

that there was nothing but truth, sincerity, and fair play in his words and actions; attain that greatness of mind, as not to admire or start at anything. Neither to hurry an enterprize, nor sleep over it; never to be puzzled, dispirited, or lie grinning at a disgust or disappointment. His way was to be neither passionate nor over-suspicious, forward to do a good turn and to forgive an ill one. In short, he seemed to be always in the possession of virtue, and to have nothing which stood in need of correction. And, which is very remarkable, nobody ever fancied they were slighted by him, or had the courage to think themselves his betters; and to conclude with him, another part of his philosophy was, not to be taken with raillery and jesting.

XVI. In my father's¹ conversation and management I observed a smooth and inoffensive temper, with great steadiness in keeping close to measures judiciously taken; a greatness proof against vanity, and the impressions of pomp and power. From him a prince might learn to love business and action, and be constantly at it; to be willing to hear out any proposals relating to public advantage; to overlook nobody's merit or misbehaviour; to understand the critical seasons, and circumstances for rigour or remissness; when it was proper to take up, and when to slacken the reins of government; to have no he-sweethearts and boy-favourites; not to stand upon points of state and prerogative, but to leave his nobility at perfect liberty in their visits and attendance. And when he was upon his progress, no man lost his favour for not being at leisure to follow the court; to debate matters nicely and thoroughly at the council-board, and then to stand by what was resolved on; to be constant to a friend, without tiring or fondness; to be always satisfied and cheerful; to reach forward into the future, and manage accordingly; not to neglect the least concerns, but all without hurry or being embarrassed. Further, by observing his methods and administration, I had the opportunity of learning how much it was the part of a prince to check the excesses of panegyric and flattery; to have his magazines and exchequer well furnished; to be frugal in his favours and expenses, without minding being lampooned for his pains; not to worship the gods to superstition, nor to court the populace, either by prodigality or compliment, but rather to be reserved, vigilant, and well poised upon all occasions, keeping things in a steady decorum, without chopping and changing of measures; to enjoy the plenty and

¹ The Emperor Antoninus Pius, who adopted our author.

magnificence of a sovereign fortune, without pride or epicurism, and yet if a campaign or country happen to prove cross, not to be mortified at the loss of them ; and to behave himself so that no man could charge him with vanity, flourish, and pretendingness, with buffooning, or being a pedant ;—no, he was a person, modest, prudent, and well weighed, scorned flattery and fooling, and was thoroughly qualified both to govern himself and others. In a word, he had nothing of the sophist in him. And as for those that were philosophers in earnest, he had a great value for them, but without reproaching those who were otherwise. To go on with him, he was condescensive and familiar in conversation, and pleasant too, but not to tiresomeness and excess. His dress was neither beauish nor negligent. As for his health, he was not anxious about it, like one fond of living, and yet managed his constitution with that care as seldom to stand in need of the assistances of physic. Further, he never envied and browbeat those that were eminent in any faculty or science, either orators, historians, or others,¹ but, on the contrary, encouraged them in their way, and promoted their reputation. He observed decency and custom in all his actions, and yet did not seem to mind them. He was not fickle and fluttering in his humour, but constant both to place and undertaking. And I have seen him after violent fits of the headache return fresh and vigorous to business. He kept but few things to himself, and those were secrets of government. He was very moderate and frugal in public shows, triumphal arches, liberalities, and such like ; being one that did not so much regard the popularity as the reason of an action. It was none of his custom to bathe at unusual hours, or to be overrun with the fancy of building, to study eating and luxury, to value the curiosity of his clothes, or the shape and person of his servants. Indeed, his dress at his country palaces was very ordinary and plain, where he would scarcely so much as put on a cloak without making an excuse for it. To take him altogether, there was nothing of ruggedness, immodesty, or eagerness in his temper. Neither did he ever seem to drudge and sweat at the helm. Things were despatched at leisure, and without being felt, and yet the administration was carried on with great order, force, and uniformity. Upon the whole, part of Socrates's character is applicable to him, for he was so much master of himself, that he could either take or leave those conveniences of life with respect to which most people are either uneasy without them or intemperate with them. Now to

¹ This was then a considerable commendation, for in the reign of Adrian an excellency of almost any kind was sometimes capital to the owner, Cassius Capitolinus.

hold on with fortitude in one condition, and sobriety in the other, is an argument of a great soul, and an impregnable virtue. And lastly, when his friend Maximus was sick, he gave me an instance how I ought to behave myself upon the like occasion.

XVII. I am to thank the gods that my grandfathers, parents, sister, preceptors, relations, friends, and domestics were almost all of them persons of probity; and that I never happened to disoblige or misbehave myself towards any of them; notwithstanding, if my humour had been awakened, and pushed forward, I had been likely enough to have miscarried this way. But by the goodness of the gods, I met with no provocation to discover my infirmities. It is likewise their providence that my childhood was no longer managed by my grandfather's mistress;¹ that my youth was undebauched, and that I barred my liberty for some time in standing clear from engagements with women; that I was observant of the emperor my father, and bred under him, who was the most proper person living to put me out of conceit with pride, and to convince me that authority may be supported without the ceremony of guards, without richness and distinction of habit, without torches,² statues, or such other marks of royalty and state; and that a prince may shrink himself almost into the figure of a private gentleman, and yet act nevertheless with all the force and majesty of his character when the government requires it. It is the favour of the gods that I happened to meet with a brother,³ whose behaviour and affection is such as to contribute both to my pleasure and improvement. It is also their blessing that my children were neither heavy in their heads, nor misshapen in their limbs; that I made no further advances in rhetoric, poetry, and such other amusements, which possibly might have engaged my fancy too far, had I found myself a considerable proficient; that without asking, I gave my governors that share of honour, and that sort of business, which they seemed to desire, and did not put them off from time to time with promises and excuse; that I had the happiness of being acquainted with those celebrated philosophers, Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus; for having a clear idea of the rules of practice, and the true way of living, and the impression frequently refreshed, so that considering the extraordinary assistances and directions of the gods, it is impossible for me to miss the road of nature and

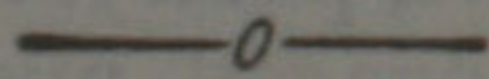
¹ Concubine.

² To have torches or fire always carried before them was an honour peculiar to the Roman emperors and empresses.

³ Lucius Verus, who was adopted by the Emperor Antoninus Pius.

right reason, unless by refusing to be guided by the dictates and almost sensible inspirations of heaven. It is the favour of these superior beings that my constitution has held out so well, under a life of fatigue and business; that I never had any infamous correspondence with *Benedicta* or *Theodotus*;¹ and that after some amours and intemperate sallies, I took up, and recovered; that when I fell out with *Rusticus*, as it frequently happened, I was not transported into any act of violence; that I had the satisfaction of my mother's life and company a considerable while, though she was very near dying when she was young. To give more instances of their bounty; it is they that kept me from standing in need of any man's fortune, and that when I was willing to relieve the necessities of others, I was never told that the exchequer, or privy-purse, were out of cash. And further, it is from them that my wife is so very obsequious and affectionate, and so remote from the fancy of figure and expense; that I had choice of good governors for my children; that remedies were prescribed me in a dream, against giddiness and spitting of blood, as I remember it happened both at *Cajeta* and *Chrysa*;² that when I had a mind to look into philosophy, I met neither with a pedant nor a knave to instruct me; that I did not spend too much time in voluminous reading, chopping logic or natural philosophy. Now all these points could never have been compassed and guarded without a protection from above, and the gods presiding over fate and fortune.

This was written in the country of the *Quadi*,³ in my expedition against them.



BOOK II.

I. REMEMBER to put yourself in mind every morning that before night it will be your luck to meet with some inquisitive impertinent, with some ungrateful and abusive fellow; with some knavish, envious, or unsociable churl or other. Now all this perverseness in them proceeds from their ignorance of good and evil. And since it is fallen to my share to understand the natural beauty of a good

¹ The one most probably a famous wench, and the other a court catamite.

² A town in Troas, D'Acier.

³ In High Germany.

action, and the deformity of an ill one ; since I am satisfied the person disobliging is of kin to me, and though we are not just of the same flesh and blood, yet our minds are nearly related, being both extracted from the deity ; since I am likewise convinced that no man can do me a real injury, because no man can force me to misbehave myself ; for these reasons, I cannot find in my heart to hate or be angry with one of my own nature and family. For we are all made for mutual assistance, no less than the parts of the body are for the service of the whole ; from whence it follows that clashing and opposition is perfectly unnatural. Now such an unfriendly disposition is implied in resentment and aversion.

II. This being of mine, all that is of it, consists of body, breath, and that part which governs. Now would you examine your whole composition ? Pray then let your library alone ; what need you puzzle your thoughts and over-grasp yourself ? To come to the inquiry. As for your carcass, value it no more than if you were just expiring, and taking leave of it. For what is it in comparison ? Nothing but a little paltry blood and bones ; a piece of network, wrought up with a company of nerves, veins, and arteries twisted together. In the next place, you are to examine what sort of thing your breath is. Why, only a little air sucked into your lungs, and pumped out again. The third part of your composition is your mind, which was made for government and authority. Now here make a stand ; consider you are an old man ; do not suffer this noble part of you under servitude any longer ; let it not be overborne with selfish passions ; let it not quarrel fate, be uneasy at the present, or afraid of the future.

III. Providence shines clearly through the administration of the world. Even chance itself is not without steadiness and nature at the bottom, being only an effect of that chain of causes which are under a providential regulation ; indeed, all things flow from this fountain. Besides, there is necessity and general convenience that matters should lie as they do ; and to speak out, the interest of the whole world, of which you are a part, is concerned in it. Now, that which is both the product and support of universal nature must by consequence be serviceable to every part of it. But the world subsists upon alteration, and what it loses one way it gets another ; for generation and corruption are no more than terms of reference and respect. Let these reflections satisfy you, and make them your rule to live by. As for books, never be over-eager about them ; such a fondness for reading will be apt to perplex your

mind, and make you die displeased. Be sure therefore to resign willingly, and go off in good humour, and heartily thank the gods for what you have had.

IV. Remember how often you have postponed the minding your interest, and slipped those opportunities the gods have given you. It is now high time to consider what sort of world you are part of, and from what kind of governor of it you are descended; that you have a set period assigned you to act in, and unless you improve it, to brighten and compose your thoughts, it will quickly run off with you, and be lost beyond recovery.

V. Take care always to pursue the business in hand with vigour and application; remember yourself a man, and a Roman; and let the action be done with all the dignity and advantage of circumstance. Let unaffected gravity, humanity, freedom, and justice shine through it. And be sure you entertain no fancies which may give check to these qualities. This talk is very practicable, if you will but suppose everything you are upon your last; if your appetites and passions do not cross upon your reason; if you stand clear of rashness, and do not complain of your destiny, and have nothing of insincerity and self-love to infect you. You see what a few points a man has to gain in order to a happy and godlike way of living; for he that comes thus far performs all which the immortal powers require of him.

VI. In earnest, at this rate of management thou usest thyself very coarsely,¹ neither hast thou much time left to do right to thy honour. For life hurries off apace; thine is almost up already, and yet instead of paying a due regard to thy own reason, thou hast placed thy happiness in the fancies of other men.

VII. Do not let accidents disturb or outward objects engross your thoughts, but keep your mind quiet and unengaged, that you may be at leisure to learn somewhat that is good; and do not ramble from one thing to another. There is likewise another dangerous sort of roving to be avoided. For some people are busy, and yet do nothing; they fatigue and wear themselves out, and yet drive at no point, nor propose any general end of action or design.

VIII. A man can rarely miscarry by being ignorant of another's

¹ See sect. 16.

thoughts; but he that does not attend to his own is certainly unhappy.

IX. The reflections following ought always to be at hand. To consider well the nature of the universe, and my own, together with the communication and reference betwixt them; and in what degree of proportion and quality I stand with respect to the whole; and that no mortal can hinder me from acting and speaking suitably to the condition of my being.

X. Theophrastus, in comparing the degrees of faults (as we commonly speak), talks like a philosopher, where he affirms that those instances of misbehaviour which proceed from desire are greater than those of which anger was the occasion.¹ For a man that is angry seems to quit his hold unwillingly, to be teased out of his reason, and start out of rule before he is aware. But he that runs riot out of appetite and pleasure is swayed by a libertine principle, and appears a more scandalous offender. The philosopher therefore was certainly right in pronouncing upon the difference of the case; for the first looks like an injured person, and is vexed, and, as it were, forced into a passion, whereas the other begins with inclination, and commits the fault with a gust.

XI. Manage all your actions and thoughts in such a manner as if you were just going to step into the grave. And what great matter is the business of dying? If the gods are in being, you can suffer no harm. And if they are not, or take no care of us mortals, why then I must tell you that a world without either gods or providence is not worth a man's while to live in. But there is no need of this supposition; the being of the gods, and their concern in human affairs, is beyond dispute. And as an instance of this they have put it in his power not to fall into any calamity properly so called.² And if other misfortunes (as we count them) had been really evils, they would have provided against them too, and furnished them with capacity to avoid them. And here I would gladly know how that which cannot make the man worse should make his life so? To speak clearly, I can never be persuaded that the first cause can be charged with the want of power, skill, or inclination to take care of these matters; or, that nature should commit such an error as to suffer things really good and evil to

¹ This is said because the Stoics esteemed all sins equal.

² The emperor means that no man is under a necessity of committing an immoral action.

happen promiscuously to good and bad men. Now, living and dying, honour and infamy, pleasure and pain, riches and poverty, all these things are the common allotment of the virtuous and disorderly. Why so? Because they have nothing of intrinsic creditableness or scandal in their nature, and therefore, to speak properly, are neither good nor bad.

XII. A man's reason will easily convince him how quickly all corporeal things moulder off, and vanish both in appearance and memory, and are neither so much as seen or talked of. The same faculty will inform him of the quality and size of the objects of sense, particularly those which charm us with pleasure, frighten us with pain, or are most admired upon the score of reputation. A little thinking will show a man how insignificant, despicable, and paltry these things are, and how soon they wither and go off. It will show one what sort of bulk those people are of, upon whose fancy and good word the being of fame depends. Thus a man may examine the point of dying, which if once abstracted from the pomp and terror of the idea it will be found nothing more than a pure natural action. Now he that dreads the course of nature is a child. Besides, there is general advantage in the case.¹ Lastly, we should consider how nigh we are related to the deity, and in what part of our being, and what becomes of that honourable side when the composition is broken.

XIII. Nothing can be more unhappy than the curiosity of that man that ranges everywhere, and digs into the earth for discovery; that is wonderfully busy to force a passage into other people's thoughts, and dive into their bosom, but does not consider that his own mind is large enough for inquiry and entertainment, and that the care and improvement of himself will afford him sufficient business. And how is all this to be done? Why, by being neither passionate nor heedless, nor yet displeased upon any account either with the gods or men. For as for the gods, their administration ought to be revered upon the score of excellency and station. And as for men, their actions should be well taken for the sake of common kindred; besides, they are often to be pitied for their ignorance of good and evil; which incapacity of discerning between moral qualities is a greater misfortune than that of a blind man who cannot distinguish between white and black.

XIV. Suppose you were to live three thousand, or, if you please,

¹ See sect. 3.

three millions of years, yet you are to remember that no man can lose any other life than that which he lives by, neither is he possessed of any other than that which he loses; from whence it follows that the longest life, as we commonly speak, and the shortest, come all to the same reckoning. The proof lies thus: the present is of the same duration everywhere, and of the same extent to all people; everybody's loss therefore is of the same bigness, and reaches no further than to a point of time. For, to speak strictly, no man is capable of losing either the past or the future; for how can any one be deprived of what he has not? So that, under this consideration there are two notions worth the laying up. One is, that a little while is enough to view the world in, for things are repeated, and come over again apace. Nature treads in a circle, and has much the same face through the whole course of eternity; and therefore it signifies not a farthing whether a man stands gazing here a hundred or a hundred thousand years; for all that he gets by it is only to see the same sights so much the oftener. The other hint is, that when the longest and shortest lived persons come to die, their loss is equal; for, as I observe, the present is their all, and they can suffer no further.

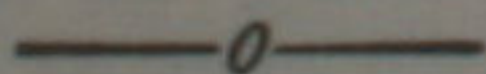
XV. Monimus, the cynic philosopher, used to say that all things were but mere fancy and opinion; pretending there was no infallible rule for the test of truth and certainty. Now this rallying expression may undoubtedly prove serviceable, provided one does not turn sceptic and carry it too far.

XVI. There are several ways of behaviour by which a man may sink his quality, use his person very scurvily, and it is possible without being aware of it. And this in the first place is more remarkably done by murmuring at anything which happens. By doing thus he makes himself a sort of an excrescence of the world, breaks off from the constitution of nature, and instead of a limb becomes an ulcer. Again, he falls under the same misfortune who hates any person, or crosses upon him, with an intention of mischief; which is the case of the angry and revengeful. Thirdly, a man lessens and affronts himself when he is overcome by pleasure or pain; fourthly, when he makes use of art, tricking, and falsehood in word or action; fifthly, when he does not know what he would be at in a business, but runs on without thought or design—whereas even the least undertaking ought to be aimed at some end. Now the end of rational beings is to be governed by the laws of nature

and the interest of the universe ; for these two are both the oldest and the best rules we can go by.

XVII. The extent of human life is but a point ; matter is in a perpetual flux ; the faculties of sense and perception are weak and unpenetrating ; the body slenderly put together, and but a remove from putrefaction ; the soul a rambling sort of a thing. Fortune and futurity are not to be guessed at ; and fame does not always stand upon desert and judgment. In a word, that which belongs to the body streams off like a river, and what the soul has is but dream and bubble ; life, to take it rightly, is no other than a campaign or course of travels ; and posthumous fame has little more in it than silence and obscurity.¹ What is it then that will stick by a man and prove significant ? Why, nothing but wisdom and philosophy. Now the functions of this quality consist in keeping the mind from injury and disgrace, superior to pleasure and pain, free from starts and rambling, without any varnish of dissembling and knavery, and as to happiness, independent of the motions of another. Further, philosophy brings the mind to take things as they fall, and acquiesce in the distributions of Providence, inasmuch as all events proceed from the same cause with itself ; and above all to have an easy prospect of death, as being nothing more than dissolving the composition and taking the elements to pieces. Now if the elements themselves are never the worse for running off into one another, what if they should all unclasp and change their figure ? Why should any man be concerned at the consequence ? All this is but nature's method ; now nature never does any mischief.

Written at Carnantum,² a town of Pannonia, or Hungary.



BOOK III.

I. WE ought not only to remember that life is perpetually wearing off, and in a literal consumption, but also to consider that if a man's line should happen to be longer than ordinary, yet it is uncertain whether his mind will keep pace with his years, and afford him sense enough for business and speculation, and to look

¹ See Book iii. sect. 10, Book iv. sect. 35.

² Supposed to be Presburg.

into the nature, reasons, and references of things both human and divine; for if the understanding falls off, and the man begins to dote, what does he signify? It is true the mere animal life may go on, he may breathe and nourish, and be furnished with perception and appetite; but to make any proper use of himself; to work his notions to any clearness and consistency; to state duty and circumstance and practice to decency and exactness; to know whether it is time for him to walk out of the world or not,¹—as to all these noble functions of reason and judgment, the man is perfectly dead already. It concerns us therefore to push forward and make the most of our matters, for death is continually advancing; and besides that, our understanding sometimes dies before us, and then the true purposes and significancy of life are at an end.

II. It is worth one's while to observe that the least design and almost unbespoken effects of nature are not without their beauty. Thus, to use a similitude, there are cracks and little breaks on the surface of a loaf, which, though never intended by the baker, have a sort of agreeableness in them which invite the appetite. Thus figs, when they are most ripe, open and gape; and olives, when they fall of themselves and are near decaying, are particularly pretty to look at. To go on; the bending of an ear of corn, the brow of a lion, the foam of a boar, and many other things, if you take them singly, are far enough from being handsome, but when they are looked on as parts of somewhat else, and considered with reference and connection, are both ornamental and affecting. Thus, if a man has but inclination and thought enough to examine the product of the universe, he will find the most unpromising appearances not unaccountable, and that the more remote appendages have somewhat to recommend them. One thus prepared will perceive the beauty of life as well as that of imitation, and be no less pleased to see a tiger grin in the tower than in a painter's shop. Such a one will find something agreeable in the decays of age as well as in the blossom of youth. I grant many of these things would not charm us at the first blush; to pronounce rightly, a man must be well affected in the case, and thoroughly acquainted with the methods and harmony of nature.

III. Hippocrates, who cured so many diseases, was not able to recover himself; the Chaldæans, who foretold other people's death, at last met with their own. Alexander, Pompey, and Julius Cæsar,

¹ The Stoics allowed self-murder.

who had destroyed so many towns, and cut off so many thousands in the field, were forced at last to march off themselves. Heraclitus, who argued so much about the world's being set on fire, perished himself by a counter element, and was drowned in a dropsy. Democritus was eaten up with lice,¹ and Socrates was despatched by another sort of vermin.² And what are these instances for? Why, to show what we must all come to. Look you, you are got abroad, you have made your voyage and your port; debark then without any more ado; if you happen to land upon another world, there will be gods enough to take care of you; but if it be your fortune to drop into nothing, why then your virtue will be no more solicited with pleasure and pain; then you will have done drudging for your carcase. Whereas as matters go now, the best moiety of you has sometimes the worst office; for, if I mistake not, the one is all soul and spirit, whereas the other is but dirt and putrefaction.

IV. For the future, do not spend your thoughts upon other people, unless you are put upon it by common interest. For the prying into foreign business, that is, musing upon the talk, fancies, and contrivances of another, and guessing at the what and why of his actions, all this does but make a man forget himself and ramble from his own reason. He ought therefore not to work his mind to no purpose, nor throw a superfluous link into the chain of thought, and more especially to stand clear of curiosity and malice in his inquiry. And to come home and make all sure, let it be your way to think upon nothing but what you could freely discover, if the question was put to you; so that if your soul was thus laid open there would nothing appear but what was sincere, good-natured, and public-spirited; not so much as one libertine or luxurious fancy, nothing of litigiousness, envy, or unreasonable suspicion, or anything else which would not bear the light without blushing. A man thus qualified may be allowed the first rank among mortals; he is a sort of priest and minister of the gods, and makes a right use of the deity within him;³ by the assistance of which he is preserved uninfected with pleasure, invulnerable against pain; out of the reach of injury, and above the malice of ill people. Thus he wrestles for the noblest prize,⁴ stands firm on the most slippery ground, and keeps his feet against all his passions; to go on with him, his honesty is right sterling, and touches as

¹ In this story about Democritus the emperor seems to be singular.

² The informers Anytus and Melitus.

³ So the emperor calls the soul or reasoning faculty.

⁴ An allusion to the diversions and wrestling in the circus.

well as it looks; he always resigns to Providence, and meets his fate with pleasure; he never minds other people's thoughts or actions, unless public reason and general good require it. No; he confines himself to his own business, and contemplates upon his post and station, and endeavours to do the first as it should be, and believe well of the latter,—I say of the latter, for fate is both inevitable and convenient. He considers that all rational beings are of kin, and that general kindness and concern for the whole world is no more than a piece of humanity; that every one's good opinion is not worth the gaining, but only of those who live up to the dignity of their nature. As for others, he knows their way of living, and their company; their public and their private disorders; and why indeed should he value the commendation of such people, who are so vitious and fantastical as not to be able to please themselves?

V. Be not haled, selfish, unadvised, or passionate in anything you do; do not affect quaintness and points of wit; neither talk nor meddle more than is necessary. Take care that your tutelar genius¹ has a creditable charge to preside over; that you appear in the character of your sex and age; act like a Roman emperor that loves his country; and be always in a readiness to quit the field² at the first sounding of the retreat. In the meantime manage your credit so that you need neither swear yourself nor want a voucher. Let your air be cheerful; depend not upon foreign supports, nor beg your happiness of another. And, in a word, never throw away your legs to stand upon crutches.

VI. If in the whole compass of human life you find anything preferable to justice and truth, to temperance and fortitude; to a mind self-satisfied with its own rational conduct, and entirely resigned to fate,—if, I say, you know anything better than this, never baulk your fancy, count it your supreme happiness, and make the most of it you can. But if there is nothing more valuable than that the genius and spirit within you³ should be absolute in its reason, master of its appetites, inquire nicely into the quality of an object. If there is nothing more to be wished than that, with Socrates, it should stand off from the impressions of sense; submit to the government of the gods, and be helpful and benevolent to mankind. If all things are trifles with respect to this, do not divide

¹ The mind, or powers of reason.

² To die.

³ The soul.

your inclinations, misplace your thoughts, and weaken your satisfaction, by any foreign pursuits ; rational choice and benevolent design should never be checked. But if you are for trying tricks, and compounding the matter ; if popularity and power, if wealth and pleasure once strike your fancy, you are gone ; these new favourites will govern your motions, and ride you at discretion. Let your choice therefore run all one way, and be bold and resolute for that which is best. Now use and significancy is the proper test of this quality ; so that the question will be whether a thing is serviceable to your rational capacity ; if so, close with the offer ; but if it is no more than a sensual advantage, hold your hand ; and that you may distinguish rightly, keep your judgment unbiassed, and do not let it stick in the outside of matters.

VII. Do not be fond of any thing, or think that for your interest which makes you break your word, quit your modesty, be of a dissembling, suspicious, or outrageous humour ; which puts you upon hating any person, and inclines you to any practice which would not bear the light and look the world in the face. For he that values the virtue of his mind, and the dignity of his reason before all other things, is easy and well fortified, and has nothing for a tragedy to work on ; he laments under no misfortune, and wants neither solitude nor company ; and, which is still more, he neither flies death nor pursues it, but is perfectly indifferent about the length and shortness of his life. And if he was to expire this moment, the want of warning would not surprise him ; he would never struggle for more time, but go off with decency and honour. Indeed, he is solicitous about nothing but his own conduct, and for fear he should fail in the functions of reason, prudence, and generosity.

VIII. If you examine a man that has been well disciplined by philosophy, you will find nothing that is unsound, foul, or false in him ; nothing that is servile, foppish, or fond ; no selfish, no obnoxious and absconding practices. To give him his due, his business is always done ; his life may be short, but never imperfect ; so that nobody can say he goes off the stage before the play is quite acted.

IX. The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts, therefore guard accordingly ; and take care that you entertain no notions unsuitable to virtue and reasonable nature. Now in order to this, you must be wary in your assent, obedient to the gods, and benevolent to mankind.

X. As for other speculations, throw them all out of your head, excepting those few precepts above mentioned; remembering withal that every man's life lies all within the present; for the past is spent and done with, and the future is uncertain. Now the present, if strictly examined, is but a point of time. Well, then, life moves in a very narrow compass; yes, and men live in a poor corner of the world too; and the most lasting fame will stretch but to a sorry extent. The passage of it is uneven and craggy, and therefore it cannot run far. The frequent breaks of succession drop it in the conveyance; for alas! poor transitory mortals know little either of themselves or of those who were long before them.

XI. To the foregoing hints you may add this which follows. And that is to survey and define every object and thought extraordinary; and that with such penetration as to dissect it throughout, pull off its mask and fucus, and view it in its naked essence; to call the whole and the parts by their true names; and be truly informed of their force and nature, both single and in composition. For nothing is so likely to raise the mind to a pitch of greatness as to bring accidents, persons, and pretensions to a true test. For instance, to be ready to tell oneself, to what sort of purpose this thing serves, and what sort of world it is which makes use of it; what proportion of value it bears to the universe, and what to men in particular; to men, I say, who are citizens of that great Capitol,¹ in respect of which all other towns are no more than single families. To return: my business is to examine nicely into the present object; to know what it is made on, and how long it will last; what virtue it requires of me, and gives occasion to; whether fortitude or truth, good nature or good faith, simplicity, frugality, and so forth. Upon every impression and accident, a man should be ready to pronounce,—this was sent me by heaven; this is a consequence of destiny; this comes from chance, overruled by Providence; and this other was done by one of the same clan, family,² and corporation with myself. It is true, I do not like the usage, but the man was a stranger to the relation he stood in, and knew no better. But I am under none of this mistake, and therefore I will be just and friendly to him, and treat him by the laws of common society; for why should any man forfeit for his ignorance, and lose a natural right? However, as to things indifferent,³ I shall take care to look into them too, and rate them according to their respective value.

¹ The world.

² See Book ii. sect. i.

³ The Stoics reckoned all things indifferent, excepting honesty and virtue.

XII. If you will be governed by reason, and manage what lies before you with industry, vigour, and temper ; if you will not run out after new game, but keep your mind stanch and well disciplined, as if this trial of behaviour was your last ; and then, if you will but stick to your measures, and be true to the best of yourself, and keep your fears and desires from going further ; if living up to your nature, minding an opportunity, and standing boldly by the truth ; —if these things, I say, will satisfy you, you may be a happy man. Now, if you are but willing, the world cannot hinder you from doing all this.

XIII. As your surgeons have their instruments ready for sudden occasions, so be you always furnished with rules and principles, to let you into the knowledge and extent of things human and divine ; for these two have their reference and connexion with each other. The consequence is that your whole practice ought to turn upon this supposition ; for without looking into the nature and administration of the gods, you will fail in your behaviour towards men ; and thus the reasoning holds backward to the other side of the argument.

XIV. Do not go too far in your books, and overgrasp yourself. Alas ! you have no time left to peruse your diary,¹ to read over the Greek and Roman history, or so much as your own common-place book, which you collected to serve you when you were old. Come, do not flatter and deceive yourself ; look to the main chance, to the end and design of reading, and mind life more than notion. I say, if you have a kindness for your person, drive at the practice, and help yourself, for that is in your own power.

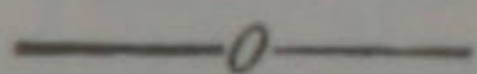
XV. Many people do not know the true compass and extent of language. For instance, they are not aware in how many senses the words, to steal, to buy, to sow, to be at quiet, may be taken, nor how much meaning the duties of life carry in them. These actions are commonly either straitened in the notion, or misapplied in the end. To say no more of it, he that would view this matter rightly must think a little, and look inward.

XVI. There are three things which belong to a man—the body, the soul, and the mind. And as to the properties of the division,² sensation belongs to the body, appetite to the soul, and reason to

¹ D'Acier.

² The emperor makes a distinction between the soul and the mind, or spirit.

the mind. To have the senses affected, and be stamped with the impression of an object is common to brutes and cattle. To be hurried and convulsed with passion is the quality of beasts of prey and men of pleasure; of libertines and tyrants;¹ of atheists and traitors; and of those who do not care what they do when nobody sees them. And since these qualities are both coarse and common, let us find out the mark of a man of probity. His distinction then lies in keeping reason at the head of practice, and being easy in his condition; to live in a crowd of objects without suffering either in his sense, his virtue, or his quiet; to have a good understanding at home, and be governed by that divine principle within him; to be all truth in his words, and justice in his actions. And if the whole world should disbelieve his integrity, dispute his character, and question his happiness, he would neither take it ill in the least, nor alter his measures, but pursue the ends of living with all the honesty, ease, and resignation imaginable.



BOOK IV.

I. WHEN the mind acts up to nature, and is rightly disposed, she takes things as they come, stands loose in her fancy, and tacks about with her circumstances. As for fixing the condition of her fortune, she is not at all solicitous about that. It is true, she is not perfectly indifferent, she moves forward with a preference in her choice; but then it is always with a reserve of acquiescence, and being easy in the event. And if anything comes cross, she falls to work upon it, and, like fire, converts it into fuel. For, as this element, when it is weak, is easily put out, but when once well kindled it seizes upon what lies next, subdues it into its own nature, and increases by resistance.

II. Let every action tend to some point, and be perfect in its kind.

III. It is the custom of people to go to unfrequented places and country seats for retirement; and this has been your method formerly. But, after all, this is but a vulgar fancy; for it is in your power to withdraw into yourself whenever you have a mind to it.

¹ The Greek mentions Phalaris and Nero.

Now, one's own breast is a place the most free from crowd and noise in the world, if a man's retrospections are easy, his thoughts entertaining, and his mind well in order. Your way is therefore to make frequent use of this retirement, and refresh your virtue in it. And to this end be always provided with a few short, uncontested notions, to keep your understanding true, and make you easy in your business. For instance, what is it that troubles you? Is it the wickedness of the world, and the ill-usage you meet with? If this be your case, out with your antidote, and consider that mankind were made for mutual advantage; that forbearance is one part of justice, and that people misbehave themselves against their will.¹ Consider likewise how many men have embroiled themselves, and spent their days in disputes and animosities; and what did they get by it? Why, they had more trouble, and it may be less of life than they would have had. Be quiet, then, and do not disturb yourself to no purpose. But it may be the government of the world does not please you; take out the other notion, and argue thus. Either Providence or chance sits at the helm; if the first, the administration cannot be questioned; if the latter, there is no mending of it. Besides, you may remember that the world is, as it were, one great city and corporation. But possibly the ill state of your health afflicts you; pray reflect, your soul does not lie in your lungs, nor your reason in your breath, so that if you are somewhat asthmatic or out of order, it is no such great matter. No, not if your mind will retire and take a view of her own privilege and power, and when she has done this, recollect her philosophy about pleasure and pain, and to which she has formerly assented. Well! it may be the concern of fame sits hard upon you. If you are pinched here, consider how quickly all things vanish and are forgotten; what an immense chaos there stands, what an extent of darkness and confusion on either side of eternity.² Applause! consider the emptiness of the sound, the precarious tenure, the little judgment of those that give it us, and the narrow compass it is confined to. For the whole globe is but a point; and of this little, how little is inhabited? And where it is peopled, you will have no reason to brag either of the number or quality of your admirers. Upon the whole, do not forget to retire into the seat of your reason; and above all things, let there be no haling nor struggling in the case, but move freely and gracefully, and manage matters like a man of sense and spirit, like a burgher of the whole world, and like a creature that must die shortly. And among the rest of your stock, let these two maxims be always ready—

¹ See Book viii. sect. 14, where the emperor gives his reasons for this paradox.

² Of eternity past, and eternity to come.

first, that it is not things, but thoughts, which give disturbance; for things keep their distance, and tease nobody, until fancy raises the spleen and grows untoward. The second¹ is, to consider that the scene is just shifting and sliding off into nothing, and that you yourself have seen abundance of great alterations. In a word, generally speaking, the world is all revolution and conduct, little better than fancy.²

IV. If the faculty of understanding lies in common amongst us all, then reason, the effect of it, must be common too,—that reason, I say, which governs practice by commands and prohibitions. From whence we may conclude that mankind are under one common regulation; and if under one common law, they must be fellow-citizens, and belong to the same body politic. From whence it will follow that the whole world is upon the matter but one commonwealth; for certainly there is no other society in which mankind can be incorporated. Now this common fund of understanding, reason, and law, is a commodity of this same country, or which way do mortals light on it? For as the four distinctions in my body belong to some general head and species of matter; for instance, the earthy part in me comes from the division of earth; the watery belongs to another element; the airy particles flow from a third spring, and those of fire from one distinct from all the former. For, by the way, nothing can no more produce something, than something can sink into nothing. And thus in proportion to the reasoning upon my constitution, our understanding must have a cause, and proceed from some quarter or other.

V. Death and generation are both mysteries of nature, and somewhat resemble each other; for the first does but untwist those elements the latter had wrought together. Now, there is nothing that a man needs be ashamed of in all this; nothing but what his reason may digest, and what results from his make and constitution.

VI. Practices and humours are generally of a piece; such usage from such sort of men is in a manner necessary. To be surprised at it, is in effect to wonder at the eager quality of vinegar.³ Pray consider that both you and your enemy are dropping off, and that ere long your very memories will be extinguished.

¹ See Book v. sect. 19, Book viii. sect. 47, and alib.

² See Book ii. sect. 15.

³ It is probable the emperor made this reflection upon receiving some great injury.

VII. Do not suppose you are hurt, and your complaint ceases, and then no damages will be done.

VIII. That which does not make a man worse, does not make him live worse ; and by consequence he has no harm by it either one way or the other.

IX. Nature was obliged to act in this manner for her own convenience.

X. Take notice that all events¹ turn upon merit and congruity ; which, if you observe nicely, you will not only perceive a connection between causes and effects, but a sovereign distribution of justice, which presides in the administration and gives everything its due. Go on with this remark, and let all your actions answer the character of a good man, I mean a good man in the strictness and notion of philosophy.

XI. If a man affronts you, do not go into his opinion, or think just as he would have you. No ; look upon things as reality presents them, and form your judgment accordingly.

XII. Be always provided with principles for the following purposes : First, to engage in nothing but what reason dictates, what the sovereign and legislative part of you shall suggest for the interest of mankind. Secondly, to be disposed to quit your opinion and alter your measures when a friend shall give you good grounds for so doing. But then the reasons of changing your mind ought to be drawn from the considerations of justice, public good, or some such generous motive ; and not because it pleases your fancy or promotes your reputation.

XIII. Have you any sense in your head ? Yes. Why do you not make use of it, then ? For if this faculty does but do its part, I cannot see what more you need wish for.

XIV. At present your nature is distinguished and stands apart ; but ere long you will vanish into the whole. Or, if you please, you will be returned into that active and prolific reason which gave you your being.²

¹ That is, which proceed from the first cause.

² The Stoics supposed the soul a part of the deity, and that it was absorbed in him after death.

XV. When frankincense is thrown upon the altar, one grain usually falls before another; but then the distance of time is insignificant.¹

XVI. The seeming singularities of reason quickly wear off. Do but stick close to the principles of wisdom, and those who take you now for a monkey, or a madman, will make a god of you in a week's time.

XVII. Do not manage as if you had ten thousand years to throw away. Look you, death stands at your elbow; make the most of your minute, and be good for something while it is in your power.

XVIII. What a great deal of time and ease that man gains who is not troubled with the spirit of curiosity; who lets his neighbour's thoughts and behaviour alone, confines his inspections to himself, and takes care of the points of honesty and conscience. Truly, as Agatho observes, this malicious trifling humour ought to be checked. In a word, we must keep to our own business, for rambling and impertinence is not to be endured.

XIX. He that is so very solicitous about being talked of when he is dead, and makes his memory his inclination, does not consider that all his admirers will quickly be gone; that his fame will grow less in the next generation, and flag upon the course; and, like a ball that is handed from one to another, it will be dropped at last. But, granting your monuments and your men immortal, what is their panegyric to you when you are dead, and know nothing of the matter? And if you were living, what would commendation signify, unless for the convenience of imitation? To conclude, if you depend thus servilely upon the good word of other people, you will act below your nature, and neglect the improvement of yourself.

XX. Whatever is good has that quality from itself; it is finished by its own nature, and commendation is no part of it. Why, then, a thing is neither better nor worse for being praised. This holds concerning things which are called good in the common way of speaking as the products of nature and art; what do you think, then, of that which deserves this character in the strictest propriety? Do you imagine it wants anything foreign to complete the idea? What is your opinion of truth, good nature, and sobriety? Do any of

¹ This thought is to show that the difference between a long and short life, as we call it, is inconsiderable with respect to eternity.

these virtues stand in need of a good word? or are they the worse for a bad one? I hope a diamond will shine never the less for a man's being silent about the worth of it; neither is there any necessity of flourishing upon a piece of gold to preserve the intrinsic of the metal.

XXI. If human souls have a being after death, which way has the air made room for them from all eternity? Pray how has the earth been capacious enough to receive all the bodies buried in it? The resolution of this latter question will satisfy the former. For as a corpse after some continuance turns into dust, and makes way for another, so when a man dies, and the spirit is let loose into the air, it holds out for some time, after which it wears off and drops in pieces. And when things come to this pass, it is either renewed and lighted up into another soul,¹ or else absorbed into that of the universe; and thus they make room for succession. And this may serve for an answer upon the supposition of the soul's surviving the body. Besides, we are not only to consider the vast number of bodies disposed of in the manner above mentioned, but what an infinite number are every day devoured by mankind and other living creatures, and as it were buried in their stomachs; and yet by the transmutation of the food into blood and humours, and by the conveyance of perspiration, there is stowage enough. And now, which way can a man take a prospect of the truth, and trace the history of nature? Why, in order to this you must divide the thing in question into matter and form.²

XXII. Do not run riot. Keep your understanding true, and your intentions honest.³

XXIII. Whatever is agreeable to you, O universe,⁴ is so to me too. Your things are never mistimed; your methods are acceptable, and your seasons all spring and summer to me! From you all things proceed, subsist in you, and return to you. And if the poet called Athens the city beloved by Cecrops, why may not the world be styled the favourite town of Jupiter?

XXIV. If you would live at your ease, says Democritus, manage

¹ The Stoics held the soul a composition of fire and air, but fire was the predominant element.

² By form the Stoics meant God, or the efficient cause of all things.

³ See Book v. sect. 36, Book vii. sect. 54.

⁴ By the world the Stoics sometimes understood God.

but a few things. I think it had been better if he had said, Do nothing but what is necessary, and what becomes one made for society; nothing but what reason prescribes, and in the order, too, she prescribes it. For by this rule a man may both secure the quality and draw in the bulk of his business, and have the double pleasure of making his actions good and few into the bargain. For the greatest part of what we say and do, being unnecessary, if this were but once retrenched, we should have both more leisure and less disturbance. And therefore before a man sets forward he should ask himself this question, Am I not upon the verge of something unnecessary and impertinent? Further, we should apply this hint to what we think, as well as to what we do; for impertinence of thought draws unnecessary action after it.

XXV. Bring the matter to an issue, make an experiment upon yourself, and examine your proficiency in a life of virtue; try how you can acquiesce in your fate, and whether your own honesty and good-nature will content you.

XXVI. Have you seen one sort of fortune? Pray view the other too; never be disturbed, but reduce your person to its natural bulk, and be not concerned for more than belongs to you. Is any man guilty of a fault? It is to himself, then. Has any advantage happened to you? It is the bounty of fate. It was all of it pre-ordained you by the universal cause. Upon the whole, life is but short, therefore be just and prudent, and make your most of it; and when you divert yourself, be always upon your guard.

XXVII. The world is either the effect of contrivance or chance; if the latter, it is a world for all that, that is to say, it is a regular and beautiful structure. Now, can any man discover symmetry in his own shape, and yet take the universe for a heap of rubbish? I say the universe, in which the very discord and confusion of the elements settles into harmony and order.¹

XXVIII. There are several sorts of scandalous tempers, some malicious and some effeminate, others obstinate, brutish, and savage. Some humours are childish and silly, some false and others scurrilous, some mercenary and some tyrannical.

XXIX. Not to know what is in the world, and not to know what is done in the world, comes much to the same thing, and a man is

¹ This section is levelled against the hypothesis of Epicurus.

one way no less a stranger than the other. To proceed; he is no better than a deserter that renounces public reason and the laws of Providence. He is a blind man that winks with his understanding; and he is a beggar that is not furnished at home, but wants the assistance of another. He that frets himself sore because things do not happen just as he would have them, is but a sort of an ulcer of the world; by murmuring at the course of nature, he quits the universal body, and gains only the distinction of a disease, never considering that the same cause which produced the displeasing accident made him too. And lastly, he that is selfish, narrow-souled, and sets up for a separate interest, is a kind of voluntary outlaw, and disincorporates himself from mankind.

XXX. This philosopher has never a waistcoat to his coat, the other never a book to read, and a third is half-naked, and yet they are none of them discouraged. One learned man has nothing for his stomach, nor another for his lectures; however, they are resolved to starve on, and be wise in despite of misfortune.

XXXI. Be satisfied with your business, and learn to love what you were bred to; and as to the remainder of your life, be entirely resigned, and let the gods do their pleasure; and when this is done, be neither slave nor tyrant to anybody.

XXXII. To begin somewhere; consider how business, humour, and fortune went with the world in Vespasian's time; consider this, I say, and you will find mankind just at the same pass they are now,—some marrying, and some concerned in education; some sick, and some dying; some fighting, and some feasting; some drudging at the plough, and some upon the Exchange; some were too affable, and some overgrown with conceit; one was full of jealousy, and the other of knavery. Here you might find a parcel wishing for the death of their friends, and there a seditious club complaining of the times; some loved their wenches, and some their bags; some grasped at the consulship, and some at the sceptre. Well! all is over with that generation long since. Come forward, then, to the reign of Trajan; now here you will find mortals in the same circle of business and folly they were in before; but they are all gone too. Go on with the contemplation, and carry it to other times and countries; and here you will see abundance of people, very busy and big with their projects, drop off presently, and moulder to dust and ashes. More particularly recollect those within your own memory who have been hurried on in these vain pursuits; how

they have overlooked the dignity of their nature, and those better satisfactions in their own power. And here you must remember to proportion your concern to the weight and importance of business; thus you will be safe against trifling, and part with amusements without regret.

XXXIII. Those words which were formerly current and proper are now become obsolete and barbarous. Alas! this is not all: fame tarnishes in time, too, and men grow out of fashion as well as language. Those celebrated names of Camillus, Cæso, and Volesus are antiquated; those of Scipio, Cato, and Augustus will have the same fortune; and those of Adrian and Antoninus must follow. All these things are transitory, and quickly swallowed up in oblivion. I speak this of those who have been the wonder of their age, and shined with unusual lustre; but as for the rest, they are no sooner dead than forgotten. And if you could perpetuate your memory, what does fame everlasting signify? Mere stuff! What, then, is it that is worth one's while to be concerned for? Why, nothing but this, to bear an honest mind, to act for the good of society, to deceive nobody, to foresee the worst, and be contented with what happens upon the score both of the cause and the necessity.

XXXIV. Put yourself frankly into the hands of fate, and let her spin you out what fortune she pleases.

XXXV. He that does a memorable action, and those that report it, are all but short-lived things.

XXXVI. Accustom yourself to consider that whatever is produced, is produced by alteration; that nature loves nothing so much as shifting the scene, and bringing new persons upon the stage. To speak closely; the destruction of one thing is the making of another; and that which subsists at present is, as it were, the seed of succession which springs from it. But if you take seed in the common notion, and confine it to the field or the garden, you have a dull fancy.

XXXVII. You are just taking leave of the world; and do you not know what you are, and what you are not? Have you not done with unnecessary desires? Are you not yet above disturbance and suspicion, and fully convinced that nothing without your own will can hurt you? Have you not yet learned to be friends with every-

body, and that to be an honest man is the only way to be a wise one?

XXXVIII. To understand the true quality of people, you must look into their minds, and examine their pursuits and aversions.

XXXIX. Your pain cannot lie in another man's head, neither can his mismanagement be your misfortune; nay, further, the declension of your health, or the accidents in your carcase, need not affect you. Where, then, are you passive and vulnerable? Why, in that part of you that forms judgments and opinions of things. Do not imagine you are hurt, and you are impregnable. Suppose, then, your flesh was hacked, seared, or putrefied, for your life let your fancy lie still;¹ that is, do not conclude what is common to good or ill men can be good or evil in itself; for that which may be everybody's lot must in its own nature be indifferent.

XL. You ought frequently to consider that the world is an animal,² consisting of one soul and body; that a universal sense runs through the whole mass of matter. You should likewise reflect how nature acts by a joint effort, and as it were altogether; and how everything contributes to the being of everything. And lastly, what connection and subordination there is between causes and effects.

XLI. Would you know what you are? Epictetus will tell you that you are a living soul that drags a carcase about with her.

XLII. Things that subsist upon change, and owe their being to instability, can neither be considerably good nor bad.³

XLIII. The world hurries off apace, and time is like a rapid river; a thing is no sooner well come but it is past; and then another is posted after it, and it may be at length the first will return under another appearance.

XLIV. Whatever happens here is as common and well known as a rose in the spring, or an apple in autumn; of this kind are diseases and death, calumny and undermining, and several other things which raise and depress the spirits of unthinking people.

¹ A Stoical rhodomontade.

² The Stoics believed the world animated, and that God was the soul of it.

³ See Book vii. sect. 23, and alib.

XLV. Antecedents and consequents are dexterously tied together in the world; things are not carelessly thrown on a heap, and joined more by number than nature, but, as it were, artificially inlaid into each other. And as the present set of appearances are very curiously contrived, so those upon the stocks are carried on by rule, and come forward with great uniformity.

XLVI. The elements are always shifting their forms, and transmuting into each other; therefore do not forget the saying of Heraclitus, that the earth dies into water, water into air, air into fire, and so backward. Remember likewise the story of the man that travelled on, without knowing to what place the way would bring him, and that many people contest the point with that reason that governs the world, and with which they are daily conversant, and seem perfectly unacquainted with those things which occur daily. Further, we must not nod over business, nor dream away life, like people who fancy they are mightily employed, when they are fast in their beds. Neither are we to be wholly governed by tradition; for that is like children who believe anything their parents tell them.

XLVII. Put the case, some god should acquaint you, you were to die to-morrow, or next day at furthest. Under this warning you would be a very poor wretch if you should strongly solicit for the longest time; for alas! how inconsiderable is the difference? In like manner, if you would reason right, and compute upon the notion of eternity, you would not be much concerned whether your life was up to-morrow or a thousand years hence.

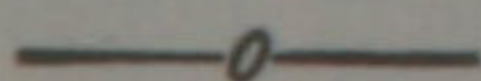
XLVIII. Consider how many physicians are dead that used to value themselves upon the cure of their patients; how many astrologers, who thought themselves great men by foretelling the death of others; how many philosophers have gone the way of all flesh, after all their learned disputes about dying and immortality; how many field-worthies, who had knocked so many men's brains out; how many tyrants, who managed the power of life and death with as much pride and rigour as if themselves had been immortal; how many cities, if I may say so, have given up the ghost—for instance, Helice in Greece, Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy, not to mention many besides. Do but recollect your acquaintance, and here you will find people managing and making way for funerals, mourning for their friends, and giving occasion for the same office themselves; and all within a small compass of time.

In short, mankind are poor transitory things. They are one day in the rudiments of life, and almost the next turned into mummy or ashes. Your way is therefore to manage this minute wisely, and part with it cheerfully ; and, like a ripe nut, when you drop out of the husk, be sure to speak well of the season, and make your acknowledgments to the tree that bore you.

XLIX. Stand firm like a rock, against which though the waves batter and swell they fall flat at last. How unfortunate has this accident made me ! cries such a one. Not at all ; he should rather say, what a happy mortal am I, for being unconcerned upon the occasion, for being neither shocked at the present, nor afraid of what is to come ! The thing might have happened to any other man as well as myself, but for all that, everybody would not have been so easy under it. Why, then, is not the good-fortune of the bearing more considerable than the ill-fortune of the happening ? Or, to speak properly, how can that be a misfortune to a man which is no disappointment to his nature ? And how can that cross upon a man's nature which falls in with the very intention and design of it ? Now, what human nature rightly disposed drives at, I suppose, you are not to learn at this time of day. To apply this reasoning : does the present accident hinder your being honest and brave, temperate and modest, judicious and unservile ? etc. Now, when a man is furnished with these good qualities, the highest notion of him is finished, and his nature has what she would have. Further, when anything grows troublesome, recollect this maxim, that generous behaviour is too strong for ill-fortune, and turns it to an advantage.

L. To consider those old people that resigned so unwillingly is, for a common notion, not unserviceable ; it helps us somewhat to face death, and contemn it ; for what are these long-lived mortals more than those that went off in their infancy ? What is become of Cœcilianus, Fabius, Julianus, and Lepidus ? Their heads are all laid somewhere ; they buried a great many, but came at last to it themselves. Upon the whole, the difference between long and short life is insignificant, especially if you consider the accidents, the company, and the carcass you must go through with ; therefore do not let a thought of this kind affect you one way or the other ; do but look upon the astonishing notion of time and eternity ; what an immense deal has run out already, and how infinite it is still in the future ;—do but consider this, and you will find three days and three ages of life come much to the same measure and reckoning.

LI. Always go the shortest way to work. Now the nearest road to your business lies through honesty. Let it be your constant method, then, to deal clearly and above-board; and by this means you need not fatigue it, you need not quarrel, flourish, and dissemble like other people.



BOOK V.

I. WHEN you find an unwillingness to rise early in the morning, make this short speech to yourself: I am getting up now to do the business of a man; and am I out of humour for going about that I was made for, and for the sake of which I was sent into the world? Was I then designed for nothing but to doze and batten beneath the counterpane? Well, but this is a comfortable way of living. Granting that; wert thou born only for pleasure? were you never to do anything? I thought action had been the end of your being. Pray look upon the plants and birds, the pismires, spiders, and bees, and you will see them all regular and industrious, exerting their nature, and busy in their station. For shame! Shall a spider act like a spider, and make the most of her matters, and shall not a man act like a man? Why do you not rouse your faculties, and manage up to your kind? For all that, there is no living without rest. True; but then let us follow nature's directions, and not take too much of it. She likewise has given you leave to eat and drink within a rule; but here you generally exceed your commission, and go beyond convenience; whereas in business you are apt to favour yourself, and do less than lies in your power. In earnest, you have no true love for yourself; if you had, you would improve your nature, humour her motions, and solicit her interest. Now, when a man loves his trade, how he will sweat and drudge to perform to a curiosity, and make himself master of it! But to speak out; you mind your person less than a turner does the making of a chair; a dancing-master has much more regard for his heels than you have for your head; and as for wealth and popularity, how strongly are they pursued by the vain and the covetous. All these people, when their fancy is once struck, push their point, might and main, and will scarcely allow themselves necessary refreshment. And now, can you think the functions of reason, justice, and generosity less valuable than these petty amusements?

II. What an easy matter it is to them the current of your imagination ; to discharge a troublesome or improper thought, and grow as calm and regular as one would wish !

III. Do not think any action beneath you which reason and circumstances require ; and never be misled by the apprehension of censure or reproach. Where honesty prompts you to say or do anything, never baulk yourself or start at the matter. If other people are particular in their fancies and opinions, mind them not. Be you governed by the reason within you ; pursue that which is most for your own and the common interest. For to speak strictly, these two are but one and the same.

IV. I will jog on in that path which nature has chalked out till my legs sink under me, and then I shall be at rest, and expire into that air which has given me breath ; fall upon that earth which has maintained my parents, helped my nurse to her milk, and supplied me with meat and drink for so many years ; and though its favours have been often abused, still suffers me to tread upon it.

V. Wit and smartness are not mightily your talent. What then ? There are a great many other good qualities in which you cannot pretend nature has failed you. Improve them as far as you can, and let us have that which is perfectly in your power. You may, if you please, behave yourself like a man of gravity and good faith ; endure hardship, and despise pleasure ; want but a few things, and complain of nothing ; you may be dispassionate, stand upon your own legs, and be great if you please, and have nothing of ill-nature, luxury, or trifling in your humour. Do you not see how much you may do if you have a mind to it, and how the plea of incapacity is out of doors ? And yet you do not push and manage as you should do. What then ? Does any natural defect force you upon grumbling, miserableness, or laying your faults upon your constitution, upon flattery or ostentation ; upon uncertainty of temper, and rolling from one folly to another ? Can you say you are so weakly made as to be driven upon these practices ? The immortal gods know to the contrary ! No, you might have stood clear of all this long since. And after all, if your parts were somewhat low, and your understanding heavy, your way had been to have taken the more pains with yourself, and not to have lain fallow and doted upon your own dulness.

VI. Some men when they do you a kindness are presently for

ringing the obligation in your ears; others are more modest than this comes to. However, they remember the favour, and look upon you as their debtor. A third sort shall be every jot as much benefactors, and yet scarce know anything of the matter. These are much like a vine, which is satisfied by being fruitful in its kind, and bears a bunch of grapes without expecting any thanks for it. A fleet horse or greyhound do not use to make a noise when they have performed handsomely, nor a bee neither when she has made a little honey. And thus a man that is rightly kind never proclaims a good turn, but does another as soon as he can; just like a vine that bears again the next season. Now we should imitate those who are so obliging as hardly to remember their beneficence. But you will say, a man ought to understand the quality of his own actions. It is somewhat natural for one that is generous to be conscious of his generosity; yes, truly, and to desire the person obliged should be sensible of it too. I grant what you say is in a great measure true, and if you do not take me right you will make one of those untoward benefactors I first mentioned. Indeed, they think their grounds plausible enough, for their vanity imposes upon them. But if you will view the case in its true colours, the privacy of doing a good turn will never discourage you.

VII. The Athenians used to be mighty clamorous to Jupiter for rain upon their own lands, but not a word for other people. Now, to my mind, they had even better have held their tongues, or else prayed with more of extent and generosity.

VIII. *Æsculapius*, as we commonly speak, has prescribed such a one riding out,¹ walking in his slippers, or a cold bath. Now, much to the same meaning we may affirm that Providence or the soul of the universe has ordered this or that person a disease, loss of limbs or estate, or some such other calamity. For, as in the first case, the word prescribed signifies a direction for the health of the patient, so in the latter it means an application proper for the constitution and benefit of fate. And thus these harsher events may be counted fit for us, as freestone, which is well joined and lies snug in a building, may be said to fit it. Indeed, the whole of nature consists of a harmony and congruity of parts; for as the world has its form and entireness from that universal matter of which it consists, so the character and distinction of fate results from the quality and concurrence of all other causes contained in

¹ Probably in a dream.

it. The common people understand this notion very well ; their way of speaking is, " This was sent him by destiny." Say you so? Was there not, then, somewhat of purpose and design in it? Let us then comply with our doom, as we do with the prescriptions of a celebrated physician. These doses are often unpalatable and rugged, and yet the desire of health makes them go merrily down. Now, that which nature esteems profit and convenience should be no less valued than your own health ; and therefore, when any cross accident happens, take it quietly to you ; it is for the good of the universe, and Jupiter himself is the better for it.¹ Depend upon it, this had never been sent you if the world had not found its account in it ; neither does nature act at random, or order anything which is not suitable to those beings under her government. You have two reasons, therefore, to be contented with your condition : first, because you were born and singled out for it ; it was assigned you from the beginning by the highest and most ancient causes. Secondly, it is for the interest of him that governs the world ;² it perfects his nature in some measure, and continues his happiness ; for it holds in causes no less than in matter and quantity ; if you lop off any part of the continuity and connection, you maim the whole. Now, if you are displeased with your circumstances, you dismember nature, and pull the world in pieces, as much as lies in your power.

IX. Be not uneasy, discouraged, or out of humour, because practice falls short of precept in some particulars. If you happen to be beaten off your reason, come on again, and let your fancy strike in at your second trial, and do not go like a school-boy to his master with an ill-will. No, you must apply to philosophy with inclination, as those who have sore eyes make use of a good recipe ; and when you are thus disposed you will easily acquiesce and be governed by reason. And here you are to remember that philosophy or true wisdom will put you upon nothing but what your nature wishes and calls for. And can you be so unreasonable as to cross the inclinations of your nature? Is not her fancy the most agreeable of anything? And does not pleasure often deceive us under this pretence? Now, think a little, and tell me what there is more delightful than downright honesty and religion, than generosity and greatness of mind. And once more, what can be more entertaining than prudence, than to be furnished with that

¹ A Stoical paradox.

² A gross error of the Stoics.

understanding which keeps a man from making a false step, and helps him to good fortune in all his business?¹

X. Things are so much perplexed and in the dark, that several considerable philosophers looked upon them as altogether unintelligible,² and that there was no certain test for the discovery of truth. Even the Stoics agree that nature and certainty is very hard to come at, that our understandings are always liable to error, and that infallibility is mere vanity and pretence. However, our ignorance is not so great but that we may discover how transitory and insignificant all things are, that those we commonly call the best circumstances are sometimes in the worst hands, and that it is possible for thieves, whores, and catamites to run away with the world, and who then would care threepence for it? Further, consider the temper of those you converse with, and you will find the best will hardly do; not to mention that a man has work enough to make himself tolerable to himself. And since we have nothing but darkness and dirt to grasp at, since time and matter, motion and mortals, are always rolling and running out of themselves,—for these reasons, I say, I cannot imagine what there is here worth the minding. On the other hand, a man ought to keep up his spirits, for it will not be long before his discharge comes. In the meantime his point is to be easy, and satisfy himself with these two considerations; the one is, that nothing will befall me but what is for the interest of the universe;³ the other, that nobody can command my practice, or force me to act against my own judgment.

XI. What use do I put my soul to, or what hand do I make of my reason? It is a serviceable question this, and should frequently be put to oneself. I say, how does my sovereign part stand affected? and what is the furniture and complexion of my mind? Is there nothing of the boy or the beast in it? nothing that is either tyrannical or effeminate?

XII. What sort of good things those are which are commonly so reckoned, you may learn from hence. For the purpose, if you reflect upon those qualities which are intrinsically valuable, such as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, you will not find a jest

¹ The Stoic's maxim is, "A wise man can never be unfortunate, let his circumstances be what they will."

² Of this opinion were Pyrrho and the new Academics.

³ See sect. 8.

upon them apt to relish and make sport; whereas upon the advantages of fortune and common estimation a piece of raillery will pass well enough. Thus we see the generality are struck with the distinction, otherwise they would not dislike the liberty in one case and allow it in the other. The felicities of riches, luxury, and ambition are all within the privilege of buffoons, and liable to the lash of the stage. Now, what significancy can there be in these things when a poet's jest will take place upon them? And what comical droll may be patly applied to the owner. "He is so stuffed," says the play, "with wealth and finery that he has no room for his close-stool."

XIII. My being consists of matter and form, that this, of soul and body. Annihilation will reach neither of them; for as they were never produced out of nothing, so they will always remain something. The consequence is that every part of me will serve to make something in the world; and thus I shall be tossed from one figure to another, through an infinite succession of change. And what wonder of all this? This constant method of alteration gave me my being, and my father before me, and so on to eternity backward; for I think I may speak thus, though the world is confined within a certain determinate period.¹

XIV. Reason needs no foreign assistance, but is sufficient for its own purposes. This faculty moves within itself, and makes directly for the point in view; for to take the matter rightly, honesty is always the nearest way to success.

XV. Those things do not belong to a man which do not belong to him as a man, or under the definition of his species. This notion may be applied to all external advantages, for these are not included in the idea; they are not required of us as men; human nature does not promise them, neither is she perfected by them; from whence it follows that they can neither constitute the chief end of man, nor strictly contribute towards it. Further, if these things were any real additions, how comes the contempt of them, and the being easy without them, to be so great a commendation? To balk an advantage would be folly, for one cannot have too much of that which is good. But the case stands otherwise; for we know that self-denial and indifference about these things is the character of a good man, and goes for a mark of true greatness.

¹ See Book x. sect. 7, Book ii. sect. 1.

XVI. Your manners will depend very much upon the quality of what you frequently think on; for the soul is, as it were, tinged with the colour and complexion of thought. Be sure, therefore, to work in such maxims as these. A man may live as he should do, and behave himself well in all places; by consequence, a life of virtue, and that of a courtier, are not inconsistent. Again, that which a thing is made for, it is made to act for; and that which it is made to act for it is naturally carried to; and in the due pursuit of this tendency the end of the agent consists. Now, where the end of a thing is, there the advantage and improvement of it is certainly lodged. From hence the inference will be that the happiness of mankind lies in society and correspondence, since that we were made for this purpose I have proved already.¹ For is it not plain that the lower order of beings are made for their betters, and the higher for the service of each other? Now, as life is preferable to bare existence, so amongst all living creatures the rational are the best quality.

XVII. To expect an impossibility is distraction; now it is impossible for ill men not to follow their bias, and show their temper in some instance or other.

XVIII. There is nothing happens to any person but what is in his power to go through with. Some people have had very severe trials, and yet, either by having less understanding or more pride than ordinary, have charged bravely through the misfortune, and come off without a scratch. Now it is a scandalous indecency to let ignorance and vanity do more with us than prudence and principle.

XIX. It is thoughts, not things, which take hold of the soul. Outward objects cannot force their passage into the mind, nor set any of its wheels a-going. No, the impression comes from herself, and it is her notions which affect her. As for the contingencies of fortune, they are either great or little according to the opinion she has of her own strength.

XX. When we consider we are bound to be serviceable to mankind, and bear with their faults, we shall perceive there is a common tie of nature and relation between us. But when we see people grow troublesome, and disturb us in our business, here we are to look upon men as indifferent sort of things, neither good nor bad to us, but according to our management. It is true, like a

¹ See Book ii. sect. 1.

cross wind, they may hinder me in the executing part, but all this while my inclinations stand firm, and the reserve of a good meaning is secured to me. Being rightly disposed, I can pass on to the exercise of another virtue; and thus it is probable I may gain by the opposition, and turn the disappointment to an advantage.

XXI. Among all things in the universe direct your worship to the greatest. And which is that? It is that Being which manages and governs all the rest. And as you worship the best thing in nature, so you are to pay a proportionable regard to the best thing in yourself. You will know it by its relation to the Deity. The quality of its functions will discover it. It is the reigning power within you, which disposes of your actions and your fortune.

XXII. That which does not damnify the city,¹ or body politic, cannot, properly speaking, damnify any person that belongs to it. Therefore, when you think you are ill-used, let this reflection be your remedy, and say thus to yourself, If the community is not the worse for it, neither am I. But if the community is injured, your business is to show the person concerned his fault, but not to grow passionate about it.

XXIII. Reflect frequently upon the instability of things, and how very fast the scenes of nature are shifted. Matter is in a perpetual flux. Change is always and everywhere at work; it strikes through causes and effects, and leaves nothing fixed and permanent. And then how very near the two vast gulfs of time, the past and the future, stand together! Now, upon the whole, is not that man a blockhead that thinks these momentary things big enough either to make him proud or uneasy?

XXIV. Remember what an atom your person stands for in respect of the universe, what a minute of unmeasurable time comes to your share, and what a small concern you are in the empire of fate.

XXV. A man misbehaves himself towards me. What is that to me? The action is his, and the will that set him upon it is his, and therefore let him look to it. As for me, I am in the condition Providence would have me, and am doing what becomes me.

XXVI. Whether the motions of your body are rugged or agree-

¹ By the city the emperor means the world, to which, as he observes, private disadvantages are a convenience.

able, do not let your reason be concerned with them; confine the impressions to their respective quarters, and let your mind keep her distance and not run in. It is true, that which results from the law of the union, from the force of sympathy or constitution, must be felt, for nature will have its course; but though the sensation cannot be stopped, it must not be overrated nor strained to the quality of good or evil.

XXVII. We ought to converse with the gods, and live the life that they do. This is done by being contented with the appointments of Providence, and by obeying the orders of that genius, which is both the deputy and the offspring of Jupiter. Now this divine authority is neither more nor less than that soul and reason which every man carries about him.

XXVIII. Are you angry at a rank smell or an ill-scented breath? Why, if a man's lungs or stomach are ulcerated, or his arm-pits out of order, how can he help it? But you will say, the case is not parallel between an ill action and an ill breath—the one is choice, and the other necessity. Well, if you think mankind so full of reason, pray make use of your own. Argue the case with the faulty person, and show him his error. If your advice prevails, he is what you would have him, and then there is no need of being angry. And lastly, do not mismanage either by your haughtiness or servility.

XXIX. You may live now, if you please, as you would choose to do if you were near dying. But suppose people will not let you? why, then, give life the slip,¹ but by no means make a misfortune of it. If the room smokes, I leave it, and there is an end; for why should one be concerned at the matter? However, if nothing of this kind drives me out, I will stay, behave myself like a man of spirit, and do what I have a mind to; but then I will have a mind to nothing but what I am led to by reason and public interest.

XXX. God, or the soul of the universe, is of a sociable disposition. For this reason He has made the coarser part of the creation for the sake of the finer. And as for those beings of the higher rank, He has engaged them to each other by inclination. You see how admirably things are ranged, and sorted according to the dignity of their kind, and cemented together by nature and benevolence.

¹ A Stoical piece of distraction.

XXXI. Recollect how you have behaved yourself all along, towards the gods, your parents, brothers, wife, and children ; towards your instructors, governors, friends, acquaintance, and servants ; whether you have not done or said something unbecoming to some of them. Recollect how much business you have been engaged in, and how well you have gone through it ; that now your task is done, and the history of your life finished. Remember likewise how much bravery you can make out ; how much of pleasure, and pain, and grandeur you have despised ; and how often you have done good against evil.

XXXII. Why should skill and knowledge be disturbed at the censures of ignorance ? But you will say, Who are these knowing and skilful people ? Why, those who are acquainted with the original cause and end of all things, with that reason that pervades the mass of matter, renews the world at certain periods, and governs it through all the lengths of time.

XXXIII. You will quickly be reduced to ashes and skeleton ; and it may be you may have a name left you, and it may be not. And what is a name ? Nothing but sound and syllable. And then for those things which are so much valued in the world, they are miserably empty and insignificant. The prize is so mean that it makes the scuffle about them ridiculous. It puts one in mind of a parcel of puppies snarling for a bone, and the contests of little children, sometimes transported and sometimes all in tears about a plaything. And as for modesty and good faith, truth and justice, they have left this wicked world and retired to heaven. And now what is it that can keep you here ? For if the objects of sense are floating and changeable, and the organs misty and apt to be imposed on ; if the soul is but a vapour drawn off the blood, and the applause of little mortals insignificant ;—if the case stands thus, what is it you stay for ? Why, I am resolved to have patience until I am either extinguished or removed.¹ And until that time comes, what is to be done ? The answer is easy—to worship the gods, and speak honourably of them ; to be beneficial to mankind ; to bear with their faults and let their property alone ; and lastly, to remember that whatever lies without the compass of your person is nothing of yours nor in your power.

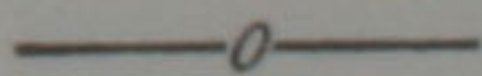
XXXIV. You may be always successful if you do but set out well, and let your thoughts and practice proceed upon grounds and

¹ Into a state of separation.

method. There are two properties and privileges common to God and all rational beings; the one is, not to be hindered by anything foreign; the other, to make virtue their supreme satisfaction, and not so much as to desire anything further.

XXXV. If this accident is no fault of mine, nor a consequence of it, and besides, if the community is never the worse for it, why am I concerned? Now, which way the community¹ may be damnified, I shall discourse afterwards.²

XXXVI. Do not suffer a sudden impression to overbear your judgment. Let those that want your assistance have it, as far as the case requires. But if fortune, as they call it, lies hard upon them, do not you conclude upon any real damage, for there is no such thing. However, upon the score of tenderness and humanity, you may condescend to their weakness, and treat them a little in their own way. But then you must remember to keep your notion true, and not suffer your compassion to run away with your reason. Thus, when you are haranguing in the Rostra³ and courting the populace, when you are thus busy, I say, a little of this to yourself would not be amiss. Hark you, friend, have you forgot that this glitter of honour is but tinsel and pageantry? I grant it, but for all that, it is extremely valued. It is mighty well. And because other people are fools, must you be so too? You may be a happy fellow in any ground, provided you have the wit to choose your fortune handsomely. Now, if you ask further, I must tell you, if your manners be good, your fortune can never be bad. For, in a word, happiness lies all in the functions of reason, in warrantable desires and regular practice.



BOOK VI.

I. As matter is all of it pliable and obsequious, so that sovereign reason which gives laws to it has neither motive nor inclination to bring an evil upon anything. This great being is no way unfriendly or hostile in his nature; he forms and governs all things, but hurts nothing.

¹ By the community is meant the world.

² See Book viii. sect. 55.

³ A pulpit in one of the squares at Rome, where the great men use to make speeches to carry elections.

II. Do but your duty, and do not trouble yourself about your condition. If you behave yourself well, never mind whether it is in the cold or by a good fire; whether you are overwatched or satisfied with sleep; whether you have a good word or a bad one; whether you are in health or dying; for this last must be done at one time or other. It is part of the business of life to lose it handsomely. Upon the whole, if we do but manage the present to advantage, that is enough.

III. Look thoroughly into matters, and let not the distinction or intrinsic value of anything escape you.

IV. The present appearance of things will quickly undergo a change, and be either exhaled into common matter, or dispersed into their respective elements.¹

V. That intelligent Being that governs the universe has perfect views of everything; his knowledge penetrates the quality of matter, and sees through all the consequences of his own operations.

VI. The best way of revenge is not to imitate the injury.

VII. Be always doing something serviceable to mankind, and let this constant generosity be your only pleasure, and not forgetting in the meantime a due reverence and regard to the Deity.

VIII. It is the governing part of the mind which awakens thought, and alters the quality of it; which gives what air she pleases to her own likeness, and to all the accidents and circumstances without her.

IX. The particular effects in the world are all wrought by one intelligent nature. This universal cause has no foreign assistant, no interloping principle, either without his jurisdiction or within it.

X. For argument's sake let us use a disjunction; the world, then, is either nothing but a rencounter of atoms, a heap of confusion, and a hurry or chance, or else it is the effect of design, and under the laws of order and providence. If the first, what should I stay for, where nature is in such a hotch-potch, and things are so blindly jumbled together? Why do not I rather make it my choice to

¹ Some philosophers held all matter was the same; and others maintained that the four elements were distinct and original principles of bodies.

disengage and return to the element of earth as soon as may be?¹ Why should I give myself any trouble? Let me do what I will, my constitution must be broken, and my atoms all disbanded in a little time. But if there is a Providence, and the latter part of the disjunction holds good, then I adore the great Governor of the world, and am easy in the prospect of protection.

XI. When you happen to be ruffled a little, and throw off your temper by any cross accident, retire immediately into your reason, and do not move out of rule any longer than needs must. For the sooner you recover a false step, the more you will be master of your practice.

XII. Put the case you had a mother-in-law and a mother at the same time; though you would pay regard to the first, your converse I conceive would be mostly with the latter. Let the court and philosophy represent these two relations to you; apply frequently to this last, and set up your stand with her; for it is a life of virtue and philosophy which makes you and your courtiers tolerable to each other.

XIII. To check the pleasure of luxury, we should in our fancy at least take away the garnishing of the dishes, the value the cook sets upon them, and give them names less tempting than ordinary. For the purpose, we may say this is but the carcass of a fish, this fowl has no more life in it than I shall have when I am buried, and the other is no better than a piece of a dead hog. And then for this bottle of Falerno,² what is it but a little moisture squeezed out of the tumour of a grape? And to mortify the vanity of fine clothes, and prevent your purple³ from growing too big for you, consider that it is nothing but sheep's hair twisted together, and stained in the gore of a little shell-fish. And if we were to proceed to some other satisfactions of sense, we should find them but coarse in their causes and constitution; and as these notions strike through the surface, press into the heart of things, and show them in their natural colours, so we should carry them on and apply them to all the pageantry of life. And where things appear most plausible and pretending, be sure to bring them to the test, and look within them. And when the paint is thus pulled off, the coarseness of them will

¹ An expression of Homer.

² Falernus, a country in Campania, which affords the richest wines in Italy.

³ Purple was so much the privilege of the emperor, that it was treason for the subject to wear it.

easily be discovered. Without this care, figure and appearance are great cheats, and when you think your fancy is best employed, you will be most fooled. Even virtue itself is sometimes counterfeited, and gravity is nothing else but grimace. Thus Crates discovered Xenocrates' philosophy to be only skin deep,—great demureness without, and no less vanity within.

XIV. The inclination of the generality may be reduced to these heads. Some people are little enough to be smitten with things in the state of bare existence or vegetation, as with wood, stones, fruit, and such like. Others, who are somewhat more tolerable in their fancy, must have life to charm them, and these, it may be, are mightily in love with their flocks and herds. A third sort, better furnished than the former, admire nothing beneath human nature; but then they do not take in the whole kind, but it is either the skill, parts, or property¹ of some particulars which affect them. But he that values a rational creature without limitation or partiality, runs into none of the dotages above mentioned, but makes it his chief business to look at home, to keep reason and good-nature stirring, and to assist all mankind in the public interest.

XV. Some things are pressing for birth and being, and others are posting off, and that which was entire just now is part of it spent already. The world is renewed by this change and rolling, no less than time is by a perpetual succession. Now, who would dote upon things hurried down the stream thus fast, and which it is impossible to take hold on? Such a passion is much like falling in love with a sparrow flying over your head—you have as it were but one glimpse of her, and she is out of sight. To go on; life is but a sort of exhalation of the blood, and a little air sucked into the lungs. Now, to return your breath for the support of life, and expire your last, when you lose it, is much what the same action.

XVI. Neither the perspiration of plants, nor the breath of animals, nor the impressions of sensation, nor the poppet motions² of passions, are privileges of any great value. To which we may add the instinct of crowding into herds, together with the functions of nutrition; this latter being not unlike a separating kind of evacuation. What then is it that you count worth your esteem? Huzzas and acclamations? Not at all. Why, then, you must not value harangues and panegyric, for this is but a mannerly sort of

¹ As in slaves who belong to their masters.

² Because they do as it were dance men upon wires.

bawling about a man. Well, I find fame and glory will not tempt you, what then is there behind worth the having? To govern your motions, and make use of your being according to the intentions of nature; this is the design of arts and improvement in other cases; every artificer and profession endeavouring to make the thing fit to answer the end for which it was intended. This, for instance, is the design of vine-dressers, those that manage horses and make dogs; their business is to make the most of things, and drive them up to the top of their kind. And what other view has learning and education but to improve the faculties and set them the right way at work? It is agreed, then, the main point lies here. Compass but this, and let the world rub. What! must your inclinations always run riot, and will you never keep them true to one thing? Must you be still hankering after this fancy and the other? Why, then, let me tell you, you will always be a slave, always in wants and disquiet. This temper will let loose abundance of uneasy passions upon you. It will make you grow envious, full of jealousy and suspicion, and apt to overreach those who are possessed of something you have a mind to. And when strong desires are unsatisfied, you will find yourself mightily disturbed; and this will make you murmur, and grow mutinous against the gods. But if you come once to pay a due regard to your reason, you will be pleased with yourself, serviceable to society, and compliant with the gods, that is, you will be entirely satisfied with their administration.

XVII. The elements either press upwards, or tumble downwards, or else run round in a circle. But virtue has none of these motions; she is of a nobler kind. Her progress in regular thoughts is somewhat unintelligible, but always prosperous.

XVIII. What a strange humour there is amongst some people. They do not care to afford a good word to their contemporaries, and yet are very desirous of being praised by posterity; that is by those they never saw, nor ever will have the least acquaintance with. Now this is almost such a freak as it would be to be disturbed because you were not commended by the generations that lived before you.

XIX. Because you find a thing very difficult, do not presently conclude that no man can master it. But whatever you observe proper and practicable by another, believe likewise within your own power.

XX. If an antagonist in the circus tears our flesh with his nails, or tilts against us with his head, we do not use to cry out foul play, nor be offended at the rough usage, nor suspect him afterwards as a dangerous person in conversation. It is true, when we are at the exercise, we guard and parry, but all this is done without raising ill blood, or looking upon the man as an enemy. Let us act at this rate in the other instances of life. When we receive a blow, let us not think ourselves in a battle, but at a trial of skill. We may fence, as I said before, and manage the contest with caution, but not with malice and ill-will.

XXI. If any one can convince me of an error, I shall be very glad to change my opinion, for truth is my business, and right information hurts nobody. No, he that continues in ignorance and mistake, it is he that receives the mischief.

XXII. I will do my duty, that is enough. As for other things, I shall never be disturbed about them. For if they happen to come cross, it is but considering that they are either without life, or without reason, or without judgment, and thus I can easily pass them over.

XXIII. As for brute animals, and things undignified with reason, use them freely and boldly, as being of a superior order yourself. But treat men like beings of your own kind, and members of the same society. And in all your affairs invoke the gods for their assistance. As for the time you are to continue this regularity, never trouble yourself whether it is long or short ; for three hours of life thus well spent will do your business.

XXIV. Alexander the Great and his groom, when dead, were both upon the same level, and ran the same fortune of being either scattered into atoms or absorbed in the soul of the universe.¹

XXV. What abundance of motions there are in the body, what abundance of thoughts and sensations in the mind at the same time ! What a vast number of operations are performed, and how much business is despatched within us in a single moment ! He that considers this will not wonder so much that infinitely more productions should start out together in the universe, or that the soul of the world should by once exerting Himself look over, actuate, and govern the whole mass of matter.

¹ See Book iv. sect. 14.

XXVI. Suppose you were asked to spell Antoninus's name, would you holloa every letter in the company's ears? Or would you return their passion, if they were angry? I conceive you would rather go mildly to work, and give them the letters and syllables as they stand, without noise. Apply this to greater instances, and remember that all duties in morality have such a determinate number of parts and circumstances to render them complete; these must be all taken care of, and performed in order; but then it must be done smoothly, without growing hot upon meeting with peevishness and provocation.

XXVII. It is a sort of cruelty to baulk people's fancies, and not give them leave to pursue what they reckon their interest. And with this you are chargeable in some measure yourself when you are angry with those that do amiss. Why so? Because they imagine they are carrying on their own interest and convenience. But that, you will say, is their mistake. I grant it; but then it is your part to lead them out of it, and to show them their error without passion and resentment.

XXVIII. What is death? It is a resting from sensation and desire; a stop upon the rambling of thought, and a release from the drudgery about your carcass.

XXIX. Keep up your spirits for business as long as your constitution lasts; for it would be a shame if your mind should falter and give in before your body.

XXX. Have a care you have not too much of an emperor in you, and that you do not fall into the liberties and pride of your predecessors. These humours are easily learned, therefore guard against the infection. Be candid, sincere, and modestly grave. Let justice and piety have their share in your character; let your temper be remarkable for mildness and good-nature, and be always enterprizing and vigorous in your business. And, in short, strive to be just such a man as virtue and philosophy would make you. Worship the gods and protect mankind. This life is short, and all the advantage you can get by it, is the opportunities you have of adoring those above¹ and doing good to those below you. Do everything like a disciple of Antoninus;² imitate him in the vigour and

¹ The gods.

² The author means the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who was his adoptive father.

constancy of his good conduct, in the equality, sweetness, and piety of his temper, the serenity of his aspect, the modesty and unpretendingness of his behaviour, and the generous ambition he had to be perfectly master of his business. Further, it was his way to dismiss nothing till he had looked through it, and viewed it on all sides ; to bear unreasonable remonstrance without making a return ; never to be in a hurry ; to be backward in giving encouragement to informers. He was a great judge of men and manners ; but of no satirical or reprimanding humour. Not at all apt to be frightened or surprised ; not too suspicious, nor in the least overrun with impertinence and conceit. Expense and figure was none of his fancy, as one might easily perceive, by his palace, his furniture, his habit, his eating, and his attendance. Lenity was his humour, and fatiguing his delight. He was so temperate in his diet that he was able to sit at the council board till night, without withdrawing into another room ; for the necessities of nature never returned upon him till their usual time. He was firm in his friendship, and steady and agreeable in the manner of showing it. He gave his courtiers all the freedom imaginable to contradict him, and was pleased with the proposal of a better expedient than his own. To conclude, he was a religious prince, but on this side superstition. Pray imitate these good qualities of his, that you may have the satisfaction of them at your last hour.

XXXI. Rouse and recollect yourself, and you will perceive your trouble lay only in a scene of imagination ;¹ and when you are well awake, turn the tables, and carry the contemplation through life ; and then the world in a dream, and the world out of it, will appear muchwhat the same thing.

XXXII. My person consists of soul and body. To this latter all things are morally indifferent ; the body being in no condition to make a distinction of this kind. And as to my mind, there is nothing can affect her in the quality of good or evil, her own actions excepted ; now these are all within her power. And of all her actions she is only concerned with the present ; for what is past or to come signifies as much as nothing, and falls under no moral character.²

XXXIII. As long as the hands and feet do the work they were made for, they move naturally and with ease. Thus while a man

¹ The emperor seems to have made this reflection after a troublesome dream.

² A kind of paradox.

performs the functions of his species, and keeps true to his condition, he feels no more weight than what nature lays upon him. Now that which is not beside the intentions of nature can never be a real misfortune.

XXXIV. What abundance of sensual satisfaction have thieves, catamites, parricides, and usurpers been possessed of? We may guess at the quality of pleasure by its falling to the share of such wretches as these.

XXXV. Do you not observe among your artificers, though they bear the contradiction and impertinence of the unskilful, yet they will not comply so far as to be talked out of their knowledge, or work against the rules of their trade? And is it not a scandalous business that an architect or a physician should have more regard for their profession than a man has for his? For his, I say, in which he has the honour of the gods for his partners. And what is a man's trade simply considered as a man? Why, nothing but the study and practice of virtue and moral philosophy.

XXXVI. The vast continents of Europe and Asia are but corners of the creation. The ocean is but a drop, and Mount Athos but a grain in respect of the universe; and the present instant of time but a point to the extent of eternity. These things have all of them little, changeable, and transitory beings. Remember likewise that all things proceed from the soul of the universe, either by direct or consequential causality. Thus the growling deformity of a lion, the poison of serpents, thorns and dirt, and whatever seems coarse or offensive in nature, start out of something more noble, or belong to the entireness of her beautiful productions. Do not therefore suppose them insignificant and unworthy the Being you worship, but consider the fountain from whence all things spring.¹

XXXVII. He that has taken a view of the present age has seen as much as if he had begun with the world, and gone to the end of it; for all things are of a kind and of a colour.²

XXXVIII. The mutual dependence all things have, and the relation they stand in to each other, is worth your frequent observation. For all the parts of matter are in some measure linked together and interwoven, and for this reason have a natural

¹ See Book iii. sect. 2, Book viii. sect. 50.

² See Book ii. sect. 14, Book ix. sect. 35.

sympathy for each other. And thus motion and the continuity of matter makes one body consequent and connected to another.¹

XXXIX. Bring your will to your fate, and suit your mind to your circumstances; and love those people heartily that it is your fortune to be engaged with.

XL. Those tools and utensils are said to be right when they serve for the uses they were made; though in this case the artificer that made them is commonly absent. But in the works of nature, the forming power is always present with the effect, and deserves a particular regard. From hence you are to conclude that as long as you behave yourself as this sovereign power directs you, you will have your wishes in everything. Indeed, it is this bent of inclination which makes the gods happy, and gives satisfaction to the soul of the universe.

XLI. If you suppose anything which lies out of your command to be good or evil, your missing the one or falling into the other will unavoidably make you a malcontent against the gods, and put you upon hating those people whom you either know or suspect to be instrumental in your misfortune. To be plain; our mistake in this supposition and pursuing objects above our reach often makes us very unreasonable and unjust. But if we confine the notion of good and evil to things in our power, then all the motives to complaint and ill-nature will drop off; then we shall neither remonstrate against heaven nor quarrel with any mortal living.

XLII. All people concur in some measure to the purposes of Providence, though all are not sensible of it. And thus, as I remember, Heraclitus observes, that those who are asleep may be said to help the world forward. In short, the grand design is carried on by different hands and different hearts too. For even he that complains makes head against his fate, and strives to pull the administration in pieces; even such a testy mortal as this is useful in his way.² Consider then how you are ranged, and whether you have joined the dutiful or the disaffected party. For He that governs the world will certainly make you good for something, and prove serviceable to his scheme one way or other. Have a care you do not serve for a foil or a jest, and make such a ridiculous

¹ This section seems to be levelled against Epicurus's hypothesis of a vacuum.

² See Book ix. sect. 42.

figure in nature as that Doggril did in the play Chrysippus mentions.

XLIII. Every one should keep to his post, and be contented with the assignments of Providence. The sun never covets the properties of a shower, nor does one god interfere with another. Everything is serviceable in his own station, and unressembling causes unite to advantage in the effect. Are not the stars different from each other? and yet their influences agree together upon sublunary productions.

XLIV. If the gods have decreed me anything, they have decreed my advantage. If not, they must either be mistaken in their measures or unbenevolent in their design. Now, as the first part of this supposition is absurd, so the latter is incomprehensible. For to what purpose should they intend me any harm? What would themselves or their universe get by it? But granting they have made no particular provision for me, yet since their government of the world is not disputed, the consequence will be much the same. For this way my affairs will be comprehended and fall within the compass of their general providence, and why then should I not be contented with whatever happens? To put the case further. Suppose the gods take care of nothing, which, by the way, we must reckon a scandalous opinion, or else it will be high time to leave off the common solemnities of sacrificing, prayers, and religious swearing. If things lie thus, why all this superstitious trouble in these and many other instances? To what purpose should we behave ourselves as if we were in the very court and company of heaven? However, since a supposition implies nothing of reality, let it pass for once. If the gods therefore will take care of none of us, it is certainly lawful for me to take care of myself. Now it is my right to state the notion of my own convenience; and what is that? Why, that is convenient for every one which suits his nature and his species. Now my nature has reason, sociable principles, and public inclination in it. By consequence, the interest of my country must be my own. Take me then under the particular distinction of Antoninus, and Rome is my town and country; but consider me as a man in general, and I belong to the corporation of the world. That, therefore, and only that, which is serviceable to both these societies, is an advantage to me.

XLV. Whatever happens to particulars is serviceable to the universe; that thought might satisfy. But we can carry the reasons

for acquiescence further; for, upon observation, you will perceive that what is profitable to one man is in some measure for the interest of the rest. And here I take the word profit in the sense of common acceptation, and not in the language of the Stoics.¹

XLVI. You may remember at a play, or such resembling diversions, coming over and over with the same thing tires the sense and extinguishes the pleasure. Remove this contemplation into life; for here all things come round, and bring the same causes and appearances along with them. How long, then, will it be before you are cloyed with these repetitions?

XLVII. Consider with yourself that people of all conditions, professions, and countries are forced to die. Cast your eyes upon what sort of mortals you please, and you will find them go the way of all flesh. And we must take our turn too with the rest, and remove to the same place whither so many famous orators and philosophers, generals, princes, and heroes have shown us the way. Those great sages, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates; those celebrated mathematicians, Eudoxus, Hipparchus, and Archimedes, had no privilege or protection against fate. Not to mention a great many other extraordinary geniuses, persons of industry, reach, and spirit; they are all gone. Even those buffoons who, like Menippus, were always flouting and fleering at mankind, though they lived in jest, they died in earnest. Remember they are all in their graves; and where is the harm of all this? Nay, what are those the worse for it that have not so much as left their own names behind them? In a word, there is only one thing here worth the minding, and that is, not to imitate the degeneracy of mortals, but to be true, honest, and good-natured even amongst knaves and sharpers.

XLVIII. When you have a mind to divert your fancy, consider the good qualities of your acquaintance; as the enterprising vigour of this man, the modesty of another, the liberality of a third, and so on; for there is nothing so entertaining as a lively image of the virtues and advantages of those we converse with. Let such an idea therefore be always ready and at hand.

XLIX. You are not angry because you weigh so light in the scale, and do not ride forty stone. Why then should you be

¹ The Stoics esteemed nothing profitable but virtue and honesty, though at the same time they allow other things to be useful.

dissatisfied because your life is not drawn out to an unusual and extraordinary period? You ought to be no more covetous of time than you are of bulk, but be contented with the common allowance.

L. It is good to try to bring people to a right understanding of the case, but if they grow troublesome, be governed by your own conscience, and never ask anybody's leave to be honest. If there comes a force upon you, and stops your progress, disengage, and be easy, and make a virtue of necessity. Remember that you undertook the business upon the condition of its being feasible, and never pretended to grasp at impossibilities. What was it, then, you aimed at? Why, to do your best, and secure your reason. Right! And this may be effectually done, though the enterprize should happen to miscarry.

LI. The ambitious person lodges his happiness in the fancy of another. The voluptuary admires at home, and keeps within the reach of his senses; but a man of understanding depends upon himself, and makes action, and not appetite, his pleasure.

LII. We are at liberty not to misinterpret any accident, and by consequence may be free from disturbance. Things have no such power over thoughts as to make us of what judgment they please.

LIII. Accustom yourself to attend to what is discoursed, and, as far as you can, get into the soul of him that speaks.

LIV. That which is not for the interest of the whole swarm is not for the interest of a single bee.

LV. If the patient rails at the doctor, or the crew at the master of the vessel, who will they mind, or what good is to be done upon them? Or, which way can either health or a good voyage be expected?

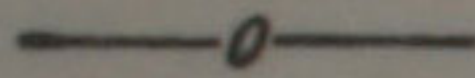
LVI. How many people that came into the world with me are gone out of it already?

LVII. Honey tastes bitter to such as are troubled with an overflowing of the gall; and people bitten by a mad dog are frightened at the sight of water; and, on the other hand, a little ball is a curious thing to a child. This considered; why should you be

angry with any one? Can you imagine that error and ignorance has less force upon the mind than a little gall or venom upon the body?

LVIII. As nobody can rob you of the privileges of your nature, or force you to live counter to your reason, so nothing can happen to you but what comes from Providence, and consists with the interest of the universe.¹

LIX. Consider with yourself what sort of people your men of popularity must court, what scandalous submissions they are obliged to, and what poor returns they have for their pains. And then how soon death and oblivion sweep all before them.



BOOK VII.

I. WHAT is vice and wickedness? No rarity, you may depend on it. When you are in danger of being shocked, consider that the sight is nothing but what you have frequently seen already. To be brief, men and manners are generally muchwhat alike. All ages and histories, towns and families, are of the same complexion, and full of the same stories. There is nothing new to be met with, but all things are common and quickly over.

II. Opinions, whether right or wrong, can never be pulled out of your head, unless the grounds and reasons of them are first removed. It is your interest, therefore, to awaken your memory, and refresh those notions which are serviceable and well examined. For the purpose; you may say to yourself, it is in my power to form a right judgment upon the present emergency; and why then should I be disturbed at it? For nothing that does not enter my mind, and get within me, can hurt me. Hold to this, and you are safe. Come, I will tell you a way how you may live your time over again. Do but recollect and review what you have seen already, and the work is done.

III. Gazing after triumphs and cavalcades; the diversions of the stage; farms well stocked with flocks and herds; contests for victory

¹ See Book v. sect. 8.

in the field,—these are the little pleasures and concerns of mortals. Would you have a further illustration, and see an image of them elsewhere? Fancy, then, that you saw two or three whelps quarrelling about a bone; fishes scrambling for a bait; pismires in a peck of troubles about the carriage of a grain of wheat; mice frightened out of their wits, and scouring across the room; puppets dancing upon a wire, etc. And after all, though human life is but ordinary and trifling, a wise man must be easy and good-humoured, and not grow splenetic or haughty upon the contemplation; remembering, notwithstanding, that the true bulk and bigness of a man is to be measured by the size of his business and the quality of his inclinations.

IV. Do not let either discourse or action pass unobserved; attend to the sense and signification of the one, and to the tendency and design of the other.

V. Am I sufficiently qualified for this business or not? If I am, I will make use of my talent, as given me by heaven for that purpose. If I am not, I will either let it alone, and resign it to a better capacity, or else I will do what I can, I will give my advice, and put the executing part into an abler hand; and thus, by looking out for help, the juncture may be nicked, and the general interest secured. For whatsoever I act, either by myself or in conjunction with another, I am always to aim at the advantage of the community.

VI. How many famous men are dropped out of history, and forgotten! And how many poets and panegyrists, that promised to keep up other people's names, have lost their own!

VII. Never be ashamed of assistance. Like a sentinel at the storming of a town, your business is to maintain your post and execute your orders. Now, suppose you happen to be lame at an assault, and cannot mount the breach upon your own feet, will not you suffer your comrade to help you?

VIII. Be not disturbed about the future; for if ever you come to it, you will have the same reason for your guide and protection which preserves you at present.

IX. All parts of the universe are interwoven and tied together, and no one thing is foreign or unrelated to another. This general

connexion gives unity and ornament to the world. For the world, take it altogether, is but one; there is but one sort of matter to make it of, one God to govern it, and one law to guide it. For, run through the whole system of rational beings, and you will find reason and truth is but single and the same. And thus beings of the same kind, and endued with the same reason, are made happy by the same exercises of it.

X. All compositions of matter fly off apace to the common stock and receptacle; spirits are quickly swallowed up in the soul of the universe,¹ and so is memory and fame in the gulf of time.

XI. With rational beings, nature and reason is the same thing. By consequence, to act according to the one must be to act according to the other.

XII. Either stand upright upon your own legs, or let another support you.

XIII. Does continuity and connexion create sympathy and relation in the parts of the body? Why, resemblance and, as one may say, consanguinity of nature does the same thing among rational beings; for though they are not tacked together by extension and union of place, they seem all made to co-operate with each other. This thought will be more intelligible and affecting if you frequently consider yourself as a member of the rational system; but if you reckon yourself only a part, this relation will prove too weak for a principle of action. This remoter notion will not cherish good nature enough, nor carry it to a just improvement. You will not love mankind so heartily as you should do. Under this persuasion a generous action will never delight and regale you. You will do a good office merely for fashion and decency, but not as if it was really a kindness to yourself.

XIV. Let accidents happen to such as are liable to the impression, and those that feel misfortune may complain of it if they please. As for me, let what will come, I can receive no damage by it, unless I think it a calamity; and it is in my power to think it none if I have a mind to it.

XV. Let people's tongues and actions be what they will, my

¹ See Book iv. sect. 14.

business is to keep my road, and be honest, and make the same speech to myself that a piece of gold or an emerald should, if they had sense and language. Let the world talk and take their method, I shall not mind it, but sparkle and shine on, and be true to my species and my colour.

XVI. Does not the mind give the man the disturbance? Does she not bring fears and fits of the spleen upon herself? Let any other body try to disquiet her if they can; when they have done their worst, it is in her power to prevent the impression. And as for this small carcass, let it complain, and feel, and be frightened, if it know how. It is true, the soul is the seat and principle of thought, and by consequence, of passion and pain; however, this passive capacity will do no harm, unless you throw her into fancies and fears about it.¹ For the mind is in her own nature self-sufficient, and must create her wants before she can feel them.² This privilege makes her impregnable, and above restraint, unless she teases and puts fetters upon herself.

XVII. What is happiness but wise thinking, or a mind rightly disposed? Why then does fancy³ break in and disturb the scene? Begone! I will have nothing to do with the impostures of imagination! However, since they have custom to plead in their excuse, let them withdraw, and I will forgive them.

XVIII. Is any one afraid of dissolution and change? I would gladly know what can be done without it. If the course of nature and the method of the universe will not reconcile us to the expectation, we are somewhat unreasonable. Pray, must not your wood be turned into a coal before your bath can be ready for you? Must not your meat be changed in your stomach, to make it fit to nourish you? Indeed, what part of life or convenience can go forward without alteration? Now, in all likelihood, a revolution in your carcass and condition may be as serviceable to the world in general as those alterations above mentioned are to you.

XIX. All particular bodies are quickly dissolved and hurried through the universal mass, where, at last, they incorporate, grow serviceable, and become a sort of limbs to the world. How many such eminent sages, as Chrysippus, Socrates, and Epictetus, have

¹ The old Stoical paradox.

² A Stoical piece of vanity.

³ That is a vulgar opinion concerning good and evil. Now all people are the vulgar with the Stoics except themselves.

sunk in the gulf of time? And the same reflection will hold good concerning any other person or thing whatsoever.

XX. I am only solicitous about one thing, and that is, lest I should not act up to the nature and dignity of a man; lest I should fail in some of the circumstances of my duty, and mismanage either in the matter, manner, or time of doing it.

XXI. It will not be long before you will have forgotten all the world; and in a little time, to be even, all the world will forget you too.

XXII. It is the privilege of human nature above brutes to love those that disoblige us; to practise with ease and inclination, you must consider that the offending party is of kin to you, that ignorance is the cause of the misbehaviour, that the will and the fault seldom go together,¹ that you will both of you quickly be in your graves; but especially consider that you have received no harm by the injury; for if your reason is untouched, and your mind never the worse, there can be no damages done.

XXIII. God, or the spirit of nature, works the mass of matter like wax. Now, for the purpose, it is a horse; soon after you will have it melted down, and run into the figure of a tree; and from this form it is possible it may remove into the flesh and bones of a man, or what you please, and it is but a little while that it is fixed in one species. Now, a trunk feels no more pain by being knocked in pieces than when it was first put together.²

XXIV. A sour, gruff look is very unnatural, and to put it on often will make it settle, and destroy the beauty and pleasantness of the aspect to that degree that it is never to be recovered; from whence you may conclude it a foolish custom.

XXV. It is high time for those people to die that have outlived the sense of their own misdemeanours.

XXVI. That Being which governs nature will quickly change the present face of it. One thing will be made out of another by frequent revolutions, and thus the world will be always coming new out of the mint.

¹ See this paradox further explained, sect. 3.

² This similitude is brought to insinuate the mind's independence on the body, which is all paradox.

XXVII. When any one misbehaves himself towards you, immediately bethink yourself what notions he has concerning advantage and disadvantage; when you have found out this, you will pity him, and neither be angry nor surprised at the matter. It may be, upon inquiry, you may find your opinions upon these points much the same, and then you ought to pardon him, for you would have done the same thing yourself upon the same occasion. But if your notions of good and evil are different, and more just than his, then your passion will yield to your good-nature, and you will easily bear with his ignorance.

XXVIII. Do not let your head run upon that which is none of your own, but pick out some of the best of your circumstances, and consider how eagerly you would wish for them, were they not in your possession; but then you must take care to keep your satisfaction within compass, for fear it should carry you too far, make you overvalue the object, and be disturbed at the loss of it.

XXIX. Fortify at home, and rely upon yourself, for a rational mind is born to the privilege of independence; honesty, and the inward quiet consequent to it, is enough, in all conscience, to make you happy.

XXX. Rub out the colours of imagination;¹ do not suffer your passions to make a machine of you; confine your care to the present;² look through the quality, and press into the nature of that which happens either to yourself or another. Distinguish the parts of your subject, and divide them into matter and form, and into body and spirit,³ when they have them. Think upon your last hour, and do not trouble yourself about other people's faults, but leave them with those that must answer for them.

XXXI. When you hear a discourse make your understanding keep pace with it, and reach as far as you can into those things which fall under your observation.

XXXII. Would you set off your person, and recommend yourself? Let it be done by simplicity and candour, by modesty of behaviour, and by indifference to external advantages. Love mankind and resign to Providence, for, as the poet observes, "All things are

¹ See sect. 17.

² See Book iii. sect 12, and alib.

³ See Book iv. sect. 21.

under law and superior direction." And what if the elements only had their course chalked out, and their motions prescribed them? But we may carry the conclusion further, for there are, at the most, but very few things in the world perfectly turned over to chance and liberty.

XXXIII. Let death make atoms or vacuum of me, or what you please, it will come to this upshot at last,—it will either extinguish my being or translate me to another state.

XXXIV. As for pain, if it is intolerable, the extremity will destroy itself and quickly despatch you. If it stays long, you will be big enough to grapple with it. Your mind, in the meantime, will save herself by the strength of thought, keep undisturbed, and suffer nothing.¹ And for your limbs that lie under the execution, if they can complain and make out anything, let them do it.

XXXV. To moderate your ambition about fame, consider the generality of the people that are to commend and take notice of you, how insignificant they are, and how little in their pursuits and aversions! Consider also that as one heap of sand thrown upon another covers the first, so it happens in the business of fame, a new glory eclipses an old one, and the latter age is a sort of extinguisher to the former.

XXXVI. A saying of Plato:² "He that has raised his mind to a due pitch of greatness, that has looked through the world from one end to the other, and carried his view through the whole extent of matter and time, do you imagine such a one will think human life any great business? Not at all (says the other man in the dialogue); what then? Will the fear of death afflict him? Far from it."

XXXVII. There is a great deal of truth in that sentence of Antisthenes: "That it is the fate of princes to be ill spoken of for their good deeds."

XXXVIII. It is a shame that a man should not be master of his mind as well as of his countenance; that his will should be stronger for his looks than for his thoughts: prescribe what air he pleases to the first, and let the other lie mutinous and ungovernable.

¹ The old paradox.

² Plato, *De Republic.*, lib. vi.

XXXIX. "It is to no purpose to fall out with accidents and things, for they do not care a farthing for it."¹

XL. "Manage yourself with that advantage, that I, and the gods too, may have pleasure and satisfaction in your conduct."²

XLI. "Fate mows down life like corn, this mortal falls, and the other stands a while."³

XLII. "Is my family struck out of Providence, and do the gods forget me? If it be so, they have reason for their neglect."

XLIII. "Virtue and happiness is a present I can make myself."

XLIV. "Not too much sympathy with other people's sorrow;"⁴ and keep your passions from all kinds of transport and excess.

XLV. More of Plato's sentences:⁵ "To such a one I should return this very reasonable answer. Hark ye, friend, you are mightily out if you think a man that is good for anything is either afraid of living or dying. No; his concern is only to bring his actions to the test, to secure his practice, and stand clear of knavery and misbehaviour."

XLVI. Plato again:⁶ "Gentlemen, in my opinion, when a man is satisfied with his own choice, or put into a post by his superiors, his business is to stand buff against danger and death, and fear nothing but disgrace and cowardice."

XLVII. Plato once more:⁷ "With your favour, sir, it is not always the part of virtue and bravery to preserve either your own life or your neighbour's. He that is a man in good earnest must not be so mean as to whine for life, and grasp intemperately at old age; let him leave this point to Providence. The women in the nursery can tell him that we must go when our time is come. His duty is to consider how he may make the most of his life, and spend what there is to the best advantage."

¹ Eurip. *Belleroph.* Here the emperor transcribed some sentences of the poets into his commonplace book.

² This advice seems intended for his son Commodus.

³ Eurip. *Hypsip.* l.

⁴ Aristoph. *Acharn.*

⁵ Plato, *Apolog.*

⁶ *Apolog.*

⁷ Plato, *Gorgias.*

XLVIII. Let the transmutation and shuffling of the elements be frequently the subjects of your meditation. Consider the course of the stars as if you were driving through the sky, and kept them company. Such contemplations as these brighten the soul, and scour off the rust contracted by conversing here below.

XLIX. It is a handsome saying, that of Plato's: "That when we consider the state and condition of mankind, we should place our imagination upon some lofty pyramid or observatory; and from thence take a prospect of the world, and look it over as it were at one view. Here we may see how mortals are drawn up into towns and armies in one place, and dispersed for husbandry in another! Here are abundance of things to be seen together, marriage and confederacy treated by nations and families, births and burials, feasting and jollity at one house, and all in tears at another. Here they are in a mighty hurry at the bar, and there up to the ears in trading and merchandise. Towards the end of the prospect, it may be you may see a great deal of barren and uninhabitable wilderness, with variety of barbarous people beyond it. Take it altogether, it is a strange medley of business, humour, and condition; and yet if you consider it thoroughly, you will find the diversity and disagreement of the parts contribute to the beauty of the whole."

L. By looking back into history, and considering the fate and revolutions of government, you will be able to draw a guess, and almost prophesy upon the future. For things past, present, and to come, are strangely uniform and of a colour, and are commonly cast in the same mould. So that upon the matter, forty years of human life may serve for a sample of ten thousand.

LI. "What is sprung from earth dissolves to earth again, and heaven-born things fly to their native seat."¹

If the matter does not stand thus, either the atoms will be untwisted, or the elements scattered into insensibility.

LII. "We feed ourselves up for long life with a great deal of care and expense; but alas! fate will find us out, and when the gods give the sign, we must embark, though never so unwilling."²

LIII. Can another man ride or fence better than you? It may be so. But though you may fall short in your exercises, let nobody

¹ Eurip. *Chrysip.*

² Eurip.

outdo you in virtue and behaviour. Let nobody be more liberal and modest, more resigned and forgiving than yourself.

LIV. As long as a man can make use of his reason, and act in concert with the gods, he needs not question the event. There can be no grounds to suspect misfortune, provided you stick close to nature, and manage within the character of your condition.

LV. It is always and everywhere in your power to resign to the gods, to be just to mankind, and to examine every object with that nicety as never to be imposed on.

LVI. Never make any rambling inquiries after other people's thoughts, but look directly at the mark which nature has set you. Nature, I say, either that of the universe¹ or your own. The first leads you to submission to Providence, the latter to act as becomes you. Now that which is suitable to the frame and constitution of things is what becomes them. To be more particular; the rest of the world is designed for the service of rational beings, in consequence of this general appointment, by which the lower order of things are made for the use of the more noble; and rational creatures, standing all upon a level, are designed for the advantage of each other. Now, a beneficent and sociable temper is that which human nature was principally intended for; the next thing designed in our being is to be proof against corporeal impressions. It being the peculiar privilege of reason to move within herself, to fortify against an assault, and not suffer sensation or passion to break in upon her; for these are both of animal and inferior quality. But the understanding part claims a right to govern, and will not bend to matter and appetite. And good reason for it, since she was born to command and make use of them. The third main requisite in a rational being is to secure the assent from rashness and mistake. Let your mind but compass these points and stick to them, and then she is mistress of everything which belongs to her.

LVII. We ought to spend the remainder of our life as if it was more than we expected, and lent us on purpose for wiser management.

LVIII. Let your fate be your inclination, for there is nothing more reasonable and prudential.

LIX. When any accident happens, call to mind those who have

¹ The nature of the universe is God, in the language of the Stoics.

formerly been under the same circumstances; how full of surprise, complaint, and trouble they were about the matter. And where are they now? They are gone, their murmuring could not make them immortal. To what purpose should you imitate their behaviour; cannot you leave foreign humours and things to their own mismanagement and bias? Your business is only to mind your conduct, and give a turn of advantage to the emergency. Now you may be the better for the misfortune, if you will but take care, and do nothing but what is warrantable; always remembering that accidents are indifferent in themselves, and only good or bad for us accordingly as we use them.

LX. Look inwards, and turn over your self; for you have a lasting mine of happiness at home, if you will but dig for it.

LXI. Take care that your motions and gestures may be grave and composed; for the same air of sense and decency which the mind can put into the face ought to be visible through the whole body. But then all this must be done without the least affectation.

LXII. The right knack of living resembles wrestling more than dancing, for here a man does not know his movement and his measures beforehand. No; he is obliged to stand strong against chance, and secure himself as occasion shall offer.

LXIII. Well! it seems you desire to be commended. But what sort of people are they that must do you this kindness, and how are their understandings furnished? Truly, if you do but consider the size of their sense and the disorder of their passions, you will pity their ignorant misbehaviour, and not care a rush for their approbation.

LXIV. It is a saying of Plato's,¹ that nobody misses the truth by their good-will. The same may be said with reference to honesty, sobriety, good-nature, and the like. Be particularly careful to remember this hint, for it will help to sweeten your temper.

LXV. When you lie under any corporal affliction, let this lenitive be at hand to relieve you—that there is no scandal in pain, that the sovereign part of your mind is never the worse for it. For how can she suffer unless her essence or her benevolence were

¹ Plato charges ignorance and vice upon the misfortunes of constitution or education; Plato's *Timæus*.

impaired? Besides, Epicurus's maxim will support you under most pains; for, as he observes, they will either be tolerable or quickly over. But then you must keep your notions tight, and not run into the common opinion about them.¹ And here you must remember that there are many more sensations than we are aware of, which belong to the nature of pain. Such as nodding when one would be awake, broiling in the heat of the sun, and nauseating some part of our diet. Now, when you find yourself fret and grow disturbed at these things, take notice that you are caught napping, and that pain has got the better of you.

LXVI. Do not return the temper of ill-natured people upon themselves, nor treat them as they do the rest of mankind.

LXVII. Which way are we to conclude that Socrates was a better man in virtue and temper than Telauges?² To make out this, it is not enough to say that he disputed better and died bolder. The austerity and discipline of his life, his bravery in slighting the orders of the thirty tyrants, and refusing to apprehend an innocent person,³ the gravity and greatness in his mien and motion (though the truth of this last particular may be questioned); all this glitter will not make the character shine out. To prove the point, we must examine what sort of soul Socrates carried about him. Could he be contented with the conscience of an honest and a pious man? Did he not fret and fume to no purpose at the knavery and wickedness of the age? Was he governed by nobody's ignorance? Did he never question the equity of Providence, grow surprised at his hard fortune, and sink under the weight of it? To conclude, did he keep pain and pleasure at a due distance, and not dip his soul too deep in his senses? These marks are the only test of a great man, and it is to no purpose to pretend to that character without them.

LXVIII. Nature has not wrought your composition so close as to destroy the properties of matter and spirit. No; the mind is in a condition to distinguish her faculties, to set out her jurisdiction, and do her own business herself. And now I think of it, lodge this always in your memory, that a man may be a first-rate in virtue and true value, and yet be very obscure at the same time. You may likewise observe that happiness lies in a little room; granting your talent will not reach very far into logic and natural philosophy. This

¹ See Book viii. sect. 49.

² A philosopher of slender character.

³ One Salominius, a man of fortune.

cannot hinder the freedom and greatness of your mind, nor deprive you of the blessings of sobriety, beneficence, and resignation.

LXIX. You may live with all the freedom and satisfaction imaginable, though the whole world should bawl against you and cry you down; nay, though a brace of lions should quarter upon your carcase and tear you limb from limb. For, pray, how can anything of this reach up to your mind and ruffle her serenity?¹ How can it prevent your passing a right judgment upon your circumstances, and making the best use of them? And thus your reason may repel the attack, and argue thus against the object of terror. "Look ye! you are not so fierce as you are painted; nature has made you one thing, and common mistake another. To be plain, I expected to engage you, and now you are come, I will turn you to some account or other; for it is my way to make everything serve for something." In short, you may work any accident into an instance of virtue, into a performance of some duty, either to God or man. By consequence, we need not be surprised or overset by any rencounter. For to take things rightly, there is nothing new in them or difficult to deal with.

LXX. He that is come to the top of wisdom and practice spends every day as if it were his last, and is never guilty of over-driving, sluggishness, or insincerity.

LXXI. Though the gods are immortal, and have their patience tried through so many ages, yet they not only bear with a wicked world, but provide liberally for it into the bargain. And are you that are just going off the stage sick of the company? Are you tired with ill men already, and yet one of those unhappy mortals yourself?

LXXII. It is great folly to run from other people's faults, and not part with your own. This is going quite the wrong way to work, grasping at a project impracticable, and losing an advantage which lies in your power.

LXXIII. Whatever business tends neither to the improvement of your reason nor the benefit of society, conclude it beneath you, and manage accordingly.

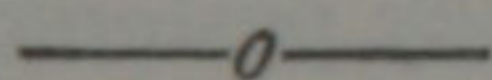
LXXIV. When you have done a kindness, and your neighbour

¹ The old paradox.

is the better for it, what need you be so ignorant as to look any farther, and lie gaping for reputation and requital?

LXXV. Nobody is ever tired with favours and advantages. Now, to act in conformity to the laws of nature and reason is certainly an advantage. Do not you therefore grow weary of doing good offices; for by obliging others, you are really kind to yourself.

LXXVI. There was a time when God and nature was employed in making the world. So that now all events must either be consequences of decree, and result from the first measures, or else the soul of the universe¹ failed in the execution of her principal design. Now the absurdity of this latter supposition will go a great way towards the making a man easy.



BOOK VIII.

I. To keep you modest and mortified to vain glory, remember that it has not been your good fortune to spend your life wholly in the pursuit of virtue and wisdom. Your friends and yourself too are sufficiently acquainted how much you fall short of philosophy; and though merit and character are sometimes parted, yet the bare report of being a philosopher is no easy matter for you to compass. You are unqualified by your station, and too much embarrassed, for this privilege. However, since you know how to come at the thing, never be concerned about missing the credit of it. Be satisfied, therefore, and for the rest of your life let your own rational nature direct you. Mind then what she would be at, and let nothing foreign disturb you. You are very sensible how much you have rambled after happiness, and failed. Neither learning, nor wealth, nor fame, nor pleasure, could ever help you to it. Which way is it to be had, then? By acting up to the height of human nature. And how shall a man do this? Why, by getting a right set of principles for thoughts and practice. And what principles are those? Such as state and distinguish good and evil; such as give us to understand that there is nothing properly good for a man but what promotes the virtues of justice, temperance, fortitude, and

¹ God.

benevolence ; nor anything bad for him but that which carries him off to the contrary vices.

II. At every action and enterprise ask yourself this question, What will the consequence of this be to me? Am I not likely to repent of it? I shall be dead in a little time, and then all is over with me. If the present undertaking is but suitable to an intelligent and sociable being, and one that has the honour to live by the same rule, and reason with God himself; if the case stands thus, all is well, and to what purpose should you look any farther?

III. Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Pompey, what were they in comparison of Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates? These philosophers looked through cause, matter, and consequence, and understood the nature and use of things. This was noble furniture for a man's head and happiness; but as for those great princes, what a load of cares were they pestered with, and how much slaves to their ambition!

IV. Never disturb yourself, for people will be untoward, and play the same pranks over again, though you should fret your heart out.

V. In the first place, keep yourself easy, for all things are governed by the laws and order of Providence; besides, you will quickly go the way of all flesh, as Augustus, Adrian, and the rest of the emperors have done before you. Farther, examine the matter to the bottom, and remember that the top of your business is to be a good man. Therefore, whatever the dignity of human nature requires of you, set about it presently without ifs or ands; and speak always according to your conscience, but let it be done in the terms of good-nature and civility.

VI. It is the method of Providence to change the face of things, and remove fortune and success from one place to another. All conditions are subject to revolution, so that you need not be afraid of unusual treatment; for you stand upon no worse ground than the rest of the world, and will only have your share of the common fate.

VII. Every being is at ease when the powers of it move regularly and without interruption. Now a rational being is in this prosperous condition when her judgment is gained by nothing but truth and

evidence; when her designs are all meant for the advantage of society; when her desires and aversions are confined to objects within her power; when she rests satisfied with the distributions of Providence; for which she has great reason, in regard she is part of it herself,¹ and with as much propriety as a leaf belongs to the nature of the tree which bears it; only with this difference, that a leaf is part of nature, without sense or reason, and liable to be checked in its operations; whereas a man is a limb, as it were, of an intelligent, righteous, and irresistible being,—a being that is all wisdom, and assigns matter and form, time, force, and fortune to everything in due measure and proportion. And this you will easily perceive, if you do not stop short in your speculation and make a lame inquiry, but compare the whole of one thing with the whole of another.

VIII. You have no leisure to read books; what then? You have leisure not to be haughty or play the knave. It is in your power to be superior to your senses, and paramount over pleasure and pain; to be deaf to the charms of ambition, and look down upon fame and glory. It is in your power not only to forbear being angry with people for their folly and ingratitude, but over and above to cherish their interest and take care of them.

IX. Never censure a court life, nor seem dissatisfied with your own.

X. Repentance is a reproof of a man's conscience for the neglect of some advantages. Now, whatever is morally good is profitable, and ought to be the concern of a man of probity; but no good man was ever inwardly troubled for the omission of any pleasure, or the baulking of his senses. From whence it follows that pleasure, strictly speaking, is neither profitable nor good.

XI. To go to the bottom of a thing, these things should be answered, What is it in its proper nature and distinction? Of what sort of matter and form does it consist? What share of force and action has it in the world? And how long is it likely to stay there?

XII. When you find yourself sleepy in a morning, remember that business and doing service to the world is to act up to nature and live like a man; whereas sleeping does but degrade you for the time, and bring you down to a beast. Now those actions which

¹ The Stoics believed the soul a part of God.

fall in with the design and properties of nature are more suitable and serviceable, and upon a custom more pleasant than others.

XIII. Upon every new idea let it be your constant custom to make use of your talent in physics, metaphysics, and morality, and examine the object in the respective inquiries of those sciences.

XIV. When you are about to converse with any person, make this short speech to yourself: How does this man's definition stand affected? What notions has he about good and evil? Nay, if his understanding is so misled, if he has such unfortunate opinions concerning pleasure and pain and the causes of them; if his fancy or his fears are misapplied, or over-proportioned with respect to reputation or ignominy, to life or death; if the case stands thus with him, I do not wonder at his practice, for indeed it is next to impossible he should do otherwise.

XV. Would it not be an odd instance of surprise to stare at a fig-tree for bearing figs? Why then should it seem strange to us for the world to act like itself, and produce things pursuant to quality and kind? This is just as foolish as it would be for a physician to wonder at a fever, or a master of a vessel at a cross blast of wind.

XVI. To retract or mend a fault at the admonition of a friend, hurts your credit or liberty no more than if you had grown wiser upon your own thought; for it is still your own judgment and temper which makes you see your mistake and willing to retrieve it.

XVII. If what is done displeases you, why do you do it, if it is in your power to let it alone? But if you cannot help it, who do you complain of? The atoms or the gods?¹ Either way is distraction, and therefore we must murmur against nothing. If you can mend the matter, go about it; if you cannot, what are you the better for grumbling? Now a man should never do anything to no purpose.

XVIII. Whatever drops out of life is caught up somewhere, for the world loses nothing.² Within this circumference of corporeity all things have their several forms and revolutions; and here it is,

¹ That is, chance or Providence, for the world must be governed by one of them.

² That is, nothing is annihilated.

likewise, that they return into element and first principle, under which notion those of the world and your own are the very same;¹ and all these last changes are made without the least repining. And why, then, should the same matter that lies quiet in an element grumble in a man?

XIX. Providence does not grant force and faculties at random, but everything is made for some end. The sun, as high as it is, has its business assigned, and so have the celestial deities.² And where is the wonder of all this? But pray what were you made for? For your pleasure? Common sense will not bear so scandalous an answer.

XX. Nature³ pre-ordains the end of everything, no less than its beginning and continuance; as he that strikes a ball designs whither it should go, as well as which way. And what is the ball the better all this while for mounting, or the worse for flying lower and coming to the ground? What does a bubble get in the swelling, or lose in the breaking? The same may be said of a candle, which is every jot as happy out as burning.

XXI. Turn your carcass the wrong side outwards, and be proud if you can; and to improve your thought, consider what a beauty, age, diseases, and death will make of you; and, to keep you low in your computations upon fame, consider that both the orator and the hero, the man and the merit, will quickly go off and be out of sight; that the earth is but a point, and that we live but in a corner of this little dimension; that men differ in their notions of honour and esteem; and that even the same person is not of the same opinion long together.

XXII. Mind that which lies before you, whether it be thought, word, or action. You are well enough served⁴ for postponing your improvement, and making virtue wait for you till to-morrow.

XXIII. Am I about anything? I will do it with regard to the interest of mankind. Does anything happen to me extraordinary?

¹ All bodies are made of the same matter.

² The emperor means the stars which the heathen and some Christians too believed to be animated; and that a spirit or intelligence was seated in the centre, and governed the motions of the luminary.

³ Or Providence.

⁴ Here the emperor refers to some disappointment.

I will receive it as the appointment of fate and the distribution of heaven.

XXIV. Think a little, and tell me what you meet with in the business of bathing. There is oil, and sweat, and dirtiness, and water, but an offensive mixture, take it altogether. Why, life and satisfaction is made up of much such indifferent stuff, but coarse, if you examine it to the bottom.

XXV. Lucilla buried Verus,¹ and followed him soon after; Secunda did the same office for Maximus, and survived but a little while. And thus it fared with Epitynchanus and Diotimus, with Antoninus and Faustina,² with Celer³ and the Emperor Adrianus; they assisted at one funeral, and quickly made another themselves. Thus poor mortals moulder away! Where are those men of reach and prognostication? and the other haughty fantastical sparks? They made a great noise and figure formerly, but what is become of them now? Where are those celebrated philosophers, Charax, Eudæmon, Demetrius the Platonist, and others of their learning and character? Alas! they took but a turn in the world, and are gone long since. Some of them have sunk to-rights, and left no memory behind them; the history of others is overcast and dwindled into fables; and a third sort have decayed farther, and dropped even out of a romance. Your business is therefore to remember, that after death your body will fall in pieces and fly off into atoms; and as for your spirit, that will either be extinguished or removed into another station.

XXVI. Pleasure and satisfaction consist in following the bent of nature, and doing the things we were made for. And which way is this to be compassed? By the practice of general kindness, by neglecting the importunity and clamour of our senses, by distinguishing appearance from truth, and by contemplating the nature and works of the Almighty. All this is acting according to kind, and keeping the faculties in the right channel.

XXVII. Every man has three relations to acquit himself in; his body helps to make one, the Deity another, and his neighbours a third.

¹ Lucilla was our emperor's daughter, and married to Verus, who was his partner in the empire.

² Antoninus Pius's empress.

³ An orator, or rhetoric master to our emperor and his colleague Lucius Verus.

XXVIII. If pain is an affliction, it must affect either the body or the mind. If the body is hurt, let it say so.¹ As for the soul, she can secure the passes, and keep the enemy at a distance; it is in her power to be invulnerable, by supposing the accident no evil; which supposition is very practicable; for judgment and appetite, aversion and desire, and all the equipage of thought, are lodged within, and there no mischief can come at them.²

XXIX. Discharge common prejudice and the fallacies of fancy, by saying thus to yourself: It is in my power to be as easy and as innocent as it is possible; to have nothing of vice, of appetite or disturbance in me. I am likewise in a condition to state the value and distinguish the quality of things, and make use of them accordingly. These are all privileges of nature, and ought to be remembered as such.

XXX. When you speak in the senate, or elsewhere, mind decency and character more than rhetoric, and let your discourse be always sincere and agree with your meaning.

XXXI. Augustus's court is buried long since. His empress and daughter, his grandchildren and sons-in-law, his sister and Agrippa, his relations and domestics, physicians and under-sacrificers, his favourites, such as Arius the philosopher and Mæcenas, they are all gone.

Go on from single persons to families; that of the Pompeys, for instance, and you will find the whole line extinct. "This man was the last of his house" is not uncommon upon a monument. How solicitous were the ancestors of such people about an heir, and yet the family must of necessity sink, and the blood fail at one time or other.

XXXII. Govern your life altogether by measures and rules; and if every action goes its due lengths, and holds up to opportunity, rest contented. Now, no mortal can hinder you from putting your affairs in this condition. But may not some obstacle without interpose? No, not so far as to prevent your acting like a man of probity and prudence. For all that my motions may be checked, and my design baulked. It is no matter for that, as long as you are easy under the obstruction, and pass on smoothly to what comes

¹ See Book vii. sect. 16.

² The old paradox.

next ; this behaviour is as good as going thorough, and serves your improvement as well as success.

XXXIII. As to the case of good fortune, take it without pride, and resign without reluctance.

XXXIV. If you have observed a hand or a foot cut off and removed from the body, just such a thing is that man to his power, who is either a malcontent or over-selfish, who struggles against fate, or breaks off from the interest of mankind.¹ This untoward behaviour amounts to amputation, and destroys the union of nature. But here lies the good luck of the case ; it is in your power to retrieve the maim, and set the limb on again. This favour is allowed to no other part of the creation. Consider then the particular bounty of God Almighty to man in this privilege. He has set him above the necessity of breaking off from nature and Providence at all ; but supposing his miscarriage, it is in his power to rejoin the body, and grow together again, and recover the advantage of being the same member he was at first.

XXXV. Whence come all the powers and prerogatives of rational beings ? From the soul of the universe.² Amongst other faculties, they have this which I am going to mention. For as God overrules all mutinous accidents, brings them under the laws of fate, and makes them serviceable to his purpose, so it is the power of man to make something out of every cross adventure, and turn all opposition to advantage.

XXXVI. Do not take your whole life into your head at a time, nor burden yourself with the weight of the future, nor form an image of all probable misfortunes ; this method will but confound you. On the contrary, your way is, upon every emergency to put this question to yourself, What intolerable circumstances are there in all this ? For here your honour will secure you, you will be ashamed to assign particulars, and confess yourself conquered. Besides, you are to remember that neither what is past nor what is to come needs afflict you, for you have only to deal with the present. Now this is strangely lessened if you take it single and by itself. Chide your fancy, therefore, if it offers to shrink for a moment, and grow faint under so slender a trial.

XXXVII. Do Panthea and Pergamus still wait at the tomb of

¹ See Book ii. sect. 16, Book iii. sect. 8, and alib.

² God.

Verus, or Chabrias and Diotimus at that of Adrian?¹ That would be stuff indeed. And what if they were there, would those princes be sensible of the service? Granting they were, what satisfaction would it be to them? And suppose they were pleased, would these waiters last always and be immortal? Are they not doomed to age and death with the rest of mankind? And when they are dead, what a pickle would the royal ghosts be in for want of their attendance! Alas! these fancies have nothing in them; all this ceremony must end at last in stench and dust.

XXXVIII. If you are so discerning, says the philosopher, make use of your talent to some purpose, and let your subject be proportionable to your parts.

XXXIX. I find no moral virtue which contradicts and combats justice; this cannot be affirmed of pleasure, for here temperance comes in with a restraint.

XL. It is opinion which gives being to misfortune; do not fancy yourself hurt, and nothing can touch you. But what, is this you? Is it not some notional superfine thing? No, it is your reason. But I am not so lucky as to be all reason. Make yourself so, then, and do not let reason degenerate and grow uneasy. In short, when anything troubles you, let this thought be your remedy.

XLI. To be checked in the functions of sense, and motion, and desire, is an evil to the animal life. That which hinders the growth or flourishing of a vegetable may be said to be an evil there; so likewise to be cramped in the faculties of the mind is an evil to an intelligent nature. Apply all this to yourself. Does pleasure or pain solicit or attack you? Turn them over to your senses, and let them answer for it. Does anything lie across your undertaking? Why, if you were positive and peremptory about it, and set your heart upon it, then the disappointment is really an evil. But if you engaged only upon condition the nail would drive, and with a reserve for accidents, then no manner of hindrance or harm has happened to you. Indeed, no mortal can lay the soul by the heels, or put a restraint upon her. The mind, if she will but arm her thoughts and exert her courage, is impregnable; and neither fire nor sword, tongue nor tyrant, can touch her.

¹ Princes used to have some of their friends or domestics sit constantly at their tombs for some time after they were dead.

XLII. Why should I fret and vex that never willingly vexed anybody?¹ Certainly I can have no reason to be more unkind to myself than to other people.

XLIII. Every man has his particular gust and inclination; but my pleasure lies in wise thinking and reasonable desires. Give me a sound and a sober understanding; a temper that never falls out either with men or accidents, that takes all things with good humour, computes rightly upon their value, and puts them to the uses they are fit for.

XLIV. Make the best of your time while you have it. Those who are so solicitous about fame, and think of living here after they are dead; such men, I say, never consider that the world will not mend by growing older; that future generations will be as weak and disobliging as the present. What then can the noise or opinions of such little mortals signify?

XLV. Toss me into what climate or state you please; for all that I will keep my genius² in good humour; that is, my own conscience, if it is good, shall make me happy. Let me but perform the duties of a reasonable nature, and I will ask no more. What! is this misadventure big enough to ruffle my mind and throw her off the hinges? to make her mean, craving, and servile, and to fright her from the privileges of her nature? What is there that can justify such disorders, and make satisfaction for them?

XLVI. No accident can happen to any man but what is consequent to his condition, and common to his kind. And the same thing may be affirmed of a beast, a tree, or a stone. Now, if things fare no otherwise than according to kind and constitution, what makes you complain and grow uneasy? You may be assured Providence will never lay you in the way of an intolerable evil, nor make your being your grievance.

XLVII. If externals put you into the spleen, take notice that it is not the thing which disturbs you, but your notion about it, which notion you may dismiss if you please. But if the condition of your mind disgusts you, who should hinder you from rectifying your mistakes, and setting your thoughts in order? Farther, if

¹ The emperor seems here to be under the sense of some ingratitude and ill-usage extraordinary.

² Or soul.

you are disturbed because you are not active and bold in the discharge of your duty ; if this be your case, your way is to fall on, and do something, and not lie growling at your own omission. But you are under some insuperable difficulty. If you have done your utmost, never vex yourself about the matter ; for you have nothing to answer for. It may be you will say, It is not worth my while to live unless this business can be effected. Why, then, even die, but take your leave handsomely ; go off as smoothly as if you had succeeded, and be not angry with those that disappointed you.

XLVIII. The mind is invincible when she exerts herself and relies upon her own courage. In this case there is no forcing her will, though she has nothing but obstinacy for her defence. What then must her strength be, when she is fortified with reason, and engages upon thought and deliberation ? A soul unembarrassed with passion¹ is the most impregnable security ; hither we may retire and defy our enemies. He that sees not this advantage must be ignorant, and he that forgets to use it, unhappy.

XLIX. Do not add to your information from without, nor make more of things than your senses report. For instance, you are told that such a one has spoken ill of you. Right ; but that you are really the worse for it is no part of the news ; and if you think so, it is your own addition. Again ; I see my child lie sick. True ; but that he is in danger is more than I see, and therefore if I conclude so I must thank myself for it. Thus always stop at the first representation, and you are safe. Inferences and supplemental fancies do but make a man unhappy. But if you will reason upon it (which may not be unserviceable) do it the right way. Do it like a man that has looked through the world, and is no stranger to anything that can happen.

L. Does your cucumber taste bitter ? Let it alone. Are there brambles in your way ? Avoid them, then. Thus far you are well. But then do not ask, What does the world with such stuff as this is ? This is to be too bold and impertinent, and a natural philosopher would laugh at you. This expostulation is just as wise as it would be to find fault with a carpenter for having sawdust, or a tailor shreds in his shop ; they know where to bestow them, though you do not. Nay, if you examine farther, the absurdity is too big for the comparison. For universal nature has no place for refuse out of herself. All things are lodged within her circumference. Here it

¹ That has nothing of hope or fear or aversion or desire to weaken it.

is that they grow old and moulder, and seem good for nothing. But then under all these disadvantages the wonder of her contrivance is such that she melts them down, and recoins them in another figure, and sends them new and shining from the mint. And thus she neither wants any foreign ore or by-place to throw the dross in, but is always abundantly furnished with room, and matter, and art within herself.

LI. Be not heavy in business, nor disturbed in conversation, nor rambling and impertinent in your thoughts. Keep your mind from running adrift, from sudden surprise and transports, and do not overset yourself with too much employment. Do they curse you? Do they threaten to kill and quarter you? Let them go on. They can never murder your reason or your virtue. Those privileges run for life if you please. All this barbarity signifies little. It is much as if a man that stands by a lovely spring should fall a-railing at it. The water is never the worse for his foul language; and if he should throw in dirt and dung, it would quickly disappear and disperse, and the fountain be as wholesome as ever. Which way now are you to go to work, to keep your springs always running, and never stagnate into a pool? I will tell you. You must be always drudging at the virtues of freedom and independence, of sincerity, sobriety, and good-nature. Make yourself but master of these qualities, and your business is done.

LII. He that is unacquainted with the origin and first cause of the world, and with that Providence that governs it, must be at a loss to know where he is, and what empire he lives under. And he that cannot tell the ends he was made for, is ignorant both of himself and the world too. And he that is uninstructed in either of these two points, will never be able to look into the design of his being. And yet there are abundance of people that would be puzzled at these questions. What do you think then of his discretion that is anxious about what is said of him, and values either the praise or the censure of those little folks that know neither where they are nor who?

LIII. Nothing can be more vain than the courting of popular applause. What! are you so ambitious of a man's good word that it may be in an hour's time shall curse himself to the pit of hell? Are you so fond of being in their favour that cannot keep in their own? Striving to please those people that cannot please themselves is to no manner of purpose. And how can they be said to

please themselves who are dissatisfied with their conduct at every turn, and repent of almost everything they do?

LIV. Let your soul receive the Deity as your blood does the air, for the influences of the one are no less vital than the other. This correspondence is very practicable. For there is an ambient omnipresent spirit, which lies as open and pervious to your mind, as the air you breathe does to your lungs. But then you must remember to be disposed to draw it.

LV. Wickedness is no substance or separate being, and therefore one would think it should be no necessary nuisance. It subsists only in particular subjects, and here it does no harm to anything that is foreign. It is only a plague to the breast it lies in, and does nobody any mischief, but him that may be rid of it whenever he pleases.

LVI. My thoughts and my will are as much my own as my constitution, and no more concerned in the conduct of another man, than my blood is in the beating of another body's pulse. For though we are born for the service of each other, yet our liberty is independent, and our souls all left to ourselves. Otherwise my neighbour's miscarriage might be my misfortune. But God has prevented this consequence, lest it should be in another's power to make me unhappy.

LVII. The sun is diffused and bestows himself everywhere, but this seeming expense never exhausts him. The reason is, because he is stretched like a thread, and not poured out like a liquor. And thus his beams have their name from extension.¹ As for the properties and philosophy of a ray, you may observe them, if you please to let it into a dark room through a narrow passage. Here you will see it move in a right line till it is broken and as it were divided in reflection, by having its progress stopped upon a solid body. And here the light makes a stand, without dropping or sliding off. Thus you should let your sense shine out upon conversation. There is no fear of emptying your understanding. And when you meet with opposition, never tilt and batter against it, nor yet drop your talent in despair. No; let your beams spread themselves, and play on, and enlighten where they find a capacity. And as for that body that will not transmit the light, it does but darken itself by its resistance.

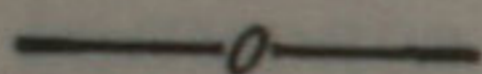
¹ Ἀκτῖνες from Ἐκτείνασθαι, as the emperor will have it.

LVIII. He that dreads death, is either afraid that his senses will be extinguished, or altered. Now if the powers are lost, the pain must be so too, for if he has no faculties, he will have no feeling. But if he has new perceptions, and another set of senses, he will be another creature, and then he will live still, as I take it.

LIX. Men are born to be serviceable to one another, therefore either reform the world, or bear with it.

LX. Understanding does not always drive onward like an arrow. The mind sometimes, by making a halt, and going round for advice, hits the mark much better than if she had let fly directly upon it.

LXI. Look nicely into the thoughts of other people, and give them the same freedom with your own.



BOOK IX.

I. To play the knave is to rebel against religion, all sort of injustice is no less than high treason against heaven. For since the nature or soul of the universe¹ has made rational creatures for mutual service and support; made them that they should assist and oblige each other, according to the regards of circumstance and merit, but never to anybody any harm. The case standing thus, he that crosses upon this design, is profane in his contradiction and outrages the most ancient Deity. For the nature of the universe is the cause of it, and that which gives it being. Thus all things are one family, suited, and as it were of kin to each other. This nature is also styled truth, as being the basis of first principles and certainty. He, therefore, that tells a lie knowingly, is an irreligious wretch, for by deceiving his neighbour, he is unjust to him, and cheats him of the truth to which he has a natural right. And he that is guilty of an untruth out of ignorance, is liable to the same charge (though not in the same degree), because his ignorance is voluntary and affected; because he dissents from the mind of providence, brings disorder into the world, and opposes the first settlement of nature. He seems to be fond of confusions to declare

¹ God.

for the interest of error, and take the field against certainty and science. By neglecting the assistances of heaven, and the talent he was born to; he has parted with the guide of his understanding, lost the test of truth, and the distinction of right and wrong. Further, he that reckons prosperity and pleasure among things really good, pain and hardship amongst things really evil, can be no pious person. For such a man will be sure to complain of the administrations of providence, charge it with mismatching fortune and merit, and misapplying rewards and punishments. He will often see ill people furnished with materials for pleasure, and regaled with the relish of it, and good men harassed and depressed, and meeting with nothing but misfortune. To go on: he that is afraid of pain or affliction, will be afraid of something that will always be in the world, but to be thus uneasy at the appointments of providence, is a failure in reverence and respect. On the other hand: he that is violent in the pursuit of pleasure, will not stick to turn villain for the purchase. And is not this plainly an ungracious and an ungodly humour? To set the matter right, where the allowance of God is equally clear, as it is with regard to prosperity and adversity, for had He not approved both these conditions, He would never have made them. I say, where the good liking of heaven is equally clear, ours ought to be so too. Because we ought to follow the guidance of nature, and the sense of the Deity. That man therefore that does not comply with providence in the same indifference of notion, with respect to pleasure and pain, life and death, honour and infamy; he that does not this without struggling of passions, without unmanageable preference or aversion, is no friend to the divine economy; his thoughts are lewd and mutinous, and so would his actions be too, if he had power.

By saying that Universal Nature, or God, stands equally affected to these different dispensations, the meaning is, that they are both comprehended in the general scheme, and equally consequent to the first establishment. They were decreed by the Almighty from the beginning, and struck out with the lines of the creation. Then it was that the plan of providence was drawn, and the fate of futurity determined. Then nature was made prolific, and enabled to bring forth in due time. Then the whole stock of beings, the revolutions of fortune, and the successions of time, were all stated and set a going.

II. He is better bred, and more a gentleman, that takes leave of the world without a blot in his scutcheon, and has nothing of false-

hood and dissimulation, of luxury or pride, to tarnish his character. But when a man is once dipped in these vices, the next best thing is for him to quit, rather than live on and be an old sinner. I suppose you understand the plague too well not to run away from it. And what is the plague? Why, if you are a knave or a libertine, you have the tokens upon you. The infection of the mind is ten times worse than that of the air; the malignity is not near so fatal in the blood as in the will, for the brute only suffers in the first case, but the man in the other.

III. Do not contemn death, but take it handsomely and willingly; look upon it as part of the product of nature, and one of those things which Providence has been pleased to order. For as youth and age, growth and declension, down and grey hairs, pregnancy and birth, etc., are all natural actions, consequences of time, and incidents of life; so also is dying and dissolution every jot as much according to common course as the rest. A wise man therefore must neither run giddily, nor stalk haughtily into his grave; he must look upon death as nature's business, and wait her leisure, as he does for the progress and maturity of other¹ things: for as you don't overdrive a foetus, but let it take its own time, and come into the world when it is ready, so you should stay in the other case, till opportunity presents, and things are ripe, and your soul drops out of the husk of her own accord. But if you stand in need of a vulgar remedy, and want a cordial to make dying go down the better, you shall have it. Consider then what sort of world and what sort of humours you will be rid of! It is true you are not to fall foul upon mankind, but to treat them with kindness and temper; but still you may remember that you do not live among people just of your own mind and fancy. Indeed if your humours hit it, and your understandings were all set to the same tune, such an unanimity amongst mortals might reasonably recommend life, and make us loath to part with it; but you perceive the matter is quite otherways, and that vast disturbances are bred by different opinions, insomuch that now we ought rather to petition death to make haste, for fear we should be teased out of our reason, and lose our best thoughts in a crowd.

IV. He that commits a fault abroad is a trespasser at home, and he that injures his neighbour hurts himself, for to make himself an ill man is a shrewd mischief.

¹ Here the emperor seems to contradict his Stoical opinion of the lawfulness of self-murder.

V. Omissions no less than commissions, are oftentimes branches of injustice.

VI. If your judgment pronounces rightly, if your actions are friendly and well-meant, if your mind is contented and resigned to Providence; if you are in possession of these blessings, you are happy enough in all conscience.

VII. Do not be imposed on by appearances; check your fancy, and moderate your heat, and keep your reason always in her own power.

VIII. The souls of brutes are all of one kind, and so are those of rational beings, though of a high order. And thus all living creatures that have occasion for air, and earth, and light, are furnished at the same shop, and have the same elements and sun at their service.¹

IX. Things of the same common quality have a tendency to their kind. Earthy bodies tumble to the ground, one drop of moisture runs after another; and thus air, where it is predominant, presses after air, and nothing but force and violence can keep these things asunder. Fire likewise mounts, and reaches upwards, to make after its own element above. This property gives it a disposition to propagate its species, and join other fires here below, and for this reason it catches easily upon all fuel a little more dry than ordinary, because here the qualities opposite to ascension are weak and disabled. Thus all beings which partake of the same common thought and understanding, have a natural instinct for correspondence with their own kind, only with this difference, that the higher anything stands in the scale of being, the stronger it is inclined to communication with its own order and distinction. To illustrate the argument, we find the force of nature and blood very active amongst brute animals, as appears by their running together in herds and swarms according to kind; by their providing for their young ones, and by that resemblance of love and affection, which is carried on among them. These animals have a soul in them; by consequence their principle of union is more vigorous than in stocks and stones. To go on to reasonable creatures, and here we may observe mankind united by public councils and commonwealths, by particular friendships and families; and when war has

¹ This section proves that mankind are all equal in the grand privileges of nature.

worked them to the greatest misunderstanding, they have even then the benefit of corresponding by truce and articles. Farther, to instance in a higher order, the stars,¹ though not neighbours in situation, move by concert. Thus where things are more noble, and nature rises, sympathy rises too, and operates at a distance. But here lies the misery of it. Mankind are strangely unfortunate with the privilege of their reason! They are the only beings which break through the force of instinct, and would make the alliances of nature signify nothing. But though they run from their kind, they are caught again in some measure. For you shall sooner see a piece of earth refuse to lie by its own element, than find any man so perfectly unsociable, as not to correspond with somebody or other.

X. Everything affords some product; God, and men, and the world, all of them bear fruit in their proper seasons; it is true, use has restrained this signification to vines and trees; but this custom apart, reason may properly enough be said to bear, when it is serviceable both at home and to the public, especially if we consider that the fruit of the understanding keeps close to its kind, and resembles the stock more fully than that which grows in the garden.

XI. Give an injurious person good advice, and reform him if you can. If not, remember that your clemency and temper were given you for this trial; that the gods are so patient and benign, as to pass by the perverseness of men, and sometimes to assist them over and above in their health, fame, and fortune. Just thus may you do if you please; if not, let me know the impediment.

XII. Do not drudge like a galley slave, nor do business in such a laborious manner, as if you had a mind to be pitied, or wondered at. Let your motives be more solid, and either put on, or make a halt, as public reason and convenience shall direct you.

XIII. To-day I rushed clear out of all misfortune, or rather I threw misfortune from me; for, to speak truth, it was no outlier, nor ever any farther off than my own fancy.

XIV. All things are the same over again, and nothing but what has been served up to our forefathers; they are stale upon experiment, momentary in their lasting, and coarse in their matter.

¹ The emperor supposed the stars animated by a deity.

XV. Things or accidents stand without doors, and keep their distance, and neither know, nor report any things about themselves; what is it then that pronounces upon their quality, and makes them look frightfully? Nothing but your own fancy and opinion.¹

XVI. As virtue and vice consist in action, and not in the impressions of the senses; so it is not what they feel, but what they do, which makes mankind either happy or miserable.²

XVII. It is all one to a stone whether it is thrown upwards or downwards; the mounting or sinking of the motion does not make the thing one jot the better or the worse.³

XVIII. Examine the size of people's sense and the condition of their understandings, and you will never be fond of popularity, or afraid of censure.

XIX. All things are in a perpetual flux, and a sort of consumption; you yourself are so, and the whole world keeps you company.

XX. Do not disturb yourself about the irregularities of other people, but let everybody's fault lie at their own doors.

XXI. The intermission of action, and a stop in appetite and thought, are a kind of death upon the faculties for the present; and yet there is no harm in it. Go on now to the different periods of life, and here you will find infancy, youth, manhood, and old age treading upon the heels of each other; and the first as it were cut down, and despatched by the latter. And where lies the damage and terror of all this? Proceed to your grandfather's time, and to that of your father and mother, and run over as much ground in changes, decay and death, as you please; and when you have done, ask yourself what great grievance there is in the contemplation. And when you find nothing extraordinary, you may conclude that ending and alteration will fit no harder upon your life than upon those before you.

XXII. Make a stand for thought and inquiry, and survey your own mind, that of the universe,⁴ and that of the person who has disobliged you: your own, that you may keep it honest; God Almighty's, that you may know who you are part of, and to whom

¹ See Book iv. sect. 39 and alib.

³ See Book viii. sect. 20.

² See Book vi. sect. 51.

⁴ God.

you belong; the offender's, that you may discover whether his fault was ignorance or malice: and here you should likewise remember, that you are of kin to him.

XXIII. As you are a member of society yourself, so every action of yours should tend to the benefit and improvement of it. So that when you do anything which has neither immediate nor remote reference to general advantage, you make a breach in the common interest, destroy the unity of public life, and are as really guilty of a seditious behaviour, as a malcontent that embroils a nation, and draws off a faction from the government.

XXIV. The business of mankind is strangely trifling and transient; things are so hollow, and so quickly hurried off, that the world looks somewhat like a scene of necromancy, and seems to be more apparition than real life.¹

XXV. Penetrate the quality of forms, and take a view of them, abstracted from their matter; and when you have done this, compute the common period of their duration.²

XXVI. You have been a great sufferer for rambling from a life of reason, and for not being contented with doing what you were made for.

XXVII. When people treat you ill, blame your conduct, or report anything to your disadvantage; shoot yourself into the very soul of them; rummage their understandings, and see how their heads are furnished. A thorough inquiry into this matter will set you at rest. You will be fully convinced that the opinion of such mortals is not worth one troublesome thought. However, you must be kind to them, for nature has made them your relations. Besides, the gods³ give them all sort of countenance, advertise them by dreams and prophecy, and help them to those things they have a mind to.

XXVIII. This uncertain world is always rolling, and turning things topsy-turvy. Now the soul of the universe⁴ either pursues the course of time, descends to particulars, and exerts itself upon every effect, or else matter and motion were put into such order at

¹ See Book v. sect. 33.

² See Book iv. 21, and vii. 29, and xii. 18.

³ Whose pattern ought to be followed.

⁴ God.

first, that things should do of themselves, and work up the model by necessary consequence. Take it either way, and the administration will lie in the same hands; and that is sufficient to make you quiet. But if neither of these hypotheses will satisfy, you must set Epicurus's atoms at the helm, and make them juggle out a world in the dark. In a word, if God governs, all is well; but if things are left to themselves and set adrift, do not you ramble and float after them. To conclude; we shall quickly be all under ground; and ere long the earth itself must be changed into something else, and that something into another form, and so on *in infinitum*. Now he that considers these everlasting alterations, this constant tossing and tumbling, and how fast revolutions succeed each other; he that considers this, I say, will have but a mean opinion of what the world can afford.

XXIX. Nature runs rapid like a torrent, and sweeps all things.¹ What wretched statesmen are those counterfeits in virtue and philosophy!² Hark you, friend, no more hypocrisy and grimace, no prudential knavery, no clashing between politics and morals! Come, let honesty be served first; do what God requires of you, and trust for the issue and event. Fall on them as occasion offers, and never look about for company and commendation. However, I would not have you expect Plato's commonwealth. That draught is too fine, and your morals will never rise up to it. As the world goes, a moderate reformation is a great point, and therefore rest contented. If we can but govern people's hands, we must let their hearts and their heads go free. To cure them all of their folly and ill principles is impracticable. And yet, unless you can change their opinions, their subjection will be all force and dissembling. But you will say, were not Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius Phalereus under the rules of these pretended philosophers? and what a noble figure do they make in history! Granting all that, I have a question or two to ask them. Had they a right notion of the laws of nature, and were they just and generous in good earnest? If their virtues were all show and varnish, I desire to be excused the imitation. Philosophy is a modest profession; it is all reality and plain dealing. I hate solemnity and pretence with nothing but pride at the bottom.

XXX. Fly your fancy into the clouds, and from this imaginary

¹ See Books ii., xvii., vii., xix., and alib.

² This section is levelled against the knavery of the Sophists, who pretended to the politics.