuring him?"

12

The beginning of philosophy is this: The being sensible of the disagreement of men with each other; an inquiry into the cause of this disagreement, and a disapprobation and distrust of what merely seems; a certain examination into what seems, whether it seem rightly; and an invention of some rule, like a balance for the determination of weights, like a square for straight and crooked.

13

This is the part of philosophy: to examine and fix the rules; and to make use of them when they are known, is the business of a wise and good man.
When children cry if their nurse happens to be absent for a little while, give them a cake, and they forget their grief. Shall we compare you to these children, then?

No, indeed. For I do not desire to be pacified by a cake, but by right principles. And what are they?

Such as a man ought to study all day long, so as not to be attached to what doth not belong to him; neither to a friend, to a place, an academy, nor even to his own body, but to remember the law and to have that constantly before his eyes. And what is the divine law? To preserve inviolate what is properly our own, not to claim what belongs to others; to use what is given us, and not desire what is not given us; and, when anything is taken away, to restore it readily, and to be thankful for the time you have been permitted the use of it, and not cry after it, like a child for its nurse and its mamma.

Expel grief, fear, desire, envy, malevolence, avarice, effeminacy, intemperance, from your mind. But these can be no otherwise expelled than by looking up to God alone as your pattern; by attaching yourself to him alone, and being consecrated to his commands. If you wish for anything else, you will, with sighs and groans, follow what is stronger than you, always seeking prosperity without, and never able to find it. For you seek it where it is not, and neglect to seek it where it is.

What is the first business of one who studies philosophy? To part with self-conceit. For it is impossible for any one to begin to learn what he hath a conceit that he already knows. Now it is ridiculous to suppose that a person will learn anything but what he desires to learn, or make an improvement in what he doth not learn.

Every habit and faculty is preserved and increased by correspondent actions: as the habit of walking, by walking; of running, by running. If you would be
a reader, read; if a writer, write. But if you do not read for a month together, but do somewhat else, you will see what will be the consequence. So after sitting still for ten days, get up and attempt to take a long walk, and you will find how your legs are weakened. Upon the whole, then, whatever you would make habitual, practice it; and, if you would not make a thing habitual, do not practice it, but habituate yourself to something else.

It is the same with regard to the operations of the soul. Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but that you have increased a habit, and added fuel to a fire. When you are overcome by the company of women, do not esteem it as a single defeat; but that you have fed, that you have increased, your dissoluteness. For it is impossible but that habits and faculties must either be first produced, or strengthened and increased, by correspondent actions.

If you would not be of an angry temper, then, do not feed the habit. Give it nothing to help its increase. Be quiet at first, and reckon the days in which you have not been angry. I used to be angry every day; now every other day; then every third and fourth day: and, if you miss it so long as thirty days, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. For habit is first weakened, and then entirely destroyed. "I was not vexed to-day; nor the next day; nor for three or four months after; but took heed to myself when some provoking things happened." Be assured that you are in a fine way. "To-day, when I saw a handsome person, I did not say to myself, O that I could possess her! And, How happy is her husband! (for he who says this, says too, How happy is her gallant!): nor do I go on to represent her as present, as undressed, as lying down beside me." On this I stroke my head, and say, Well done, Epictetus: thou hast solved a pretty sophism; a much prettier than one very celebrated in the schools. But if even the lady should happen to be willing, and give me intimations of it, and send for me and press my hand, and place herself next to me, and I should then forbear and get the victory, that would be a sophism beyond all the subtleties of logic. This, and not disputing artfully, is the proper subject for exultation.
Concerning those who embrace philosophy only in word: Who, then, is a Stoic? As we call that a Phidian statue, which is formed according to the art of Phidias, so show me some one person, formed according to the principles which he professes. Show me one who is sick, and happy; in danger, and happy; dying, and happy; exiled, and happy; disgraced, and happy. Show him me, for, by heaven, I long to see a Stoic. But (you will say) you have not one perfectly formed. Show me, then, one who is forming, one who is approaching towards this character. Do me this favor. Do not refuse an old man a sight which he hath never yet seen. Do you suppose that you are to show the Jupiter or Minerva of Phidias, a work of ivory or gold? Let any of you show me a human soul, willing to have the same sentiments with those of God, not to accuse either God or man, not to be disappointed of its desire, or incur its aversion, not to be angry, not to be envious, not to be jealous, in a word, willing from a man to become a god, and, in this poor mortal body, aiming to have fellowship with Jupiter. Show him to me. But you cannot.

True and evident propositions must, of necessity, be used even by those who contradict them. And, perhaps, one of the strongest proofs that there is such a thing as evidence, is the necessity which those who contradict it are under to make use of it. If a person, for instance, should deny that anything is universally true, he will be obliged to assert the contrary, that nothing is universally true. What, wretch, not even this itself? For what is this but to say, that everything universal is false? Again, if any one should come and say, "Know that there is nothing to be known, but all things are uncertain"; or another, "Believe me, and it will be the better for you, no man ought to be believe in anything"; or a third, "Learn from me, that nothing is to be learned; I tell you this, and will teach the proof of it, if you please." Now what difference is there between such as these, and those who call themselves Academics? Who say to us, "Be convinced, that no one ever is convinced. Believe us, that nobody believes anybody."
Thus also, when Epicurus would destroy the natural relation of mankind to each other, he makes use of the very thing he is destroying. For what doth he say? "Be not deceived, be not seduced and mistaken. There is no natural relation between reasonable beings. Believe me. Those who say otherwise mislead and impose upon you." Why are you concerned for us, then? Let us be deceived. You will fare never the worse if all the rest of us are persuaded that there is a natural relation between mankind, and that it is by all means to be preserved. Nay, it will be much safer and better. Why do you give yourself any trouble about us, sir? Why do you break your rest for us? Why do you light your lamp? Why do you rise early? Why do you compose so many volumes? Is it that none of us should be deceived concerning the gods; as if they took any care of men? Or that we may not suppose the essence of good consists in anything but pleasure? For, if these things be so, lie down and sleep, and lead the life of which you judge yourself worthy - that of a mere reptile. Eat and drink, and satisfy your passion for women, and ease yourself, and snore. What is it to you whether others think right or wrong about these things?

To whatever objects a person devotes his attention, these objects he probably loves. Do men ever devote their attention, then, to evils? - By no means. Or even to what doth not concern them? - No, nor this. It remains, then, that good must be the sole object of their attention; and, if of their attention, of their love too. Whoever, therefore, understands good is capable likewise of love; and he who cannot distinguish good from evil, and things indifferent from both, how is it possible that he can love? The prudent person alone, then, is capable of loving.

If, therefore, to speak properly belongs to one who is skillful, do not you see, that to hear with benefit belongs likewise to one who is skillful? He who would hear philosophers needs some kind of exercise in hearing.
When one of the company said to him, "Convince me that logic is necessary": Would you have me demonstrate it to you? says he. - "Yes." Then I must use a demonstrative form of argument. - "Granted." And how will you know then whether I argue sophistically? On this, the man being silent: You see, says he, that even by your own confession, logic is necessary; since, without its assistance, you cannot learn so much as whether it be necessary or not.
BOOK THREE

1

Of ascetic exercise: We are not to carry our exercises beyond nature, nor merely to attract admiration; for thus we, who call ourselves philosophers, shall not differ from jugglers.

2

As bad performers cannot sing alone but in a chorus, so some persons cannot walk alone. If you are anything, walk alone, talk by yourself, and do not skulk in the chorus. Think a little at last; look about you, sift yourself, that you may know what you are.

3

I am better than you, for my father hath been consul. I have been a tribune, says another, and not you. If we were horses, would you say, My father was swifter than yours? I have abundance of oats and hay, and fine trappings? What now, if while you were saying this, I should answer, "Be it so. Let us run a race, then." Is there nothing in man analogous to a race in horses, by which it may be known which is better or worse? Is there not honor, fidelity, justice? Show yourself the better in these, that you may be the better, as a man. But if you tell me you can kick violently, I will tell you again that you value yourself on the property of an ass.

4

He who frequently converses with others, either in discourse or entertainments, or in any familiar way of living, must necessarily either become like his companions, or bring them over to his own way. For, if a dead coal be applied to a live one, either the first will quench the last, or the last kindle the first. Since, then, the danger is so great, caution must be used in entering into these familiarities with the vulgar; remembering that it is impossible to touch a chimney-sweeper without being partaker of his soot.
Do not you know that a wise and good man doth nothing for appearance, but for the sake of having acted well?

Why, do you not know, then, that the origin of all human evils and of mean-spiritedness and cowardice is not death, but rather the fear of death? Fortify yourself, therefore, against this. Hither let all your discourses, readings, exercises, tend. And then you will know that thus alone are men made free.
BOOK FOUR

1

Consider in animals what is our idea of freedom. Some keep tame lions, and feed and even carry them about with them; and who will say that any such lion is free? Nay, doth he not live the more slavishly the more he lives at ease? And who, that had sense and reason, would wish to be one of those lions? Again, how much do birds, which are taken and kept in a cage, suffer by trying to fly away? Nay, some of them starve with hunger rather than undergo such a life; then, as many of them as are saved, it is scarcely and with difficulty and in a pining condition, and the moment they find any hole, out they hop. Such a desire have they of natural freedom, and to be at their own disposal and unrestrained.

2

Do you think freedom to be something great and noble and valuable? - "How should I not?" Is it possible, then, that he who acquires anything so great and valuable and noble should be of an abject spirit? - "It is not." Whenever, then, you see any one subject to another, and flattering him, contrary to his own opinion, confidently say that he too is not free; and not only if he doth it for a supper, but even if it be for a government, nay, a consulship; but call those indeed little slaves who act thus for the sake of little things, and the others, as they deserve, great slaves.

3

What is it, then, that makes a man free and independent? For neither riches, nor consulship, nor command of provinces, or kingdoms, make him so; but something else must be found. What is it that preserves any one from being hindered and restrained in writing? - "The science of writing." In music? - "The science of music." Therefore, in life, too, the science of living. As you have heard it in general, then, consider it likewise in particulars. Is it possible for him to be unrestrained who desires any of those things that are in the power of others? - "No." Can he avoid being hindered? - "No." Therefore neither can he be free.
And what if my fellow-traveller himself should turn against me, and rob me? What shall I do? I will be the friend of Caesar. While I am his companion, no one will injure me. Yet, before I can become illustrious enough for this, what must I bear and suffer! How often, and by how many, must I be robbed! And then, if I do become the friend of Caesar, he too is mortal; and, if by any accident he should become my enemy, where can I best retreat? To a desert? Well, and doth not a fever come there? What can be done, then? Is it not possible to find a fellow-traveller, safe, faithful, brave, incapable of being surprised? A person who reasons thus understands and considers that, if he joins himself to God, he shall go safely through his journey. - "How do you mean, join himself?" That whatever is the will of God may be his will too; whatever is not the will of God may not be his. "How, then, can this be done?" - Why, how otherwise than by considering the exertions of God's power, and his administration? What hath he given me, my own, and independent? What hath he reserved to himself? He hath given me whatever depends upon choice. The things in my power he hath made incapable of hindrance or restraint.

After you have received all, and even your very self, from another, are you angry with the giver, and complain if he takes anything away from you? Who are you, and for what purpose did you come? Was it not he who brought you here? Was it not he who showed you the light? Hath not he given you assistants? Hath not he given you senses? Hath not he given you reason? And as whom did he bring you here? Was it not as a mortal? Was it not as one to live, with a little portion of flesh, upon earth, and to see his administration; to behold the spectacle with him, and partake of the festival for a short time? After having beheld the spectacle, and the solemnity, then, as long as it is permitted you, will you not depart when he leads you out, adoring and thankful for what you have heard and seen?

Correct your principles. See that nothing cleave to you which is not your own; nothing grow to you that may give you pain when it is torn away. And
say, when you are daily exercising yourself as you do here, not that you act the philosopher (admit this to be an insolent title), but that you are asserting your freedom. For this is true freedom.

Are you free yourself, then? (it will be said). By heaven, I wish and pray for it. But I cannot yet face my masters. I still pay a regard to my body, and set a great value on keeping it whole, though at the same time it is not whole. But I can show you one who was free, that you may no longer seek an example. Diogenes was free. - "How so?" Not because he was of free parents, for he was not; but because he was so himself, because he had cast away all the handles of slavery, nor was there any way of getting at him, nor anywhere to lay hold on him to enslave him. Everything sat loose upon him, everything only just hung on. If you took hold on his possessions, he would rather let them go than follow you for them; if on his leg, he let go his leg; if his body, he let go his body; acquaintance, friends, country, just the same. For he knew whence he had them, and from who and upon what conditions he received them. But he would never have forsaken his true parents the gods, and his real country, nor have suffered any one to be more dutiful and obedient to them than he; nor would any one have died more readily for his country than he.

And that you may not think that I show you the example of a man clear of encumbrances, without a wife or children, or country or friends, or relations to bend and draw him aside; take Socrates, and consider him, who had a wife and children, but not as his own; a country, friends, relations, but only as long as it was proper, and in the manner that was proper; and all these he submitted to the law and to the obedience due to it. Hence, when it was proper to fight he was the first to go out, and exposed himself to danger without the least reserve. But when he was sent by the thirty tyrants to apprehend Leo, because he esteemed it a base action he did not deliberate about it, though he knew that, perhaps, he might die for it. But what did that signify to him? For it was something else that he wanted to preserve, not his paltry flesh; but his fidelity, his honor, free from attack or subjection. And afterwards, when
he was to make a defence for his life, doth he behave like one who had children? Or a wife? No; but like a single man. And how doth he behave when he was to drink the poison? When he might have escaped, and Crito persuaded him to get out of prison for the sake of his children, what doth he say? Doth he esteem it a fortunate opportunity? How should he? But he considers what is becoming, and neither sees nor regards anything else. "For I am not desirous," says he, "to preserve this pitiful body, but that [part of me] which is improved and preserved by justice, and impaired and destroyed by injustice." Socrates is not to be basely preserved. He who refused to vote for what the Athenians commanded, he who contemned the thirty tyrants, he who held such discourses on virtue and moral beauty: such a man is not to be preserved by a base action; but is preserved by dying, not by running away. For even a good actor is preserved by leaving off when he ought, not by going on to act beyond his time. "What, then, will become of your children?" - "If I had gone away to Thessaly you would have taken care of them; and will there be no one to take care of them when I am departed to Hades?" You see how he ridicules and plays with death. But, if it had been you or I, we should presently have proved, by philosophical arguments, that those who act unjustly are to be repaid in their own way; and should have added, "If I escape, I shall be of use to many; if I die, to none." Nay, if it had been necessary, we should have crept through a mouse-hole to get away. But how should we have been of use to any? For where must they have dwelt? If we were useful alive, should we not be of still more use to mankind by dying when we ought, and as we ought? And now the remembrance of the death of Socrates is not less, but even more useful to the world than that of the things which he did and said when alive.

When you have lost anything external, have this always at hand, what you have got instead of it; and, if that be of more value, do not by any means say, "I am a loser"; whether it be a horse for an ass, an ox for a sheep, a good action for a piece of money, a due composedness of mind for a dull jest, or modesty for indecent discourse. By continually remembering this, you will preserve your character such as it ought to be.
Now, the very nature of every one is to pursue good, to avoid evil, to esteem him as an enemy and betrayer who deprives us of the one, and involves us in the other, though he be a brother, or a son, or father. For nothing is more nearly related to us than good.

Never commend or censure any one for common actions, nor ascribe them either to skillfulness or unskillfulness, and thus you will at once be free both from rashness and ill-nature. Such a one bathes in a mighty little time. Doth he therefore do it ill? Not at all. But what? In a mighty little time. - "Is everything well done, then?" - By no means. But what is done from good principles is well done; what from bad ones, ill. But till you know from what principles any one acts, neither commend nor censure the action.

At what employment, then, would you have death find you? For my part, I would have it some humane, beneficent, public-spirited, gallant action. But if I cannot be found doing any such great things, yet, at least, I would be doing what I am incapable of being restrained from, what is given me to do, correcting myself, improving that faculty which makes use of the appearances of things, to procure tranquillity, and render to the several relations of life their due; and, if I am so fortunate, advancing to the third topic, a security of judging right. If death overtakes me in such a situation, it is enough for me if I can stretch out my hands to God and say, "The opportunities which thou hast given me of comprehending and following [the rules] of thy administration I have not neglected. As far as in me lay, I have not dishonored thee. See how I have used my perceptions, how my pre-conceptions. Have I at any time found fault with thee? Have I been discontented at thy dispensations, or wished them otherwise? Have I transgressed the relations of life? I thank thee that thou hast brought me into being. I am satisfied with the time that I have enjoyed the things which thou hast given me. Receive them back again, and assign them to whatever place
thou wilt; for they were all thine, and thou gavest them to me."

13

When you let go your attention for a little while, do not fancy you may recover it whenever you please; but remember this, that by means of the fault of today your affairs must necessarily be in a worse condition for the future.
FRAGMENTS OF EPICURUS

1

It is better to offend seldom (owning it when we do), and act often wisely, than to say we seldom err, and offend frequently.

2

Be not so much ashamed of what is void of glory, as studious to shun what is void of truth.

3

If you would be well spoken of, learn to speak well of others. And, when you have learned to speak well of them, endeavor likewise to do well to them; and thus you will reap the fruit of being well spoken of by them.

4

If you would live with tranquillity and content, endeavor to have all who live with you good. And you will have them good by instructing the willing and dismissing the unwilling.

5

No one who is a lover of money, a lover of pleasure, or a lover of glory, is likewise a lover of mankind; but only he who is a lover of virtue.

6

When we are invited to an entertainment, we take what we find; and if any one should bid the master of the house set fish or tarts before him, he would be thought absurd. Yet, in the world, we ask the gods for what they do not give us, and that though they have given us so many things.

7

They are pretty fellows indeed, said he, who value themselves on things not in our own power. I am a better man than you, says one, for I have many estates, and you are pining with hunger. I have been consul, says another; I am a governor, a third; and I have a fine head of hair, says a fourth. Yet one
horse doth not say to another, "I am better than you, for I have a great deal of hay and a great deal of oats; and I have a gold bridle and embroidered trappings"; but, "I am swifter than you." And every creature is better or worse, from its own good or bad qualities. Is man, then, the only creature which hath no natural good quality? And must we consider hair, and clothes, and ancestors [to judge of him]?

8

Examine yourself, whether you had rather be rich or happy; and, if rich, be assured that this is neither a good, nor altogether in your own power; but, if happy, that this is both a good, and in your own power, since the one is a temporary loan of fortune and the other depends on choice.

9

As it is better to lie straitened for room upon a little couch in health, than to toss upon a wide bed in sickness, so it is better to contract yourself within the compass of a small fortune and be happy, than to have a great one and be wretched.

10

It is not poverty that causes sorrow, but covetous desires; nor do riches deliver from fear, but reasoning. If, therefore, you acquire a habit of reasoning, you will neither desire riches nor complain of poverty.

11

It is better, by yielding to truth, to conquer opinion; than, by yielding to opinion, to be defeated by truth.

12

It is better, by living with one free person, to be fearless and free, than to be a slave in company of many.

13

Whenever any one exceeds moderation, the most delightful things may become the most undelightful.
14
If you would give a just sentence, mind neither parties nor pleaders, but the cause itself.

15
You will commit the fewest faults in judging, if you are faultless in your own life.

16
When Pittacucus had been unjustly treated by some person, and had the power of chastising him, he let him go; saying, "Forgiveness is better than punishment; for the one is the proof of a gentle, the other of a savage nature."

17
Consult nothing so much, upon every occasion, as safety. Now it is safer to be silent than to speak; and omit speaking whatever is not accompanied with sense and reason.

18
As lighthouses in havens, by kindling a great flame from a few fagots, afford a considerable assistance to ships wandering on the sea: so an illustrious person, in a state harassed by storms, while he is contented with little himself, confers great benefits on his fellow-citizens.

19
As, if you were to breed lions, you would not be solicitous about the magnificence of their dens, but the qualities of the animals themselves: so, if you undertake to preside over your fellow-citizens, be not so solicitous about the magnificence of the buildings, as careful of the fortitude of those who inhabit them.

20
As neither a goose is alarmed by gaggling, nor a sheep by bleating: so neither be you terrified by the voice of a senseless multitude.

21
As the sun doth not wait for prayers and incantations to be prevailed on to rise, but immediately
shines forth, and is received with universal salutation: so, neither do you wait for applauses and shouts and praises, in order to do good; but be a voluntary benefactor, and you will be beloved like the sun.

22

A ship ought not to be fixed by one anchor, nor life on a single hope.

23

We ought not to stretch either our legs or our hopes to a point they cannot reach.

24

Thales, being asked what was the most universally enjoyed of all things, answered, "Hope; for they have it who have nothing else."

25

Pyrrho used to say, "There is no difference between living and dying." A person asked him, Why, then, do not you die? "Because," answered Pyrrho, "there is no difference."

26

If you always remember that God stands by, an inspector of whatever you do either in soul or body, you will never err, either in your prayers or actions, and you will have God abiding with you.

27

Epictetus being asked how a person might grieve his enemy, answered, "By doing as well as possible himself."

28

Let no wise man estrange himself from the government of the state; for it is both impious to withdraw from being useful to those that need it, and cowardly to give way to the worthless. For it is foolish to choose rather to be governed ill, than to govern well.
[Remember] that such is, and was, and will be, the nature of the world; nor is it possible that things should be otherwise than they now are, and that not only men and other animals upon earth partake of this change and transformation, but the divinities also. For, indeed, even the four elements are transformed and changed up and down; and earth becomes water, and water air, and this again is transformed into other things. And the same manner of transformation happens from things above to those below. Whoever endeavors to turn his mind towards these points, and persuade himself to receive with willingness what cannot be avoided, he will pass his life with moderation and harmony.
THE ENCHIRIDION, OR MANUAL,
OF EPICTETUS
Of things, some are in our power and others not. In our power are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in one word, whatever are our own actions. Not in our power are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions.

Now, the things in our power are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our power, weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others. Remember, then, that if you suppose things by nature slavish to be free, and what belongs to others your own, you will be hindered; you will lament; you will be disturbed; you will find fault both with gods and men. But if you suppose that only to be your own which is your own, and what belongs to others such as it really is, no one will ever compel you; no one will restrain you; you will do no one thing against your will; no one will hurt you; you will not have an enemy, for you will suffer no harm.

Aiming therefore at such great things, remember that you must not allow yourself to be carried, even with a slight tendency, towards the attainment of the others: but that you must entirely quit some of them and for the present postpone the rest. But if you would both have these and command and riches at once, perhaps you will not gain so much as the latter, because you aim at the former too: but you will absolutely fail of the former, by which alone happiness and freedom are procured.

Study therefore to be able to say to every harsh appearance, "You are but an appearance, and not absolutely the thing you appear to be." And then examine it by those rules which you have, and first, and chiefly, by this: whether it concerns the things which are in our own power, or those which are not; and, if it concerns anything not in our power, be prepared to say that it is nothing to you.

Remember that desire promises the attainment of that of which you are desirous; and aversion promises the avoiding of that to which you are averse; and he
who fails of the object of his desire is disappointed, and he who incurs the object of his aversion wretched. If, then, you confine your aversion to those objects only which are contrary to the natural use of your faculties, which you have in your own power, you will never incur anything to which you are averse. But if you are averse to sickness, or death, or poverty, you will be wretched. Remove aversion, then, from all things that are not in our power, and transfer it to things contrary to the nature of what is in our power. But, for the present, totally suppress desire: for, if you desire any of the things not in our own power, you must necessarily be disappointed; and of those which are, and which it would be laudable to desire, nothing is yet in your possession. Use only [the requisite acts] of pursuit and avoidance; and even these lightly, and with gentleness and reservation.

With regard to whatever objects either delight the mind, or contribute to use, or are loved with fond affection, remember to tell yourself of what nature they are, beginning from the most trifling things. If you are fond of an earthen cup, that it is an earthen cup of which you are fond; for thus, if it is broken, you will not be disturbed. If you kiss your child, or your wife, that you kiss a being subject to the accidents of humanity; and thus you will not be disturbed if either of them dies.

When you are going about any action, remind yourself of what nature the action is. If you are going to bathe, represent to yourself the things which usually happen in the bath: some persons dashing the water; some pushing and crowding; others giving abusive language; and others stealing. And thus you will more safely go about this action if you say to yourself, "I will now go bathe, and preserve my own mind in a state conformable to nature." And in the same manner with regard to every other action. For this, if any impediment arises in bathing, you will have it ready to say, "It was not only to bathe that I desired, but to preserve my mind in a state conformable to nature; and I shall not preserve it so if I am out of humor at things that happen."
Men are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and notions which they form concerning things. Death, for instance, is not terrible, else it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the terror consists in our notion of death that it is terrible. When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never impute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles. It is the action of an uninstructed person to lay the fault of his own bad condition upon others; of one entering upon instruction to lay the fault on himself; and of one perfectly instructed, neither on others nor on himself.

Be not elated on any excellence not your own. If a horse should be elated and say, "I am handsome," it would be supportable. But when you are elated, and say, "I have a handsome horse," know that you are elated on what is, in fact, only the good of the horse. What, then is your own? The use of the appearances of things. So that when you behave conformably to nature in the use of these appearances, you will be elated with reason; for you will be elated on some good of your own.

As in a voyage, when the ship is at anchor, if you go on shore to get water you may amuse yourself with picking up a shellfish, or an onion, in your way, but your thoughts ought to be bent towards the ship, and perpetually attentive lest the captain should call, and then you must leave all these things, that you may not be thrown into the vessel, bound neck and heels like a sheep: thus likewise in life, if, instead of an onion or a shellfish, such a thing as a wife or a child be granted you, there is no objection; but if the captain calls, run to the ship, leave all these things, regard none of them. But if you are old, never go far from the ship: lest, when you are called, you should be unable to come in time.

Require not things to happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well.
Sickness is an impediment to the body, but not to the faculty of choice, unless itself pleases. Lameness is an impediment to the leg, but not to the faculty of choice: and say this to yourself with regard to everything that happens. For you will find it to be an impediment to something else, but not to yourself.

Upon every accident, remember to turn towards yourself and inquire what powers you have for making a proper use of it. If you see a handsome person, you will find continence a power against this: if pain be presented to you, you will find fortitude: if ill language, you will find patience. And thus habituated, the appearances of things will not hurry you away along with them.

Never say of anything, "I have lost it"; but, "I have restored it." Is your child dead? It is restored. Is your wife dead? She is restored. Is your estate taken away? Well, and is not that likewise restored? "But he who took it away is a bad man." What is it to you by whose hands he, who gave it, hath demanded it back again? While he gives you to possess it, take care of it; but as of something not your own, as passengers do of an inn.

If you would improve, lay aside such reasonings as these: "If I neglect my affairs, I shall not have a maintenance; if I do not correct my servant, he will be good for nothing." For it is better to die with hunger, exempt from grief and fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation; and it is better your servant should be bad, than you unhappy.

Begin therefore from little things. Is a little oil spilt? A little wine stolen? Say to yourself, "This is the purchase paid for apathy, for tranquillity, and nothing is to be had for nothing." And when you call your servant, consider it is possible he may not come to your call; or, if he doth, that he may not do what you would have him do. But he is by no means of such importance that it should be in his power to give you any disturbance.
If you would improve, be content to be thought foolish and stupid with regard to externals. Do not wish to be thought to know anything; and though you should appear to be somebody to others, distrust yourself. For, be assured, it is not easy at once to preserve your faculty of choice in a state conformable to nature, and [to secure] externals; but while you are careful about the one, you must of necessity neglect the other.

If you wish your children, and your wife, and your friends to live for ever, you are stupid; for you wish things to be in your power which are not so, and what belongs to others to be your own. So likewise, if you wish your servant to be without fault, you are a fool; for you wish vice not to be vice, but something else. But, if you wish to have your desires undisappointed, this is in your own power. Exercise, therefore, what is in your power. He is the master of every other person who is able to confer or remove whatever that person wishes either to have or to avoid. Whoever, then, would be free, let him wish nothing, let him decline nothing which depends on others else he must necessarily be a slave.

Remember that you must behave [in life] as at an entertainment. Is anything brought round to you? Put out your hand and take your share with moderation. Doth it pass by you? Do not stop it. Is it not yet come? Do not stretch forth your desire towards it, but wait till it reaches you. Thus do with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches, and you will be some time or other a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods. And if you do not so much as take the things which are set before you, but are able even to despise them, then you will not only be a partner of the feasts of the gods, but of their empire also. For, by thus doing, Diogenes and Heraclitus, and others like them, deservedly became, and were called, divine.

When you see any one weeping for grief, either that his son is gone abroad, or dead, or that he hath
suffered in his affairs, take heed that the appear-
ance may not hurry you away with it. But immediately
make the distinction within your own mind, and have
it ready to say, "It is not the accident that
distresses this person, for it doth not distress
another man; but the judgment which he forms
concerning it." As far as words go, however, do not
disdain to condescend to him, and even, if it should
so happen, to groan with him. Take heed, however,
not to groan inwardly too.

17

Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of
such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If
short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it
be his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple,
a governor, or a private person, see that you act it
naturally. For this is your business, to act well
the character assigned you; to choose it is
another's.

18

When a raven happens to croak unluckily, let not
the appearance hurry you away with it, but
immediately make the distinction to yourself, and
say, "None of these things is portended to me; but
either to my paltry body, or property, or reputation,
or children, or wife. But to me all portents are
lucky, if I will. For whichever of these things
happens, it is in my power to derive advantage from
it."

19

You may be unconquerable, if you enter into no
combat in which it is not in your own power to
conquer. When, therefore, you see any one eminent in
honors, or power, or in high esteem on any other
account, take heed not to be hurried away with the
appearance, and to pronounce him happy, for, if the
essence of good consists in things in our own power,
there will be no room for envy or emulation. But,
for your part, do not wish to be a general, or a
senator, or a consul, but to be free; and the only
way to this is a contempt of things not in our own
power.
Remember, that not he who gives ill language or a blow affronts, but the principle which represents these things as affronting. When, therefore, any one provokes you, be assured that it is your own opinion which provokes you. Try, therefore, in the first place, not to be hurried away with the appearance. For if you once gain time and respite, you will more easily command yourself.

Let death and exile, and all other things which appear terrible be daily before your eyes, but chiefly death, and you will never entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet anything.

If you have an earnest desire of attaining to philosophy, prepare yourself from the very first to be laughed at, to be sneered by the multitude, to hear them say, "He is returned to us a philosopher all at once," and "Whence this supercilious look?" Now, for your part, do not have a supercilious look indeed; but keep steadily to those things which appear best to you as one appointed by God to this station. For remember that, if you adhere to the same point, those very persons who at first ridiculed will afterwards admire you. But if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.

If you ever happen to turn your attention to externals, so as to wish to please any one, be assured that you have ruined your scheme of life. Be contented, then, in everything with being a philosopher; and, if you wish to be thought so likewise by any one, appear so to yourself, and it will suffice you.

Let not such considerations as these distress you. "I shall live in dishonor, and be nobody anywhere." For, if dishonor is an evil, you can no more be involved in any evil by the means of another, than be engaged in anything base. Is it any business of yours, then, to get power, or to be admitted to an entertainment? By no means. How, then, after all,
is this a dishonor? And how is it true that you will be nobody anywhere, when you ought to be somebody in those things only which are in your own power, in which you may be of the greatest consequence? "But my friends will be unassisted." - What do you mean by unassisted? They will not have money from you, nor will you make them Roman citizens. Who told you, then, that these are among the things in our own power, and not the affair of others? And who can give to another the things which he hath not himself? "Well, but get them, then, that we too may have a share." If I can get them with the preservation of my own honor and fidelity and greatness of mind, show me the way and I will get them; but if you require me to lose my own proper good that you may gain what is no good, consider how unequitable and foolish you are. Besides, which would you rather have, a sum of money, or a friend of fidelity and honor? Rather assist me, then, to gain this character than require me to do those things by which I may lose it. Well, but my country, say you, as far as depends on me, will be unassisted. Here again, what assistance is this you mean? "It will not have porticoes nor baths of your providing." And what signifies that? Why, neither doth a smith provide it with shoes, or a shoemaker with arms. It is enough if every one fully performs his own proper business. And were you to supply it with another citizen of honor and fidelity, would not he be of use to it? Yes. Therefore neither are you yourself useless to it. "What place, then, say you, shall I hold in the state?" Whatever you can hold with the preservation of your fidelity and honor. But if, by desiring to be useful to that, you lose these, of what use can you be to your country when you become faithless and void of shame?

25

Is any one preferred before you at an entertainment, or in a compliment, or in being admitted to a consultation? If these things are good, you ought to rejoice that he hath got them; and if they are evil, do not be grieved that you have not got them. And remember that you cannot, without using the same means [which others do] to acquire things not in our own power, expect to be thought worthy of an equal share of them. For how can he who doth not frequent the door of any [great] man, doth not attend him, doth not praise him, have an equal share with him who
doth. You are unjust, then, and unsatiable, if you are unwilling to pay the price for which these things are sold, and would have them for nothing. For how much are lettuces sold? A halfpenny, for instance. If another, then, paying a halfpenny, takes the lettuces, and you, not paying it, go without them, do not imagine that he hath gained any advantage over you. For as he hath the lettuces, so you have the halfpenny which you did not give. So, in the present case, you have not been invited to such a person's entertainment, because you have not paid him the price for which a supper is sold. It is sold for praise; it is sold for attendance. Give him then the value, if it be for your advantage. But if you would, at the same time, not pay the one and yet receive the other, you are unsatiable, and a blockhead. Have you nothing, then, instead of the supper? Yes, indeed, you have; the not praising him, whom you do not like to praise; the not bearing with his behavior at coming in.

26

The will of nature may be learned from those things in which we do not differ from each other. As, when our neighbor's boy hath broken a cup, or the like, we are presently ready to say, "These are things that will happen." Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup was broken. Transfer this, in like manner, to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, "This is a human accident." But if any one's own child happens to die, it is presently, "Alas! how wretched am I!" But it should be remembered how we are affected in hearing the same thing concerning others.

27

As a mark is not set up for the sake of missing the aim, so neither doth the nature of evil exist in the world.

28

If a person had delivered up your body to any one whom he met in his way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be disconcerted and confounded by any one who happens to give you ill language?
In every affair consider what precedes and follows, and then undertake it. Otherwise you will begin with spirit; but not having thought of the consequences, when some of them appear you will shamefully desist. "I would conquer at the Olympic games." But consider what precedes and follows, and then, if it be for your advantage, engage in the affair. You must conform to rules, submit to a diet, refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether you choose it or not, at a stated hour, in heat and cold; you must drink no cold water, nor sometimes even wine. In a word, you must give yourself up to your master, as to a physician. Then, in the combat, you may be thrown into a ditch, dislocate your arm, turn your ankle, swallow abundance of dust, be whipped, and, after all, lose the victory. When you have reckoned up all this, if your inclination still holds, set about the combat. Otherwise, take notice, you will behave like children, who sometimes play wrestlers, sometimes gladiators, sometimes blow a trumpet, and sometimes act a tragedy, when they happen to have seen and admired these shows. Thus you will be at one time a wrestler, at another a gladiator, now a philosopher, then an orator; but with your whole soul, nothing at all. Like an ape, you mimic all you see, and one thing after another is sure to please you, but is out of favor as soon as it becomes familiar. For you have never entered upon anything considerately, nor after having viewed the whole matter on all sides, or made any scrutiny into it, but rashly, and with a cold inclination. Thus some, when they have seen a philosopher and heard a man speaking like Euphrates (though, indeed, who can speak like him?), have a mind to be philosophers too. Consider first, man, what the matter is, and what your own nature is able to bear. If you would be a wrestler, consider your shoulders, your back, your thighs; for different persons are made for different things. Do you think that you can act as you do, and be a philosopher? That you can eat and drink, and be angry and discontented as you are now? You must watch, you must labor, you must get the better of certain appetites, must quit your acquaintance, be despised by your servant, be laughed at by those you meet; come off worse than others in everything, in magistracies, in honors, in courts of judicature. When you have considered all these things round, approach, if you please; if, by parting with them you
have a mind to purchase apathy, freedom, and tranquility. If not, do not come hither; do not, like children, be one while a philosopher, then a publican, then an orator, and then one of Caesar's officers. These things are not consistent. You must be one man, either good or bad. You must cultivate either your own ruling faculty or externals, and apply yourself either to things within or without you; that is, be either a philosopher, or one of the vulgar.

30

Duties are universally measured by relations. Is any one a father? In this are implied, as due, taking care of him, submitting to him in all things, patiently receiving his reproaches, his correction. But he is a bad father. Is your natural tie then to a good father? No; but to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, preserve your own situation towards him. Consider not what he doth, but what you are to do to keep your own faculty of choice in a state conformable to nature. For another will not hurt you unless you please. You will then be hurt when you think you are hurt. In this manner, therefore, you will find, from the idea of a neighbor, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties if you accustom yourself to contemplate the several relations.

31

Be assured that the essential property of piety towards the gods is to form right opinions concerning them, as existing and as governing the universe with goodness and justice. And fix yourself in this resolution, to obey them, and yield to them, and willingly follow them in all events, as produced by the most perfect understanding. For thus you will never find fault with the gods nor accuse them as neglecting you. And it is not possible for this to be effected any other way than by withdrawing yourself from things not in our own power, and placing good or evil in those only which are. For if you suppose any of the things not in our own power to be either good or evil, when you are disappointed of what you wish, or incur what you would avoid, you must necessarily find fault with and blame the authors. For every animal is naturally formed to flee and abhor things that appear hurtful, and the causes of them; and to pursue and admire those which
appear beneficial, and the causes of them. It is impracticable, then, that one who supposes himself to be hurt should rejoice in the person who, he thinks, hurts him, just as it is impossible to rejoice in the hurt itself. Hence, also, a father is reviled by a son, when he doth not impart to him the things which he takes to be good; and the supposing empire to be a good made Polynices and Eteocles mutually enemies. On this account the husbandman, the sailor, the merchant, on this account those who lose wives and children, revile the gods. For where interest is, there too is piety placed. So that, whoever is careful to regulate his desires and aversions as he ought, is, by the very same means, careful of piety likewise. But it is also incumbent on every one to offer libations and sacrifices the first fruits, conformably to the customs of his country, with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligent-ly, nor sparingly, nor beyond his ability.

32

When you have recourse to divination, remember that you know not what the event will be, and you come to learn it of the diviner; but of what nature it is you know before you come, at least if you are a philosopher. For if it is among the things not in our power, it can by no means be either good or evil. Do not, therefore, bring either desire or aversion with you to the diviner (else you will approach him trembling), but first acquire a distinct knowledge that every event is indifferent and nothing to you, of whatever sort it may be, for it will be in your power to make a right use of it, and this no one can hinder; then come with confidence to the gods, as your counsellors, and afterwards, when any counsel is given you, remember what counsellors you have assumed, and whose advice you will neglect if you disobey. Come to divination, as Socrates prescribed, in cases of which the whole consideration relates to the event, and in which no opportunities are afforded by reason, or any other art, to discover the thing proposed to be learned. When, therefore, it is our duty to share the danger of a friend or of our country, we ought not to consult the oracle whether we shall share it with them or not. For, though the diviner should forewarn you that the victims are unfavorable, this means no more than that either death or mutilation or exile is portended. But we have reason within us, and it directs, even with
these hazards, to stand by our friend and our country. Attend, therefore, to the greater diviner, the Pythian god, who cast out of the temple the person who gave no assistance to his friend while another was murdering him.

33

Immediately prescribe some character and form [of behavior] to yourself, which you may preserve both alone and in company.

Be for the most part silent, or speak merely what is necessary, and in few words. We may, however, enter, though sparingly, into discourse sometimes when occasion calls for it, but not on any of the common subjects, of gladiators, or horse races, or athletic champions, or feasts, the vulgar topics of conversation; but principally not of men, so as either to blame, or praise, or make comparisons. If you are able, then, by your own conversation bring over that of your company to proper subjects; but, if you happen to be taken among strangers, be silent.

Let not your laughter be much, nor on many occasions, nor profuse.

Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.

Avoid public and vulgar entertainments; but, if ever an occasion calls you to them, keep your attention upon the stretch, that you may not imperceptibly slide into vulgar manners. For be assured that if a person be ever so sound himself, yet, if his companion be infected, he who converses with him will be infected likewise.

Provide things relating to the body no further than mere use; as meat, drink, clothing, house, family. But strike off and reject everything relating to show and delicacy.

As far as possible, before marriage, preserve yourself pure from familiarities with women, and, if you indulge them, let it be lawfully. But do not therefore be troublesome and full of reproofs to those who use these liberties, nor frequently boast that you yourself do not.

115
If any one tells you that such a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer: "He doth not know my other faults, else he would not have mentioned only these."

It is not necessary for you to appear often at public spectacles; but if ever there is a proper occasion for you to be there, do not appear more solicitous for any one than for yourself; that is, wish things to be only just as they are, and him only to conquer who is the conqueror, for thus you will meet with no hindrance. But abstain entirely from acclamations and derision and violent emotions. And when you come away, do not discourse a great deal on what hath passed, and what doth not contribute to your own amendment. For it would appear by such discourse that you were immoderately struck with the show.

Go not [of your own accord] to the rehearsals of any [authors], nor appear [at them] readily. But, if you do appear, preserve your gravity and sedateness, and at the same time avoid being morose.

When you are going to confer with any one, and particularly of those in a superior station, represent to yourself how Socrates or Zeno would behave in such a case, and you will not be at a loss to make a proper use of whatever may occur.

When you are going to any of the people in power, represent to yourself that you will not find him at home; that you will not be admitted; that the doors will not be opened to you; that he will take no notice of you. If, with all this, it be your duty to go, bear what happens, and never say [to yourself], "It was not worth so much." For this is vulgar, and like a man disconcerted by externals.

In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own actions and dangers. For, however, agreeable it may be to yourself to mention the risks you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures. Avoid, likewise, an endeavor to excite laughter. For this is a slippery point, which may throw you into vulgar manners, and, besides, may be apt to lessen you in the esteem of your acquaintance. Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever,
therefore, anything of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way; or, at least, by silence and blushing and a forbidding look, show yourself to be displeased by such talk.

34

If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind both points of time; that in which you shall enjoy the pleasure, and that in which you will repent and reproach yourself after you have enjoyed it; and set before you, in opposition to these, how you will rejoice and applaud yourself if you abstain. And even though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed that its enticing, and agreeable and attractive force may not subdue you; but set in opposition to this how much better it is to be conscious of having gained so great a victory.

35

When you do anything from a clear judgment that it ought to be done, never shun the being seen to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it; for, if you do not act right, shun the action itself; but, if you do, why are you afraid of those who censure you wrongly?

36

As the proposition, Either it is day or it is night, is extremely proper for a disjunctive argument, but quite improper in a conjunctive one, so, at a feast, to choose the largest share is very suitable to the bodily appetite, but utterly inconsistent with the social spirit of an entertainment. When you eat with another, then, remember not only the value of those things which are set before you to the body, but the value of that behavior which ought to be observed towards the person who gives the entertainment.

37

If you have assumed any character above your strength, you have both made an ill figure in that and quitted one which you might have supported.
38

As, in walking, you take care not to tread upon a nail or turn your foot, so likewise take care not to hurt the ruling faculty of your mind. And, if we were to guard against this in every action, we should undertake the action with the greater safety.

39

The body is to every one the measure of the possessions proper for it, as the foot is of the shoe. If, therefore, you stop at this, you will keep the measure; but if you move beyond it, you must necessarily be carried forward, as down a precipice; as in the case of a shoe, if you go beyond its fitness to the foot, it comes first to be gilded, then purple, and then studded with jewels. For to that which once exceeds a due measure, there is no bound.

40

Women from fourteen years old are flattered with the title of "mistresses" by the men. Therefore, perceiving that they are regarded only as qualified to give the men pleasure, they begin to adorn themselves, and in that to place all their hopes. It is worth while, therefore, to fix our attention on making them sensible that they are esteemed for nothing else but the appearance of a decent and modest and discreet behavior.

41

It is a mark of want of genius to spend much time in things relating to the body, as to be long in our exercises, in eating and drinking, and in the discharge of other animal functions. These should be done incidentally and slightly, and our whole attention be engaged in the care of the understanding.

42

When any person doth ill by you, or speaks ill of you, remember that he acts or speaks from a supposition of its being his duty. Now, it is not possible that he should follow what appears right to you, but what appears so to himself. Therefore, if he judges from a wrong appearance, he is the person hurt, since he too is the person deceived. For if
any one should suppose a true proposition to be false, the proposition is not hurt, but he who is deceived about it. Setting out, then, from these principles, you will meekly bear a person who reviles you, for you will say upon every occasion, "It seemed so to him."

43

Everything hath two handles, the one by which it may be borne, the other by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the action by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but by the opposite, that he is your brother, that he was brought up with you; and thus you will lay hold on it, as it is to be borne.

44

These reasonings are unconnected: "I am richer than you, therefore I am better"; "I am more eloquent than you, therefore I am better." The connection is rather this: "I am richer than you, therefore my property is greater than yours"; "I am more eloquent than you, therefore my style is better than yours." But you, after all, are neither property nor style.

45

Doth any one bathe in a mighty little time? Do not say he doth it ill, but in a mighty little time. Doth any one drink a great quantity of wine? Do not say that he doth ill, but that he drinks a great quantity. For, unless you perfectly understand the principle [from which any one acts], how should you know if he acts ill? Thus you will not run the hazard of assenting to any appearances but such as you fully comprehend.

46

Never call yourself a philosopher, nor talk a great deal among the unlearned about theorems, but act conformably to them. Thus, at an entertainment, do not talk how persons ought to eat, but eat as you ought. For remember that in this manner Socrates also universally avoided all ostentation. And when persons came to him and desired to be recommended by him to philosophers, he took and recommended them, so well did he bear being overlooked. So that if ever any talk should happen among the unlearned concerning
philosophic theorems, be you, for the most part, silent. For there is great danger in immediately throwing out what you have not digested. And, if any one tells you that you know nothing, and you are not nettled at it, then you may be sure that you have begun your business. For sheep do not throw up the grass to show the shepherds how much they have eaten; but, inwardly digesting their food, they outwardly produce wool and milk. Thus, therefore, do you likewise not show theorems to the unlearned, but the actions produced by them after they have been digested.

47

When you have brought yourself to supply the necessities of your body at a small price, do not pique yourself upon it; nor, if you drink water, be saying upon every occasion, "I drink water." But first consider how much more sparing and patient of hardship the poor are than we. But if at any time you would inure yourself by exercise to labor, and bearing hard trials, do it for your own sake, and not for the world; do not grasp statues, but, when you are violently thirsty; take a little cold water in your mouth, and spurt it out and tell nobody.

48

The condition and characteristic of a vulgar person, is, that he never expects either benefit or hurt from himself, but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher is, that he expects all hurt and benefit from himself. The marks of a proficient are, that he censures no one, praises no one, blames no one, accuses no one, says nothing concerning himself as being anybody, or knowing anything: when he is, in any instance, hindered or restrained, he accuses himself; and, if he is praised, he secretly laughs at the person who praises him; and, if he is censured, he makes no defence. But he goes about with the caution of infirm people [after sickness or an accident], dreading to move anything that is set right, before it is perfectly fixed. He suppresses all desire to himself; he transfers his aversion to those things only which thwart the proper use of our own faculty of choice; the exertion of his active powers towards anything is very gentle; if he appears stupid or ignorant, he doth not care, and, in a word, he watches himself as an enemy, and one in ambush.
When any one shows himself vain on being able to understand and interpret the works of Chrysippus, say to yourself, "Unless Chrysippus had written obscurely, this person would have had no subject for his vanity. But what do I desire? To understand nature and follow her. I ask, then, who interprets her, and, finding Chrysippus doth, I have recourse to him. I do not understand his writings. I seek, therefore, one to interpret them." So far there is nothing to value myself upon. And when I find an interpreter, what remains is to make use of his instructions. This alone is the valuable thing. But, if I admire nothing but merely the interpretation, what do I become more than a grammarian instead of a philosopher? Except, indeed, that instead of Homer I interpret Chrysippus. When any one, therefore, desires me to read Chrysippus to him, I rather blush when I cannot show my actions agreeable and constant to his discourse.

Whatever rules you have deliberately proposed to yourself [for the conduct of life], abide by them as so many laws, and as if you would be guilty of impiety in transgressing any of them, and do not regard what any one says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours. How long, then, will you defer to think yourself worthy of the noblest improvements, and in no instance to transgress the distinctions of reason? You have received the philosophic theorems, with which you ought to be conversant, and you have been conversant with them. What other master, then, do you wait for, to throw upon the delay of reforming yourself? You are no longer a boy, but a grown man. If, therefore, you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and fix day after day in which you will attend to yourself, you will insensibly continue without proficiency, and living and dying, persevere in being one of the vulgar. This instant, then, think yourself worthy of living as a man grown up, and a proficient. Let whatever appears to be the best be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, or glory or disgrace, be set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the Olympiad comes on, nor can it be put off; and that, by once being
worsted and giving way, proficiency is lost, or [by the contrary] preserved. Thus Socrates became perfect, improving himself to everything, attending to nothing but reason. And though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought, however, to live as one desirous of becoming a Socrates.

51

The first and most necessary topic in philosophy is that of the use of [practical] theorems, as that, We ought not to lie; the second is that of demonstrations, as, Whence it is that we ought not to lie; and third, that which gives strength and articulation to the other two, as, Whence this is a demonstration. For what is demonstration? What is consequence? What contradiction? What truth? What falsehood? The third topic, then, is necessary on the account of the second, and the second on the account of the first. But the most necessary, and that whereon we ought to rest, is the first. But we act just on the contrary. For we spend all our time on the third topic, and employ all our diligence about that, and entirely neglect the first. Therefore, at the same time that we lie, we are mighty ready to show how it is demonstrated that lying is not right.

52

Upon all occasions we ought to have these maxims ready at hand:

"Conduct me, Jove, and thou, O Destiny, Wherever your decrees have fixed my station. I follow cheerfully; and, did I not, Wicked and wretched, I must follow still."

"Whoe'er yields properly to Fate, is deemed Wise among men, and knows the laws of heaven."

And this third:

"O Crito, if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be. Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot."
MARCUS AURELIUS
BOOK ONE

1
From my grandfather Verus I learned good morals and the government of my temper.

2
From the reputation and remembrance of my father, modesty and a manly character.

3
In my father I observed mildness of temper, and unchangeable resolution in the things which he had determined after due deliberation; and no vain-glory in those things which men call honors; and a love of labor and perseverance; and a readiness to listen to those who had anything to propose for the common weal; and undeviating firmness in giving to every man according to his deserts; and a knowledge derived from experience of the occasions for vigorous action and for remission. I observed that he had overcome all passion for joys; and he considered himself no more than any other citizen, and he released his friends from all obligation to sup with him or to attend him of necessity when he went abroad, and those who had failed to accompany him, by reason of any urgent circumstances always found him the same. I observed, too, his habit of careful inquiry in all matters of deliberation, and this persistency, and that he never stopped his investigation through being satisfied with appearances which first presented themselves; and that his disposition was to keep his friends, and not to be soon tired of them, nor yet to be extravagant in his affection; and to be satisfied on all occasions, and cheerful; and to foresee things a long way off, and to provide for the smallest without display; and to check immediately popular applause and flattery; and to be ever watchful over the things that were necessary for the administration of the empire, and to be a good manager of the expenditure, and patiently to endure the blame which he got for such conduct. He was neither superstitious with respect to the gods, nor did he court men by gifts or by trying to please them, or by flattering the populace; but he showed sobriety
in all things and firmness, and never any mean thoughts or action, nor love of novelty.

The things which conduce in any way to the commodity of life, and of which fortune gives an abundant supply, he used without arrogance and without excusing himself; so that when he had them, he enjoyed them without affectation, and when he had them not he did not want them. No one could ever say of him that he was either a sophist or a home-bred flippant slave or a pedant; but every one acknowledged him to be a man ripe, perfect, above flattery, able to manage his own and other men's affairs. Besides this, he honored those who were true philosophers, and he did not reproach those who pretended to be philosophers, nor yet was he easily led by them. He was also easy in conversation, and he made himself agreeable without any offensive affectation.

He took a reasonable care of his body's health, not as one who was greatly attached to life, nor out of regard to personal appearance, nor yet in a careless way, but so that, through his own attention, he very seldom stood in need of the physician's art or of medicine or external applications.

He was most ready to give way without envy to those who possessed any particular faculty, such as that of eloquence or knowledge of the law or of morals, or of anything else; and he gave them his help, that each might enjoy reputation according to his deserts; and he always acted conformably to the institutions of his country, without showing any affectation of doing so.

There was in him nothing harsh, nor implacable, nor violent, nor, as one may say, anything carried to the sweating point; but he examined all things severally, as if he had abundance of time, and without confusion, in an orderly way, vigorously and consistently. And that might be applied to him which is recorded of Socrates, that he was able both to abstain from, and to enjoy, those things which many are too weak to abstain from, and cannot enjoy without excess. But to be strong both to bear the one and to be sober in the other is the mark of a man who has a perfect and invincible soul.
BOOK TWO

1

Betimess in the morning say to thyself, This day I shall have to do with an idle curious man, with an unthankful man, a railer, a crafty, false, or an envious man; an unsociable, uncharitable man. All these ill qualities have happened unto them, through ignorance of that which is truly good and truly bad. But I that understand the nature of that which is good, that it only is to be desired, and of that which is bad, that it only is truly odious and shameful; who knows moreover, that this transgressor, whosoever by be, is my kinsman, not by the same blood and seed, but by participation of the same reason, and of the same divine particle. How can I either be hurt by any of those, since it is not in their power to make me incur anything that is truly reproachful? or angry, and ill affected towards him, who by nature is so near unto me? for we are all born to be fellow-workers, as the feet, the hands, and the eyelids; as the rows of the upper and under teeth; for such therefore to be in opposition, is against nature; and what is it to chafe at, and to be averse from, but to be in opposition?

2

Whatever this is that I am, it is a little flesh and breath, and the ruling part. Throw away thy books; no longer distract thyself; it is not allowed; but as if thou wast now dying, despise the flesh; it is blood and bones and a network, a contexture of nerves, veins and arteries. See the breath also, what kind of a thing it is; air, and not always the same, but every moment sent out and again sucked in. The third then is the ruling part, consider thus: Thou art an old man; no longer let this be a slave, no longer be pulled by the strings like a puppet to unsocial movements, no longer be either dissatisfied with thy present lot, or shrink from the future.

3

Remember how long thou hast been putting off these things, and how often thou hast received an opportunity from the gods, and yet dost not use it. Thou must now at last perceive of what universe thou
art a part, and of what administrator of the universe thy existence is an efflux; and that a limit of time is fixed for thee, which if thou dost not use for clearing away the clouds from thy mind, it will go and thou wilt go, and it will never return.

4

Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and feeling of affection, and freedom, and justice, and to give thyself relief from all other thoughts. And thou wilt give thyself relief, if thou doest every act of thy life as if it were the last, laying aside all carelessness and passionate aversion from the commands of reason, and all hypocrisy, and self-love and discontent with the portion which has been given to thee. Thou seest how few the things are, which if a man lays hold of, he is able to live a life which flows in quiet, and is like the existence of the gods; for the gods on their part will require nothing from him who observes these things.

5

Do the things external which fall upon thee distract thee? Give thyself time to learn something new and good, and cease to be whirled around. But then thou must also avoid being carried about the other way. For those too are triflers who have wearied themselves in life by their activity, and yet have no object to which to direct every movement, and, in a word, all their thoughts.

6

Through not observing what is in the mind of another a man has seldom been seen to be unhappy; but those who do not observe the movements of their own minds must of necessity be unhappy.

7

This thou must always bear in mind, what is the nature of the whole, and what is thy nature, and how this is related to that, and what kind of a part of it is of what kind of a whole; and that there is no one who hinders thee from always doing and saying the things which are according to the nature of which thou art a part.
Theophrastus, in his comparison of bad acts—such a comparison as one would make in accordance with the common notions of mankind—says, like a true philosopher, that the offenses which are committed through desire are more blameable than those which are committed through anger. For he who is excited by anger seems to turn away from reason with a certain pain and unconscious contraction; but he who offends through desire, being overpowered by pleasure, seems to be in a manner more intemperate and more womanish in his offenses. Rightly then, and in a way worthy of philosophy, he said that the offense which is committed with pleasure is more blameable than that which is committed with pain; and on the whole the one is more like a person who has been first wronged and through pain is compelled to be angry; but the other is moved by his own impulse to do wrong, being carried toward doing something by desire.

Since it is possible that thou mayest depart from life this very moment, regulate every act and thought accordingly. But to go away from among men, if there are gods, is not a thing to be afraid of, for the gods will not involve thee in evil; but if indeed they do not exist, or if they have no concern about human affairs, what is it to me to live in a universe devoid of gods or devoid of providence? But in truth they do exist, and they do care for human things, and they have put all the means in man's power to enable him not to fall into real evils. And as to the rest, if there was anything evil, they would have provided for this also, that it should be altogether in a man's power not to fall into it. Now, that which does not make a man worse, how can it make a man's life worse?

Though thou shouldest be going to live three thousand years, and as many times ten thousand years, still remember that no man loses any other life than this which he now lives, nor lives any other than this which he now loses. These two things then thou must bear in mind; the one, that all things from eternity are of like forms and come round in a circle, and that it makes no difference whether a man shall see the same things during a hundred years or two hundred, or an infinite time. And the second, that the longest
liver and he who will die soonest lose just the same. For the present is the only thing of which a man can be deprived, if this is the only thing which he has, and that a man cannot lose a thing if he has it not.

Life is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and after fame is oblivion.
BOOK THREE

1

We ought to consider not only that our life is daily wasting away and a smaller part of it is left, but another thing also must be taken into account, that if a man should live longer it is quite uncertain whether the understanding will still continue sufficient for the comprehension of things, and retain the power of contemplation which strives to acquire the knowledge of the divine and the human. We must make haste then, not only because we are daily nearer to death, but also because the conception of things and the understanding of them cease first.

2

Do not waste the remainder of thy life in thoughts about others, when thou dost not refer thy thoughts to some object of common utility. For thou losest the opportunity of doing something else when thou hast such thoughts as these.

3

Labor not unwillingly, nor without regard to the common interest, nor without due consideration, nor with distraction; and be not either a man of many words, or busy about too many things. Be cheerful also, and seek not external help nor the tranquillity which others give. A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others.

4

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, and, in a word, anything better than thy own mind's self-satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice; if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul, and enjoy that which thou hast found to be the best. But if nothing appears to be better than the diety which is planted in thee, which has subjected to itself all thy appetites, and, as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense, and has submitted itself to the gods, and cares for mankind; if thou findest everything else smaller and
of less value than this, give place to nothing else, for if thou dost once diverge and incline to it, thou wilt no longer without distraction be able to give the preference to that good thing which is thy proper possession and thy own.

5

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains.

6

In the mind of one who is chastened and purified thou wilt find no corrupt matter, nor impurity, nor any sore skinned over. Nor is his life incomplete when fate overtakes him, as one may say of an actor who leaves the stage before ending and finishing the play. Besides, there is in him nothing servile, nor affected, nor too closely bound to other things, nor yet detached from other things, nothing worthy of blame, nothing which seeks a hiding-place.

7

Reverence the faculty which produces opinion. On this faculty it entirely depends whether there shall exist in thy ruling part any opinion inconsistent with nature and the constitution of the rational animal. And this faculty promises freedom from hasty judgment, and friendship toward men, and obedience to the gods.

8

Throwing away, then, all things, hold to these only which are few; and besides bear in mind that every man lives only this present time, which is an indivisible point, and that all the rest of his life is either past or it is uncertain. Short then is the time which every man lives, and small the nook of the earth where he lives; and short too the longest posthumous fame, and even this only continued by a succession of poor human beings, who will very soon die; and who know not even themselves, much less him who died long ago.

9

Nothing is so productive of elevation of mind as to be able to examine methodically and truly every
object which is presented to thee in life, and always to look at things so as to see at the same time what kind of universe this is, and what kind of use everything performs in it, and what value everything has with reference to the whole, and what with reference to man, who is a citizen of the highest city, of which all other cities are like families; what each thing is, and of what it is composed, and how long it is the nature of this thing to endure which now makes an impression on me; and what virtue I have need of with respect to it, such as gentleness, manliness, truth, fidelity, simplicity, contentment, and the rest.

10

If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee, but keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldest be bound to give it back immediately; if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And there is no man who is able to prevent this.

11

As physicians have always their instruments and knives ready for cases which suddenly require their skill, so do thou have principles ready for the understanding of things divine and human, and for doing everything, even the smallest, with a recollection of the bond which unites the divine and human to one another. For neither wilt thou do anything well which pertains to man without at the same time having a reference to things divine; nor the contrary.

12

They know not how many things are signified by the words stealing, sowing, buying, keeping quiet, seeing what ought to be done; for this is not effected by the eyes, but by another kind of vision.

13

Body, soul, intelligence; to the body belong sensations, to the soul appetites, to the intelligence principles. To receive the impressions of forms by means of appearances belongs even to animals; to be
pulled by the strings of desire belongs both to wild
beasts and to men who have made themselves into women,
and to a Phalaris and a Nero; and to have the intel-
ligence that guides to the things which appear suit-
able belongs also to those who do not believe in the
gods, and who betray their country, and do their
impure deeds when they have shut the doors. If then
everything else is common to all that I have mention-
ed, there remains that which is peculiar to the good
man, to be pleased and content with what happens, and
with the thread which is spun for him; and not to
defile the divinity which is planted in his breast,
nor disturb it by a crowd of images, but to preserve
it tranquil, following it obediently as a god, neither
saying anything contrary to the truth, nor doing
anything contrary to justice. And if all men refuse
to believe that he lives a simple, modest, and con-
tented life, he is neither angry with any of them, nor
does he deviate from the way which leads to the end of
life, to which a man ought to come pure, tranquil,
ready to depart, and without any compulsion perfectly
reconciled to his lot.
BOOK FOUR

1

It is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere, either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble, does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity; and I affirm that tranquillity is nothing else than the good ordering of the mind.

2

The whole earth is a point, and how small a nook in it is this thy dwelling, and how few are there in it, and what kind of people are they who will praise thee. This then remains: Remember to retire into this little territory of thy own, and, above all, do not distract or strain thyself, but be free, and look at things as a man, as a human being, as a citizen, as a mortal.

3

All these things, which thou seest, change immediately and will no longer be; and constantly bear in mind how many of these changes thou hast already witnessed. The universe is transformation: life is opinion.

4

Death is such as generation is, a mystery of nature; a composition out of the same elements, and a decomposition into the same; and altogether not a thing of which any man should be ashamed, for it is not contrary to the nature of a reasonable animal, and not contrary to the reason of our constitution.

5

Take away thy opinion, and then there is taken away the complaint, "I have been harmed." Take away the complaint, "I have been harmed," and the harm is taken away.
Everything which happens, happens justly, and if thou observest carefully, thou wilt find it to be so. I do not say only with respect to the continuity of the series of things, but with respect to what is just, and as if it were done by one who assigns to each thing its value.

Do not have such an opinion of things as he has who does thee wrong, or such as he wishes thee to have, but look at them as they are in truth.

Hast thou reason? I have. Why then dost not thou use it? For if this does its own work, what else dost thou wish?

Within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape, if thou wilt return to thy principles and the worship of reason.

Do not act as if thou wert going to live ten thousand years. Death hangs over thee. While thou livest, while it is in thy power, be good.

How much trouble he avoids who does not look to see what his neighbor says or does or thinks, but only to what he does himself, that it may be just and pure; or as Agathon says, look not round at the depraved morals of others, but run straight along the line without deviating from it.

Everything which is in any way beautiful is beautiful in itself, and terminates in itself, not having praise as part of itself. Neither worse then nor better is a thing made by being praised. I affirm this also of the things which are called beautiful by the vulgar; for example, material things and works of art. That which is really beautiful has no need of anything; not more than law, not more than truth, not more than benevolence or modesty. Which of these
things is beautiful because it is praised, or spoiled by being blamed? Is such a thing as an emerald made worse than it was, if it is not praised? or gold, ivory, purple, a lyre, a little knife, a flower, a shrub?

If souls continue to exist, how does the air contain them from eternity? But how does the earth contain the bodies of those who have been buried from time so remote? For as here the mutation of these bodies after a certain continuance, whatever it may be, and their dissolution make room for other dead bodies; so the souls which are removed into the air after subsisting for some time are transmuted and diffused, and assume a fiery nature by being received into the seminal intelligence of the universe, and in this way make room for the fresh souls which come to dwell there. And this is the answer which a man might give on the hypothesis of the soul's continuing to exist.

Do not be whirled about, but in every movement have respect to justice, and on the occasion of every impression maintain the faculty of comprehension or understanding.

Everything harmonizes with me, which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early nor too late, which is the due time for thee. Everything is fruit to me which thy seasons bring, O Nature; from thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return. The poet says, Dear City of Cecrops; and wilt not thou say, Dear City of Zeus!

Occupy thyself with few things, says the philosopher, if thou wouldst be tranquil. The greatest part of what we say and do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly on every occasion a man should ask himself, is this one of the unnecessary things? Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after.
Try how the life of the good man suits thee, the life of him who is satisfied with his portion out of the whole, and satisfied with his own just acts and benevolent disposition.

Do not disturb thyself. Make thyself all simplicity. Does anyone do wrong? It is to himself that he does the wrong. Has anything happened to thee? Well, out of the universe from the beginning everything which happens has been apportioned and spun out to thee. In a word, thy life is short. Thou must turn to profit the present by the aid of reason and justice. Be sober in thy relaxation.

If he is a stranger to the universe who does not know what is in it, no less is he a stranger who does not know what is doing on it. He is a runaway, who flies from social reason; he is blind, who shuts the eyes of the understanding; he is poor, who has need of another, and has not from himself all things which are useful for life. He is an abscess on the universe who withdraws and separates himself from the reason of our common nature through being displeased with the things which happen, for the same nature produces this, and has produced thee too; he is a piece rent asunder from the state, who tears his own soul from that of reasonable animals, which is one.

Love the art, poor as it may be, which thou hast learned, and be content with it; and pass through the rest of life like one who has intrusted to the gods with his whole soul all that he has, making thyself neither the tyrant nor the slave of any man.

It is necessary to remember that the attention given to everything has its proper value and proportion. For thus thou wilt not be dissatisfied, if thou appliest thyself to smaller matters no further than is fit.
22

Everythir, is only for a day, both that which remembers and that which is remembered.

23

Observe constantly that all things take place by change, and accustom thyself to consider that the nature of the Universe loves nothing so much as to change the things which are to make new things like them. For everything that exists is in a manner the seed of that which will be.

24

Examine men's ruling principles, even those of the wise, what kind of things they avoid, and what kind they pursue.

25

It is no evil for things to undergo change, and no good for things to subsist in consequence of change.

26

Time is like a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream; for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too.

27

If any god told thee that thou shalt die to-morrow, or certainly on the day after to-morrow, thou wouldst not care much whether it was on the third day or on the morrow, unless thou wast in the highest degree mean-spirited - for how small is the difference - so think it no great thing to die after as many years as thou canst name rather than to-morrow.

28

Think continually how many physicians are dead after often contracting their eyebrows over the sick; and how many astrologers after predicting with great pretensions the deaths of others; and how many philosophers after endless discourses on death or immortality; how many heroes after killing thousands; and how many tyrants who have used their power over men's
lives with terrible insolence as if they were immortal; and how many cities are entirely dead, so to speak, Helice and Pompeii and Herculaneum, and others innumerable. Add to the reckoning all whom thou hast known, one after another. One man after burying another has been laid out dead, and another buries him; and all this is in a short time. To conclude, always observe how ephemeral and worthless human things are, and what was yesterday a little mucus, to-morrow will be a mummy or ashes. Pass then through this little space of time conformably to nature, and end thy journey in content, just as an olive falls off when it is ripe, blessing nature who produced it, and thanking the tree on which it grew.

Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it. Unhappy am I, because this has happened to me? - Not so, but Happy am I, though this has happened to me, because I continue free from pain, neither crushed by the present nor fearing the future. For such a thing as might have happened to everyman; but every man would not have continued free from pain on such an occasion. Why, then, is that rather a misfortune than this a good fortune?

Will then this which has happened prevent thee from being just, magnanimous, temperate, prudent, secure against inconsiderate opinions and falsehood; will it prevent thee from having modesty, freedom, and everything else, by the presence of which man's nature obtains all that is its own? Remember, too, on every occasion which leads thee to vexation to apply this principle; not that this is a misfortune, but that to bear it nobly is good fortune.

Altogether the interval is small between birth and death; and consider with how much trouble, and in company with what sort of people, and in what a feeble body this interval is laboriously passed. Do not then consider life a thing of any value. For look to the immensity of time behind thee, and to the time which is before thee, another boundless space. In this infinity then what is the difference between him who lives three days and him who lives three generations.
Always run to the short way; and the short way is the natural: accordingly say and do everything in conformity with the soundest reason. For such a purpose frees a man from trouble, and warfare, and all artifice and ostentatious display.
BOOK FIVE

1

In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present - I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bedclothes and keep myself warm? But this is more pleasant. Dost thou exist then to take thy pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion? Dost thou not see the little plants, the little birds, the ants, the spiders, the bees working together to put in order their several parts of the universe? And art thou unwilling to do the work of a human being, and dost thou not make haste to do that which is according to thy nature?

2

Judge every word and deed which is according to nature to be fit for thee; and be not diverted by the blame which follows from thy people, nor by their words, but if a thing is good to be done or said, do not consider it unworthy of thee. For those persons have their peculiar leading principle and follow their peculiar movement; which things do not thou regard, but go straight on, following thy own nature and the common nature; and the way of both is one.

3

I am composed of the formal and the material; and neither of them will perish into non-existence, as neither of them came into existence out of non-existence. Every part of me then will be reduced by change into some part of the universe, and that again will change into another part of the universe, and so on forever. And by consequence of such a change I too exist, and those who begot me, and so on forever in the other direction.

4

Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the characters of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts. Dye it then with a continuous series of such thoughts as these; for instance, that where a man
can live, there he can also live well. But he must live in a palace - well then, he can also live well in a palace. Now the good for the reasonable animal is society; for that we are made for society has been shown above. Is it not plain that the inferior exist for the sake of the superior? but the things which have life are superior to those which have not life, and of those which have life the superior are those which have reason.

5

Nothing happens to any man which he is not formed by nature to bear.

6

That which does no harm to the State, does no harm to the citizen. In the case of every appearance of harm apply this rule; if the State is not harmed by this, neither am I harmed. But if the State is harmed, thou must not be angry with him who does harm to the State. Show him where his error is.

7

Often think of the rapidity with which things pass by and disappear, both the things which are and the things which are produced. For substance is like a river in a continual flow, and the activities of things are in constant change, and the causes work in infinite varieties; and there is hardly anything which stands still. And consider this which is near to thee, this boundless abyss of the past and of the future in which all things disappear. How then is he not a fool who is puffed up with such things or plagued about them and makes himself miserable? for they vex him only for a time, and a short time.

8

Think of the universal substance, of which thou hast a very small portion; and of universal time, of which a short and indivisible interval has been assigned to thee; and of that which is fixed by destiny, and how small a part of it thou art.

9

Live with the gods. And he does live with the gods who constantly shows to them that his own soul is satisfied with that which is assigned to him, and that
it does all that the demon wishes, which Zeus hath given to every man for his guardian and guide, a portion of himself. And this is every man's understanding and reason.

Art thou angry with him whose arm-pits stink? Art thou angry with him whose mouth smells foul? What good will this anger do thee? He has such a mouth, he has such arm-pits; it is necessary that such an emanation must come from such things - but the man has reason, it will be said, and he is able, if he takes pains, to discover wherein he offends - I wish thee well of thy discovery. Well, then, and thou hast reason: by thy rational faculty stir up his rational faculty; show him his error, admonish him. For if he listens, thou wilt cure him, and there is no need of anger.

The intelligence of the universe is social. Accordingly it has made the inferior things for the sake of the superior, and it has fitted the superior to one another. Thou seest how it has subordinated, co-ordinated and assigned to everything its proper portion, and brought into concord with one another the things which are best.

How hast thou behaved hitherto to the gods, thy parents, brethren, children, teachers, to those who looked after thy infancy, to thy friends, kinsfolk, to thy slaves? Consider if thou hast hitherto behaved to all in such a way that this may be said of thee:

He never has wronged a man in deed or word. And call to recollection both how many things thou hast passed through and how many things thou hast been able to endure; and that the history of thy life is now complete, and thy service is ended: and how many beautiful things thou hast seen: and how many pleasures and pains thou hast despised; and how many things called honorable thou hast spurned; and to how many ill-minded folks thou hast shown a kind disposition.

Soon, very soon, thou wilt be ashes, or a skeleton, and either a name or not even a name; but name is
sound and echo. And the things which are much valued in life are empty and rotten and trifling, and like little dogs biting one another, and little children quarrelling, laughing, and then straightway weeping. But fidelity and modesty and justice and truth are fled

Up to Olympus from the wide-spread earth

- Hesiod

What then is there which still detains thee here? if the objects of sense are easily changed and never stand still, and the organs of perception are dull and easily receive false impressions; and the poor soul itself is an exhalation from blood. But to have good repute amid such a world as this is an empty thing. Why then dost thou not wait in tranquillity for thy end, whether it is extinction or removal to another state? And until that time comes, what is sufficient? Why, what else than to venerate the gods and bless them, and to do good to men, and to practice tolerance and self-restraint; but as to everything which is beyond the limits of the poor flesh and breath, to remember that this is neither thine nor in thy power.

14

Thou canst pass thy life in an equable flow of happiness, if thou canst go by the right way, and think and act in the right way. These two things are common both to the soul of God and to the soul of man, and to the soul of every rational being, not to be hindered by another; and to hold good to consist in the disposition to justice and the practice of it, and in this to let thy desire find its termination.

15

I was once a fortunate man, but I lost it, I know not how. But fortunate means that a man has assigned to himself a good fortune; and a good fortune is good disposition of the soul, good emotions, good actions.
BOOK SIX

1

The substance of the universe is obedient and compliant; and the reason which governs it has in itself no cause for doing evil, for it has no malice, nor does it do evil to anything, nor is anything harmed by it. But all things are made and perfected according to this reason.

2

Let it make no difference to thee whether thou art cold or warm, if thou art doing thy duty; and whether thou art drowsy or satisfied with sleep, and whether ill-spoken of or praised; and whether dying or doing something else. For it is one of the acts of life, this act by which we die; it is sufficient then in this act also to do well what we have in hand.

3

All existing things soon change, and they will either be reduced to vapor, if indeed all substance is one, or they will be dispersed.

4

The reason which governs knows its own disposition, and what it does, and on what material it works.

5

The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrong doer.

6

The universe is either a confusion, and a mutual involution of things, and a dispersion; or it is unity and order and providence. If then it is the former, why do I desire to tarry in a fortuitous combination of things and such a disorder? and why do I care about anything else than how I shall at last become earth? and why am I disturbed, for the dispersion of my elements will happen whatever I do. But if the other supposition is true, I venerate, and I am firm, and I trust in him who governs.
If thou hadst a step-mother and a mother at the same time, thou wouldst be dutiful to thy step-mother, but still thou wouldst constantly return to thy mother. Let the court and philosophy now be to thee step-mother and mother; return to philosophy frequently and repose in her, through whom what thou meetest with in the court appears to thee tolerable, and thou appearest tolerable in the court.

When we have meat before us and such eatables, we receive the impression, that this is the dead body of a fish, and this is the dead body of a bird or a pig; and again, that this Falernian is only a little grape juice, and this purple robe some sheep's wool dyed with the blood of a shell-fish; such then are these impressions, and they reach the things themselves and penetrate them, and so we see what kind of things they are. Just in the same way ought we to act all through life, and where there are things which appear most worthy of our approbation, we ought to lay them bare and look at their worthlessness and strip them of all the words by which they are exalted. For outward show is a wonderful preventer of the reason, and when thou art most sure that thou art employed about things worth thy pains, it is then that it cheats thee most.

He who values a rational soul, a soul universal and fitted for political life, regards nothing else except this; and above all things he keeps his soul in a condition and in an activity conformable to reason and social life, and he co-operates to this end with those who are of the same kind as himself.

Above, below, all around are the movements of the elements. But the motion of virtue is in none of these; it is something more divine, and advancing by a way hardly observed it goes happily on its road.

How strangely men act. They will not praise those who are living at the same time and living with themselves; but to be themselves praised by posterity, by those whom they have never seen or never will see,
this they set much value on. But this is very much the same as if thou shouldst be grieved because those who have lived before thee did not praise thee.

12

If a thing is difficult to be accomplished by thyself, do not think that it is impossible for man; but if anything is possible for man and conformable to his nature, think that this can be attained by thyself too.

13

In the gymnastic exercises suppose that a man has torn thee with his nails, and by dashing against thy head has inflicted a wound. Well, we neither show any signs of vexation, nor are we offended, nor do we suspect him afterward as a treacherous fellow; and yet we are on our guard against him, not however as an enemy, nor yet with suspicion, but we quietly get out of his way. Something like this let thy behavior be in all the other parts of life; let us overlook many things in those who are like antagonists in the gymnasium. For it is in our power, as I said, to get out of the way, and to have no suspicion nor hatred.

14

If any man is able to convince me and show me that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change; for I seek the truth by which no man was ever injured. But he is injured who abides in his error and ignorance.

15

I do my duty: other things trouble me not; for they are either things without reason, or things that have rambled and know not the way.

16

Alexander the Macedonian and his groom, by death were brought to the same state; for either they were received among the same seminal principles of the universe, or they were alike dispersed among the atoms.

17

Consider how many things in the same indivisible time take place in each of us, things which concern
the body and things which concern the soul; and thou wilt not wonder if any more things, or rather things which come into existence in that which is the one and all, which we call Cosmos, exist in it at the same time.

18

If any man should propose to thee the question, how the name Antoninus is written, wouldst thou with a straining of the voice utter each letter? What then if they grow angry, wilt thou be angry too? Wilt thou not go on with composure and number every letter? Just so then in this life also remember that every duty is made up of certain parts. These it is thy duty to observe, and without being disturbed or showing anger toward those who are angry with thee, to go on thy way and finish that which is set before thee.

19

How cruel is it not to allow men to strive after the things which appear to them to be suitable to their nature and profitable! And yet in a manner thou dost not allow them to do this, when thou art vexed because they do wrong. For they are certainly moved toward things because they suppose them to be suitable to their nature and profitable to them. But it is not so. Teach them then, and show them without being angry.

20

It is a shame for the soul to be first to give way in this life, when thy body does not give way.

21

Take care that thou art not made into a Caesar, that thou art not dyed with this dye; for such things happen. Keep thyself then simple, good, pure, serious, free from affectation, a friend of justice, a worshipper of gods, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts. Strive to continue to be such as philosophy wished to make thee. Reverence the gods, and help men. Short is life. There is only one fruit of this terrene life, a pious disposition and social acts. Do everything as a disciple of Antoninus. Remember his constancy in every act which was conformable to reason, and his evenness in all things, and his piety, and the serenity of his countenance, and
his sweetness, and his disregard of empty fame, and his efforts to understand things; and how he would never let anything pass without having first most carefully examined it and clearly understood it; and how he bore with those who blamed him unjustly without blaming them in return; how he did nothing in a hurry; and how he listened not to calumnies, and how exact an examiner of manners and actions he was; and not given to reproach people, nor timid, nor suspicious, nor a sophist; and with how little he was satisfied, such as lodging, bed, dress, food, servants; and how laborious and patient; and how he was able on account of his sparing diet to hold out to the evening, not ever requiring to relieve himself by any evacuations except at the usual hour; and his firmness and uniformity in his friendships; and how he tolerated freedom of speech in those who opposed his opinions; and the pleasure that he had when any man showed him anything better; and how religious he was without superstition. Imitate all this that thou mayest have as good a conscience, when thy last hour comes, as he had.

22

He who has seen present things has seen all, both everything which has taken place from all eternity and everything which will be for time without end; for all things are of one kin and of one form.

23

Adapt thyself to the things with which thy lot has been cast; and the men among whom thou hast received thy portion, love them, but do it sincerely.

24

Men co-operate after different fashions; and even those co-operate abundantly who find fault with what happens and those who try to oppose it and to hinder it; for the universe has need even of such men as these. It remains then for thee to understand among what kind of workmen thou placest thyself; for he who rules all things will certainly make a right use of thee, and he will receive thee among some part of the co-operators and of those whose labors conduce to one end.

25

Whatever happens to every man, this is for the interest of the universal; this might be sufficient.
But further thou wilt observe this also as a general truth, if thou dost observe, that whatever is profitable to any man is profitable also to other men. But let the word profitable be taken here in the common sense as said of things of the middle kind [neither good nor bad].

26

As it happens to thee in the amphitheater and such places, that the continual sight of the same things and the uniformity make the spectacle weary, so it is in the whole of life; for all things above, below, are the same and from the same. How long then?

27

One thing here is worth a great deal, to pass thy life in truth and justice, with a benevolent disposition even to liars and unjust men.

28

When thou wishes to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth. For nothing delights so much as the examples of the virtues, when they are exhibited in the morals of those who live with us and present themselves in abundance, as far as it is possible. Wherefore we must keep them before us.

29

Thou art not dissatisfied, I suppose, because thou weighest only so many liters and not three hundred. Be not dissatisfied then that thou must live only so many years and not more; for as thou art satisfied with the amount of substance which has been assigned to thee, so be content with the time.

30

That which is not good for the bee-hive, cannot be good for the bee.

31

To the jaundiced honey tastes bitter, and to those bitten by mad dogs water causes fear; and to little children the ball is a fine thing. Why then
am I angry? Dost thou think that a false opinion has less power than the bile in the jaundiced or the poison in him who is bitten by a mad dog?

32

No man will hinder thee from living according to the reason of thy own nature; nothing will happen to thee contrary to the reason of the universal nature.

33

What kind of people are those whom men wish to please, and for what objects, and by what kind of acts? How soon will time cover all things, and how many it has covered already.
BOOK SEVEN

1

On the occasion of everything which happens keep this in mind, that it is that which thou hast often seen. Everywhere up and down thou wilt find the same things, with which the old histories are filled, those of the middle ages and those of our own day; with which cities and houses are filled now. There is nothing new; all things are both familiar and short-lived.

2

To recover thy life is in thy power. Look at things again as thou didst use to look at them; for in this consists the recovery of thy life.

3

Every man is worth just so much as the things are worth about which he busies himself.

4

Is my understanding sufficient for this or not? If it is sufficient I use it for the work as an instrument given by the universal nature. But if it is not sufficient, then either I retire from the work and give way to him who is able to do it better, unless there be some reason why I ought not to do so; or I do it as well as I can, taking to help me the man who with the aid of my ruling principle can do what is now fit and useful for the general good. For whatsoever either by myself or with another I can do, ought to be directed to this only, to that which is useful and well-suited to society.

5

Be not ashamed to be helped; for it is thy business to do thy duty like a soldier in the assault on a town. How then is it possible, if being lame thou canst not mount up on the battlements alone, but with the help of another?

6

Let not the future things disturb thee, for thou wilt come to them, if it shall be necessary, having
with thee the same reason which now thou usest for present things.

7

All things are implicated with one another, and the bond is holy; and there is hardly anything unconnected with any other thing. For things have been co-ordinated, and they combine to form the same universe [order]. For there is one universe made up of all things, and one god who pervades all things, and one substance, and one law, one common reason in all intelligent animals, and one truth; if indeed there is also one perfection for all animals which are of the same stock and participate in the same reason.

8

Is any man afraid of change? Why, what can take place without change? What then is more pleasing or more suitable to the universal nature? And canst thou take a bath unless the wood undergoes a change? And canst thou be nourished, unless the food undergoes a change? And can anything else that is useful be accomplished without a change? Dost thou not see then that for thyself also to change is just the same, and equally necessary for the universal nature?

9

Through the universal substance as through a furious torrent all bodies are carried, being by their nature united with and co-operating with the whole, as the parts of our body with one another. How many a Chrysippus, how many a Socrates, how many an Epictetus has time already swallowed up? And let the same thought occur to thee with reference to every man and thing.

10

Near is thy forgetfulness of all things; and near the forgetfulness of thee by all.

11

A scowling look is altogether unnatural; when it is often assumed, the result is that all comeliness dies away, and at last is so completely extinguished that it cannot be again lighted up at all. Try to conclude from this very fact that it is contrary to reason. For if even the perception of doing wrong
shall depart, what reason is there for living any longer?

12

Nature which governs the whole will soon change all things thou seest, and out of their substance will make other things, and again other things from the substance of them, in order that the world may be ever new.

13

Think not so much of what thou hast not as of what thou hast: but of the things which thou hast select the best, and then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought, if thou hadst them not. At the same time, however, take care that thou dost not through being so pleased with them accustom thyself to overvalue them, so as to be disturbed if ever thou shouldst not have them.

14

Adorn thyself with simplicity and modesty and with indifference toward the things which lie between virtue and vice. Love mankind. Follow God. The poet says that Law rules all. And it is enough to remember that law rules all.

15

About death: whether it is a dispersion, or a resolution into atoms, or annihilation, it is either extinction or change.

16

About pain: the pain which is intolerable carries us off; but that which lasts a long time is tolerable; and the mind maintains its own tranquillity by retiring into itself; and the ruling faculty is not made worse.

17

About fame: look at the minds [of those who seek fame], observe what they are, and what kind of things they avoid, and what kind of things they pursue. And consider that as the heaps of sand piled on one another hide the former sands, so in life the events which go before are soon covered by those which come after.
For thus it is, men of Athens, in truth; wherever a man has placed himself thinking it the best place for him, or has been placed by a commander, there in my opinion he ought to stay and to abide the hazard, taking nothing into the reckoning, either death or anything else, before the baseness of deserting his post.

Look round at the courses of the stars, as if thou wert going along with them; and constantly consider the changes of the elements into one another; for such thoughts purge away the filth of the terrene life.

This is a fine saying of Plato: That he who is discoursing about men should look also at earthly things as if he viewed them from some higher place; should look at them in their assemblies, armies, agricultural labors, marriages, treaties, births, deaths, noise of the courts of justice, desert places, various nations of barbarians, feasts, lamentations, markets, a mixture of all things and an orderly combination of contraries.

To have contemplated human life for forty years is the same as to have contemplated it for ten thousand years. For what more wilt thou see?

The prime principle then in man's constitution is the social. And the second is not to yield to the persuasions of the body, for it is the peculiar office of the rational and intelligent motion to circumscribe itself, and never to be overpowered either by the motion of the senses or of the appetites, for both are animal.

Consider thyself to be dead, and to have completed thy life up to the present time; and live according to nature the remainder which is allowed thee.
Why art thou not altogether intent upon the right way of making use of the things which happen to thee? for then thou wilt use them well, and they will be a material for thee [to work on]. Only attend to thyself, and resolve to be a good man in every act which thou doest; and remember....

Look within. Within is the foundation of good, and it will ever bubble up, if thou wilt ever dig.

The body ought to be compact, and to show no irregularity either in motion or attitude. For what the mind shows in the face by maintaining in it the expression of intelligence and propriety, that ought to be required also in the whole body. But all these things should be observed without affectation.

The art of life is more like the wrestler's art than the dancer's, in respect of this, that it should stand ready and firm to meet onsets which are sudden and unexpected.

"No soul (saith he) is willingly bereft of the truth," and by consequent, neither of justice, or temperance, or kindness, or mildness; nor of anything that is of the same kind. It is most needful that thou shouldst always remember this. For so shalt thou be far more gentle and moderate towards all men.

In the case of most pains let this remark of Epicurus aid thee, that pain is neither intolerable nor everlasting, if thou bearest in mind that it has its limits, and if thou addest nothing to it in imagination.

It is very possible to be a divine man and to be recognized as such by no one. Always bear this in mind; and another thing too, that very little indeed is necessary for living a happy life.
31

It is in thy power to live free from all compulsion in the greatest tranquillity of mind, even if all the world cry out against thee as much as they choose, and even if wild beasts tear in pieces the members of this kneaded matter which has grown around thee.

32

The perfection of moral character consists in this, in passing every day as the last, and in being neither violently excited, nor torpid, nor playing the hypocrite.

33

The gods who are immortal are not vexed because during so long a time they must tolerate continually men such as they are and so many of them bad; and besides this, they also take care of them in all ways. But thou, who art destined to end so soon, art thou wearied of enduring the bad, and this too when thou art one of them?

34

It is a ridiculous thing for a man not to fly from his own badness, which is indeed possible, but to fly from other men's badness, which is impossible.

35

When thou hast done a good act and another has received it, why dost thou still look for a third thing besides these, as fools do, either to have the reputation of having done a good act or to obtain a return?
BOOK EIGHT

1

Thou hast had experience of many wanderings without having found happiness anywhere, not in syllogisms, nor in wealth, nor in reputation, nor in enjoyment, nor anywhere. Where is it then? In doing what man's nature requires. How then shall a man do this? If he has principles from which come his affects and his acts. What principles? Those which relate to good and bad: the belief that there is nothing good for man, which does not make him just, temperate, manly, free; and that there is nothing bad, which does not do the contrary.

2

On the occasion of every act ask thyself, How is this with respect to me? Shall I repent of it? A little time and I am dead, and all is gone. What more do I seek, if what I am now doing is the work of an intelligent living being, and a social being, and one who is under the same law with God?

3

Having fixed thy eyes steadily on thy business, look at it, and at the same time remembering that it is thy duty to be a good man, and what man's nature demands, do that without turning aside; and speak as it seems to thee most just, only let it be with a good disposition and with modesty and without hypocrisy.

4

Every nature is contented with itself when it goes on its way well; and a rational nature goes on its way well, when in its thoughts it assents to nothing false or uncertain, and when it directs its movements to social acts only, and when it confines its desires and aversions to the things which are in its power, and when it is satisfied with everything that is assigned to it by the common nature. For of this common nature every particular nature is a part, as the nature of the leaf is a part of the nature of the plant; except that in the plant the nature of the leaf is part of a nature which has not perception of reason, and is subject to be impeded; but the nature
of man is part of a nature which is not subject to impediments, and is intelligent and just.

5

When thou risest from thy sleep with reluctance, remember that it is according to thy constitution and according to human nature to perform social acts, but sleeping is common also to irrational animals.

6

Whatever man thou meetest with, immediately say to thyself: What opinions has this man about good and bad? For if with respect to pleasure and pain and the causes of each, and with respect to fame and ignominy, death and life he has such and such opinions, it will seem nothing strange to me, if he does such and such things; and I shall bear in mind that he is compelled to do so.

7

Remember that to change thy opinion and to follow him who corrects thy error is as consistent with freedom as it is to persist in thy error. For it is thy own, the activity which is exerted according to thy own movement and judgment, and indeed according to thy own understanding too.

8

Everything exists for some end, a horse, a vine. Why dost thou wonder? Even the sun will say, I am for some purpose, and the rest of the gods will say the same. For what purpose then art thou? To enjoy pleasure? See if common sense allows this.

9

Speak both in the senate and to every man, whoever he may be, appropriately, not with any affectation; use plain discourse.

10

Receive wealth or prosperity without arrogance; and be ready to let it go.

11

Do not disturb thyself by thinking of the whole of thy life. Let not thy thoughts at once embrace all
the various troubles which thou mayest expect to befal thee: but on every occasion ask thyself, What is there in this which is intolerable and past bearing? for thou wilt be ashamed to confess it. In the next place remember that neither the future nor the past pains thee, but only the present. But this is reduced to a very little, if thou only circumscribest it, and chidest thy mind, if it is unable to hold out against even this.

12

Different things delight different people. But it is my delight to keep the ruling faculty sound without turning away either from any man or from any of the things which happen to me, but looking at and receiving all with welcome eyes and using every thing according to its value.

13

See that thou secure this present-time to thyself; for those who rather pursue posthumous fame do not consider that the men of after time will be exactly such as these whom they cannot bear now; and both are mortal. And what is it in any way to thee if these men of after time utter this or that sound, or have this or that opinion about thee?

14

If thou art pained by any external thing, it is not this thing that disturbs thee, but thy own judgment about it. And it is in thy power to wipe out this judgment now. But if anything in thy own disposition gives thee pain, who hinders thee from correcting thy opinion? And even if thou art pained because thou art not doing some particular thing which seems to thee to be right, why dost thou not rather act than complain? But some insuperable obstacle is in the way? Do not be grieved then, for the cause of its not being done depends not on thee. But it is not worth while to live, if this cannot be done. Take thy departure then from life contentedly, just as he dies who is in full activity, and well pleased too with the things which are obstacles.

15

Neither in thy actions be sluggish, nor in thy conversation without method, nor wandering in thy thoughts, nor let there be in thy soul inward con-
tention nor external effusion, nor in life be so busy as to have no leisure. Suppose that men kill thee, cut thee in pieces, curse thee. What then can these things do to prevent thy mind from remaining pure, wise, sober, just? For instance, if a man should stand by a limpid pure spring, and curse it, the spring never ceases sending up potable water; and if he should cast clay into it or filth, it will speedily disperse them and wash them out, and will not be at all polluted. How then shalt thou possess a perpetual fountain and not a mere well? By forming thyself hourly to freedom conjoined with contentment, simplicity and modesty.

16

Though we are made especially for the sake of one another, still the ruling power of each of us has its own office, for otherwise my neighbor's wickedness would be my harm, which God has not willed in order that my unhappiness may not depend on another.

17

Men exist for the sake of one another. Teach them then or bear with them.
He who acts unjustly acts impiously. For since universal nature has made rational animals for the sake of one another to help one another according to their deserts, but in no way to injure one another, he who transgresses her will, is clearly guilty of impiety toward the highest divinity. And he too who lies is guilty of impiety to the same divinity; for the universal nature is the nature of things that are; and things that are have a relation to all things that come into existence. And further, this universal nature is named truth, and is the prime cause of all things that are true.

Hast thou determined to abide with vice, and has not experience yet induced thee to fly from this pestilence? For the destruction of the understanding is a pestilence, much more, indeed, than any such corruption and change of this atmosphere which surrounds us. For this corruption is a pestilence of animals so far as they are animals; but the other is a pestilence of men so far as they are men.

Do not despise death, but be well content with it, since this too is one of those things which nature wills.

This, then, is consistent with the character of a reflecting man, to be neither careless nor impatient nor contemptuous with respect to death, but to wait for it as one of the operations of nature.

He often acts unjustly who does not do a certain thing; not only he who does a certain thing.

Check desire: extinguish appetite: keep the ruling faculty in its own power.
If thou art able, correct by teaching those who do wrong; but if thou canst not, remember that indulgence is given to thee for this purpose.

To-day I have got out of all trouble, or rather I have cast out all trouble, for it was not outside, but within and in my opinions.

All things are the same, familiar in experience, and ephemeral in time, and worthless in the matter. Everything now is just as it was in the time of those whom we have buried.

As thou thyself art a component part of a social system, so let every act of thine be a component part of social life.

When another blames thee or hates thee, or when men say about thee anything injurious, approach their poor souls, penetrate within, and see what kind of men they are. Thou wilt discover that there is no reason to take any trouble that these men may have this or that opinion about thee.

Nor yet expect Plato's Republic: but be content if the smallest thing goes on well, and consider such an event to be no small matter. For who can change men's opinions?

One man prays thus: How shall I be able to lie with that woman? Do thou pray thus: How shall I not desire to lie with her? Another prays thus: How shall I be released from this? Do thou pray: How shall I not desire to be released? Another thus: How shall I not lose my little son? Thou thus: How shall I not be afraid to lose him? In fine, turn thy prayers this way, and see what comes.
Epicurus says, in my sickness my conversation was not about my bodily sufferings, nor, says he, did I talk on such subjects to those who visited me; but I continued to discourse on the nature of things as before, keeping to this main point, how the mind, while participating in such movements as go on in the poor flesh, shall be free from perturbation and maintain its proper good. Nor did I, he says, give the physicians an opportunity of putting on solemn looks, as if they were doing something great, but my life went on well and happily. Do, then, the same that he did in sickness, if thou art sick, and in any other circumstances: never desert philosophy in any events that may befall, nor hold trifling talk either with an ignorant man or with one unacquainted with nature.

When thou art offended with any man's shameless conduct, immediately ask thyself, Is it possible, then, that shameless men should not be in the world? It is not possible. Do not, then, require what is impossible. For this man is one of those shameless ones who must of necessity be in the world. Let the same considerations be present to thy mind in the case of the knave, and the faithless man, and of every man who does wrong in any way. For, at the same time that thou dost remind thyself that it is impossible that such men should not exist, thou wilt become more kindly disposed toward every one individually.

Most of all, when thou blamest a man as faithless or ungrateful, turn to thyself. For the fault is manifestly thy own, whether thou didst trust that a man who had such a disposition would keep his promise, or when conferring thy kindness thou didst not confer it absolutely, nor yet in such a way as to have received from thy very act all the profit. For what more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it?
BOOK TEN

1

Remember, that thou art formed by nature to bear everything, with respect to which it depends on thy own opinion to make it endurable and tolerable, by thinking that it is either thy interest or thy duty to do this.

2

Whatever may happen to thee, it was prepared for thee from all eternity.

3

Whether the universe is a concourse of atoms, or nature is a system, let this first be established, that I am a part of the whole which is governed by nature; next, I am in a manner intimately related to the parts which are of the same kind with myself. For remembering this, inasmuch as I am a part, I shall be discontented with none of the things which are assigned to me out of the whole; for nothing is injurious to the part, if it is for the advantage of the whole.

4

Magnanimity is the elevation of the intelligent part above the pleasurable or painful sensations of the flesh, and above that poor thing called fame, and death, and all such things.

5

When thou art offended at any man's fault, forthwith turn to thyself and reflect in what like manner thou dost err thyself; for example, in thinking that money is a good thing, or pleasure, or a bit of reputation, and the like. For by attending to this thou wilt quickly forget thy anger.

6

But thou, in what a brief space of time is thy existence? And why art thou not content to pass through this short time in an orderly way? What matter and opportunity for thy activity art thou avoiding? For what else are all these things, except
exercises for the reason, when it has viewed carefully
and by examination into their nature the things which
happen in life? Persevere then until thou shalt have
made these things thy own, as the stomach which is
strengthened makes all things its own, as the blazing
fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that
is thrown into it.

7

Let it not be in any man's power to say truly of
thee that thou art not simple, or that thou art not
good; but let him be a liar whoever shall think
anything of this kind about thee; and this is alto-
gether in thy power. For who is he that shall hinder
thee from being good and simple?

8

What is that which as to this material [our life]
can be done or said in the way most conformable to
reason. For whatever this may be, it is in thy power
to do it or to say it, and do not make excuses that
thou art hindered. Thou wilt not cease to lament till
thy mind is in such a condition that, what luxury is
to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in
the matter which is subjected and presented to thee,
and doing of the things which are conformable to man's
constitution; for a man ought to consider as an
enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do
according to his own nature.

9

Remember that nothing harms him who is really a
citizen, which does not harm the state; nor yet does
anything harm the state which does not harm the law
[order].

10

The healthy eye ought to see all visible things
and not to say, I wish for green things; for this is
the condition of a diseased eye. And the healthy
hearing and smelling ought to be ready to perceive all
that can be heard and smelled. And the healthy
stomach ought to be with respect to all food just as
the mill with respect to all things which it is formed
to grind. And accordingly the healthy understanding
ought to be prepared for everything which happens; but
that which says, Let my dear children live, and let
all men praise whatever I may do, is an eye which
seeks for green things, or teeth which seek for soft things.

11

Accustom thyself as much as possible on the occasion of anything being done by any person to inquire of thyself, For what object is this man doing this? but begin with thyself, and examine thyself first.
BOOK ELEVEN

1

These are the properties of the rational soul: it sees itself, analyzes itself, and makes itself such as it chooses; the fruit which it bears itself enjoys - for the fruits of plants and that in animals which corresponds to fruits others enjoy - it obtains its own end, wherever the limit of life may be fixed. Not as in a dance and in a play and in such like things, where the whole action is incomplete, if anything cuts it short; but in every part and wherever it may be stopped, it makes what has been set before it full and complete, so that it can say, I have what is my own. And further it traverses the whole universe, and the surrounding vacuum, and surveys its form, and it extends itself into the infinity of time, and embraces and comprehends the periodical renovation of all things, and it comprehends that those who come after us will see nothing new, nor have those before us seen anything more; but in a manner he who is forty years old, if he has any understanding at all, has seen by virtue of the uniformity that prevails all things which have been and all that will be. This, too, is a property of the rational soul; love of one's neighbor, and truth and modesty, and to value nothing more than itself, which is also the property of Law. Thus, then, right reason differs not at all from the reason of justice.

2

Have I done something for the general interest? Well then I have had my reward. Let this always be present to my mind, and never stop doing such good.

3

What is thy business? To be good. And how is this accomplished well except by general principles, some about the nature of the universe, and others about the proper constitution of man?

4

Now as to a branch, another cuts it off, but a man by his own act separates himself from his neighbor when he hates him and turns away from him, and he does
not know that he has at the same time cut himself off from the whole social system.

5

As those who try to stand in thy way when thou art proceeding according to right reason, will not be able to turn thee aside from thy proper action, so neither let them drive thee from thy benevolent feelings toward them, but be on thy guard equally in both matters, not only in the matter of steady judgment and action, but also in the matter of gentleness toward those who try to hinder or otherwise trouble thee.

6

Suppose any man shall despise me. Let him look to that himself. But I will look at this, that I be not discovered doing or saying anything deserving of contempt. Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it. But I will be mild and benevolent toward every man, and ready to show even him his mistake, not reproachfully, nor yet as making a display of my endurance, but nobly and honestly. A man ought to be seen by the gods neither dissatisfied with anything nor complaining. For what evil is it to thee, if thou art now doing what is agreeable to thy own nature, and art satisfied with that which at this moment is suitable to the nature of the universe, since thou art a human being placed at thy post in order that what is for the common advantage may be done in some way?

7

How unsound and insincere is he who says, I have determined to deal with thee in a fair way. What art thou doing, man? There is no occasion to give this notice. It will soon show itself by acts.

8

Seek what is conformable to thy own nature, and strive toward this, even if it bring no reputation; for every man is allowed to seek his own good.

9

If any have offended against thee consider what kind of men they are at table, in bed, and so forth, and particularly, under what compulsions in respect of opinions they are; and as to their acts, consider with
what pride they do what they do.

10

If men do rightly what they do, we ought not to be displeased; but if they do not right, it is plain that they do so involuntarily and in ignorance. For as every soul is unwillingly deprived of the truth, so also is it unwillingly deprived of the power of behaving to each man according to his deserts. Accordingly men are pained when they are called unjust, ungrateful, and greedy, and in a word wrong-doers to their neighbors.

11

Consider that thou also doest many things wrong, and that thou art a man like others; and even if thou dost abstain from certain faults, still thou hast the disposition to commit them, though either through cowardice, or concern about reputation or some such mean motive, thou dost abstain from such faults.

12

Consider that thou dost not even understand whether men are doing wrong or not, for many things are done with a certain reference to circumstances. And, in short, a man must learn a great deal to enable him to pass a correct judgment on another man's acts.

13

Consider when thou art much vexed or grieved, that man's life is only a moment, and, after a short time, we are all laid out dead.

14

Consider that it is not men's acts which disturb us, for those acts have their foundation in men's ruling principles, but it is our own opinions which disturb us. Take away those opinions then, and resolve to dismiss thy judgment about an act as if it were something grievous, and thy anger is gone. How, then, shall I take away these opinions? By reflecting that no wrongful act of another brings shame on me.

15

Consider how much more pain is brought on us by the anger and vexation caused by such acts than by the acts themselves, at which we are angry and vexed.
Consider that a good disposition is invincible, if it be genuine, and not an affected smile and acting a part. For what will the most violent man do to thee, if thou continuest to be of a kind disposition toward him, and if, as opportunity offers, thou gently admonishest him and calmly correctest his errors at the very time when he is trying to do thee harm, saying, Not so, my child: we are constituted by nature for something else: I shall certainly not be injured, but thou art injuring thyself, my child. And show him with gentle tact and by general principles that this is so, and that even bees do not do as he does, nor any animals which are formed by nature to be gregarious. And thou must do this neither with any double meaning nor in the way of reproach, but affectionately and without any rancour in thy soul; and not as if thou wart lecturing him, nor yet that any bystander may admire, but so always that nobody be privy to it, but himself alone.

Remember all the above rules, as if thou hadst received them as a gift from the Muses, and begin at last to be a man while thou livest. But thou must equally avoid flattering men and being vexed at them, for both are unsocial and lead to harm. And let this truth be present to thee in the excitement of anger, that to be moved by passion is not manly, but that mildness and gentleness, as they are more agreeable to human nature, so also are they more manly; and he who possesses these qualities possesses strength, nerves and courage, and not the man who is subject to fits of passion and discontent. For in the same degree in which a man's mind is nearer to freedom from all passion, in the same degree also is it nearer to strength: and as the sense of pain is a characteristic of weakness, so also is anger. For he who yields to pain and he who yields to anger, both are wounded and both submit.

But if thou wilt, receive also one more present from the leader of the Muses, Apollo, and it is this - that to expect bad men not to do wrong is madness, for he who expects this desires an impossibility. But to allow men to behave so to others, and to expect them
not to do thee any wrong, is irrational and tyrannical.

19

There are four principal aberrations of the superior faculty against which thou shouldst be constantly on thy guard, and when thou hast detected them, thou shouldst wipe them out and say on each occasion thus: this thought is not necessary: this tends to destroy social union: this which thou art going to say comes not from my real thoughts; for thou shouldst consider it among the most absurd of things for man not to speak from his real thoughts. For the fourth, thou shalt sharply check and upbraid thyself, for that thou dost suffer that more divine part in thee, to become subject and obnoxious to that more ignoble part of thy body, and the gross lusts and concupiscences thereof.

20

The movement towards injustice and intemperance and to anger and grief and fear is nothing else than the act of one who deviates from nature. And also when the ruling faculty is discontented with anything that happens, then too it deserts its post: for it is constituted for piety and reverence toward the gods no less than for justice.

21

Socrates used to call the opinions of the many by the name of Lamiae, bugbears to frighten children.

22

Neither in writing nor in reading wilt thou be able to lay down rules for others before thou shalt have first learned to obey rules thyself. Much more is this so in life.

23

When a man kisses his child, said Epictetus, he should whisper to himself, "To-morrow perchance thou wilt die". But those are words of bad omen. "No word is a word of bad omen," said Epictetus, "which expresses any work of nature; or if it is so, it is also a word of bad omen to speak of the ears of corn being reaped."
No man can rob us of our free will.

Socrates used to say, What do you want; souls of rational men or irrational? Souls of rational men. Of what rational men: sound or unsound? Sound. Why then do you not seek for them? Because we have them. Why then do you fight and quarrel?
BOOK TWELVE

1

All those things at which thou wishest to arrive by a circuitous road, thou canst have now, if thou dost not refuse them to thyself. And this means, if thou wilt take no notice of all the past, and trust the future to Providence, and direct the present only conformably to piety and justice. Conformably to piety, that thou mayest be content with the lot which is assigned to thee, for nature designed it for thee and thee for it. Conformably to justice, that thou mayest always speak the truth freely and without disguise, and do the things which are agreeable to law and according to the worth of each. And let neither another man's wickedness hinder thee, nor opinion, nor voice, nor yet the sensations of the poor flesh which has grown about thee; for the passive part will look to this. If then, whatever the time may be when thou shalt be near to thy departure, neglecting everything else thou shalt respect only thy ruling faculty and the divinity within thee, and if thou shalt be afraid not because thou must some time cease to live, but if thou shalt fear never to have begun to live according to nature, then thou wilt be a man worthy of the universe which has produced thee, and thou wilt cease to be a stranger in thy native land, and to wonder at things which happen daily as if they were something unexpected, and to be dependent on things that are not in thy power.

2

He who regards not the poor flesh which envelops him, surely will not trouble himself by looking after raiment and dwelling and fame and such like externals and show.

3

The things are three of which thou art composed, a little body, a little breath [life], intelligence. Of these the first two are thine, so far as it is thy duty to take care of them; but the third alone is properly thine. Therefore, if thou shalt separate from thyself, that is, from thy understanding, whatever others do or say, and whatever thou hast done or said thyself, and whatever future things trouble thee
because they may happen, and whatever in the body which envelops thee, or in the breath [life], which is by nature associated with the body, is attached to thee independent of thy will, and whatever the external circumfluent vortex whirls round, so that the intellectual power exempt from the things of fate can live pure and free by itself, doing what is just and accepting what happens and saying the truth: if thou wilt separate, I say, from this ruling faculty the things which are attached to it by the impressions of sense, and the things of time to come and of time that is past, and wilt make thyself like Empedocles' sphere:

All round, and in its joyous rest reposing;

and if thou shalt strive to live only what is really thy life, that is, the present, then thou wilt be able to pass that portion of life which remains for thee up to the time of thy death, free from perturbations, nobly, and in good favor and correspondency, with that spirit which is within thee.

4

I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men, but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others. If then a god or a wise teacher should present himself to a man and bid him to think of nothing and to design (nothing which he would not express as soon as he conceived it), he could not endure it even for a single day. So much more respect have we to what our neighbors shall think of us than to what we shall think of ourselves.

5

Practice thyself even in the things which thou desparest of accomplishing. For even the left hand, which is ineffectual for all other things for want of practice, holds the bridle more vigorously than the right hand; for it has been practiced in this.

6

With respect to that which happens conformably to nature, we ought to blame neither gods, for they do nothing wrong either voluntarily or involuntarily, nor men, for they do nothing wrong except involuntarily. Consequently we should blame nobody.
7

How ridiculous and what a stranger he is who is surprised at anything which happens in life.

8

Does the light of the lamp shine without losing its splendor until it is extinguished; and shall the truth which is in thee and justice and temperance be extinguished before thy death?

9

If it is not right, do not do it: if it is not true, do not say it.

10

Perceive at last that thou hast in thee something better and more divine than the things which, as it were, pull thee by the strings. What is there now in my mind? is it fear, or suspicion, or desire, or anything of the kind?

11

First, do nothing inconsiderately, nor without a purpose. Second, make thy acts refer to nothing else than to a social end.

12

Consider that everything is opinion, and opinion is in thy power. Take away then, when thou choosest, thy opinion, and like a mariner, who has doubled the promontory, thou wilt find calm, everything stable, and a waveless bay.

13

In the things which thou doest do nothing either inconsiderately or otherwise than as justice herself would act; but with respect to what may happen to thee from without, consider that it happens either by chance or according to providence, and thou must neither blame chance nor accuse providence.

14

When thou art troubled about anything, thou hast forgotten this, that all things happen according to the universal nature; and forgotten this, that a man's wrongful act is nothing to thee; and further thou hast
forgotten this, that everything which happens, always happened so and will happen so, and now happens so everywhere; forgotten this, too, how close is the kinship between a man and the whole human race, for it is a community, not of a little blood or seed, but of intelligence. And thou hast forgotten this too, that every man's intelligence is a god, and is an efflux of the deity; and forgotten this, that nothing is a man's own, but that his child and his body and his very soul came from the deity; forgotten this, that everything is opinion; and lastly thou hast forgotten that every man lives the present time only, and loses only this.

In fine, think of the eager pursuit of anything co-joined with pride; and how worthless everything is after which men violently strain; and how much more philosophical it is for a man in the opportunities presented to him to show himself just, temperate, obedient to the gods, and to do this with all simplicity: for the pride which is proud of its want of pride is the most intolerable of all.

How small a part of boundless and unfathomable time is assigned to every man? For it is very soon swallowed up in the eternal. And how small a part of the whole substance? And how small a part of the universal soul? And on what a small clod of the whole earth thou creepest? Reflecting on all this, consider nothing to be great, except to act as thy nature leads thee, and to endure that which the common nature brings.

Man, thou hast been a citizen in this great state the world: what difference does it make to thee whether for five years or three? For that which is conformable to the laws is just for all. Where is the hardship then, if not a tyrant nor yet an unjust judge sends thee away from the state, but nature who brought thee into it? The same as if a praetor who has employed an actor dismisses him from the stage. "But I have not finished the five acts, but only three of them." Thou sayest well, but in life the three acts are the whole drama; for what shall be a complete drama is determined by him who was once the cause of
its composition, and now of its dissolution: but thou art the cause of neither. Depart then satisfied, for he also who releases thee is satisfied.
FRANCES KANES HAZLITT is the author and editor of THE CONCISE BIBLE, a condensation, published by Henry Regnery in 1962. A new edition (both hardcover and paperback) was published by Liberty Press in 1976. A British edition (by Eyre & Spottiswoode) was also published in 1976 and is marketed in a large number of countries.

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