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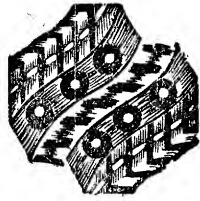
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CLASSICAL

THE
MEDITATIONS OF MARCUS AURELIUS
TRANSLATED BY MERIC CASAUBON
INTRODUCTION BY W. H. D. ROUSE

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS, born at Rome in April, A.D. 121, the son of the prefect of the city and a consul. He was himself made consul in 140 and became emperor in 161. Died in Pannonia on 17th March 180.

MEDITATIONS



MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

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INTRODUCTION

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS was born on April 26, A.D. 121. His real name was M. Annius Verus, and he was sprung of a noble family which claimed descent from Numa, second King of Rome. Thus the most religious of emperors came of the blood of the most pious of early kings. His father, Annius Verus, had held high office in Rome, and his grandfather, of the same name, had been thrice Consul. Both his parents died young, but Marcus held them in loving remembrance. On his father's death Marcus was adopted by his grandfather, the consular Annius Verus, and there was deep love between these two. On the very first page of his book Marcus gratefully declares how of his grandfather he had learned to be gentle and meek, and to refrain from all anger and passion. The Emperor Hadrian divined the fine character of the lad, whom he used to call not Verus but Verissimus, more Truthful than his own name. He advanced Marcus to equestrian rank when six years of age, and at the age of eight made him a member of the ancient Salian priesthood. The boy's aunt, Annia Galeria Faustina, was married to Antoninus Pius, afterwards emperor. Hence it came about that Antoninus, having no son, adopted Marcus, changing his name to that which he is known by, and betrothed him to his daughter Faustina. His education was conducted with all care. The ablest teachers were engaged for him, and he was trained in the strict doctrine of the Stoic philosophy, which was his great delight. He was taught to dress plainly and to live simply, to avoid all softness and luxury. His body was trained to hardihood by wrestling, hunting, and outdoor games ; and though his constitution was weak, he showed great personal

courage to encounter the fiercest boars. At the same time he was kept from the extravagancies of his day. The great excitement in Rome was the strife of the Factions, as they were called, in the circus. The racing drivers used to adopt one of four colours—red, blue, white, or green—and their partisans showed an eagerness in supporting them which nothing could surpass. Riot and corruption went in the train of the racing chariots; and from all these things Marcus held severely aloof.

In 140 Marcus was raised to the consulship, and in 141 his betrothal was consummated by marriage. Two years later Faustina brought him a daughter; and soon after the tribunate and other imperial honours were conferred upon him.

Antoninus Pius died in 161, and Marcus assumed the imperial state. He at once associated with himself Lucius Ceionius Commodus, whom Antoninus had adopted as a younger son at the same time with Marcus, giving him the name of Lucius Aurelius Verus. Henceforth the two are colleagues in the empire, the junior being trained as if it were to succeed. No sooner was Marcus settled upon the throne than wars broke out on all sides. In the east Vologeses III. of Parthia began a long-meditated revolt by destroying a whole Roman Legion and invading Syria (162). Verus was sent off in hot haste to quell this rising; and he fulfilled his trust by plunging into drunkenness and debauchery, while the war was left to his officers. Soon after Marcus had to face a more serious danger at home in the coalition of several powerful tribes on the northern frontier. Chief among those were the Marcomanni or Marchmen, the Quadi (mentioned in this book), the Sarmatians, the Catti, the Jazyges. In Rome itself there was pestilence and starvation, the one brought from the east by Verus's legions, the other caused by floods which had destroyed vast quantities of grain. After all had been done possible to allay famine and to supply pressing needs—Marcus being forced even to sell the imperial jewels to find money—both emperors set forth to a struggle which was to continue more or less during the rest of Marcus's

reign. During these wars, in 169, Verus died. We have no means of following the campaigns in detail ; but thus much is certain, that in the end the Romans succeeded in crushing the barbarian tribes, and effecting a settlement which made the empire more secure. Marcus was himself commander-in-chief, and victory was due no less to his own ability than to his wisdom in choice of lieutenants, shown conspicuously in the case of Pertinax. There were several important battles fought in these campaigns ; and one of them has become celebrated for the legend of the Thundering Legion. In a battle against the Quadi in 174, the day seemed to be going in favour of the foe, when on a sudden arose a great storm of thunder and rain : the lightning struck the barbarians with terror, and they turned to rout. In later days this storm was said to have been sent in answer to the prayers of a legion which contained many Christians, and the name Thundering Legion should be given to it on this account. The title of Thundering Legion is known at an earlier date, so this part of the story at least cannot be true ; but the aid of the storm is acknowledged by one of the scenes carved on Antonine's Column at Rome, which commemorates these wars.

The settlement made after these troubles might have been more satisfactory but for an unexpected rising in the east. Avidius Cassius, an able captain who had won renown in the Parthian wars, was at this time chief governor of the eastern provinces. By whatever means induced, he had conceived the project of proclaiming himself emperor as soon as Marcus, who was then in feeble health, should die ; and a report having been conveyed to him that Marcus was dead, Cassius did as he had planned. Marcus, on hearing the news, immediately patched up a peace and returned home to meet this new peril. The emperor's great grief was that he must needs engage in the horrors of civil strife. He praised the qualities of Cassius, and expressed a heartfelt wish that Cassius might not be driven to do himself a hurt before he should have the opportunity to grant a free pardon. But before he could come to the east news had come to Cassius that the emperor still lived ; his followers

fell away from him, and he was assassinated. Marcus now went to the east, and while there the murderers brought the head of Cassius to him ; but the emperor indignantly refused their gift, nor would he admit the men to his presence.

On this journey his wife, Faustina, died. At his return the emperor celebrated a triumph (176). Immediately afterwards he repaired to Germany, and took up once more the burden of war. His operations were followed by complete success ; but the troubles of late years had been too much for his constitution, at no time robust, and on March 17, 180, he died in Pannonia.

The good emperor was not spared domestic troubles. Faustina had borne him several children, of whom he was passionately fond. Their innocent faces may still be seen in many a sculpture gallery, recalling with odd effect the dreamy countenance of their father. But they died one by one, and when Marcus came to his own end only one of his sons still lived—the weak and worthless Commodus. On his father's death Commodus, who succeeded him, undid the work of many campaigns by a hasty and unwise peace ; and his reign of twelve years proved him to be a ferocious and bloodthirsty tyrant. Scandal has made free with the name of Faustina herself, who is accused not only of unfaithfulness, but of intriguing with Cassius and egging him on to his fatal rebellion. It must be admitted that these charges rest on no sure evidence ; and the emperor, at all events, loved her dearly, nor ever felt the slightest qualm of suspicion.

As a soldier we have seen that Marcus was both capable and successful ; as an administrator he was prudent and conscientious. Although steeped in the teachings of philosophy, he did not attempt to remodel the world on any preconceived plan. He trod the path beaten by his predecessors, seeking only to do his duty as well as he could, and to keep out corruption. He did some unwise things, it is true. To create a compeer in empire, as he did with Verus, was a dangerous innovation which could only succeed if one of the two effaced himself ; and under Diocletian this

very precedent caused the Roman Empire to split into halves. He erred in his civil administration by too much centralising. But the strong point of his reign was the administration of justice. Marcus sought by laws to protect the weak, to make the lot of the slaves less hard, to stand in place of father to the fatherless. Charitable foundations were endowed for rearing and educating poor children. The provinces were protected against oppression, and public help was given to cities or districts which might be visited by calamity. The great blot on his name, and one hard indeed to explain, is his treatment of the Christians. In his reign Justin at Rome became a martyr to his faith, and Polycarp at Smyrna, and we know of many outbreaks of fanaticism in the provinces which caused the death of the faithful. It is no excuse to plead that he knew nothing about the atrocities done in his name: it was his duty to know, and if he did not he would have been the first to confess that he had failed in his duty. But from his own tone in speaking of the Christians it is clear he knew them only from calumny; and we hear of no measures taken even to secure that they should have a fair hearing. In this respect Trajan was better than he.

To a thoughtful mind such a religion as that of Rome would give small satisfaction. Its legends were often childish or impossible; its teaching had little to do with morality. The Roman religion was in fact of the nature of a bargain: men paid certain sacrifices and rites, and the gods granted their favour, irrespective of right or wrong. In this case all devout souls were thrown back upon philosophy, as they had been, though to a less extent, in Greece. There were under the early empire two rival schools which practically divided the field between them, Stoicism and Epicureanism. The ideal set before each was nominally much the same. The Stoics aspired to *ἀπάθεια*, the repression of all emotion, and the Epicureans to *ἀταραξία*, freedom from all disturbance; yet in the upshot the one has become a synonym of stubborn endurance, the other for unbridled licence. With Epicureanism we have nothing to do now; but it will be worth while to sketch the history and tenets of the Stoic sect.

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was born in Cyprus at some date unknown, but his life may be said roughly to be between the years 350 and 250 B.C. Cyprus has been from time immemorial a meeting-place of the East and West, and although we cannot grant any importance to a possible strain of Phœnician blood in him (for the Phœnicians were no philosophers), yet it is quite likely that through Asia Minor he may have come in touch with the Far East. He studied under the cynic Crates, but he did not neglect other philosophical systems. After many years' study he opened his own school in a colonnade in Athens called the Painted Porch, or Stoa, which gave the Stoics their name. Next to Zeno, the School of the Porch owes most to Chrysippus (280-207 B.C.), who organised Stoicism into a system. Of him it was said,

'But for Chrysippus, there had been no Porch.'

The Stoics regarded speculation as a means to an end and that end was, as Zeno put it, to live consistently (*ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν*), or as it was later explained, to live in conformity with nature (*ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν*). This conforming of the life to nature was the Stoic idea of Virtue. This dictum might easily be taken to mean that virtue consists in yielding to each natural impulse; but that was very far from the Stoic meaning. In order to live in accord with nature, it is necessary to know what nature is; and to this end a threefold division of philosophy is made—into *Physics*, dealing with the universe and its laws, the problems of divine government and teleology; *Logic*, which trains the mind to discern true from false; and *Ethics*, which applies the knowledge thus gained and tested to practical life.

The Stoic system of physics was materialism with an infusion of pantheism. In contradiction to Plato's view that the Ideas, or Prototypes, of phenomena alone really exist, the Stoics held that material objects alone existed; but immanent in the material universe was a spiritual force which acted through them, manifesting itself under many forms, as fire, æther, spirit, soul, reason, the ruling principle.

The universe, then, is God, of whom the popular gods are manifestations ; while legends and myths are allegorical. The soul of man is thus an emanation from the godhead, into whom it will eventually be re-absorbed. The divine ruling principle makes all things work together for good, but for the good of the whole. The highest good of man is consciously to work with God for the common good, and this is the sense in which the Stoic tried to live in accord with nature. In the individual it is virtue alone which enables him to do this ; as Providence rules the universe, so virtue in the soul must rule man.

In Logic, the Stoic system is noteworthy for their theory as to the test of truth, the *Criterion*. They compared the new-born soul to a sheet of paper ready for writing. Upon this the senses write their impressions (*φαντασίαι*), and by experience of a number of these the soul unconsciously conceives general notions (*κοινὰ ἔννοιαι*) or anticipations (*προλήψεις*). When the impression was such as to be irresistible it was called *καταληπτικὴ φαντασία*, one that holds fast, or as they explained it, one proceeding from truth. Ideas and inferences artificially produced by deduction or the like were tested by this 'holding perception.'

Of the Ethical application I have already spoken. The highest good was the virtuous life. Virtue alone is happiness, and vice is unhappiness. Carrying this theory to its extreme, the Stoic said that there could be no gradations between virtue and vice, though of course each has its special manifestations. Moreover, nothing is good but virtue, and nothing but vice is bad. Those outside things which are commonly called good or bad, such as health and sickness, wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain, are to him indifferent (*ἀδιάφορα*). All these things are merely the sphere in which virtue may act. The ideal Wise Man is sufficient unto himself in all things (*αὐτάρκης*) ; and knowing these truths, he will be happy even when stretched upon the rack. It is probable that no Stoic claimed for himself that he was this Wise Man, but that each strove after it as an ideal much as the Christian strives after a likeness to Christ. The exaggeration in this statement

was, however, so obvious, that the later Stoics were driven to make a further subdivision of things indifferent into what is preferable (*προηγμένα*) and what is undesirable (*ἀποπροηγμένα*). They also held that for him who had not attained to the perfect wisdom, certain actions were proper (*καθήκοντα*). These were neither virtuous nor vicious, but, like the indifferent things, held a middle place.

Two points in the Stoic system deserve special mention. One is a careful distinction between things which are in our power and things which are not. Desire and dislike, opinion and affection, are within the power of the will; whereas health, wealth, honour, and other such are generally not so. The Stoic was called upon to control his desires and affections, and to guide his opinion; to bring his whole being under the sway of the will or leading principle, just as the universe is guided and governed by divine Providence. This is a special application of the favourite Greek virtue of moderation (*σωφροσύνη*), and has also its parallel in Christian ethics. The second point is a strong insistence on the unity of the universe, and on man's duty as part of a great whole. Public spirit was the most splendid political virtue of the ancient world, and it is here made cosmopolitan. It is again instructive to note that Christian sages insisted on the same thing. Christians are taught that they are members of a world-wide brotherhood, where is neither Greek nor Hebrew, bond nor free; and that they live their lives as fellow-workers with God.

Such is the system which underlies the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius. Some knowledge of it is necessary to the right understanding of the book, but for us the chief interest lies elsewhere. We do not come to Marcus Aurelius for a treatise on Stoicism. He is no head of a school to lay down a body of doctrine for students; he does not even contemplate that others should read what he writes. His philosophy is not an eager intellectual inquiry, but more what we should call religious feeling. The uncompromising stiffness of Zeno or Chrysippus is softened and transformed by passing through a nature reverent and tolerant,

gentle and free from guile; the grim resignation which made life possible to the Stoic sage becomes in him almost a mood of aspiration. His book records the most thoughts of his heart, set down to ease it, with such moral maxims and reflections as may help him to bear the burden of duty and the countless annoyances of a busy life.

It is instructive to compare the *Meditations* with another famous book, the *Imitation of Christ*. There is the same deal of self-control in both. It should be a man's task, says the *Imitation*, 'to overcome himself, and every day to be stronger than himself.' 'In withstanding of the passions standeth very peace of heart.' 'Let us set the axe to the root, that we being purged of our passions may have a peaceable mind.' To this end there must be continual self-examination. 'If thou may not continually gather thyself together, namely sometimes do it, at least once a day, the morning or the evening. In the morning purpose, in the evening discuss the manner, what thou hast been this day, in word, work, and thought.' But while the Roman's temper is a modest self-reliance, the Christian aims at a more passive mood, humbleness and meekness, and reliance on the presence and personal friendship of God. The Roman scrutinises his faults with severity, but without the self-contempt which makes the Christian 'vile in his own sight.' The Christian, like the Roman, bids 'study to withdraw thine heart from the love of things visible'; but it is not the busy life of duty he has in mind so much as the contempt of all worldly things, and the 'cutting away of all lower delectations.' Both rate men's praise or blame at their real worthlessness; 'Let not thy peace,' says the Christian, 'be in the mouths of men.' But it is to God's censure the Christian appeals, the Roman to his own soul. The petty annoyances of injustice or unkindness are looked on by each with the same magnanimity. 'Why doth a little thing said or done against thee make thee sorry? It is no new thing; it is not the first, nor shall not be the last, if thou live long. At best suffer patiently, if thou canst not suffer joyously.' The

Christian should sorrow more for other men's malice than for our own wrongs ; but the Roman is inclined to wash his hands of the offender. 'Study to be patient in suffering and bearing other men's defaults and all manner infirmities,' says the Christian ; but the Roman would never have thought to add, 'If all men were perfect, what had we then to suffer of other men for God?' The virtue of suffering in itself is an idea which does not meet us in the *Meditations*. Both alike realise that man is one of a great community 'No man is sufficient to himself,' says the Christian ; 'we must bear together, help together, comfort together.' But while he sees a chief importance in zeal, in exalted emotion that is, and avoidance of lukewarmness, the Roman thought mainly of the duty to be done as well as might be, and less of the feeling which should go with the doing of it. To the saint as to the emperor, the world is a poor thing at best. 'Verily it is a misery to live upon the earth,' says the Christian ; few and evil are the days of man's life, which passeth away suddenly as a shadow.

But there is one great difference between the two books we are considering. The *Imitation* is addressed to others, the *Meditations* by the writer to himself. We learn nothing from the *Imitation* of the author's own life, except in so far as he may be assumed to have practised his own preachings ; the *Meditations* reflect mood by mood the mind of him who wrote them. In their intimacy and frankness lies their great charm. These notes are not sermons ; they are not even confessions. There is always an air of self-consciousness in confessions ; in such revelations there is always a danger of unctuousness or of vulgarity for the best of men. St. Augustine is not always clear of offence, and John Bunyan himself exaggerates venial peccadilloes into heinous sins. But Marcus Aurelius is neither vulgar nor unctuous ; he extenuates nothing, but nothing sets down in malice. He never poses before an audience ; he may not be profound, he is always sincere. And it is a lofty and serene soul which is here disclosed before us. Vulgar vices seem to have no temptation for him ; this is not one tied and bound with chains which he strives to break. The faults he detects in

himself are often such as most men would have no eyes to see. To serve the divine spirit which is implanted within him, a man must 'keep himself pure from all violent passion and evil affection, from all rashness and vanity, and from all manner of discontent, either in regard of the gods or men'; or, as he says elsewhere, 'unspotted by pleasure, undaunted by pain.' Unwavering courtesy and consideration are his aims. 'Whatsoever any man either doth or saith, thou must be good;' 'doth any man offend? It is against himself that he doth offend: why should it trouble thee?' The offender needs pity, not wrath; those who must needs be corrected, should be treated with tact and gentleness; and one must be always ready to learn better. 'The best kind of revenge is, not to become like unto them.' There are so many hints of offence forgiven, that we may believe the notes followed sharp on the facts. Perhaps he has fallen short of his aim, and thus seeks to call his principles to mind, and to strengthen himself for the future. That these sayings are not mere talk is plain from the story of Avidius Cassius, who would have usurped his imperial throne. Thus the emperor faithfully carries out his own principle, that evil must be overcome with good. For each fault in others, Nature (says he) has given us a counteracting virtue; 'as, for example, against the unthankful, it hath given goodness and meekness, as an antidote.'

One so gentle towards a foe was sure to be a good friend; and indeed his pages are full of generous gratitude to those who had served him. In his First Book he sets down to account all the debts due to his kinsfolk and teachers. To his grandfather he owed his own gentle spirit, to his father shamefastness and courage; he learnt of his mother to be religious and bountiful and single-minded. Rusticus did not work in vain, if he showed his pupil that his life needed amending. Apollonius taught him simplicity, reasonableness, gratitude, a love of true liberty. So the list runs on; every one he had dealings with seems to have given him something good, a sure proof of the goodness of his nature, which thought no evil.

If his was that honest and true heart which is the Chris-

tian ideal, this is the more wonderful in that he lacked the faith which makes Christians strong. He could say, it true, 'either there is a God, and then all is well; or if things go by chance and fortune, yet mayest thou use thine own providence in those things that concern thee properly and then art thou well.' Or again, 'We must needs grant that there is a nature that doth govern the universe.' But his own part in the scheme of things is so small, that he does not hope for any personal happiness beyond what a serene soul may win in this mortal life. 'O my soul, the time I trust will be, when thou shalt be good, simple, more open and visible, than that body by which it is enclosed but this is said of the calm contentment with human life which he hopes to attain, not of a time when the trammels of the body shall be cast off. For the rest, the world and its fame and wealth, 'all is vanity.' The gods may perhaps have a particular care for him, but their especial care is for the universe at large: thus much should suffice. His gods are better than the Stoic gods, who sit aloof from all human things, untroubled and uncaring, but his personal hope is hardly stronger. On this point he says little, though there are many allusions to death as the natural end; doubtless he expected his soul one day to be absorbed into the universal soul, since nothing comes out of nothing, and nothing can be annihilated. His mood is one of strenuous weariness; he does his duty as a good soldier, waiting for the sound of the trumpet which shall sound the retreat; he has not that cheerful confidence which led Socrates through a life no less noble, to a death which was to bring him into the company of gods he had worshipped and men whom he had revered.

But although Marcus Aurelius may have held intellectually that his soul was destined to be absorbed, and to lose consciousness of itself, there were times when he felt, as all who hold it must sometimes feel, how unsatisfying is such a creed. Then he gropes blindly after something less empty and vain. 'Thou hast taken ship,' he says, 'thou hast sailed, thou art come to land, go out, if to another life, there also shalt thou find gods, who are everywhere.'

There is more in this than the assumption of a rival theory for argument's sake. If worldly things be but as a dream, the thought is not far off that there may be an awakening to what is real. When he speaks of death as a necessary change, and points out that nothing useful and profitable can be brought about without change, did he perhaps think of the change in a corn of wheat, which is not quickened except it die? Nature's marvellous power of recreating out of corruption is surely not confined to bodily things. Many of his thoughts sound like far-off echoes of St. Paul; and it is strange indeed that this most Christian of emperors has nothing good to say of the Christians. To him they are only sectaries 'violently and passionately set upon opposition.'

Profound as philosophy these *Meditations* certainly are not; but Marcus Aurelius was too sincere not to see the essence of such things as came within his experience. Ancient religions were for the most part concerned with outward things. Do the necessary rites, and you propitiate the gods; and these rites were often trivial, sometimes violated right feeling or even morality. Even when the gods stood on the side of righteousness, they were concerned with the act more than with the intent. But Marcus Aurelius knows that what the heart is full of, the man will do. 'Such as thy thoughts and ordinary cogitations are,' he says, 'such will thy mind be in time.' And every page of the book shows us that he knew thought was sure to issue in act. He drills his soul, as it were, in right principles, that when the time comes, it may be guided by them. To wait until the emergency is to be too late.

He sees also the true essence of happiness. 'If happiness did consist in pleasure, how came notorious robbers, impure abominable livers, parricides, and tyrants, in so large a measure to have their part of pleasures?' He who had all the world's pleasures at command can write thus: 'A happy lot and portion is, good inclinations of the soul, good desires, good actions.'

By the irony of fate this man, so gentle and good, so desirous of quiet joys and a mind free from care, was set

at the head of the Roman Empire when great danger threatened from east and west. For several years he himself commanded his armies in chief. In camp before the Quadi he dates the first book of his *Meditations*, and shows how he could retire within himself amid the coarse clangour of arms. The pomps and glories which he despised were all his; what to most men is an ambition or a dream, to him was a round of weary tasks which nothing but the stern sense of duty could carry him through. And he did his work well. His wars were slow and tedious, but successful. With a statesman's wisdom he foresaw the danger to Rome of the barbarian hordes from the north, and took measures to meet it. As it was, his settlement gave two centuries of respite to the Roman Empire; had he fulfilled the plan of pushing the imperial frontiers to the Elbe, which seems to have been in his mind, much more might have been accomplished. But death cut short his designs.

Truly a rare opportunity was given to Marcus Aurelius of showing what the mind can do in despite of circumstances. Most peaceful of warriors, a magnificent monarch whose ideal was quiet happiness in home life, bent to obscurity yet born to greatness, the loving father of children who died young or turned out hateful, his life was one paradox. That nothing might lack, it was in camp before the face of the enemy that he passed away and went to his own place.

THE following is a list of the chief English translations of Marcus Aurelius: (1) By Meric Casaubon, 1634; (2) Jeremy Collier, 1701; (3) James Thomson, 1747; (4) R. Graves, 1792; (5) H. McCormac, 1844; (6) George Long, 1862; (7) G. H. Rendall, 1898; and (8) J. Jackson, 1906. Renan's "Marc-Aurèle"—in his "History of the Origins of Christianity," which appeared in 1882—is the most vital and original book to be had relating to the time of Marcus Aurelius. Pater's "Marius the Epicurean" forms another outside commentary, which is of service in the imaginative attempt to create again the period.

MARCUS AURELIUS
ANTONINUS
THE ROMAN EMPEROR
HIS FIRST BOOK

concerning HIMSELF :

*Wherein Antoninus recordeth, What and of whom, whether
Parents, Friends, or Masters ; by their good examples,
or good advice and counsel, he had learned :*

Divided into Numbers or Sections.

ANTONINUS Book vi. Num. xlviii. Whensoever thou wilt rejoice thyself, think and meditate upon those good parts and especial gifts, which thou hast observed in any of them that live with thee: as industry in one, in another modesty, in another bountifulness, in another some other thing. For nothing can so much rejoice thee, as the resemblances and parallels of several virtues, eminent in the dispositions of them that live with thee, especially when all at once, as it were, they represent themselves unto thee. See therefore, that thou have them always in a readiness

THE FIRST BOOK

I. Of my grandfather Verus I have learned to be gentle and meek, and to refrain from all anger and passion. From the fame and memory of him that begot me I have learned both shamefastness and manlike behaviour. Of my mother I have learned to be religious, and bountiful; and to forbear, not only to do, but to intend any evil; to content myself with a spare diet, and to fly all such excess as is incidental to great wealth. Of my great-grandfather, both to frequent public schools and auditories, and to get me good and able teachers at home; and that I ought not to think much, if upon such occasions, I were at excessive charges.

II. Of him that brought me up, not to be fondly addicted to either of the two great factions of the coursers in the circus, called Prasini, and Veneti: nor in the amphitheatre partially to favour any of the gladiators, or fencers, as either the Parmularii, or the Secutores. Moreover, to endure labour; nor to need many things; when I have anything to do, to do it myself rather than by others; not to meddle with many businesses; and not easily to admit of any slander.

III. Of Diognetus, not to busy myself about vain things, and not easily to believe those things, which are commonly spoken, by such as take upon them to work wonders, and by sorcerers, or prestidigitators, and impostors; concerning the power of charms, and their driving out of demons, or evil spirits; and the like. Not to keep quails for the game; nor to be mad after such things. Not to be offended with other men's liberty of speech, and to apply myself unto philosophy. Him also I must thank, that ever I heard first Bacchius, then Tandasis and Marcianus, and that I did write dialogues in my youth; and that I took liking to the philosophers' little couch and skins, and such other things, which by the Grecian discipline are proper to those who profess philosophy.

IV. To Rusticus I am beholding, that I first entered into the conceit that my life wanted some redress and cure. And then, that I did not fall into the ambition of ordinary sophists, either to write tracts concerning the common theorems, or to exhort men unto virtue and the study of philosophy by public orations; as also that I never by way of ostentation did affect to show myself an active able man, for any kind of bodily exercises. And that I gave over the study of rhetoric and poetry, and of elegant neat language. That I did not use to walk about the house in my long robe, nor to do any such things. Moreover I learned of him to write letters without any affectation, or curiosity; such as that was, which by him was written to my mother from Sinuessa: and to be easy and ready to be reconciled, and well pleased again with them that had offended

me, as soon as any of them would be content to seek unto me again. To read with diligence; not to rest satisfied with a light and superficial knowledge, nor quickly to assent to things commonly spoken of: whom also I must thank that ever I lighted upon Epictetus his *Hypomnemata*, or moral commentaries and commone-factions: which also he gave me of his own.

V. From Apollonius, true liberty, and unvariable steadfastness, and not to regard anything at all, though never so little, but right and reason: and always, whether in the sharpest pains, or after the loss of a child, or in long diseases, to be still the same man; who also was a present and visible example unto me, that it was possible for the same man to be both vehement and remiss: a man not subject to be vexed, and offended with the incapacity of his scholars and auditors in his lectures and expositions; and a true pattern of a man who of all his good gifts and faculties, least esteemed in himself, that his excellent skill and ability to teach and persuade others the common theorems and maxims of the Stoic philosophy. Of him also I learned how to receive favours and kindnesses (as commonly they are accounted:) from friends, so that I might not become obnoxious unto them, for them, nor more yielding upon occasion, than in right I ought; and yet so that I should not pass them neither, as an unsensible and unthankful man.

VI. Of Sextus, mildness and the pattern of a family governed with paternal affection; and a purpose to live according to nature: to be grave without affectation: to observe carefully the several dispositions of my friends, not to be offended with idiots, nor unseasonably to set upon those that are carried with the vulgar opinions, with the theorems, and tenets of philosophers: his conversation being an example how a man might accommodate himself to all men and companies; so that though his company were sweeter and more pleasing than any flatterer's cogging and fawning; yet was it at the same time most respected and revered: who also had a proper happiness and faculty, rationally and

methodically to find out, and set in order all necessary determinations and instructions for a man's life. A man without ever the least appearance of anger, or any other passion; able at the same time most exactly to observe the Stoic *Apathia*, or unpassionateness, and yet to be most tender-hearted: ever of good credit; and yet almost without any noise, or rumour: very learned, and yet making little show.

VII. From Alexander the Grammarian, to be unprovable myself, and not reproachfully to reprehend any man for a barbarism, or a solecism, or any false pronunciation, but dextrously by way of answer, or testimony, or confirmation of the same matter (taking no notice of the word) to utter it as it should have been spoken; or by some other such close and indirect admonition, handsomely and civilly to tell him of it.

VIII. Of Fronto, to how much envy and fraud and hypocrisy the state of a tyrannous king is subject unto, and how they who are commonly called *εὐπατρίδαι*, *i.e.* nobly born, are in some sort incapable, or void of natural affection.

IX. Of Alexander the Platonic, not often nor without great necessity to say, or to write to any man in a letter, 'I am not at leisure'; nor in this manner still to put off those duties, which we owe to our friends and acquaintances (to every one in his kind) under pretence of urgent affairs.

X. Of Catulus, not to condemn any friend's expostulation, though unjust, but to strive to reduce him to his former disposition: freely and heartily to speak well of all my masters upon any occasion, as it is reported of Domitius, and Athenodotus: and to love my children with true affection.

XI. From my brother Severus, to be kind and loving to all them of my house and family; by whom also I came to the knowledge of Thræsea and Helvidius, and Cato, and Dio, and Brutus. He it was also that did put me in the first conceit and desire of an equal commonwealth, administered by justice and equality; and of a kingdom wherein should be regarded nothing more

than the good and welfare of the subjects. Of him also, to observe a constant tenor, (not interrupted, with any other cares and distractions,) in the study and esteem of philosophy: to be bountiful and liberal in the largest measure; always to hope the best; and to be confident that my friends love me. In whom I moreover observed open dealing towards those whom he reprov'd at any time, and that his friends might without all doubt or much observation know what he would, or would not, so open and plain was he.

XII. From Claudius Maximus, in all things to endeavour to have power of myself, and in nothing to be carried about; to be cheerful and courageous in all sudden chances and accidents, as in sicknesses: to love mildness, and moderation, and gravity: and to do my business, whatsoever it be, thoroughly, and without querulousness. Whatsoever he said, all men believed him that as he spake, so he thought, and whatsoever he did, that he did it with a good intent. His manner was, never to wonder at anything; never to be in haste, and yet never slow: nor to be perplexed, or dejected, or at any time unseemly, or excessively to laugh: nor to be angry, or suspicious, but ever ready to do good, and to forgive, and to speak truth; and all this, as one that seem'd rather of himself to have been straight and right, than ever to have been rectified or redressed; neither was there any man that ever thought himself undervalued by him, or that could find in his heart, to think himself a better man than he. He would also be very pleasant and gracious.

XIII. In my father, I observed his meekness; his constancy without wavering in those things, which after a due examination and deliberation, he had determined. How free from all vanity he carried himself in matter of honour and dignity, (as they are esteemed :) his laboriousness and assiduity, his readiness to hear any man, that had aught to say tending to any common good: how generally and impartially he would give every man his due; his skill and knowledge, when rigour or extremity, or when remissness or moderation was in season; how

he did abstain from all unchaste love of youths ; his moderate condescending to other men's occasions as an ordinary man, neither absolutely requiring of his friends, that they should wait upon him at his ordinary meals, nor that they should of necessity accompany him in his journeys ; and that whensoever any business upon some necessary occasions was to be put off and omitted before it could be ended, he was ever found when he went about it again, the same man that he was before. His accurate examination of things in consultations, and patient hearing of others. He would not hastily give over the search of the matter, as one easy to be satisfied with sudden notions and apprehensions. His care to preserve his friends ; how neither at any time he would carry himself towards them with disdainful neglect, and grow weary of them ; nor yet at any time be madly fond of them. His contented mind in all things, his cheerful countenance, his care to foresee things afar off, and to take order for the least, without any noise or clamour. Moreover, how all acclamations and flattery were repressed by him : how carefully he observed all things necessary to the government, and kept an account of the common expenses, and how patiently he did abide that he was reprehended by some for this his strict and rigid kind of dealing. How he was neither a superstitious worshipper of the gods, nor an ambitious pleaser of men, or studious of popular applause ; but sober in all things, and everywhere observant of that which was fitting ; no affecter of novelties : in those things which conduced to his ease and convenience, (plenty whereof his fortune did afford him,) without pride and bragging, yet with all freedom and liberty : so that as he did freely enjoy them without any anxiety or affectation when they were present ; so when absent, he found no want of them. Moreover, that he was never commended by any man, as either a learned acute man, or an obsequious officious man, or a fine orator ; but as a ripe mature man, a perfect sound man ; one that could not endure to be flattered ; able to govern both himself and others. Moreover, how much he did honour all true philosophers, without upbraiding

those that were not so; his sociableness, his gracious and delightful conversation, but never unto satiety; his care of his body within bounds and measure, not as one that desired to live long, or over-studious of neatness, and elegancy; and yet not as one that did not regard it: so that through his own care and providence, he seldom needed any inward physic, or outward applications: but especially how ingeniously he would yield to any that had obtained any peculiar faculty, as either eloquence, or the knowledge of the laws, or of ancient customs, or the like; and how he concurred with them, in his best care and endeavour that every one of them might in his kind, for that wherein he excelled, be regarded and esteemed: and although he did all things carefully after the ancient customs of his forefathers, yet even of this was he not desirous that men should take notice, that he did imitate ancient customs. Again, how he was not easily moved and tossed up and down, but loved to be constant, both in the same places and businesses; and how after his great fits of headache he would return fresh and vigorous to his wonted affairs. Again, that secrets he neither had many, nor often, and such only as concerned public matters: his discretion and moderation, in exhibiting of the public sights and shows for the pleasure and pastime of the people: in public buildings, congiaries, and the like. In all these things, having a respect unto men only as men, and to the equity of the things themselves, and not unto the glory that might follow. Never went to use the baths at unseasonable hours; no builder; never curious, or solicitous, either about his meat, or about the workmanship, or colour of his clothes, or about anything that belonged to external beauty. In all his conversation, far from all inhumanity, all boldness, and incivility, all greediness and impetuosity; never doing anything with such earnestness, and intention, that a man could say of him, that he did sweat about it: but contrariwise, all things distinctly, as at leisure; without trouble; orderly, soundly, and agreeably. A man might have applied that to him, which is recorded of Socrates, that he knew how to want,

and to enjoy those things, in the want whereof, most men show themselves weak ; and in the fruition, intemperate : but to hold out firm and constant, and to keep within the compass of true moderation and sobriety in either estate, is proper to a man, who hath a perfect and invincible soul ; such as he showed himself in the sickness of Maximus.

XIV. From the gods I received that I had good grandfathers, and parents, a good sister, good masters, good domestics, loving kinsmen, almost all that I have ; and that I never through haste and rashness transgressed against any of them, notwithstanding that my disposition was such, as that such a thing (if occasion had been) might very well have been committed by me, but that it was the mercy of the gods, to prevent such a concurring of matters and occasions, as might make me to incur this blame. That I was not long brought up by the concubine of my father ; that I preserved the flower of my youth. That I took not upon me to be a man before my time, but rather put it off longer than I needed. That I lived under the government of my lord and father, who would take away from me all pride and vainglory, and reduce me to that conceit and opinion that it was not impossible for a prince to live in the court without a troop of guards and followers, extraordinary apparel, such and such torches and statues, and other like particulars of state and magnificence ; but that a man may reduce and contract himself almost to the state of a private man, and yet for all that not to become the more base and remiss in those public matters and affairs, wherein power and authority is requisite. That I have had such a brother, who by his own example might stir me up to think of myself ; and by his respect and love, delight and please me. That I have got ingenuous children, and that they were not born distorted, nor with any other natural deformity. That I was no great proficient in the study of rhetoric and poetry, and of other faculties, which perchance I might have dwelt upon, if I had found myself to go on in them with success. That I did by times prefer those,

by whom I was brought up, to such places and dignities, which they seemed unto me most to desire; and that I did not put them off with hope and expectation, that (since that they were yet but young) I would do the same hereafter. That I ever knew Apollonius and Rusticus, and Maximus. That I have had occasion often and effectually to consider and meditate with myself, concerning that life which is according to nature, what the nature and manner of it is: so that as for the gods and such suggestions, helps and inspirations, as might be expected from them, nothing did hinder, but that I might have begun long before to live according to nature; or that even now that I was not yet partaker and in present possession of that life, that I myself (in that I did not observe those inward motions, and suggestions, yea and almost plain and apparent instructions and admonitions of the gods,) was the only cause of it. That my body in such a life, hath been able to hold out so long. That I never had to do with Benedicta and Theodotus, yea and afterwards when I fell into some fits of love, I was soon cured. That having been often displeased with Rusticus, I never did him anything for which afterwards I had occasion to repent. That it being so that my mother was to die young, yet she lived with me all her latter years. That as often as I had a purpose to help and succour any that either were poor, or fallen into some present necessity, I never was answered by my officers that there was not ready money enough to do it; and that I myself never had occasion to require the like succour from any other. That I have such a wife, so obedient, so loving, so ingenuous. That I had choice of fit and able men, to whom I might commit the bringing up of my children. That by dreams I have received help, as for other things, so in particular, how I might stay my casting of blood, and cure my dizziness, as that also that happened to thee in Cajeta, as unto Chryses when he prayed by the seashore. And when I did first apply myself to philosophy, that I did not fall into the hands of some sophists, or spent my time either in reading the manifold volumes of

ordinary philosophers, nor in practising myself in the solution of arguments and fallacies, nor dwelt upon the studies of the meteors, and other natural curiosities. All these things without the assistance of the gods, and fortune, could not have been.

XV. In the country of the Quadi at Granua, these.

Betimes 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 know moreover, that this transgressor, whosoever he 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?

XVI. Whatsoever I am, is either flesh, or life, or that which we commonly call the mistress and overruling part of man; reason. Away with thy books, suffer not thy mind any more to be distracted, and carried to and fro; for it will not be; but as even now ready to die, think little of thy flesh: blood, bones, and a skin; a pretty piece of knit and twisted work, consisting of nerves, veins and arteries; think no more of it, than so. And as for thy life, consider what it is; a wind; not one constant wind neither, but every moment of an hour let out, and sucked in again. The third. is thy ruling part: and here consider; Thou art an old man; suffer not that excellent part to be brought in subjection, and to become slavish: suffer it not to be drawn

up and down with unreasonable and unsociable lusts and motions, as it were with wires and nerves; suffer it not any more, either to repine at anything now present, or to fear and fly anything to come, which the destiny hath appointed thee.

XVII. Whatsoever proceeds from the gods immediately, that any man will grant totally depends from their divine providence. As for those things that are commonly said to happen by fortune, even those must be conceived to have dependence from nature, or from that first and general connection, and concatenation of all those things, which more apparently by the divine providence are administered and brought to pass. All things flow from thence: and whatsoever it is that is, is both necessary, and conducing to the whole (part of which thou art), and whatsoever it is that is requisite and necessary for the preservation of the general, must of necessity for every particular nature, be good and behoveful. And as for the whole, it is preserved, as by the perpetual mutation and conversion of the simple elements one into another, so also by the mutation, and alteration of things mixed and compounded. Let these things suffice thee; let them be always unto thee, as thy general rules and precepts. As for thy thirst after books, away with it with all speed, that thou die not murmuring and complaining, but truly meek and well satisfied, and from thy heart thankful unto the gods.

THE SECOND BOOK

Reign

I. Remember how long thou hast already put off these things, and how often a certain day and hour as it were, having been set unto thee by the gods, thou hast neglected it. It is high time for thee to understand the true nature both of the world, whereof thou art a part; and of that Lord and Governor of the world, from whom, as a channel from the spring, thou thyself didst flow: and that there is but a certain limit of time appointed unto thee, which if thou shalt not make use of to calm and allay the many distempers of thy soul, it will pass away and thou with it, and never after return.

II. Let it be thy earnest and incessant care as a Roman and a man to perform whatsoever it is that thou art about, with true and unfeigned gravity, natural affection, freedom and justice: and as for all other cares, and imaginations, how thou mayest ease thy mind of them. Which thou shalt do; if thou shalt go about every action as thy last action, free from all vanity, all passionate and wilful aberration from reason, and from all hypocrisy, and self-love, and dislike of those things, which by the fates or appointment of God have happened unto thee. Thou seest that those things, which for a man to hold on in a prosperous course, and to live a divine life, are requisite and necessary, are not many, for the gods will require no more of any man, that shall but keep and observe these things.

III. Do, soul, do; abuse and contemn thyself; yet a while and the time for thee to respect thyself, will be at an end. Every man's happiness depends from himself, but behold thy life is almost at an end, whiles affording thyself no respect, thou dost make thy happiness to consist in the souls, and conceits of other men.

IV. Why should any of these things that happen externally, so much distract thee? Give thyself leisure to learn some good thing, and cease roving and wandering to and fro. Thou must also take heed of another kind of wandering, for they are idle in their actions, who toil and labour in this life, and have no certain scope to which to direct all their motions, and desires.

V. For not observing the state of another man's soul, scarce was ever any man known to be unhappy. But whosoever they be that intend not, and guide not by reason and discretion the motions of their own souls, they must of necessity be unhappy.

VI. These things thou must always have in mind: What is the nature of the universe, and what is mine in particular: This unto that what relation it hath: what kind of part, of what kind of universe it is: And that there is nobody that can hinder thee, but that thou mayest always both do and speak those things which are agreeable to that nature, whereof thou art a part.

VII. Theophrastus, where he compares sin with sin (as after a vulgar sense such things I grant may be compared :) says well and like a philosopher, that those sins are greater which are committed through lust, than those which are committed through anger. For he that is angry seems with a kind of grief and close contraction of himself, to turn away from reason; but he that sins through lust, being overcome by pleasure, doth in his very sin bewray a more impotent, and unmanlike disposition. Well then and like a philosopher doth he say, that he of the two is the more to be condemned, that sins with pleasure, than he that sins with grief. For indeed this latter may seem first to have been wronged, and so in some manner through grief thereof to have been forced to be angry, whereas he who through lust doth commit anything, did of himself merely resolve upon that action.

VIII. Whatsoever thou dost affect, whatsoever thou dost project, so do, and so project all, as one who, for aught thou knowest, may at this very present depart out of this life. And as for death, if there be any gods, it

is no grievous thing to leave the society of men. The gods will do thee no hurt, thou mayest be sure. But if it be so that there be no gods, or that they take no care of the world, why should I desire to live in a world void of gods, and of all divine providence? But gods there be certainly, and they take care for the world; and as for those things which be truly evil, as vice and wickedness, such things they have put in a man's own power, that he might avoid them if he would: and had there been anything besides that had been truly bad and evil, they would have had a care of that also, that a man might have avoided it. But why should that be thought to hurt and prejudice a man's life in this world, which cannot any ways make man himself the better, or the worse in his own person? Neither must we think that the nature of the universe did either through ignorance pass these things, or if not as ignorant of them, yet as unable either to prevent, or better to order and dispose them. It cannot be that she through want either of power or skill, should have committed such a thing, so as to suffer all things both good and bad, equally and promiscuously. to happen unto all both good and bad. As for life therefore, and death, honour and dishonour, labour and pleasure, riches and poverty, all these things happen unto men indeed, both good and bad, equally; but as things which of themselves are neither good nor bad; because of themselves, neither shameful nor praiseworthy.

IX. Consider how quickly all things are dissolved and resolved: the bodies and substances themselves, into the matter and substance of the world: and their memories into the general age and time of the world. Consider the nature of all worldly sensible things; of those especially, which either ensnare by pleasure, or for their irksomeness are dreadful, or for their outward lustre and show are in great esteem and request, how vile and contemptible, how base and corruptible, how destitute of all true life and being they are.

X. It is the part of a man endowed with a good understanding faculty, to consider what they themselves

are in very deed, from whose bare conceits and voices, honour and credit do proceed : as also what it is to die, and how if a man shall consider this by itself alone, to die, and separate from it in his mind all those things which with it usually represent themselves unto us, he can conceive of it no otherwise, than as of a work of nature, and he that fears any work of nature, is a very child. Now death, it is not only a work of nature, but also conducing to nature.

XI. Consider with thyself how man, and by what part of his, is joined unto God, and how that part of man is affected, when it is said to be diffused. There is nothing more wretched than that soul, which in a kind of circuit compasseth all things, searching (as he saith) even the very depths of the earth; and by all signs and conjectures prying into the very thoughts of other men's souls; and yet of this, is not sensible, that it is sufficient for a man to apply himself wholly, and to confine all his thoughts and cares to the tendance of that spirit which is within him, and truly and really to serve him. His service doth consist in this, that a man keep himself pure from all violent passion and evil affection, from all rashness and vanity, and from all manner of discontent, either in regard of the gods or men. For indeed whatsoever proceeds from the gods, deserves respect for their worth and excellency; and whatsoever proceeds from men, as they are our kinsmen, should by us be entertained, with love, always; sometimes, as proceeding from their ignorance, of that which is truly good and bad, (a blindness no less, than that by which we are not able to discern between white and black :) with a kind of pity and compassion also.

XII. If thou shouldst live three thousand, or as many as ten thousands of years, yet remember this, that man can part with no life properly, save with that little part of life, which he now lives: and that which he lives, is no other, than that which at every instant he parts with. That then which is longest of duration, and that which is shortest, come both to one effect: For although in regard of that which is already past there may be some

inequality, yet that time which is now present and in being, is equal unto all men. And that being it which we part with whensoever we die, it doth manifestly appear, that it can be but a moment of time, that we then part with. For as for that which is either past or to come, a man cannot be said properly to part with it. For how should a man part with that which he hath not? These two things therefore thou must remember. First, that all things in the world from all eternity, by a perpetual revolution of the same times and things ever continued and renewed, are of one kind and nature; so that whether for a hundred or two hundred years only, or for an infinite space of time, a man see those things which are still the same, it can be no matter of great moment. And secondly, that that life which any the longest liver, or the shortest liver parts with, is for length and duration the very same, for that only which is present, is that, which either of them can lose, as being that only which they have; for that which he hath not, no man can truly be said to lose.

XIII. Remember that all is but opinion and conceit, for those things are plain and apparent, which were spoken unto Monimus the Cynic; and as plain and apparent is the use that may be made of those things, if that which is true and serious in them, be received as well as that which is sweet and pleasing.

XIV. A man's soul doth wrong and disrespect itself first and especially, when as much as in itself lies it becomes an aposteme, and as it were an excrescency of the world, for to be grieved and displeased with anything that happens in the world, is direct apostacy from the nature of the universe; part of which, all particular natures of the world, are. Secondly, when she either is averse from any man, or led by contrary desires or affections, tending to his hurt and prejudice; such as are the souls of them that are angry. Thirdly, when she is overcome by any pleasure or pain. Fourthly, when she doth dissemble, and covertly and falsely either doth or saith anything. Fifthly, when she doth either affect or endeavour anything to no certain end, but rashly and without

due ratiocination and consideration, how consequent or inconsequent it is to the common end. For even the least things ought not to be done, without relation unto the end; and the end of the reasonable creatures is, to follow and obey him, who is the reason as it were, and the law of this great city, and ancient commonwealth.

XV. The time of a man's life is as a point; the substance of it ever flowing, the sense obscure; and the whole composition of the body tending to corruption. His soul is restless, fortune uncertain, and fame doubtful; to be brief, as a stream so are all things belonging to the body; as a dream, or as a smoke, so are all that belong unto the soul. Our life is a warfare, and a mere pilgrimage. Fame after life is no better than oblivion. What is it then that will adhere and follow? Only one thing, philosophy. And philosophy doth consist in this, for a man to preserve that spirit which is within him, from all manner of contumelies and injuries, and above all pains or pleasures; never to do anything either rashly, or feignedly, or hypocritically: wholly to depend from himself, and his own proper actions: all things that happen unto him to embrace contentedly, as coming from Him from whom he himself also came; and above all things, with all meekness and a calm cheerfulness, to expect death, as being nothing else but the resolution of those elements, of which every creature is composed. And if the elements themselves suffer nothing by this their perpetual conversion of one into another, that dissolution, and alteration, which is so common unto all, why should it be feared by any? Is not this according to nature? But nothing that is according to nature can be evil.

Whilst I was at Carnuntum.

THE THIRD BOOK

I. A man must not only consider how daily his life wasteth and decreaseth, but this also, that if he live long, he cannot be certain, whether his understanding shall continue so able and sufficient, for either discreet consideration, in matter of businesses; or for contemplation: it being the thing, whereon true knowledge of things both divine and human, doth depend. For if once he shall begin to dote, his respiration, nutrition, his imaginative, and appetitive, and other natural faculties, may still continue the same: he shall find no want of them. But how to make that right use of himself that he should, how to observe exactly in all things that which is right and just, how to redress and rectify all wrong, or sudden apprehensions and imaginations, and even of this particular, whether he should live any longer or no, to consider duly; for all such things, wherein the best strength and vigour of the mind is most requisite; his power and ability will be past and gone. Thou must hasten therefore; not only because thou art every day nearer unto death than other, but also because that intellectual faculty in thee, whereby thou art enabled to know the true nature of things, and to order all thy actions by that knowledge, doth daily waste and decay: or, may fail thee before thou die.

II. This also thou must observe, that whatsoever it is that naturally doth happen to things natural, hath somewhat in itself that is pleasing and delightful: as a great loaf when it is baked, some parts of it cleave as it were, and part asunder, and make the crust of it rugged and unequal, and yet those parts of it, though in some sort it be against the art and intention of baking itself, that they are thus cleft and parted, which should have been and

were first made all even and uniform, they become it well nevertheless, and have a certain peculiar property, to stir the appetite. So figs are accounted fairest and ripest then, when they begin to shrink, and wither as it were. So ripe olives, when they are next to putrefaction, then are they in their proper beauty. The hanging down of grapes, the brow of a lion, the froth of a foaming wild boar, and many other like things, though by themselves considered, they are far from any beauty, yet because they happen naturally, they both are comely, and delightful ; so that if a man shall with a profound mind and apprehension, consider all things in the world, even among all those things which are but mere accessories and natural appendices as it were, there will scarce appear anything unto him, wherein he will not find matter of pleasure and delight. So will he behold with as much pleasure the true *rictus* of wild beasts, as those which by skilful painters and other artificers are imitated. So will he be able to perceive the proper ripeness and beauty of old age, whether in man or woman : and whatsoever else it is that is beautiful and alluring in whatsoever is, with chaste and continent eyes he will soon find out and discern. Those and many other things will he discern, not credible unto every one, but unto them only who are truly and familiarly acquainted, both with nature itself, and all natural things.

III. Hippocrates having cured many sicknesses, fell sick himself and died. The Chaldeans and Astrologians having foretold the deaths of divers, were afterwards themselves surprised by the fates. Alexander and Pompeius, and Caius Cæsar, having destroyed so many towns, and cut off in the field so many thousands both of horse and foot, yet they themselves at last were fain to part with their own lives. Heraclitus having written so many natural tracts concerning the last and general conflagration of the world, died afterwards all filled with water within, and all bedaubed with dirt and dung without. Lice killed Democritus ; and Socrates, another sort of vermin, wicked ungodly men. How then stands the case ? Thou hast taken ship, thou hast sailed, thou

art come to land, go out, if to another life, there also shalt thou find gods, who are everywhere. If all life and sense shall cease, then shalt thou cease also to be subject to either pains or pleasures ; and to serve and tend this vile cottage ; so much the viler, by how much that which ministers unto it doth excel ; the one being a rational substance, and a spirit, the other nothing but earth and blood.

IV. Spend not the remnant of thy days in thoughts and fancies concerning other men, when it is not in relation to some common good, when by it thou art hindered from some other better work. That is, spend not thy time in thinking, what such a man doth, and to what end : what he saith, and what he thinks, and what he is about, and such other things or curiosities, which make a man to rove and wander from the care and observation of that part of himself, which is rational, and overruling. See therefore in the whole series and connection of thy thoughts, that thou be careful to prevent whatsoever is idle and impertinent : but especially, whatsoever is curious and malicious : and thou must use thyself to think only of such things, of which if a man upon a sudden should ask thee, what it is that thou art now thinking, thou mayest answer This, and That, freely and boldly, that so by thy thoughts it may presently appear that in all thee is sincere, and peaceable ; as becometh one that is made for society, and regards not pleasures, nor gives way to any voluptuous imaginations at all : free from all contentiousness, envy, and suspicion, and from whatsoever else thou wouldest blush to confess thy thoughts were set upon. He that is such, is he surely that doth not put off to lay hold on that which is best indeed, a very priest and minister of the gods, well acquainted and in good correspondence with him especially that is seated and placed within himself, as in a temple and sacrary : to whom also he keeps and preserves himself unspotted by pleasure, undaunted by pain ; free from any manner of wrong, or contumely, by himself offered unto himself : not capable of any evil from others : a wrestler of the best sort, and for the

highest prize, that he may not be cast down by any passion, or affection of his own; deeply dyed and drenched in righteousness, embracing and accepting with his whole heart whatsoever either happeneth or is allotted unto him. One who not often, nor without some great necessity tending to some public good, mindeth what any other, either speaks, or doth, or purposeth: for those things only that are in his own power, or that are truly his own, are the objects of his employments, and his thoughts are ever taken up with those things, which of the whole universe are by the fates or Providence destined and appropriated unto himself. Those things that are his own, and in his own power, he himself takes order, for that they be good: and as for those that happen unto him, he believes them to be so. For that lot and portion which is assigned to every one, as it is unavoidable and necessary, so is it always profitable. He remembers besides that whatsoever partakes of reason, is akin unto him, and that to care for all men generally, is agreeing to the nature of a man: but as for honour and praise, that they ought not generally to be admitted and accepted of from all, but from such only, who live according to nature. As for them that do not, what manner of men they be at home, or abroad; day or night, how conditioned themselves with what manner of conditions, or with men of what conditions they moil and pass away the time together, he knoweth, and remembers right well, he therefore regards not such praise and approbation, as proceeding from them, who cannot like and approve themselves.

V. Do nothing against thy will, nor contrary to the community, nor without due examination, nor with reluctancy. Affect not to set out thy thoughts with curious neat language. Be neither a great talker, nor a great undertaker. Moreover, let thy God that is in thee to rule over thee, find by thee, that he hath to do with a man; an aged man; a sociable man; a Roman; a prince; one that hath ordered his life, as one that expecteth, as it were, nothing but the sound of the trumpet, sounding a retreat to depart out of this life with all expedition.

One who for his word or actions neither needs an oath, nor any man to be a witness.

VI. To be cheerful, and to stand in no need, either of other men's help or attendance, or of that rest and tranquillity, which thou must be beholding to others for. Rather like one that is straight of himself, or hath ever been straight, than one that hath been rectified.

VII. If thou shalt find anything in this mortal life better than righteousness, than truth, temperance, fortitude, and in general better than a mind contented both with those things which according to right and reason she doth, and in those, which without her will and knowledge happen unto thee by the providence; if I say, thou canst find out anything better than this, apply thyself unto it with thy whole heart, and that which is best wheresoever thou dost find it, enjoy freely. But if nothing thou shalt find worthy to be preferred to that spirit which is within thee; if nothing better than to subject unto thee thine own lusts and desires, and not to give way to any fancies or imaginations before thou hast duly considered of them, nothing better than to withdraw thyself (to use Socrates his words) from all sensuality, and submit thyself unto the gods, and to have care of all men in general: if thou shalt find that all other things in comparison of this, are but vile, and of little moment; then give not way to any other thing, which being once though but affected and inclined unto, it will no more be in thy power without all distraction as thou oughtest to prefer and to pursue after that good, which is thine own and thy proper good. For it is not lawful, that anything that is of another and inferior kind and nature, be it what it will, as either popular applause, or honour, or riches, or pleasures; should be suffered to confront and contest as it were, with that which is rational, and operatively good. For all these things, if once though but for a while, they begin to please, they presently prevail, and pervert a man's mind, or turn a man from the right way. Do thou therefore I say absolutely and freely make choice of that which is best, and stick unto it. Now, that they say is best, which is most

profitable. If they mean profitable to man as he is a rational man, stand thou to it, and maintain it; but if they mean profitable, as he is a creature, only reject it; and from this thy tenet and conclusion keep off carefully all plausible shows and colours of external appearance, that thou mayest be able to discern things rightly.

VIII. Never esteem of anything as profitable, which shall ever constrain thee either to break thy faith, or to lose thy modesty; to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to dissemble, to lust after anything, that requireth the secret of walls or veils. But he that preferreth before all things his rational part and spirit, and the sacred mysteries of virtue which issueth from it, he shall never lament and exclaim, never sigh; he shall never want either solitude or company: and which is chiefest of all, he shall live without either desire or fear. And as for life, whether for a long or short time he shall enjoy his soul thus compassed about with a body, he is altogether indifferent. For if even now he were to depart, he is as ready for it, as for any other action, which may be performed with modesty and decency. For all his life long, this is his only care, that his mind may always be occupied in such intentions and objects, as are proper to a rational sociable creature.

IX. In the mind that is once truly disciplined and purged, thou canst not find anything, either foul or impure, or as it were festered: nothing that is either servile, or affected: no partial tie; no malicious averseness; nothing obnoxious; nothing concealed. The life of such an one, death can never surprise as imperfect; as of an actor, that should die before he had ended, or the play itself were at an end, a man might speak.

X. Use thine opinative faculty with all honour and respect, for in her indeed is all: that thy opinion do not beget in thy understanding anything contrary to either nature, or the proper constitution of a rational creature. The end and object of a rational constitution is, to do nothing rashly, to be kindly affected towards men, and in all things willingly to submit unto the gods. Casting therefore all other things aside, keep thyself to

these few, and remember withal that no man properly can be said to live more than that which is now present, which is but a moment of time. Whatsoever is besides either is already past, or uncertain. The time therefore that any man doth live, is but a little, and the place where he liveth, is but a very little corner of the earth, and the greatest fame that can remain of a man after his death, even that is but little, and that too, such as it is whilst it is, is by the succession of silly mortal men preserved, who likewise shall shortly die, and even whiles they live know not what in very deed they themselves are : and much less can know one, who long before is dead and gone.

XI. To these ever-present helps and mementoes, let one more be added, ever to make a particular description and delineation as it were of every object that presents itself to thy mind, that thou mayest wholly and throughly contemplate it, in its own proper nature, bare and naked ; wholly, and severally ; divided into its several parts and quarters : and then by thyself in thy mind, to call both it, and those things of which it doth consist, and in which it shall be resolved, by their own proper true names, and appellations. For there is nothing so effectual to beget true magnanimity, as to be able truly and methodically to examine and consider all things that happen in this life, and so to penetrate into their natures, that at the same time, this also may concur in our apprehensions : what is the true use of it ? and what is the true nature of this universe, to which it is useful ? how much in regard of the universe may it be esteemed ? how much in regard of man, a citizen of the supreme city, of which all other cities in the world are as it were but houses and families ?

XII. What is this, that now my fancy is set upon ? of what things doth it consist ? how long can it last ? which of all the virtues is the proper virtue for this present use ? as whether meekness, fortitude, truth, faith, sincerity, contentation, or any of the rest ? Of everything therefore thou must use thyself to say, This immediately comes from God, this by that fatal connection, and concaten-

ation of things, or (which almost comes to one) by some coincidental casualty. And as for this, it proceeds from my neighbour, my kinsman, my fellow: through his ignorance indeed, because he knows not what is truly natural unto him: but I know it, and therefore carry myself towards him according to the natural law of fellowship; that is kindly, and justly. As for those things that of themselves are altogether indifferent, as in my best judgment I conceive everything to deserve more or less, so I carry myself towards it.

XIII. If thou shalt intend that which is present, following the rule of right and reason carefully, solidly, meekly, and shalt not intermix any other businesses, but shall study this only to preserve thy spirit impolluted, and pure, and shall cleave unto him without either hope or fear of anything, in all things that thou shalt either do or speak, contenting thyself with heroical truth, thou shalt live happily; and from this, there is no man that can hinder thee.

XIV. As physicians and chirurgeons have always their instruments ready at hand for all sudden cures; so have thou always thy dogmata in a readiness for the knowledge of things, both divine and human: and whatsoever thou dost, even in the smallest things that thou dost, thou must ever remember that mutual relation, and connection that is between these two things divine, and things human. For without relation unto God, thou shalt never speed in any worldly actions; nor on the other side in any divine, without some respect had to things human.

XV. Be not deceived; for thou shalt never live to read thy moral commentaries, nor the acts of the famous Romans and Grecians; nor those excerpta from several books; all which thou hadst provided and laid up for thyself against thine old age. Hasten therefore to an end, and giving over all vain hopes, help thyself in time if thou carest for thyself, as thou oughtest to do.

XVI. To steal, to sow, to buy, to be at rest, to see what is to be done (which is not seen by the eyes, but by another kind of sight:) what these words mean, and

how many ways to be understood, they do not understand. The body, the soul, the understanding. As the senses naturally belong to the body, and the desires and affections to the soul, so do the dogmata to the understanding.

XVII. To be capable of fancies and imaginations, is common to man and beast. To be violently drawn and moved by the lusts and desires of the soul, is proper to wild beasts and monsters, such as Phalaris and Nero were. To follow reason for ordinary duties and actions is common to them also, who believe not that there be any gods, and for their advantage would make no conscience to betray their own country; and who when once the doors be shut upon them, dare do anything. If therefore all things else be common to these likewise, it follows, that for a man to like and embrace all things that happen and are destinated unto him, and not to trouble and molest that spirit which is seated in the temple of his own breast, with a multitude of vain fancies and imaginations, but to keep him propitious and to obey him as a god, never either speaking anything contrary to truth, or doing anything contrary to justice, is the only true property of a good man. And such a one, though no man should believe that he liveth as he doth, either sincerely and conscionably, or cheerful and contentedly; yet is he neither with any man at all angry for it, nor diverted by it from the way that leadeth to the end of his life, through which a man must pass pure, ever ready to depart, and willing of himself without any compulsion to fit and accommodate himself to his proper lot and portion.

THE FOURTH BOOK

I. That inward mistress part of man if it be in its own true natural temper, is towards all worldly chances and events ever so disposed and affected, that it will easily turn and apply itself to that which may be, and is within its own power to compass, when that cannot be which at first it intended. For it never doth absolutely addict and apply itself to any one object, but whatsoever it is that it doth now intend and prosecute, it doth prosecute it with exception and reservation; so that whatsoever it is that falls out contrary to its first intentions, even that afterwards it makes its proper object. Even as the fire when it prevails upon those things that are in his way; by which things indeed a little fire would have been quenched, but a great fire doth soon turn to its own nature, and so consume whatsoever comes in his way: yea by those very things it is made greater and greater.

II. Let nothing be done rashly, and at random, but all things according to the most exact and perfect rules of art.

III. They seek for themselves private retiring places, as country villages, the sea-shore, mountains; yea thou thyself art wont to long much after such places. But all this thou must know proceeds from simplicity in the highest degree. At what time soever thou wilt, it is in thy power to retire into thyself, and to be at rest, and free from all businesses. A man cannot any whither retire better than to his own soul; he especially who is beforehand provided of such things within, which whensoever he doth withdraw himself to look in, may presently afford unto him perfect ease and tranquillity. By tranquillity I understand a decent orderly disposition and carriage, free from all confusion and tumultuousness. Afford then thyself this retiring continually, and thereby

refresh and renew thyself. Let these precepts be brief and fundamental, which as soon as thou dost call them to mind, may suffice thee to purge thy soul throughly, and to send thee away well pleased with those things whatsoever they be, which now again after this short withdrawing of thy soul into herself thou dost return unto. For what is it that thou art offended at? Can it be at the wickedness of men, when thou dost call to mind this conclusion, that all reasonable creatures are made one for another? and that it is part of justice to bear with them? and that it is against their wills that they offend? and how many already, who once likewise prosecuted their enmities, suspected, hated, and fiercely contended, are now long ago stretched out, and reduced unto ashes? It is time for thee to make an end. As for those things which among the common chances of the world happen unto thee as thy particular lot and portion, canst thou be displeased with any of them, when thou dost call that our ordinary dilemma to mind, either a providence, or Democritus his atoms; and with it, whatsoever we brought to prove that the whole world is as it were one city? And as for thy body, what canst thou fear, if thou dost consider that thy mind and understanding, when once it hath recollected itself, and knows its own power, hath in this life and breath (whether it run smoothly and gently, or whether harshly and rudely), no interest at all, but is altogether indifferent: and whatsoever else thou hast heard and assented unto concerning either pain or pleasure? But the care of thine honour and reputation will perchance distract thee? How can that be, if thou dost look back, and consider both how quickly all things that are, are forgotten, and what an immense chaos of eternity was before, and will follow after all things: and the vanity of praise, and the inconstancy and variableness of human judgments and opinions, and the narrowness of the place, wherein it is limited and circumscribed? For the whole earth is but as one point; and of it, this inhabited part of it, is but a very little part; and of this part, how many in number, and what manner of men

are they, that will commend thee? What remains then, but that thou often put in practice this kind of retiring of thyself, to this little part of thyself; and above all things, keep thyself from distraction, and intend not anything vehemently, but be free and consider all things, as a man whose proper object is virtue, as a man whose true nature is to be kind and sociable, as a citizen, as a mortal creature. Among other things, which to consider, and look into thou must use to withdraw thyself, let those two be among the most obvious and at hand. One, that the things or objects themselves reach not unto the soul, but stand without still and quiet, and that it is from the opinion only which is within, that all the tumult and all the trouble doth proceed. The next, that all these things, which now thou seest, shall within a very little while be changed, and be no more: and ever call to mind, how many changes and alterations in the world thou thyself hast already been an eyewitness of in thy time. This world is mere change, and this life, opinion.

IV. If to understand and to be reasonable be common unto all men, then is that reason, for which we are termed reasonable, common unto all. If reason is general, then is that reason also, which prescribeth what is to be done and what not, common unto all. If that, then law. If law, then are we fellow-citizens. If so, then are we partners in some one commonweal. If so, then the world is as it were a city. For which other commonweal is it, that all men can be said to be members of? From this common city it is, that understanding, reason, and law is derived unto us, for from whence else? For as that which in me is earthly I have from some common earth; and that which is moist from some other element is imparted; as my breath and life hath its proper fountain; and that likewise which is dry and fiery in me: (for there is nothing which doth not proceed from something; as also there is nothing that can be reduced unto mere nothing:) so also is there some common beginning from whence my understanding hath proceeded.

V. As generation is, so also death, a secret of nature's

wisdom : a mixture of elements, resolved into the same elements again, a thing surely which no man ought to be ashamed of: in a series of other fatal events and consequences, which a rational creature is subject unto, not improper or incongruous, nor contrary to the natural and proper constitution of man himself.

VI. Such and such things, from such and such causes, must of necessity proceed. He that would not have such things to happen, is as he that would have the fig-tree grow without any sap or moisture. In sum, remember this, that within a very little while, both thou and he shall both be dead, and after a little while more, not so much as your names and memories shall be remaining.

VII. Let opinion be taken away, and no man will think himself wronged. If no man shall think himself wronged, then is there no more any such thing as wrong. That which makes not man himself the worse, cannot make his life the worse, neither can it hurt him either inwardly or outwardly. It was expedient in nature that it should be so, and therefore necessary.

VIII. Whatsoever doth happen in the world, doth happen justly, and so if thou dost well take heed, thou shalt find it. I say not only in right order by a series of inevitable consequences, but according to justice and as it were by way of equal distribution, according to the true worth of everything. Continue then to take notice of it, as thou hast begun, and whatsoever thou dost, do it not without this proviso, that it be a thing of that nature that a good man (as the word good is properly taken) may do it. This observe carefully in every action.

IX. Conceit no such things, as he that wrongeth thee conceiveth, or would have thee to conceive, but look into the matter itself, and see what it is in very truth.

X. These two rules, thou must have always in a readiness. First, do nothing at all, but what reason proceeding from that regal and supreme part, shall for the good and benefit of men, suggest unto thee. And secondly, if any man that is present shall be able to rectify thee or to turn thee from some erroneous per-

suation, that thou be always ready to change thy mind, and this change to proceed, not from any respect of any pleasure or credit thereon depending, but always from some probable apparent ground of justice, or of some public good thereby to be furthered ; or from some other such inducement.

XI. Hast thou reason? I have. Why then makest thou not use of it? For if thy reason do her part, what more canst thou require?

XII. As a part hitherto thou hast had a particular subsistence : and now shalt thou vanish away into the common substance of Him, who first begot thee, or rather thou shalt be resumed again into that original rational substance, out of which all others have issued, and are propagated. Many small pieces of frankincense are set upon the same altar, one drops first and is consumed, another after ; and it comes all to one.

XIII. Within ten days, if so happen, thou shalt be esteemed a god of them, who now if thou shalt return to the dogmata and to the honouring of reason, will esteem of thee no better than of a mere brute, and of an ape.

XIV. Not as though thou hadst thousands of years to live. Death hangs over thee : whilst yet thou livest, whilst thou mayest, be good.

XV. Now much time and leisure doth he gain, who is not curious to know what his neighbour hath said, or hath done, or hath attempted, but only what he doth himself, that it may be just and holy? or to express it in Agathos' words, Not to look about upon the evil conditions of others, but to run on straight in the line, without any loose and extravagant agitation.

XVI. He who is greedy of credit and reputation after his death, doth not consider, that they themselves by whom he is remembered, shall soon after every one of them be dead ; and they likewise that succeed those ; until at last all memory, which hitherto by the succession of men admiring and soon after dying hath had its course, be quite extinct. But suppose that both they that shall remember thee, and thy memory with them should be immortal, what is that to thee? I will not

say to thee after thou art dead ; but even to thee living, what is thy praise ? But only for a secret and politic consideration, which we call *οικονομίαν*, or dispensation. For as for that, that it is the gift of nature, whatsoever is commended in thee, what might be objected from thence, let that now that we are upon another consideration be omitted as unseasonable. That which is fair and goodly, whatsoever it be, and in what respect soever it be, that it is fair and goodly, it is so of itself, and terminates in itself, not admitting praise as a part or member : that therefore which is praised, is not thereby made either better or worse. This I understand even of those things, that are commonly called fair and good, as those which are commended either for the matter itself, or for curious workmanship. As for that which is truly good, what can it stand in need of more than either justice or truth ; or more than either kindness and modesty ? Which of all those, either becomes good or fair, because commended ; or dispraised suffers any damage ? Doth the emerald become worse in itself, or more vile if it be not commended ? Doth gold, or ivory, or purple ? Is there anything that doth though never so common, as a knife, a flower, or a tree ?

XVII. If so be that the souls remain after death (say they that will not believe it) ; how is the air from all eternity able to contain them ? How is the earth (say I) ever from that time able to contain the bodies of them that are buried ? For as here the change and resolution of dead bodies into another kind of subsistence (whatsoever it be ;) makes place for other dead bodies : so the souls after death transferred into the air, after they have conversed there a while, are either by way of transmutation, or transfusion, or conflagration, received again into that original rational substance, from which all others do proceed : and so give way to those souls, who before coupled and associated unto bodies, now begin to subsist single. This, upon a supposition that the souls after death do for a while subsist single, may be answered. And here, (besides the number of bodies, so buried and contained by the earth), we may further consider the

number of several beasts, eaten by us men, and by other creatures. For notwithstanding that such a multitude of them is daily consumed, and as it were buried in the bodies of the eaters, yet is the same place and body able to contain them, by reason of their conversion, partly into blood, partly into air and fire. What in these things is the speculation of truth? to divide things into that which is passive and material; and that which is active and formal.

XVIII. Not to wander out of the way, but upon every motion and desire, to perform that which is just: and ever to be careful to attain to the true natural apprehension of every fancy, that presents itself.

XIX. Whatsoever is expedient unto thee, O World, is expedient unto me; nothing can either be unseasonable unto me, or out of date, which unto thee is seasonable. Whatsoever thy seasons bear, shall ever by me be esteemed as happy fruit, and increase. O Nature! from thee are all things, in thee all things subsist, and to thee all tend. Could he say of Athens, Thou lovely city of Cecrops; and shalt not thou say of the world, Thou lovely city of God?

XX. They will say commonly, Meddle not with many things, if thou wilt live cheerfully. Certainly there is nothing better, than for a man to confine himself to necessary actions; to such and so many only, as reason in a creature that knows itself born for society, will command and enjoin. This will not only procure that cheerfulness, which from the goodness, but that also, which from the paucity of actions doth usually proceed. For since it is so, that most of those things, which we either speak or do, are unnecessary; if a man shall cut them off, it must needs follow that he shall thereby gain much leisure, and save much trouble, and therefore at every action a man must privately by way of admonition suggest unto himself, What? may not this that now I go about, be of the number of unnecessary actions? Neither must he use himself to cut off actions only, but thoughts and imaginations also, that are unnecessary;

for so will unnecessary consequent actions the better be prevented and cut off.

XXI. Try also how a good man's life ; (of one, who is well pleased with those things whatsoever, which among the common changes and chances of this world fall to his own lot and share ; and can live well contented and fully satisfied in the justice of his own proper present action, and in the goodness of his disposition for the future :) will agree with thee. Thou hast had experience of that other kind of life : make now trial of this also. ~~Trouble not thyself any more henceforth, reduce thyself unto perfect simplicity. Doth any man offend? It is against himself that he doth offend : why should it trouble thee? Hath anything happened unto thee? It is well, whatsoever it be, it is that which of all the common chances of the world from the very beginning in the series of all other things that have, or shall happen, was destined and appointed unto thee. To comprehend all in a few words, our life is short ; we must endeavour to gain the present time with best discretion and justice. Use recreation with sobriety.~~

XXII. Either this world is a *κόσμος*, or a comely piece, because all disposed and governed by certain order : or if it be a mixture, though confused, yet still it is a comely piece. For is it possible that in thee there should be any beauty at all, and that in the whole world there should be nothing but disorder and confusion ? and all things in it too, by natural different properties one from another differenced and distinguished ; and yet all through diffused, and by natural sympathy, one to another united, as they are ?

XXIII. A black or malign disposition, an effeminate disposition ; an hard inexorable disposition, a wild inhuman disposition, a sheepish disposition, a childish disposition ; a blockish, a false, a scurril, a fraudulent, a tyrannical : what then ? If he be a stranger in the world, that knows not the things that are in it ; why not he a stranger as well, that wonders at the things that are done in it ?

XXIV. He is a true fugitive, that flies from reason,

by which men are sociable. He blind, who cannot see with the eyes of his understanding. He poor, that stands in need of another, and hath not in himself all things needful for this life. He an aposteme of the world, who by being discontented with those things that happen unto him in the world, doth as it were apostatise, and separate himself from common nature's rational administration. For the same nature it is that brings this unto thee, whatsoever it be, that first brought thee into the world. He raises sedition in the city, who by irrational actions withdraws his own soul from that one and common soul of all rational creatures.

XXV. There is, who without so much as a coat; and there is, who without so much as a book, doth put philosophy in practice. I am half naked, neither have I bread to eat, and yet I depart not from reason, saith one. But I say; I want the food of good teaching, and instructions, and yet I depart not from reason.

XXVI. What art and profession soever thou hast learned, endeavour to affect it, and comfort thyself in it; and pass the remainder of thy life as one who from his whole heart commits himself and whatsoever belongs unto him, unto the gods: and as for men, carry not thyself either tyrannically or servilely towards any.

XXVII. Consider in my mind, for example's sake, the times of Vespasian: thou shalt see but the same things: some marrying, some bringing up children, some sick, some dying, some fighting, some feasting, some merchandising, some tilling, some flattering, some boasting, some suspecting, some undermining, some wishing to die, some fretting and murmuring at their present estate, some wooing, some hoarding, some seeking after magistracies, and some after kingdoms. And is not that their age quite over, and ended? Again, consider now the times of Trajan. There likewise thou seest the very self-same things, and that age also is now over and ended. In the like manner consider other periods, both of times and of whole nations, and see how many men, after they had with all their might and main intended and prosecuted some one worldly thing or other,

did soon after drop away, and were resolved into the elements. But especially thou must call to mind them, whom thou thyself in thy lifetime hast known much distracted about vain things, and in the meantime neglecting to do that, and closely and unseparably (as fully satisfied with it) to adhere unto it, which their own proper constitution did require. And here thou must remember, that thy carriage in every business must be according to the worth and due proportion of it, for so shalt thou not easily be tired out and vexed, if thou shalt not dwell upon small matters longer than is fitting.

XXVIII. Those words which once were common and ordinary, are now become obscure and obsolete; and so the names of men once commonly known and famous, are now become in a manner obscure and obsolete names. Camillus, Cæso, Volesius, Leonnatus; not long after, Scipio, Cato, then Augustus, then Adrianus, then Antoninus Pius: all these in a short time will be out of date, and, as things of another world as it were, become fabulous. And this I say of them, who once shined as the wonders of their ages, for as for the rest, no sooner are they expired, than with them all their fame and memory. And what is it then that shall always be remembered? all is vanity. What is it that we must bestow our care and diligence upon? even upon this only: that our minds and wills be just; that our actions be charitable; that our speech be never deceitful, or that our understanding be not subject to error; that our inclination be always set to embrace whatsoever shall happen unto us, as necessary, as usual, as ordinary, as flowing from such a beginning, and such a fountain, from which both thou thyself and all things are. Willingly therefore, and wholly surrender up thyself unto that fatal concatenation, yielding up thyself unto the fates, to be disposed of at their pleasure.

XXIX. Whatsoever is now present, and from day to day hath its existence; all objects of memories, and the minds and memories themselves, incessantly consider, all things that are, have their being by change and

alteration. Use thyself therefore often to meditate upon this, that the nature of the universe delights in nothing more, than in altering those things that are, and in making others like unto them. So that we may say, that whatsoever is, is but as it were the seed of that which shall be. For if thou think that that only is seed, which either the earth or the womb receiveth, thou art very simple.

XXX. Thou art now ready to die, and yet hast thou not attained to that perfect simplicity: thou art yet subject to many troubles and perturbations; not yet free from all fear and suspicion of external accidents; nor yet either so meekly disposed towards all men, as thou shouldst; or so affected as one, whose only study and only wisdom is, to be just in all his actions.

XXXI. Behold and observe, what is the state of their rational part; and those that the world doth account wise, see what things they fly and are afraid of; and what things they hunt after.

XXXII. In another man's mind and understanding thy evil cannot subsist, nor in any proper temper or distemper of the natural constitution of thy body, which is but as it were the coat or cottage of thy soul. Wherein then, but in that part of thee, wherein the conceit, and apprehension of any misery can subsist? Let not that part therefore admit any such conceit, and then all is well. Though thy body which is so near it should either be cut or burnt, or suffer any corruption or putrefaction, yet let that part to which it belongs to judge of these, be still at rest; that is, let her judge this, that whatsoever it is, that equally may happen to a wicked man, and to a good man, is neither good nor evil. For that which happens equally to him that lives according to nature, and to him that doth not, is neither according to nature, nor against it; and by consequent, neither good nor bad.

XXXIII. Ever consider and think upon the world as being but one living substance, and having but one soul, and how all things in the world, are terminated into one sensitive power; and are done by one general motion

as it were, and deliberation of that one soul ; and how all things that are, concur in the cause of one another's being, and by what manner of connection and concatenation all things happen.

XXXIV. What art thou, that better and divine part excepted, but as Epictetus said well, a wretched soul, appointed to carry a carcass up and down ?

XXXV. To suffer change can be no hurt ; as no benefit it is, by change to attain to being. The age and time of the world is as it were a flood and swift current, consisting of the things that are brought to pass in the world. For as soon as anything hath appeared, and is passed away, another succeeds, and that also will presently out of sight.

XXXVI. Whatsoever doth happen in the world, is, in the course of nature, as usual and ordinary as a rose in the spring, and fruit in summer. Of the same nature is sickness and death ; slander, and lying in wait, and whatsoever else ordinarily doth unto fools use to be occasion either of joy or sorrow. That, whatsoever it is, that comes after, doth always very naturally, and as it were familiarly, follow upon that which was before. For thou must consider the things of the world, not as a loose independent number, consisting merely of necessary events ; but as a discreet connection of things orderly and harmoniously disposed. There is then to be seen in the things of the world, not a bare succession, but an admirable correspondence and affinity.

XXXVII. Let that of Heraclitus never be out of thy mind, that the death of earth, is water, and the death of water, is air ; and the death of air, is fire ; and so on the contrary. Remember him also who was ignorant whither the way did lead, and how that reason being the thing by which all things in the world are administered, and which men are continually and most inwardly conversant with : yet is the thing, which ordinarily they are most in opposition with, and how those things which daily happen among them, cease not daily to be strange unto them, and that we should not either speak, or do anything as men in their sleep, by opinion and bare imagination : for

then we think we speak and do, and that we must not be as children, who follow their father's example; for best reason alleging their bare *καθότι παρελήφμεν*; or, as by successive tradition from our forefathers we have received it.

XXXVIII. Even as if any of the gods should tell thee, Thou shalt certainly die to-morrow, or next day, thou wouldst not, except thou wert extremely base and pusillanimous, take it for a great benefit, rather to die the next day after, than to-morrow; (for alas, what is the difference!) so, for the same reason, think it no great matter to die rather many years after, than the very next day.

XXXIX. Let it be thy perpetual meditation, how many physicians who once looked so grim, and so tetrically shrunk their brows upon their patients, are dead and gone themselves. How many astrologers, after that in great ostentation they had foretold the death of some others, how many philosophers after so many elaborate tracts and volumes concerning either mortality or immortality; how many brave captains and commanders, after the death and slaughter of so many; how many kings and tyrants, after they had with such horror and insolency abused their power upon men's lives, as though themselves had been immortal; how many, that I may so speak, whole cities both men and towns: Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and others innumerable are dead and gone. Run them over also, whom thou thyself, one after another, hast known in thy time to drop away. Such and such a one took care of such and such a one's burial, and soon after was buried himself. So one, so another: and all things in a short time. For herein lieth all indeed, ever to look upon all worldly things, as things for their continuance, that are but for a day: and for their worth, most vile, and contemptible, as for example, What is man? That which but the other day when he was conceived was vile snivel; and within few days shall be either an embalmed carcass, or mere ashes. Thus must thou according to truth and nature, throughly consider how man's life is but for a

very moment of time, and so depart meek and contented: even as if a ripe olive falling should praise the ground that bare her, and give thanks to the tree that begat her.

XL. Thou must be like a promontory of the sea, against which though the waves beat continually, yet it both itself stands, and about it are those swelling waves stilled and quieted.

XLI. Oh, wretched I, to whom this mischance is happened! nay, happy I, to whom this thing being happened, I can continue without grief; neither wounded by that which is present, nor in fear of that which is to come. For as for this, it might have happened unto any man, but any man having such a thing befallen him, could not have continued without grief. Why then should that rather be an unhappiness, than this a happiness? But however, canst thou, O man! term that unhappiness, which is no mischance to the nature of man! Canst thou think that a mischance to the nature of man, which is not contrary to the end and will of his nature? What then hast thou learned is the will of man's nature? Doth that then which hath happened unto thee, hinder thee from being just? or magnanimous? or temperate? or wise? or circumspect? or true? or modest? or free? or from anything else of all those things in the present enjoying and possession whereof the nature of man, (as then enjoying all that is proper unto her,) is fully satisfied? Now to conclude; upon all occasion of sorrow remember henceforth to make use of this dogma, that whatsoever it is that hath happened unto thee, is in very deed no such thing of itself, as a misfortune; but that to bear it generously, is certainly great happiness.

XLII. It is but an ordinary coarse one, yet it is a good effectual remedy against the fear of death, for a man to consider in his mind the examples of such, who greedily and covetously (as it were) did for a long time enjoy their lives. What have they got more, than they whose deaths have been untimely? Are not they themselves dead at the last? as Cadicianus, Fabius, Julianus

Lepidus, or any other who in their lifetime having buried many, were at the last buried themselves. The whole space of any man's life, is but little; and as little as it is, with what troubles, with what manner of dispositions, and in the society of how wretched a body must it be passed! Let it be therefore unto thee altogether as a matter of indifferency. For if thou shalt look backward; behold, what an infinite chaos of time doth present itself unto thee; and as infinite a chaos, if thou shalt look forward. In that which is so infinite, what difference can there be between that which liveth but three days, and that which liveth three ages?

XLIII. Let thy course ever be the most compendious way. The most compendious, is that which is according to nature: that is, in all both words and deeds, ever to follow that which is most sound and perfect. For such a resolution will free a man from all trouble, strife, dissembling, and ostentation

THE FIFTH BOOK

I. In the morning when thou findest thyself unwilling to rise, consider with thyself presently, it is to go about a man's work that I am stirred up. Am I then yet unwilling to go about that, for which I myself was born and brought forth into this world? Or was I made for this, to lay me down, and make much of myself in a warm bed? 'O but this is pleasing.' And was it then for this that thou wert born, that thou mightest enjoy pleasure? Was it not in very truth for this, that thou mightest always be busy and in action? Seest thou not how all things in the world besides, how every tree and plant, how sparrows and ants, spiders and bees : how all in their kind are intent as it were orderly to perform whatsoever (towards the preservation of this orderly universe) naturally doth become and belong unto them? And wilt not thou do that, which belongs unto a man to do? Wilt not thou run to do that, which thy nature doth require? 'But thou must have some rest.' Yes, thou must. Nature hath of that also, as well as of eating and drinking, allowed thee a certain stint. But thou goest beyond thy stint, and beyond that which would suffice, and in matter of action, there thou comest short of that which thou mayest. It must needs be therefore, that thou dost not love thyself, for if thou didst, thou wouldst also love thy nature, and that which thy nature doth propose unto herself as her end. Others, as many as take pleasure in their trade and profession, can even pine themselves at their works, and neglect their bodies and their food for it; and doest thou less honour thy nature, than an ordinary mechanic his trade; or a good dancer his art? than a covetous man his silver, and a vainglorious man applause? These to whatsoever they

take an affection, can be content to want their meat and sleep, to further that every one which he affects : and shall actions tending to the common good of human society, seem more vile unto thee, or worthy of less respect and intention ?

II. How easy a thing is it for a man to put off from him all turbulent adventitious imaginations, and presently to be in perfect rest and tranquillity !

III. Think thyself fit and worthy to speak, or to do anything that is according to nature, and let not the reproach, or report of some that may ensue upon it, ever deter thee. If it be right and honest to be spoken or done, undervalue not thyself so much, as to be discouraged from it. As for them, they have their own rational over-ruling part, and their own proper inclination : which thou must not stand and look about to take notice of, but go on straight, whither both thine own particular, and the common nature do lead thee ; and the way of both these, is but one.

IV. I continue my course by actions according to nature, until I fall and cease, breathing out my last breath into that air, by which continually breathed in I did live ; and falling upon that earth, out of whose gifts and fruits my father gathered his seed, my mother her blood, and my nurse her milk, out of which for so many years I have been provided, both of meat and drink. And lastly, which beareth me that tread upon it, and beareth with me that so many ways do abuse it, or so freely make use of it, so many ways to so many ends.

V. No man can admire thee for thy sharp acute language, such is thy natural disability that way. Be it so : yet there be many other good things, for the want of which thou canst not plead the want or natural ability. Let them be seen in thee, which depend wholly from thee ; sincerity, gravity, laboriousness, contempt of pleasures ; be not querulous, be content with little, be kind, be free ; avoid all superfluity. all vain prattling ; be magnanimous. Doest not thou perceive, how many things there be, which notwithstanding any pretence of natural indisposition and unfitness, thou mightest have

performed and exhibited, and yet still thou doest voluntarily continue drooping downwards? Or wilt thou say, that it is through defect of thy natural constitution, that thou art constrained to murmur, to be base and wretched; to flatter; now to accuse, and now to please, and pacify thy body: to be vainglorious, to be so giddy-headed, and unsettled in thy thoughts? nay (witnesses be the Gods) of all these thou mightest have been rid long ago: only, this thou must have been contented with, to have borne the blame of one that is somewhat slow and dull. Wherein thou must so exercise thyself, as one who neither doth much take to heart this his natural defect, nor yet pleaseth himself in it.

VI. Such there be, who when they have done a good turn to any, are ready to set them on the score for it, and to require retaliation. Others there be, who though they stand not upon retaliation, to require any, yet they think with themselves nevertheless, that such a one is their debtor, and they know as their word is what they have done. Others again there be, who when they have done any such thing, do not so much as know what they have done; but are like unto the vine, which beareth her grapes, and when once she hath borne her own proper fruit, is contented and seeks for no further recompense. As a horse after a race, and a hunting dog when he hath hunted, and a bee when she hath made her honey, look not for applause and commendation; so neither doth that man that rightly doth understand his own nature when he hath done a good turn: but from one doth proceed to do another, even as the vine after she hath once borne fruit in her own proper season, is ready for another time. Thou therefore must be one of them, who what they do, barely do it without any further thought, and are in a manner insensible of what they do. 'Nay but,' will some reply perchance, 'this very thing a rational man is bound unto, to understand what it is, that he doeth.' For it is the property, say they, of one that is naturally sociable, to be sensible, that he doth operate sociably: nay, and to desire, that the party himself that is sociably dealt with, should be sensible of it

too. I answer, That which thou sayest is true indeed, but the true meaning of that which is said, thou dost not understand. And therefore art thou one of those first, whom I mentioned. For they also are led by a probable appearance of reason. But if thou dost desire to understand truly what it is that is said, fear not that thou shalt therefore give over any sociable action.

VII. The form of the Athenians' prayer did run thus: 'O rain, rain, good Jupiter, upon all the grounds and fields that belong to the Athenians.' Either we should not pray at all, or thus absolutely and freely; and not every one for himself in particular alone.

VIII. As we say commonly, The physician hath prescribed unto this man, riding; unto another, cold baths; unto a third, to go barefoot: so it is alike to say, The nature of the universe hath prescribed unto this man sickness, or blindness, or some loss, or damage or some such thing. For as there, when we say of a physician, that he hath prescribed anything, our meaning is, that he hath appointed this for that, as subordinate and conducting to health: so here, whatsoever doth happen unto any, is ordained unto him as a thing subordinate unto the fates, and therefore do we say of such things, that they do *συμβαίνειν*, that is, happen, or fall together; as of square stones, when either in walls, or pyramids in a certain position they fit one another, and agree as it were in an harmony, the masons say, that they do *συμβαίνειν*; as if thou shouldest say, fall together: so that in the general, though the things be divers that make it, yet the consent or harmony itself is but one. And as the whole world is made up of all the particular bodies of the world, one perfect and complete body, of the same nature that particular bodies; so is the destiny of particular causes and events one general one, of the same nature that particular causes are. What I now say, even they that are mere idiots are not ignorant of: for they say commonly *τοῦτο ἔφερεν αὐτῷ*, that is, This his destiny hath brought upon him. This therefore is by the fates properly and particularly brought upon

this, as that unto this in particular is by the physician prescribed. These therefore let us accept of in like manner, as we do those that are prescribed unto us by our physicians. For them also in themselves shall we find to contain many harsh things, but we nevertheless, in hope of health, and recovery, accept of them. Let the fulfilling and accomplishment of those things which the common nature hath determined, be unto thee as thy health. Accept then, and be pleased with whatsoever doth happen, though otherwise harsh and unpleasing, as tending to that end, to the health and welfare of the universe, and to Jove's happiness and prosperity. For this whatsoever it be, should not have been produced, had it not conduced to the good of the universe. For neither doth any ordinary particular nature bring anything to pass, that is not to whatsoever is within the sphere of its own proper administration and government agreeable and subordinate. For these two considerations then thou must be well pleased with anything that doth happen unto thee. First, because that for thee properly it was brought to pass, and unto thee it was prescribed; and that from the very beginning by the series and connection of the first causes, it hath ever had a reference unto thee. And secondly, because the good success and perfect welfare, and indeed the very continuance of Him, that is the Administrator of the whole, doth in a manner depend on it. For the whole (because whole, therefore entire and perfect) is maimed, and mutilated, if thou shalt cut off anything at all, whereby the coherence, and contiguity as of parts, so of causes, is maintained and preserved. Of which certain it is, that thou doest (as much as lieth in thee) cut off, and in some sort violently take somewhat away, as often as thou art displeased with anything that happeneth.

IX. Be not discontented, be not disheartened, be not out of hope, if often it succeed not so well with thee punctually and precisely to do all things according to the right dogmata, but being once cast off, return unto them again: and as for those many and more frequent

occurrences, either of worldly distractions, or human infirmities, which as a man thou canst not but in some measure be subject unto, be not thou discontented with them; but however, love and affect that only which thou dost return unto: a philosopher's life, and proper occupation after the most exact manner. And when thou dost return to thy philosophy, return not unto it as the manner of some is, after play and liberty as it were, to their schoolmasters and pedagogues; but as they that have sore eyes to their sponge and egg: or as another to his cataplasm; or as others to their fomentations: so shalt not thou make it a matter of ostentation at all to obey reason; but of ease and comfort. And remember that philosophy requireth nothing of thee, but what thy nature requireth, and wouldest thou thyself desire anything that is not according to nature? for which of these sayest thou; that which is according to nature or against it, is of itself more kind and pleasing? Is it not for that respect especially, that pleasure itself is to so many men's hurt and overthrow, most prevalent, because esteemed commonly most kind, and natural? But consider well whether magnanimity rather, and true liberty, and true simplicity, and equanimity, and holiness; whether these be not most kind and natural? And prudence itself, what more kind and amiable than it, when thou shalt truly consider with thyself, what it is through all the proper objects of thy rational intellectual faculty currently to go on without any fall or stumble? As for the things of the world, their true nature is in a manner so involved with obscurity, that unto many philosophers, and those no mean ones, they seemed altogether incomprehensible: and the Stoics themselves, though they judge them not altogether incomprehensible, yet scarce and not without much difficulty, comprehensible, so that all assent of ours is fallible, for who is he that is infallible in his conclusions? From the nature of things, pass now unto their subjects and matter: how temporary, how vile are they! such as may be in the power and possession of some abominable loose liver, of some

common strumpet, of some notorious oppressor and extortioner. Pass from thence to the dispositions of them that thou doest ordinarily converse with, how hardly do we bear, even with the most loving and amiable! that I may not say, how hard it is for us to bear even with our own selves. In such obscurity, and impurity of things: in such and so continual a flux both of the substances and time; both of the motions themselves, and things moved; what it is that we can fasten upon; either to honour, and respect especially; or seriously, and studiously to seek after; I cannot so much as conceive. For indeed they are things contrary.

X. Thou must comfort thyself in the expectation of thy natural dissolution, and in the meantime not grieve at the delay; but rest contented in those two things. First, that nothing shall happen unto thee, which is not according to the nature of the universe. Secondly, that it is in thy power, to do nothing against thine own proper God, and inward spirit. For it is not in any man's power to constrain thee to transgress against him.

XI. What is the use that now at this present I make of my soul? Thus from time to time and upon all occasions thou must put this question to thyself, what is now that part of mine which they call the rational mistress part, employed about? Whose soul do I now properly possess? a child's? or a youth's? a woman's? or a tyrant's? some brute, or some wild beast's soul?

XII. What those things are in themselves, which by the greatest part are esteemed good, thou mayest gather even from this. For if a man shall hear things mentioned as good, which are really good indeed, such as are prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, after so much heard and conceived, he cannot endure to hear of any more, for the word good is properly spoken of them. But as for those which by the vulgar are esteemed good, if he shall hear them mentioned as good, he doth hearken for more. He is well contented to hear, that what is spoken by the comedian, is but familiarly and popularly spoken, so that even the vulgar apprehend the difference. For why is it else, that this
