PLINY THE YOUNGER

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By Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus

GAIUS PLINIUS CAECILIUS SECUNDUS, usually known as Pliny the Younger, was born at Como in 62 A. D. He was only eight years old when his father Caecilius died, and he was adopted by his uncle, the elder Pliny, author of the Natural History. He was carefully educated, studying rhetoric under Quintilian and other famous teachers, and he became the most eloquent pleader of his time. In this and in much else he imitated Cicero, who had by this time come to be the recognized master of Latin style. While still young he served as military tribune in Syria, but he does not seem to have taken zealously to a soldier's life. On his return he entered politics under the Emperor Domitian; and in the year 100 A. D. was appointed consul by Trajan and admitted to confidential intercourse with that emperor. Later while he was governor of Bithynia, he was in the habit of submitting every point of policy to his master, and the correspondence between Trajan and him, which forms the last part of the present selection, is of a high degree of interest, both on account of the subjects discussed and for the light thrown on the characters of the two men.

He is supposed to have died about 113 A. D. Pliny's speeches are now lost, with the exception of one, a panegyric on Trajan delivered in thanksgiving for the consulate. This, though diffuse and somewhat too complimentary for modern taste, became a model for this kind of composition. The others were mostly of two classes, forensic and political, many of the latter being, like Cicero's speech against Verres, impeachments of provincial governors for cruelty and extortion toward their subjects. In these, as in his public activities in general, he appears as a man of public spirit and integrity; and in his relations with his native town he was a thoughtful and munificent benefactor.

The letters, on which to-day his fame mainly rests, were largely written with a view to publication, and were arranged by Pliny himself. They thus lack the spontaneity of Cicero's impulsive utterances, but to most modern readers who are not special students of Roman history they are even more interesting. They deal with a great variety of subjects: the description of a Roman villa; the charms of country life; the reluctance of people to attend author's readings and to listen when they were present; a dinner party; legacy-hunting in ancient Rome; the acquisition of a piece of statuary; his love for his young wife; ghost stories; floating islands, a tame dolphin, and other marvels. But by far the best known are those describing the great eruption of Vesuvius in which his uncle perished, a martyr to scientific curiosity, and the letter to Trajan on his attempts to suppress Christianity in Bithynia, with Trajan's reply approving his policy.

Taken altogether, these letters give an absorbingly vivid picture of the days of the early empire, and of the interests of a cultivated Roman gentleman of wealth. Occasionally, as in the last letters referred to, they deal with important historical events; but their chief value is in bringing before us, in somewhat the same manner as "The Spectator" pictures the England of the age of Anne, the life of a time which is not so unlike our own as its distance in years might indicate. And in this time by no means the least interesting figure is that of the letter-writer himself, with his vanity and self-importance, his sensibility and generous affection? his pedantry and his loyalty.

LETTERS GAIUS PLINIUS CAECILIUS SECUNDUS

I – To SEPTITTUS

YOU have frequently pressed me to make a select collection of my Letters (if there really be any deserving of a special preference) and give them to the public. I have selected them accordingly; not, indeed, in their proper order of time, for I was not compiling a history; but just as each came to hand. And now I have only to wish that you may have no reason to repent of your advice, nor I of my compliance: in that case, I may probably enquire after the rest, which at present be neglected, and preserve those I shall hereafter write. Farewell.

II – To ARRIANUS

I FORESEE your journey in my direction is likely to be delayed, and therefore send you the speech which I promised in my former; requesting you, as usual, to revise and correct it. I desire this the more earnestly as I never, I think, wrote with the same empressment in any of my former speeches; for I have endeavoured to imitate your old favourite Demosthenes and Calvus, who is lately become mine, at least in the rhetorical forms of the speech; for to catch their sublime spirit, is given, alone, to the "inspired few." My subject, indeed, seemed naturally to lend itself to this (may I venture to call it?) emulation; consisting, as it did, almost entirely in a vehement style of address, even to a degree sufficient to have awakened me (if only I am capable of being awakened) out of that indolence in which I have long reposed. I have not however altogether neglected the flowers of rhetoric of my favourite Marc-Tully, wherever I could with propriety step out of my direct road, to enjoy a more flowery path: for it was energy, not austerity, at which I aimed. I would not have you imagine by this that I am bespeaking your indulgence: on the contrary, to make your correcting pen more vigorous, I will confess that neither my friends nor myself are averse from the publication of this piece, if only you should join in the approval of what is perhaps my folly. The truth is, as I must publish something, I wish it might be this performance rather

than any other, because it is already finished: (you hear the wish of laziness.) At all events, however, something I must publish, and for many reasons; chiefly because of the tracts which I have already sent in to the world, though they have long since lost all their recommendation from novelty, are still, I am told, in request; if, after all, the booksellers are not tickling my ears. And let them; since, by that innocent deceit, I am encouraged to pursue my studies. Farewell.

III – To VOCONIUS ROMANUS

DID YOU ever meet with a more abject and mean-spirited creature than Marcus Regulus since the death of Domitian, during whose reign his conduct was no less infamous, though more concealed, than under Nero's? He began to be afraid I was angry with him, and his apprehensions were perfectly correct; I was angry. He had not only done his best to increase the peril of the position in which Rusticus Arulenus[1] stood, but had exulted in his death; insomuch that he actually recited and published a libel upon his memory, in which he styles him "The Stoics' Ape": adding, "stigmated[2] with the Vitellian scar."[3] You recognize Regulus' eloquent strain! [4]

[5]

[6]

He fell with such fury upon the character of Herennius Senecio that Metius Carus said to him, one day, "What business have you with my dead? Did I ever interfere in the affair of Crassus' or Camerinus'?" Victims, you know, to Regulus, in Nero's time. For these reasons he imagined I was highly exasperated, and so at the recitation of his last piece, I got no invitation. Besides, he had not forgotten, it seems, with what deadly purpose he had once attacked me in the Court of the Hundred. Rusticus had desired me to act as counsel for Arionilla, Titnon's wife: Regulus was engaged against me. In one part of the

case I was strongly insisting upon a particular judgment given by Metius Modestus, an excellent man, at that time in banishment by Domitian's order. Now then for Regulus. "Pray," says he, "what is your opinion of Modestus?" You see what a risk I should have run had I answered that I had a high opinion of him, how I should have disgraced myself on the other hand if I had replied that I had a bad opinion of him. But some guardian power, I am persuaded, must have stood by me to assist me in this emergency. "I will tell you my opinion," I said, "if that is a matter to be brought before the court." "I ask you," he repeated, "what is your opinion of Modestus?" I replied that it was customary to examine witnesses to the character of an accused man, not to the character of one on whom sentence had already been passed. He pressed me a third time. "I do not now enquire," said he, "your opinion of Modestus in general, I only ask your opinion of his loyalty." "Since you will have my opinion then," I rejoined, "I think it illegal even to ask a question concerning a person who stands convicted." He sat down at this, completely silenced; and I received applause and congratulation on all sides, that without injuring my reputation by an advantageous, perhaps, though ungenerous answer, I had not entangled myself in the toils of so insidious a catch-question. Thoroughly frightened upon this then, he first seizes upon Caecilius Celer, next he goes and begs of Fabius Justus, that they would use their joint interest to bring about a reconciliation between us. And lest this should not be sufficient, he sets off to Spurinna as well; to whom he came

in the humblest way (for he is the most abject creature alive, where he has anything to be afraid of) and says to him, "Do, I entreat of you, call on Pliny to-morrow morning, certainly in the morning, no later (for I cannot endure this anxiety of mind longer), and endeavour by any means in your power to soften his resentment." I was already up, the next day, when a message arrived from Spurinna, "I am coming to call on you." I sent word back, "Nay, I will wait upon you;" however, both of us setting out to pay this visit, we met under Livia's portico. He acquainted me with the commission he had received from Regulus, and interceded for him as became so worthy a man in behalf of one so totally dissimilar, without greatly pressing the thing. "I will leave it to you," was my reply, "to consider what answer to return Regulus; you ought not to be deceived by me. I am waiting for Mauricus'[7] return" (for he had not yet come back out of exile), "so that I cannot give you any definite answer either way, as I mean to be guided entirely by his decision, for he ought to be my leader here, and I simply to do as he says." Well, a few days after this, Regulus met me as I was at the praetor's; he kept close to me there and begged a word in private, when he said he was afraid I deeply resented an expression he had once made use of in his reply to Satrius and myself, before the Court of the Hundred, to this effect, "Satrius Rufus, who does not endeavour to rival Cicero, and who is content with the eloquence of our own day." I answered, now I perceived indeed, upon his own confession, that he had meant it ill-naturedly; otherwise it might have passed

for a compliment. "For I am free to own," I said, "that I do endeavour to rival Cicero, and am not content with the eloquence of our own day. For I consider it the very height of folly not to copy the best models of every kind. But, how happens it that you, who have so good a recollection of what passed upon this occasion, should have forgotten that other, when you asked me my opinion of the loyalty of Modestus?" Pale as he always is, he turned simply pallid at this, and stammered out, "I did not intend to hurt you when I asked this question, but Modestus." Observe the vindictive cruelty of the fellow, who made no concealment of his willingness to injure a banished man. But the reason he alleged in justification of his conduct is pleasant. Modestus, he explained, in a letter of his, which was read to Domitian, had used the following expression, "Regulus, the biggest rascal that walks upon two feet:" and what Modestus had written was the simple truth, beyond all manner of controversy. Here, about, our conversation came to an end, for I did not wish to proceed further, being desirous to keep matters open until Mauricus returns. It is no easy matter, I am well aware of that, to destroy Regulus; he is rich, and at the head of a party; courted[8] by many, feared by more: a passion that will sometimes prevail even beyond friendship itself. But, after all, ties of this sort are not so strong but they may be loosened; for a bad man's credit is as shifty as himself. However (to repeat), I am waiting until Mauricus comes back. He is a man of sound judgment and great sagacity formed upon long experience, and who, from

his observations of the past, well knows how to judge of the future. I shall talk the matter over with him, and consider myself justified either in pursuing or dropping this affair, as he shall advise. Meanwhile I thought I owed this account to our mutual friendship, which gives you an undoubted right to know about not only all my actions but all my plans as well. Farewell.

IV – To CORNELIUS TACITUS

You will laugh (and you are quite welcome) when I tell you that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has taken three noble boars. "What!" you exclaim, "Pliny!"—Even he. However, I indulged at the same time my beloved inactivity; and, whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with boar spear or javelin, but pencil and tablet, by my side. I mused and wrote, being determined to return, if with all my hands empty, at least with my memorandums full. Believe me, this way of studying is not to be despised: it is wonderful how the mind is stirred and quickened into activity by brisk bodily exercise. There is something, too, in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that profound silence which is observed on these occasions, that forcibly disposes the mind to meditation. So for the future, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take your tablets along with you, as well as your basket and bottle, for be assured you will find Minerva no less fond of traversing the hills than Diana. Farewell.

V – To POMPEIUS SATURNINUS

NOTHING could be more seasonable than the letter which I received from you, in which you so earnestly beg me to send you some of my literary efforts: the very thing I was intending to do. So you have only put spurs into a willing horse and at once saved yourself the excuse of refusing the trouble, and me the awkwardness of asking the favour. Without hesitation then I avail myself of your offer; as you must now take the consequence of it without reluctance. But you are not to expect anything new from a lazy fellow, for I am going to ask you to revise again the speech I made to my fellow-townsmen when I dedicated the public library to their use. You have already, I remember, obliged me with some annotations upon this piece, but only in a general way; and so I now beg of you not only to take a general view of the whole speech, but, as you usually do, to go over it in detail. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty to publish or suppress it: and the delay in the meantime will be attended with one of these alternatives; for, while we are deliberating whether it is fit for publishing, a frequent revision will either make it so, or convince me that it is not. Though indeed my principal difficulty respecting the publication of this harangue arises not so much from the composition as out of the subject itself, which has something in it, I am afraid, that will look too like ostentation and self-conceit. For, be the style ever

so plain and unassuming, yet, as the occasion necessarily led me to speak not only of the munificence of my ancestors, but of my own as well, my modesty will be seriously embarrassed. A dangerous and slippery situation this, even when one is led into it by plea of necessity! For, if mankind are not very favourable to panegyric, even when bestowed upon others, how much more difficult is it to reconcile them to it when it is a tribute which we pay to ourselves or to our ancestors? Virtue, by herself, is generally the object of envy, but particularly so when glory and distinction attend her; and the world is never so little disposed to detract from the rectitude of your conduct as when it passes unobserved and unapplauded. For these reasons, I frequently ask myself whether I composed this harangue, such as it is, merely from a personal consideration, or with a view to the public as well; and I am sensible that what may be exceedingly useful and proper in the prosecution of any affair may lose all its grace and fitness the moment the business is completed: for instance, in the case before us, what could be more to my purpose than to explain at large the motives of my intended bounty? For, first, it engaged my mind in good and ennobling thoughts; next, it enabled me, by frequent dwelling upon them, to receive a perfect impression of their loveliness, while it guarded at the same time against that repentance which is sure to follow on an impulsive act of generosity. There arose also a further advantage from this method, as it fixed in me a certain habitual contempt of money. For, while mankind seem to be universally governed by

an innate passion to accumulate wealth, the cultivation of a more generous affection in my own breast taught me to emancipate myself from the slavery of so predominant a principle: and I thought that my honest intentions would be the more meritorious as they should appear to proceed, not from sudden impulse, but from the dictates of cool and deliberate reflection. I considered, besides, that I was not engaging myself to exhibit public games or gladiatorial combats, but to establish an annual fund for the support and education of young men of good families but scanty means. The pleasures of the senses are so far from wanting the oratorical arts to recommend them that we stand in need of all the powers of eloquence to moderate and restrain rather than stir up their influence. But the work of getting anybody to cheerfully undertake the monotony and drudgery of education must be effected not by pay merely, but by a skilfully worked-up appeal to the emotions as well. If physicians find it expedient to use the most insinuating address in recommending to their patients a wholesome though, perhaps, unpleasant regimen, how much more occasion had he to exert all the powers of persuasion who, out of regard to the public welfare, was endeavouring to reconcile it to a most useful though not equally popular benefaction? Particularly, as my aim was to recommend an institution, calculated solely for the benefit of those who were parents to men who, at present, had no children; and to persuade the greater number to wait patiently until they should be entitled to an honour of which a few only could immediately partake.

But as at that time, when I attempted to explain and enforce the general design and benefit of my institution, I considered more the general good of my countrymen, than any reputation which might result to myself; so I am apprehensive lest, if I publish that piece, it may perhaps look as if I had a view rather to my own personal credit than the benefit of others, Besides, I am very sensible how much nobler it is to place the reward of virtue in the silent approbation of one's own breast than in the applause of the world. Glory ought to be the consequence, not the motive, of our actions; and although it happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet it is by no means the less fair for having missed the applause it deserved. But the world is apt to suspect that those who celebrate their own beneficent acts performed them for no other motive than to have the pleasure of extolling them. Thus, the splendour of an action which would have been deemed illustrious if related by another is totally extinguished when it becomes the subject of one's own applause. Such is the disposition of mankind, if they cannot blast the action, they will censure its display; and whether you do what does not deserve particular notice, or set forth yourself what does, either way you incur reproach. In my own case there is a peculiar circumstance that weighs much with me: this speech was delivered not before the people, but the Decurii;[9] not in the forum, but the senate; I am afraid therefore it will look inconsistent that I, who, when I delivered it, seemed to avoid popular applause, should now, by publishing this performance, appear to court it: that I, who

was so scrupulous as not to admit even these persons to be present when I delivered this speech, who were interested in my benefaction, lest it, might be suspected I was actuated in this affair by any ambitious views, should now seem to solicit admiration, by forwardly displaying it to such as have no other concern in my munificence than the benefit of example. These are the scruples which have occasioned my delay in giving this piece to the public; but I submit them entirely to your judgment, which I shall ever esteem as a sufficient sanction of my conduct. Farewell.

VI – To ATRIUS CLEMENS

IF ever polite literature flourished at Rome, it certainly flourishes now; and I could give you many eminent instances: I will content myself, however, with naming only Euphrates[10] the philosopher. I first became acquainted with this excellent person in my youth, when I served in the army in Syria. I had an opportunity of conversing with him familiarly, and took some pains to gain his affection: though that, indeed, was not very difficult, for he is easy of access, unreserved, and actuated by those social principles he professes to teach. I should think myself extremely happy if I had as fully answered the expectations he, at that time, conceived of me, as he exceeds everything I had imagined of him. But, perhaps, I admire his excellencies more now than I did then, because I know better how to appreciate them; not that I sufficiently appreciate them even now. For as none but those who are skilled in painting, statuary, or the plastic art, can form a right judgment of any performance in those respective modes of representation, so a man must, himself, have made great advances in philosophy before he is capable of forming a just opinion of a philosopher. However, as far as I am qualified to determine, Euphrates is possessed of so many shining talents that he cannot fail to attract and impress the most ordinarily educated observer. He reasons with much force, acuteness, and elegance; and frequently rises into all the

sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style is varied and flowing, and at the same time so wonderfully captivating that he forces the reluctant attention of the most unwilling hearer. For the rest, a fine stature, a comely aspect, long hair, and a large silver beard; circumstances which, though they may probably be thought trifling and accidental, contribute, however, to gain him much reverence. There is no affected negligence in his dress and appearance; his countenance is grave but not austere; and his approach commands respect without creating awe. Distinguished as he is by the perfect blamelessness of his life, he is no less so by the courtesy and engaging sweetness of his manner. He attacks vices, not persons, and, without severity, reclaims the wanderer from the paths of virtue. You follow his exhortations with rapt attention, hanging, as it were, upon his lips; and even after the heart is convinced, the ear still wishes to listen to the harmonious reasoner. His family consists of three children (two of which are sons), whom he educates with the utmost care. His father-in-law, Pompeius Julianus, as he greatly distinguished himself in every other part of his life, so particularly in this, that though he was himself of the highest rank in his province, yet, among many considerable matches, he preferred Euphrates for his son-in-law, as first in merit, though not in dignity. But why do I dwell any longer upon the virtues of a man whose conversation I am so unfortunate as not to have time sufficiently to enjoy? Is it to increase my regret and vexation that I cannot enjoy it? My time is wholly taken up in the execution of a very honourable, indeed,

but equally troublesome, employment; in hearing cases, signing petitions, making up accounts, and writing a vast amount of the most illiterate literature. I sometimes complain to Euphrates (for I have leisure at least to complain) of these unpleasing occupations. He endeavours to console me, by affirming that, to be engaged in the public service, to hear and determine cases, to explain the laws, and administer justice, is a part, and the noblest part, too, of philosophy; as it is reducing to practice what her professors teach in speculation. But even his rhetoric will never be able to convince me that it is better to be at this sort of work than to spend whole days in attending his lectures and learning his precepts. I cannot therefore but strongly recommend it to you, who have the time for it, when next you come to town (and you will come, I daresay, so much the sooner for this), to take the benefit of his elegant and refined instructions. For I do not (as many do) envy others the happiness I cannot share with them myself: on the contrary, it is a very sensible pleasure to me when I find my friends in possession of an enjoyment from which I have the misfortune to be excluded. Farewell.

VII – To FABIUS JUSTUS

IT is a long time since I have had a letter from you, "There is nothing to write about," you say: well then write and let me know just this, that "there is nothing to write about," or tell me in the good old style, If you are well that's right, I am quite well. This will do for me, for it implies everything. You think I am joking? Let me assure you I am in sober earnest. Do let me know how you are; for I cannot remain ignorant any longer without growing exceedingly anxious about you. Farewell.

VIII – To CALESTRIUS TIRO

I HAVE suffered the heaviest loss; if that word be sufficiently strong to express the misfortune which has deprived me of so excellent a man. Corellius Rufus is dead; and dead, too, by his own act! A circumstance of great aggravation to my affliction: as that sort of death which we cannot impute either to the course of nature, or the hand of Providence, is, of all others, the most to be lamented. It affords some consolation in the loss of those friends whom disease snatches from us that they fall by the general destiny of mankind; but those who destroy themselves leave us under the inconsolable reflection, that they had it in their power to have lived longer. It is true, Corellius had many inducements to be fond of life; a blameless conscience, high reputation, and great dignity of character, besides a daughter, a wife, a grandson, and sisters; and, amidst these numerous pledges of happiness, faithful friends. Still, it must be owned he had the highest motive (which to a wise man will always have the force of destiny), urging him to this resolution. He had long been tortured by so tedious and painful a complaint that even these inducements to living on, considerable as they are, were over-balanced by the reasons on the other side. In his thirty-third year (as I have frequently heard him say) he was seized with the gout in his feet. This was hereditary; for diseases, as well as possessions, are sometimes handed down by a sort of inheritance. A life of

sobriety and continence had enabled him to conquer and keep down the disease while he was still young, latterly as it grew upon him with advancing years, he had to manfully bear it, suffering meanwhile the most incredible and undeserved agonies; for the gout was now not only in his feet, but had spread itself over his whole body. I remember, in Domitian's reign, paying him a visit at his villa, near Rome. As soon as I entered his chamber, his servants went out: for it was his rule, never to allow them to be in the room when any intimate friend was with him; nay, even his own wife, though she could have kept any secret, used to go too. Casting his eyes round the room, "Why," he exclaimed, "do you suppose I endure life so long under these cruel agonies? It is with the hope that I may outlive, at least for one day, that villain." Had his bodily strength been equal to his resolution, he would have carried his desire into practical effect. God heard and answered his prayer; and when he felt that he should now die a free, un-enslaved, Roman, he broke through those other great, but now less forcible, attachments to the world. His malady increased; and, as it now grew too violent to admit of any relief from temperance, he resolutely determined to put an end to its uninterrupted attacks, by an effort of heroism. He had refused all sustenance during four days when his wife Hispulla sent our common friend Geminius to me, with the melancholy news, that Corellius was resolved to die; and that neither her own entreaties nor her daughter's could move him from his purpose; I was the only person left who could reconcile him to life. I ran to his house

with the utmost precipitation. As I approached it, I met a second messenger from Hispulla, Julius Atticus, who informed me there was nothing to be hoped for now, even from me, as he seemed more hardened than ever in his purpose. He had said, indeed to his physician, who pressed him to take some nourishment, "'Tis resolved": an expression which, as it raised my admiration of the greatness of his soul, so it does my grief for the loss of him. I keep thinking what a friend, what a man, I am deprived of. That he had reached his sixty-seventh year, an age which even the strongest seldom exceed, I well know; that he is released from a life of continual pain; that he has left his dearest friends behind him, and (what was dearer to him than all these) the state in a prosperous condition: all this I know. Still I cannot forbear to lament him, as if he had been in the prime and vigour of his days; and I lament him (shall I own my weakness?) on my account. And—to confess to you as I did to Calvisius, in the first transport of my grief—I sadly fear, now that I am no longer under his eye, I shall not keep so strict a guard over my conduct. Speak comfort to me then, not that he was old, he was infirm; all this I know: but by supplying me with some reflections that are new and resistless, which I have never heard, never read, anywhere else. For all that I have heard, and all that I have read, occur to me of themselves; but all these are by far too weak to support me under so severe an affliction. Farewell.

IX – To SOCIUS SENECIO

This year has produced a plentiful crop of poets: during the whole month of April scarcely a day has passed on which we have not been entertained with the recital of some poem. It is a pleasure to me to find that a taste for polite literature still exists, and that men of genius do come forward and make themselves known, notwithstanding the lazy attendance they got for their pains. The greater part of the audience sit in the lounging-places, gossip away their time there, and are perpetually sending to enquire whether the author has made his entrance yet, whether he has got through the preface, or whether he has almost finished the piece. Then at length they saunter in with an air of the greatest indifference, nor do they condescend to stay through the recital, but go out before it is over, some slyly and stealthily, others again with perfect freedom and unconcern. And yet our fathers can remember how Claudius Cæsar walking one day in the palace, and hearing a great shouting, enquired the cause: and being informed that Nonianus[11] was reciting a composition of his, went immediately to the place, and agreeably surprised the author with his presence. But now, were one to bespeak the attendance of the idlest man living, and remind him of the appointment ever so often, or ever so long beforehand; either he would not come at all, or if he did would grumble about having "lost a day!" for no other reason but because he had not lost it. So

much the more do those authors deserve our encouragement and applause who have resolution to persevere in their studies, and to read out their compositions in spite of this apathy or arrogance on the part of their audience. Myself indeed, I scarcely ever miss being present upon any occasion; though, to tell the truth, the authors have generally been friends of mine, as indeed there are few men of literary tastes who are not. It is this which has kept me in town longer than I had intended. I am now, however, at liberty to go back into the country, and write something myself; which I do not intend reciting, lest I should seem rather to have lent than given my attendance to these recitations of my friends, for in these, as in all other good offices, the obligation ceases the moment you seem to expect a return. Farewell.

X – To JUNSUS MAURICUS

You desire me to look out a proper husband for your niece: it is with justice you enjoin me that office. You know the high esteem and affection I bore that great man her father, and with what noble instructions he nurtured my youth, and taught me to deserve those praises he was pleased to bestow upon me. You could not give me, then, a more important, or more agreeable, commission; nor could I be employed in an office of higher honour, than that of choosing a young man worthy of being father of the grandchildren of Rusticus Arulenus; a choice I should be long in determining, were I not acquainted with Minutius Aemilianus, who seems formed for our purpose. He loves me with all that warmth of affection which is usual between young men of equal years (as indeed I have the advance of him but by a very few), and reveres me at the same time, with all the deference due to age; and, in a word, he is no less desirous to model himself by my instructions than I was by those of yourself and your brother.

He is a native of Brixia, one of those provinces in Italy which still retain much of the old modesty, frugal simplicity, and even rusticity, of manner. He is the son of Minutius Macrinus, whose humble desires were satisfied with standing at the head of the equestrian order: for though he was nominated by Vespasian in the number of those whom that prince dignified with the

praetorian office, yet, with an inflexible greatness of mind, he resolutely preferred an honourable repose, to the ambitious, shall I call them, or exalted, pursuits, in which we public men are engaged. His grandmother, on the mother's side, is Serrana Procula, of Patavium:[12] you are no stranger to the character of its citizens; yet Serrana is looked upon, even among these correct people, as an exemplary instance of strict virtue, Acilius, his uncle, is a man of almost exceptional gravity, wisdom, and integrity. In short, you will find nothing throughout his family unworthy of yours. Minutius himself has plenty of vivacity, as well as application, together with a most amiable and becoming modesty. He has already, with considerable credit, passed through the offices of quaestor, tribune, and praetor; so that you will be spared the trouble of soliciting for him those honourable employments. He has a fine, well-bred, countenance, with a ruddy, healthy complexion, while his whole person is elegant and comely and his mien graceful and senatorian: advantages, I think, by no means to be slighted, and which I consider as the proper tribute to virgin innocence. I think I may add that his father is very rich. When I contemplate the character of those who require a husband of my choosing, I know it is unnecessary to mention wealth; but when I reflect upon the prevailing manners of the age, and even the laws of Rome, which rank a man according to his possessions, it certainly claims some regard; and, indeed, in establishments of this nature, where children and many other circumstances are to be duly weighed, it is an article that well

deserves to be taken into the account. You will be inclined, perhaps, to suspect that affection has had too great a share in the character I have been drawing, and that I have heightened it beyond the truth: but I will stake all my credit, you will find everything far beyond what I have represented. I love the young fellow indeed (as he justly deserves) with all the warmth of a most ardent affection; but for that very reason I would not ascribe more to his merit than I know it will bear. Farewell.

XI – To SEPTITIUS CLARUS

Ah! you are a pretty fellow! You make an engagement to come to supper and then never appear. Justice shall be exacted;—you shall reimburse me to the very last penny the expense I went to on your account; no small sum, let me tell you. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce a-piece, three snails, two eggs, and a barley cake, with some sweet wine and snow, (the snow most certainly I shall charge to your account, as a rarity that will not keep.) Olives, beet-root, gourds, onions, and a thousand other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, whichever you preferred; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the oysters, sows'-bellies, sea-urchins, and dancers from Cadiz of a certain—I know not who, were, it seems, more to your taste. You shall give satisfaction, how, shall at present be a secret.

Oh! you have behaved cruelly, grudging your friend,—had almost said yourself;—and upon second thoughts I do say so;—in this way: for how agreeably should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and literary amusements! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but nowhere with more unconstrained mirth, simplicity, and freedom: only make the experiment, and if you do not ever after excuse yourself to your other friends, to come to me, always put me off to go to them.

Farewell.

XII – To SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS

You tell me in your letter that you are extremely alarmed by a dream; apprehending that it forebodes some ill success to you in the case you have undertaken to defend; and, therefore, desire that I would get it adjourned for a few days, or, at least, to the next. This will be no easy matter, but I will try:

"For dreams descend from Jove."

Meanwhile, it is very material for you to recollect whether your dreams generally represent things as they afterwards fall out, or quite the reverse. But if I may judge of yours by one that happened to myself, this dream that alarms you seems to portend that you will acquit yourself with great success. I had promised to stand counsel for Junius Pastor; when I fancied in my sleep that my mother-in-law came to me, and, throwing herself at my feet, earnestly entreated me not to plead. I was at that time a very young man; the case was to be argued in the four centumviral courts; my adversaries were some of the most important personages in Rome, and particular favourites of Cæsar;[13] any of which circumstances were sufficient, after such an inauspicious dream, to have discouraged me. Notwithstanding this, I engaged in the cause, reflecting that,

"Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,
And asks no omen but his country's cause."[14]

for I looked upon the promise I had given to be as sacred to me as my country, or, if that were possible, more so. The event happened as I wished; and it was that very case which first procured me the favourable attention of the public, and threw open to me the gates of Fame. Consider then whether your dream, like this one I have related, may not pre-signify success. But, after all, perhaps you will think it safer to pursue this cautious maxim: "Never do a thing concerning the rectitude of which you are in doubt;" if so, write me word. In the interval, I will consider of some excuse, and will so plead your cause that you may be able to plead it your self any day you like best. In this respect, you are in a better situation than I was: the court of the centumviri, where I was to plead, admits of no adjournment: whereas, in that where your case is to be heard, though no easy matter to procure one, still, however, it is possible. Farewell.

XIII – To ROMANUS FIRMUS

As you are my towns-man, my school-fellow, and the earliest companion of my youth; as there was the strictest friendship between my mother and uncle and your father (a happiness which I also enjoyed as far as the great inequality of our ages would admit); can I fail (thus biassed as I am by so many and weighty considerations) to contribute all in my power to the advancement of your honours? The rank you bear in our province, as decurio, is a proof that you are possessed, at least, of an hundred thousand sesterces;[15] but that we may also have the satisfaction of seeing you a Roman Knight,[16] I present you with three hundred thousand, in order to make up the sum requisite to entitle you to that dignity. The long acquaintance we have had leaves me no room to apprehend you will ever be forgetful of this instance of my friendship. And I know your disposition too well to think it necessary to advise you to enjoy this honour with the modesty that becomes a person who receives it from me; for the advanced rank we possess through a friend's kindness is a sort of sacred trust, in which we have his judgment, as well as our own character, to maintain, and therefore to be guarded with the greater caution. Farewell.

XIV – TO CORNELIUS TACITUS

I HAVE frequent debates with a certain acquaintance of mine, a man of skill and learning, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar as conciseness. I agree with him, that where the case will admit of this precision, it may with propriety be adopted; but insist that, to leave out what is material to be mentioned,—or only briefly and cursorily to touch upon those points which should be inculcated, impressed, and urged well home upon the minds of the audience, is a downright fraud upon one's client. In many cases, to deal with the subject at greater length adds strength and weight to our ideas, which frequently produce their impression upon the mind, as iron does upon solid bodies, rather by repeated strokes than a single blow. In answer to this, he usually has recourse to authorities, and produces Lysias[17] amongst the Grecians, together with Cato and the two Gracchi, among our own countrymen, many of whose speeches certainly are brief and curtailed. In return, I name Demosthenes, Aeschines, Hyperides,[18] and many others, in opposition to Lysias; while I confront Cato and the Gracchi with Cæsar, Pollio,[19] Caelius,[20] but, above all, Cicero, whose longest speech is generally considered his best. Why, no doubt about it, in good compositions, as in everything else that is valuable, the more there is of them, the better. You may observe in statues, basso-relievos, pictures, and the human form, and

even in animals and trees, that nothing is more graceful than magnitude, if accompanied with proportion. The same holds true in pleading; and even in books a large volume carries a certain beauty and authority in its very size. My antagonist, who is extremely dexterous at evading an argument, eludes all this, and much more, which I usually urge to the same purpose, by insisting that those very individuals, upon whose works I found my opinion, made considerable additions to their speeches when they published them. This I deny; and appeal to the harangues of numberless orators, particularly to those of Cicero, for Murena and Varenus, in which a short, bare notification of certain charges is expressed under mere heads. Whence it appears that many things which he enlarged upon at the time he delivered those speeches were retrenched when he gave them to the public. The same excellent orator informs us that, agreeably to the ancient custom, which allowed only of one counsel on a side, Cluentius had no other advocate than himself; and he tells us further that he employed four whole days in defence of Cornelius; by which it plainly appears that those speeches which, when delivered at their full length, had necessarily taken up so much time at the bar were considerably cut down and pruned when he afterwards compressed them into a single volume, though, I must confess, indeed, a large one. But good pleading, it is objected, is one thing, just composition another. This objection, I am aware, has had some favourers; nevertheless, I am persuaded (though I may, perhaps, be mistaken) that, as it

is possible you may have a good pleading which is not a good speech, so a good speech cannot be a bad pleading; for the speech on paper is the model and, as it were, the archetype of the speech that was delivered. It is for this reason we find, in many of the best speeches extant, numberless extemporaneous turns of expression; and even in those which we are sure were never spoken; as, for instance, in the following passage from the speech against Verres: —"A certain mechanic—what's his name? Oh, thank you for helping me to it: yes, I mean Polyclitus." It follows, then, that the nearer approach a speaker makes to the rules of just composition, the more perfect will he be in his art; always supposing, however, that he has his due share of time allowed him; for, if he be limited of that article, no blame can justly be fixed upon the advocate, though much certainly upon the judge. The sense of the laws, I am sure, is on my side, which are by no means sparing of the orator's time; it is not conciseness, but fulness, a complete representation of every material circumstance, which they recommend. Now conciseness cannot effect this, unless in the most insignificant cases. Let me add what experience, that unerring guide, has taught me: it has frequently been my province to act both as an advocate and a judge; and I have often also attended as an assessor.[21] Upon those occasions, I have ever found the judgments of mankind are to be influenced by different modes of application, and that the slightest circumstances frequently produce the most important consequences. The dispositions and

understandings of men vary to such an extent that they seldom agree in their opinions concerning any one point in debate before them; or, if they do, it is generally from different motives. Besides, as every man is naturally partial to his own discoveries, when he hears an argument urged which had previously occurred to himself, he will be sure to embrace it as extremely convincing. The orator, therefore, should so adapt himself to his audience as to throw out something which every one of them, in turn, may receive and approve as agreeable to his own particular views. I recollect, once when Regulus and I were engaged on the same side, his remarking to me, "You seem to think it necessary to go into every single circumstance: whereas I always take aim at once at my adversary's throat, and there I press him closely." ('Tis true, he keeps a tight hold of whatever part he has once fixed upon; but the misfortune is, he is extremely apt to fix upon the wrong place.) I replied, it might possibly happen that what he called the throat was, in reality, the knee or the ankle. As for myself, said I, who do not pretend to direct my aim with so much precision, I test every part, I probe every opening; in short, to use a vulgar proverb, I leave no stone unturned. And as in agriculture, it is not my vineyards or my woods only, but my fields as well, that I look after and cultivate, and (to carry on the metaphor) as I do not content myself with sowing those fields simply with corn or white wheat, but sprinkle in barley, pulse, and the other kinds of grain; so, in my pleadings at the bar, I scatter broadcast various arguments like so many kinds of seed, in order to reap whatever

may happen to come up. For the disposition of your judges is as hard to fathom as uncertain, and as little to be relied on as that of soils and seasons. The comic writer Eupolis,[22] I remember, mentions it in praise of that excellent orator Pericles, that

> "On his lips Persuasion hung,
> And powerful Reason rul'd his tongue:
> Thus he alone could boast the art
> To charm at once, and pierce the heart."

[23] But could Pericles, without the richest variety of expression, and merely by the force of the concise or the rapid style, or both (for they are very different), have thus charmed and pierced the heart. To delight and to persuade requires time and great command of language; and to leave a sting in the minds of the audience is an effect not to be expected from an orator who merely pinks, but from him, and him only, who thrusts in. Another comic poet,[24] speaking of the same orator, says:

> "His mighty words like Jove's own thunder roll;
> Greece hears, and trembles to her inmost soul."

But it is not the close and reserved; it is the copious, the majestic, and the sublime orator, who thunders, who lightens, who, in short, bears all before him in a confused whirl. There is, undeniably, a just mean in everything; but he equally misses the mark who falls short of it, as he who goes beyond it; he

who is too limited as he who is too unrestrained. Hence it is as common a thing to hear our orators condemned for being too jejune and feeble as too excessive and redundant. One is said to have exceeded the bounds of his subject, the other not to have reached them. Both, no doubt, are equally in fault, with this difference, however, that in the one the fault arises from an abundance, in the other, from a deficiency; an error, in the former case, which, if it be not the sign of a more correct, is certainly of a more fertile genius. When I say this, I would not be understood to approve that everlasting talker[25] mentioned in Homer, but that other' described in the following lines:

> "Frequent and soft, as falls the winter snow,
> Thus from his lips the copious periods flow."

Not but that I extremely admire him,[26] too, of whom the poet says,

> "Few were his words, but wonderfully strong."

Yet, if the choice were given me, I should give the preference to that style resembling winter snow, that is, to the full, uninterrupted, and diffusive; in short, to that pomp of eloquence which seems all heavenly and divine. But (it is replied) the harangue of a more moderate length is most generally admired. It is:—but only by indolent people; and to fix the standard by their laziness and false delicacy would be simply ridiculous. Were

you to consult persons of this cast, they would tell you, not only that it is best to say little, but that it is best to say nothing at all. Thus, my friend, I have laid before you my opinions upon this subject, and I am willing to change them if not agreeable to yours. But should you disagree with me, pray let me know clearly your reasons why. For, though I ought to yield in this case to your more enlightened judgment, yet, in a point of such consequence, I had rather be convinced by argument than by authority. So if I don't seem to you very wide of the mark, a line or two from you in return, intimating your concurrence, will be sufficient to confirm me in my opinion: on the other hand, if you should think me mistaken, let me have your objections at full length. Does it not look rather like bribery, my requiring only a short letter, if you agree with me; but a very long one if you should be of a different opinion. Farewell.

XV – To PATERNUS

As I rely very much upon the soundness of your judgment, so I do upon the goodness of your eyes: not because I think your discernment very great (for I don't want to make you conceited), but because I think it as good as mine: which, it must be confessed, is saying a great deal. Joking apart, I like the look of the slaves which were purchased for me on your recommendation very well; all I further care about is, that they be honest: and for this I must depend upon their characters more than their countenances. Farewell.

XVI – To CATILIUS SEVERUS [27]

I AM at present (and have been a considerable time) detained in Rome, under the most stunning apprehensions. Titus Aristo,[28] whom I have a singular admiration and affection for, is fallen into a long and obstinate illness, which troubles me. Virtue, knowledge, and good sense, shine out with so superior a lustre in this excellent man that learning herself, and every valuable endowment, seem involved in the danger of his single person. How consummate his knowledge, both in the political and civil laws of his country! How thoroughly conversant is he in every branch of history or antiquity? In a word, there is nothing you might wish to know which he could not teach you. As for me, whenever I would acquaint myself with any abstruse point, I go to hint as my store-house. What an engaging sincerity, what dignity in his conversation! how chastened and becoming is his caution! Though he conceives, at once, every point in debate, yet he is as slow to decide as he is quick to apprehend; calmly and deliberately sifting and weighing every opposite reason that is offered, and tracing it, with a most judicious penetration, from its source through all its remotest consequences. His diet is frugal, his dress plain; and whenever I enter his chamber, and view him reclined upon his couch, I consider the scene before me as a true image of ancient simplicity, to which his illustrious mind reflects the noblest ornament. He places no part of his happiness

in ostentation, but in the secret approbation of his conscience, seeking the reward of his virtue, not in the clamorous applauses of the world, but in the silent satisfaction which results from having acted well. In short, you will not easily find his equal, even among our philosophers by outward profession. No, he does not frequent the gymnasia or porticoes[29] nor does he amuse his own and others' leisure with endless controversies, but busies himself in the scenes of civil and active life. Many has he assisted with his interest, still more with his advice, and withal in the practice of temperance, piety, justice, and fortitude, he has no superior. You would be astonished, were you there to see, at the patience with which he bears his illness, how he holds out against pain, endures thirst, and quietly submits to this raging fever and to the pressure of those clothes which are laid upon him to promote perspiration. He lately called me and a few more of his particular friends to his bedside, requesting us to ask his physicians what turn they apprehended his distemper would take; that, if they pronounced it incurable, he might voluntarily put an end to his life; but if there were hopes of a recovery, how tedious and difficult soever it might prove, he would calmly wait the event; for so much, he thought, was due to the tears and entreaties of his wife and daughter, and to the affectionate intercession of his friends, as not voluntarily to abandon our hopes, if they were not entirely desperate. A true hero's resolution this, in my estimation, and worthy the highest applause. Instances are frequent in the world, of rushing into the arms of death without reflection and

by a sort of blind impulse but deliberately to weigh the reasons for life or death, and to be determined in our choice as either side of the scale prevails, shows a great mind. We have had the satisfaction to receive the opinion of his physicians in his favour: may heaven favour their promises and relieve me at length from this painful anxiety. Once easy in my mind, I shall go back to my favourite Laurentum, or, in other words, to my books, my papers and studious leisure. Just now, so much of my time and thoughts are taken up in attendance upon my friend, and anxiety for him, that I have neither leisure nor inclination for any reading or writing whatever. Thus you have my fears, my wishes, and my after-plans. Write me in return, but in a gayer strain, an account not only of what you are and have been doing, but of what you intend doing too. It will be a very sensible consolation to me in this disturbance of mind, to be assured that yours is easy. Farewell.

XVII – To VOCONIUS ROMANUS

ROME has not for many years beheld a more magnificent and memorable spectacle than was lately exhibited in the public funeral of that great, illustrious, and no less fortunate man, Verginius Rufus. He lived thirty years after he had reached the zenith of his fame. He read poems composed in his honour, he read histories of his achievements, and was himself witness of his fame among posterity. He was thrice raised to the dignity of consul, that he might at least be the highest of subjects, who[30] had refused to be the first of princes. As he escaped the resentment of those emperors to whom his virtues had given umbrage and even rendered him odious, and ended his days when this best of princes, this friend of mankind[31] was in quiet possession of the empire, it seems as if Providence had purposely preserved him to these times, that he might receive the honour of a public funeral. He reached his eighty-fourth year, in full tranquillity and universally revered, having enjoyed strong health during his lifetime, with the exception of a trembling in his hands, which, however, gave him no pain. His last illness, indeed, was severe and tedious, but even that circumstance added to his reputation. As he was practising his voice with a view of returning his public acknowledgements to the emperor, who had promoted him to the consulship, a large volume he had taken into his hand, and which happened to be too heavy for so old a man

to hold standing up, slid from his grasp. In hastily endeavouring to recover it, his foot slipped on the smooth pavement, and he fell down and broke his thigh-bone, which being clumsily set, his age as well being against him, did not properly unite again. The funeral obsequies paid to the memory of this great man have done honour to the emperor, to the age, and to the bar. The consul Cornelius Tacitus[32] pronounced his funeral oration and thus his good fortune was crowned by the public applause of so eloquent an orator. He has departed from our midst, full of years, indeed, and of glory; as illustrious by the honours he refused as by those he accepted. Yet still we shall miss him and lament him, as the shining model of a past age; I, especially, shall feel his loss, for I not only admired him as a patriot, but loved him as a friend. We were of the same province, and of neighbouring towns, and our estates were also contiguous. Besides these accidental connections, he was left my guardian, and always treated me with a parent's affection. Whenever I offered myself as a candidate for any office in the state, he constantly supported me with his interest; and although he had long since given up all such services to friends, he would kindly leave his retirement and come to give me his vote in person. On the day on which the priests nominate those they consider most worthy of the sacred office[33] he constantly proposed me. Even in his last illness, apprehending the possibility of the senate's appointing him one of the five commissioners for reducing the public expenses, he fixed upon me, young as I am, to bear his excuses, in preference to so many

other friends, elderly men too, and of consular rank and said to me, "Had I a son of my own, I would entrust you with this matter." And so I cannot but lament his death, as though it were premature, and pour out my grief into your bosom; if indeed one has any right to grieve, or to call it death at all, which to such a man terminates his mortality, rather than ends his life. He lives, and will live on for ever; and his fame will extend and be more celebrated by posterity, now that he is gone from our sight. I had much else to write to you but my mind is full of this. I keep thinking of Verginius: I see him before me: I am for ever fondly yet vividly imagining that I hear him, am speaking to him, embrace him. There are men amongst us, his fellow-citizens, perhaps, who may rival him in virtue; but not one that will ever approach him in glory. Farewell.

XVIII – To NEPOS

THE great fame of Isaeus had already preceded him here; but we find him even more wonderful than we had heard. He possesses the utmost readiness, copiousness, and abundance of language: he always speaks extempore, and his lectures are as finished as though he had spent a long time over their written composition. His style is Greek, or rather the genuine Attic. His exordiums are terse, elegant, attractive, and occasionally impressive and majestic. He suggests several subjects for discussion, allows his audience their choice, sometimes to even name which side he shall take, rises, arranges himself, and begins. At once he has everything almost equally at command. Recondite meanings of things are suggested to you, and words —what words they are! exquisitely chosen and polished. These extempore speeches of his show the wideness of his reading, and how much practice he has had in composition. His preface is to the point, his narrative lucid, his summing up forcible, his rhetorical ornament imposing. In a word, he teaches, entertains, and affects you; and you are at a loss to decide which of the three he does best. His reflections are frequent, his syllogisms also are frequent, condensed, and carefully finished, a result not easily attainable even with the pen. As for his memory, you would hardly believe what it is capable of. He repeats from a long way back what he has previously delivered extempore, without

missing a single word. This marvellous faculty he has acquired by dint of great application and practice, for night and day he does nothing, hears nothing, says nothing else. He has passed his sixtieth year and is still only a rhetorician, and I know no class of men more single-hearted, more genuine, more excellent than this class. We who have to go through the rough work of the bar and of real disputes unavoidably contract a certain unprincipled adroitness. The school, the lecture-room, the imaginary case, all this, on the other hand, is perfectly innocent and harmless, and equally enjoyable, especially to old people, for what can be happier at that time of life than to enjoy what we found pleasantest in our young days? I consider Isaeus then, not only the most eloquent, but the happiest, of men, and if you are not longing to make his acquaintance, you must be made of stone and iron. So, if not upon my account, or for any other reason, come, for the sake of hearing this man, at least. Have you never read of a certain inhabitant of Cadiz who was so impressed with the name and fame of Livy that he came from the remotest corner of the earth on purpose to see him, and, his curiosity gratified, went straight home again. It is utter want of taste, shows simple ignorance, is almost an actual disgrace to a man, not to set any high value upon a proficiency in so pleasing, noble, refining a science. "I have authors," you will reply, "here in my own study, just as eloquent." True: but then those authors you can read at any time, while you cannot always get the opportunity of hearing eloquence. Besides, as the proverb says, "The living voice is that

which sways the soul;" yes, far more. For notwithstanding what one reads is more clearly understood than what one hears, yet the utterance, countenance, garb, aye and the very gestures of the speaker, alike concur in fixing an impression upon the mind; that is, unless we disbelieve the truth of Aeschines' statement, who, after he had read to the Rhodians that celebrated speech of Demosthenes, upon their expressing their admiration of it, is said to have added, "Ah! what would you have said, could you have heard the wild beast himself?" And Aeschines, if we may take Demosthenes' word for it, was no mean elocutionist; yet, he could not but confess that the speech would have sounded far finer from the lips of its author. I am saying all this with a view to persuading you to hear Isaeus, if even for the mere sake of being able to say you have heard him. Farewell.

XIX – To AVITUS

IT would be a long story, and of no great importance, to tell you by what accident I found myself dining the other day with an individual with whom I am by no means intimate, and who, in his own opinion, does things in good style and economically as well, but according to mine, with meanness and extravagance combined. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself and a few more of us, whilst those placed before the rest of the company consisted simply of cheap dishes and scraps. There were, in small bottles, three different kinds of wine; not that the guest might take their choice, but that they might not have any option in their power; one kind being for himself, and for us; another sort for his lesser friends (for it seems he has degrees of friends), and the third for his own freedmen and ours. My neighbour,[34] reclining next me, observing this, asked me if I approved the arrangement. Not at all, I told him. "Pray then," he asked, "what is your method upon such occasions?" "Mine," I returned, "is to give all my visitors the same reception; for when I give an invitation, it is to entertain, not distinguish, my company: I place every man upon my own level whom I admit to my table." "Not excepting even your freedmen?" "Not excepting even my freedmen, whom I consider on these occasions my guests, as much as any of the rest." He replied, "This must cost you a great deal." "Not in the least." "How can that be?" "Simply because,

although my freedmen don't drink the same wine as myself, yet I drink the same as they do." And, no doubt about it, if a man is wise enough to moderate his appetite, he will not find it such a very expensive thing to share with all his visitors what he takes himself. Restrain it, keep it in, if you wish to be true economist. You will find temperance a far better way of saving than treating other people rudely can be. Why do I say all this? Why, for fear a young man of your high character and promise should be imposed upon by this immoderate luxury which prevails at some tables, under the specious notion of frugality. Whenever any folly of this sort falls under my eye, I shall, just because I care for you, point it out to you as an example you ought to shun. Remember, then, nothing is more to be avoided than this modern alliance of luxury with meanness; odious enough when existing separate and distinct, but still more hateful where you meet with them together. Farewell.

XX – To MACRINUS

THE senate decreed yesterday, on the emperor's motion, a triumphal statue to Vestricius Spurinna: not as they would to many others, who never were in action, or saw a camp, or heard the sound of a trumpet, unless at a show; but as it would be decreed to those who have justly bought such a distinction with their blood, their exertions, and their deeds. Spurinna forcibly restored the king of the Bructeri[35] to his throne; and this by the noblest kind of victory; for he subdued that warlike people by the terror of the mere display of his preparation for the campaign. This is his reward as a hero, while, to console him for the loss of his son Cottius, who died during his absence upon that expedition, they also voted a statue to the youth; a very unusual honour for one so young; but the services of the father deserved that the pain of so severe a wound should be soothed by no common balm. Indeed Cottius himself evinced such remarkable promise of the highest qualities that it is but fitting his short limited term of life should be extended, as it were, by this kind of immortality. He was so pure and blameless, so full of dignity, and commanded such respect, that he might have challenged in moral goodness much older men, with whom he now shares equal honours. Honours, if I am not mistaken, conferred not only to perpetuate the memory of the deceased youth, and in consolation to the surviving father, but for the sake of public example also.

This will rouse and stimulate our young men to cultivate every worthy principle, when they see such rewards bestowed upon one of their own years, provided he deserve them: at the same time that men of quality will be encouraged to beget children and to have the joy and satisfaction of leaving a worthy race behind, if their children survive them, or of so glorious a consolation, should they survive their children. Looking at it in this light then, I am glad, upon public grounds, that a statue is decreed Cottius: and for my own sake too, just as much; for I loved this most favoured, gifted, youth, as ardently as I now grievously miss him amongst us. So that it will be a great satisfaction to me to be able to look at this figure from time to time as I pass by, contemplate it, stand underneath, and walk to and fro before it. For if having the pictures of the departed placed in our homes lightens sorrow, how much more those public representations of them which are not only memorials of their air and countenance, but of their glory and honour besides? Farewell.

XXI To PAISCUS

As I know you eagerly embrace every opportunity of obliging me, so there is no man whom I had rather be under an obligation to. I apply to you, therefore, in preference to anyone else, for a favour which I am extremely desirous of obtaining. You, who are commander-in-chief of a very considerable army, have many opportunities of exercising your generosity; and the length of time you have enjoyed that post must have enabled you to provide for all your own friends. I hope you will now turn your eyes upon some of mine: as indeed they are but a few Your generous disposition, I know, would be better pleased if the number were greater, but one or two will suffice my modest desires; at present I will only mention Voconius Romanus. His father was of great distinction among the Roman knights, and his father-in-law, or, I might more properly call him, his second father, (for his affectionate treatment of Voconius entitles him to that appellation) was still more conspicuous. His mother was one of the most considerable ladies of Upper Spain: you know what character the people of that province bear, and how remarkable they are for their strictness of their manners. As for himself, he lately held the post of flamen.[36] Now, from the time when we were first students together, I have felt very tenderly attached to him. We lived under the same roof, in town and country, we joked together, we shared each other's serious thoughts: for

where indeed could I have found a truer friend or pleasanter companion than he? In his conversation, and even in his very voice and countenance, there is a rare sweetness; as at the bar he displays talents of a high order; acuteness, elegance, ease, and skill: and he writes such letters too that were you to read them you would imagine they had been dictated by the Muses themselves. I have a very great affection for him, as he has for me. Even in the earlier part of our lives, I warmly embraced every opportunity of doing him all the good services which then lay in my power, as I have lately obtained for him from our most gracious prince[37] the privilege[38] granted to those who have three children: a favour which, though Cæsar very rarely bestows, and always with great caution, yet he conferred, at my request, in such a matter as to give it the air and grace of being his own choice.

The best way of showing that I think he deserves the kindnesses he has already received from me is by increasing them, especially as he always accepts my services so gratefully as to deserve more. Thus I have shown you what manner of man Romanus is, how thoroughly I have proved his worth, and how much I love him. Let me entreat you to honour him with your patronage in a way suitable to the generosity of your heart, and the eminence of your station. But above all let him have your affection; for though you were to confer upon him the utmost you have in your power to bestow, you can give him nothing more valuable than your friendship-That you may see he is worthy of it, even to the closest degree of intimacy, I send you this brief sketch

of his tastes, character, his whole life, in fact. I should continue my intercessions in his behalf, but that I know you prefer not being pressed, and I have already repeated them in every line of this letter: for, to show a good reason for what one asks is true intercession, and of the most effectual kind. Farewell.

XXII – To MAIMUS

You guessed correctly: I am much engaged in pleading before the Hundred. The business there is more fatiguing than pleasant. Trifling, inconsiderable cases, mostly; it is very seldom that anything worth speaking of, either from the importance of the question or the rank of the persons concerned, comes before them. There are very few lawyers either whom I take any pleasure in working with. The rest, a parcel of impudent young fellows, many of whom one knows nothing whatever about, come here to get some practice in speaking, and conduct themselves so forwardly and with such utter want of deference that my friend Attilius exactly hit it, I think, when he made the observation that "boys set out at the bar with cases in the Court of the Hundred as they do at school with Homer," intimating that at both places they begin where they should end. But in former times (so my elders tell me) no youth, even of the best families, was allowed in unless introduced by some person of consular dignity. As things are now, since every fence of modesty and decorum is broken down, and all distinctions are levelled and confounded, the present young generation, so far from waiting to be introduced, break in of their own free will. The audience at their heels are fit attendants upon such orators; a low rabble of hired mercenaries, supplied by contract. They get together in the middle of the court, where the dole is dealt round to them as

openly as if they were in a dining-room: and at this noble price they run from court to court. The Greeks have an appropriate name in their language for this sort of people, importing that they are applauders by profession, and we stigmatize them with the opprobrious title of table-flatterers: yet the dirty business alluded to increases every day. It was only yesterday two of my domestic officers, mere striplings, were hired to cheer somebody or other, at three denarii apiece:[39] that is what the highest eloquence goes for. Upon these terms we fill as many benches as we please, and gather a crowd; this is how those rending shouts are raised, as soon as the individual standing up in the middle of the ring gives the signal. For, you must know, these honest fellows, who understand nothing of what is said, or, if they did, could not hear it, would be at a loss without a signal, how to time their applause: for many of them don't hear a syllable, and are as noisy as any of the rest. If, at any time, you should happen to be passing by when the court is sitting, and feel at all interested to know how any speaker is acquitting himself, you have no occasion to give yourself the trouble of getting up on the judge's platform, no need to listen; it is easy enough to find out, for you may be quite sure he that gets most applause deserves it the least. Largius Licinus was the first to introduce this fashion; but then he went no farther than to go round and solicit an audience. I know, I remember hearing this from my tutor Quinctilian. "I used," he told me, "to go and hear Domitius Afer, and as he was pleading once before the Hundred in his usual slow and impressive manner, hearing,

close to him, a most immoderate and unusual noise, and being a good deal surprised at this, he left off: the noise ceased, and he began again: he was interrupted a second time, and a third. At last he enquired who it was that was speaking? He was told, Licinus. Upon which, he broke off the case, exclaiming, 'Eloquence is no more!'" The truth is it had only begun to decline then, when in Afer's opinion it no longer existed – whereas now it is almost extinct. I am ashamed to tell you of the mincing and affected pronunciation of the speakers, and of the shrill-voiced applause with which their effusions are received; nothing seems wanting to complete this sing-song performance except claps, or rather cymbals and tambourines. Howlings indeed (for I can call such applause, which would be indecent even in the theatre, by no other name) abound in plenty. Up to this time the interest of my friends and the consideration of my early time of life have kept me in this court, as I am afraid they might think I was doing it to shirk work rather than to avoid these indecencies, were I to leave it just yet: however, I go there less frequently than I did, and am thus effecting a gradual retreat. Farewell.

XXIII – To GALLUS

You are surprised that I am so fond of my Laurentine, or (if you prefer the name) my Laurens: but you will cease to wonder when I acquaint you with the beauty of the villa, the advantages of its situation, and the extensive view of the sea-coast. It is only seventeen miles from Rome: so that when I have finished my business in town, I can pass my evenings here after a good satisfactory day's work. There are two different roads to it: if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone; if by Astia, at the eleventh. Both of them are sandy in places, which makes it a little heavier and longer by carriage, but short and easy on horseback. The landscape affords plenty of variety, the view in some places being closed in by woods, in others extending over broad meadows, where numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which the severity of the winter has driven from the mountains, fatten in the spring warmth, and on the rich pasturage. My villa is of a convenient size without being expensive to keep up. The courtyard in front is plain, but not mean, through which you enter porticoes shaped into the form of the letter D, enclosing a small but cheerful area between. These make a capital retreat for bad weather, not only as they are shut in with windows, but particularly as they are sheltered by a projection of the roof. From the middle of these porticoes you pass into a bright pleasant inner court, and out of that into a

handsome hall running out towards the sea-shore; so that when there is a south-west breeze, it is gently washed with the waves, which spend themselves at its base. On every side of this hall there are either folding-doors or windows equally large, by which means you have a view from the front and the two sides of three different seas, as it were: from the back you see the middle court, the portico, and the area; and from another point you look through the portico into the courtyard, and out upon the woods and distant mountains beyond. On the left hand of this hall, a little farther from the sea, lies a large drawing-room, and beyond that, a second of a smaller size, which has one window to the rising and another to the setting sun: this as well has a view of the sea, but more distant and agreeable. The angle formed by the projection of the dining-room with this drawing-room retains and intensifies the warmth of the sun, and this forms our winter quarters and family gymnasium, which is sheltered from all the winds except those which bring on clouds, but the clear sky comes out again before the warmth has gone out of the place. Adjoining this angle is a room forming the segment of a circle, the windows of which are so arranged as to get the sun all through the day: in the walls are contrived a sort of cases, containing a collection of authors who can never be read too often. Next to this is a bed-room, connected with it by a raised passage furnished with pipes, which supply, at a wholesome temperature, and distribute to all parts of this room, the heat they receive. The rest of this side of the house is appropriated to the use of my

slaves and freedmen; but most of the rooms in it are respectable enough to put my guests into. In the opposite wing is a most elegant, tastefully fitted up bed-room; next to which lies another, which you may call either a large bed-room or a modified dining-room; it is very warm and light, not only from the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea. Beyond this is a bed-room with an ante-room, the height of which renders it cool in summer, its thick walls warm in winter, for it is sheltered, every way from the winds. To this apartment another anteroom is joined by one common wall. From thence you enter into the wide and spacious cooling-room belonging to the bath, from the opposite walls of which two curved basins are thrown out, so to speak; which are more than large enough if you consider that the sea is close at hand. Adjacent to this is the anointing-room, then the sweating-room, and beyond that the bath-heating room: adjoining are two other little bath-rooms, elegantly rather than sumptuously fitted up: annexed to them is a warm bath of wonderful construction, in which one can swim and take a view of the sea at the same time. Not far from this stands the tennis-court, which lies open to the warmth of the afternoon sun. From thence you go up a sort of turret which has two rooms below, with the same number above, besides a dining-room commanding a very extensive look-out on to the sea, the coast, and the beautiful villas scattered along the shore line. At the other end is a second turret, containing a room that gets the rising and setting sun. Behind this is a large store-room and granary, and underneath, a

spacious dining-room, where only the murmur and break of the sea can be heard, even in a storm: it looks out upon the garden, and the gestatio,[40] running round the garden. The gestatio is bordered round with box, and, where that is decayed, with rosemary: for the box, wherever sheltered by the buildings, grows plentifully, but where it lies open and exposed to the weather and spray from the sea, though at some distance from the latter, it quite withers up. Next the gestatio, and running along inside it, is a shady vine plantation, the path of which is so soft and easy to the tread that you may walk bare-foot upon it. The garden is chiefly planted with fig and mulberry trees, to which this soil is as favourable as it is averse from all others. Here is a dining-room, which, though it stands away from the sea enjoys the garden view which is just as pleasant: two apartments run round the back part of it, the windows of which look out upon the entrance of the villa, and into a fine kitchen-garden. From here extends an enclosed portico which, from its great length, you might take for a public one. It has a range of windows on either side, but more on the side facing the sea, and fewer on the garden side, and these, single windows and alternate with the opposite rows. In calm, clear, weather these are all thrown open; but if it blows, those on the weather side are closed, whilst those away from the wind can remain open without any inconvenience. Before this enclosed portico lies a terrace fragrant with the scent of violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which, while it retains the rays, keeps away the north-east wind; and it is

as warm on this side as it is cool on the side opposite: in the same way it is a protection against the wind from the south-west; and thus, in short, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds, from whatever quarter they may blow. These are some of its winter advantages, they are still more appreciable in the summer time; for at that season it throws a shade upon the terrace during the whole of the forenoon, and upon the adjoining portion of the gestatio and garden in the afternoon, casting a greater or less shade on this side or on that as the day increases or decreases. But the portico itself is coolest just at the time when the sun is at its hottest, that is, when the rays fall directly upon the roof. Also, by opening the windows you let in the western breezes in a free current, which prevents the place getting oppressive with close and stagnant air. At the upper end of the terrace and portico stands a detached garden building, which I call my favourite; my favourite indeed, as I put it up myself. It contains a very warm winter-room, one side of which looks down upon the terrace, while the other has a view of the sea, and both lie exposed to the sun. The bed-room opens on to the covered portico by means of folding-doors, while its window looks out upon the sea. On that side next the sea, and facing the middle wall, is formed a very elegant little recess, which, by means of transparent[41] windows, and a curtain drawn to or aside, can be made part of the adjoining room, or separated from it. It contains a couch and two chairs: as you lie upon this couch, from where your feet are you get a peep of the sea; looking behind you see the neighbouring

villas, and from the head you have a view of the woods: these three views may be seen either separately, from so many different windows, or blended together in one. Adjoining this is a bed-room, which neither the servants' voices, the murmuring of the sea, the glare of lightning, nor daylight itself can penetrate, unless you open the windows. This profound tranquillity and seclusion are occasioned by a passage separating the wall of this room from that of the garden, and thus, by means of this intervening space, every noise is drowned. Annexed to this is a tiny stove-room, which, by opening or shutting a little aperture, lets out or retains the heat from underneath, according as you require. Beyond this lie a bed-room and ante-room, which enjoy the sun, though obliquely indeed, from the time it rises, till the afternoon. When I retire to this garden summer-house, I fancy myself a hundred miles away from my villa, and take especial pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia,[42] when, by the licence of that festive season, every other part of my house resounds with my servants' mirth: thus I neither interrupt their amusement nor they my studies. Amongst the pleasures and conveniences of this situation, there is one drawback, and that is, the want of running water; but then there are wells about the place, or rather springs, for they lie close to the surface. And, altogether, the quality of this coast is remarkable; for dig where you may, you meet, upon the first turning up of the ground, with a spring of water, quite pure, not in the least salt, although so near the sea. The neighbouring woods supply us with all the fuel we require, the

other necessaries Ostia furnishes. Indeed, to a moderate man, even the village (between which and my house there is only one villa) would supply all ordinary requirements. It has three public baths, which are a great convenience if it happen that friends come in unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time in preparing my own. The whole coast is very pleasantly sprinkled with villas either in rows or detached, which whether looking at them from the sea or the shore, present the appearance of so many different cities. The strand is, sometimes, after a long calm, perfectly smooth, though, in general, through the storms driving the waves upon it, it is rough and uneven. I cannot boast that our sea is plentiful in choice fish; however, it supplies us with capital soles and prawns; but as to other kinds of provisions, my villa aspires to excel even inland countries, particularly in milk: for the cattle come up there from the meadows in large numbers, in pursuit of water and shade. Tell me, now, have I not good reason for living in, staying in, loving, such a retreat, which, if you feel no appetite for, you must be morbidly attached to town? And I only wish you would feel inclined to come down to it, that to so many charms with which my little villa abounds, it might have the very considerable addition of your company to recommend it. Farewell.

XXIV – To CEREALIS

You advise me to read my late speech before an assemblage of my friends. I shall do so, as you advise it, though I have strong scruples. Compositions of this sort lose, I well know, all their force and fire, and even their very name almost, by a mere recital. It is the solemnity of the tribunal, the concourse of advocates, the suspense of the event, the fame of the several pleaders concerned, the different parties formed amongst the audience; add to this the gestures, the pacing, aye the actual running, to and fro, of the speaker, the body working[43] in harmony with every inward emotion, that conspire to give a spirit and a grace to what he delivers. This is the reason that those who plead sitting, though they retain most of the advantages possessed by those who stand up to plead, weaken the whole force of their oratory. The eyes and hands of the reader, those important instruments of graceful elocution, being engaged, it is no wonder that the attention of the audience droops, without anything extrinsic to keep it up, no allurements of gesture to attract, no smart, stinging impromptus to enliven. To these general considerations I must add this particular disadvantage which attends the speech in question, that it is of the argumentative kind; and it is natural for an author to infer that what he wrote with labour will not be read with pleasure. For who is there so unprejudiced as not to prefer the attractive and sonorous to the sombre and unornamented in

style? It is very unreasonable that there should be any distinction; however, it is certain the judges generally expect one style of pleading, and the audience another; whereas an auditor ought to be affected only by those parts which would especially strike him, were he in the place of the judge. Nevertheless it is possible the objections which lie against this piece may be surmounted in consideration of the novelty it has to recommend it: the novelty I mean with respect to us; for the Greek orators have a method of reasoning upon a different occasion, not altogether unlike that which I have employed. They, when they would throw out a law, as contrary to some former one unrepealed, argue by comparing those together; so I, on the contrary, endeavour to prove that the crime, which I was insisting upon as falling within the intent and meaning of the law relating to public extortions, was agreeable, not only to that law, but likewise to other laws of the same nature. Those who are ignorant of the jurisprudence of their country can have no taste for reasonings of this kind, but those who are not ought to be proportionably the more favourable in the judgments they pass upon them. I shall endeavour, therefore, if you persist in my reciting it, to collect as learned an audience as I can. But before you determine this point, do weigh impartially the different considerations I have laid before you, and then decide as reason shall direct; for it is reason that must justify you; obedience to your commands will be a sufficient apology for me. Farewell.

XXV – To CALVISIUS

GIVE me a penny, and I will tell you a story "worth gold," or, rather, you shall hear two or three; for one brings to my mind another. It makes no difference with which I begin. Verania, the widow of Piso, the Piso, I mean, whom Galba adopted, lay extremely ill, and Regulus paid her a visit. By the way, mark the assurance of the man, visiting a lady who detested him herself, and to whose husband he was a declared enemy! Even barely to enter her house would have been bad enough, but he actually went and seated himself by her bed-side and began enquiring on what day and hour she was born. Being informed of these important particulars, he composes his countenance, fixes his eyes, mutters something to himself, counts upon his fingers, and all this merely to keep the poor sick lady in suspense. When he had finished, "You are," he says, "in one of your climacterics; however, you will get over it. But for your greater satisfaction, I will consult with a certain diviner, whose skill I have frequently experienced." Accordingly off he goes, performs a sacrifice, and returns with the strongest assurances that the omens confirmed what he had promised on the part of the stars. Upon this the good woman, whose danger made her credulous, calls for her will and gives Regulus a legacy. She grew worse shortly after this; and in her last moments exclaimed against this wicked, treacherous, and worse than perjured wretch, who had sworn falsely to her by

his own son's life. But imprecations of this sort are as common with Regulus as they are impious; and he continually devotes that unhappy youth to the curse of those gods whose vengeance his own frauds every day provoke.

Velleius Blaesus, a man of consular rank, and remarkable for his immense wealth, in his last illness was anxious to make some alterations in his will. Regulus, who had lately endeavoured to insinuate himself into his good graces, hoped to get something from the new will, and accordingly addresses himself to his physicians, and conjures them to exert all their skill to prolong the poor man's life. But after the will was signed, he changes his character, reversing his tone: "How long," says he to these very same physicians, "do you intend keeping this man in misery? Since you cannot preserve his life, why do you grudge him the happy release of death?" Blaesus dies, and, as if he had overheard every word that Regulus had said, has not left him one farthing.—And now have you had enough? or are you for the third, according to rhetorical canon? If so, Regulus will supply you. You must know, then, that Aurelia, a lady of remarkable accomplishments, purposing to execute her will,[44] had put on her smartest dress for the occasion. Regulus, who was present as a witness, turned to the lady, and "Pray," says he, "leave me these fine clothes." Aurelia thought the man was joking: but he insisted upon it perfectly seriously, and, to be brief, obliged her to open her will, and insert the dress she had on as a legacy to him, watching as she wrote, and then looking over it to see that

it was all down correctly. Aurelia, however, is still alive: though Regulus, no doubt, when he solicited this bequest, expected to enjoy it pretty soon. The fellow gets estates, he gets legacies, conferred upon him, as if he really deserved them! But why should I go on dwelling upon this in a city where wickedness and knavery have, for this time past, received, the same, do I say, nay, even greater encouragement, than modesty and virtue? Regulus is a glaring instance of this truth, who, from a state of poverty, has by a train of villainies acquired such immense riches that he once told me, upon consulting the omens to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces,[45] he found them so favourable as to portend he should possess double that sum. And possibly he may, if he continues to dictate wills for other people in this way: a sort of fraud, in my opinion, the most infamous of any. Farewell.

XXVI – To CALVISIUS

I NEVER, I think, spent any time more agreeably than my time lately with Spurinna. So agreeably, indeed, that if ever I should arrive at old age, there is no man whom I would sooner choose for my model, for nothing can be more perfect in arrangement than his mode of life. I look upon order in human actions, especially at that advanced age, with the same sort of pleasure as I behold the settled course of the heavenly bodies. In young men, indeed, a little confusion and disarrangement is all well enough: but in age, when business is unseasonable, and ambition indecent, all should be composed and uniform. This rule Spurinna observes with the most religious consistency. Even in those matters which one might call insignificant, were they not of every-day occurrence, he observes a certain periodical season and method. The early morning he passes on his couch; at eight he calls for his slippers, and walks three miles, exercising mind and body together. On his return, if he has any friends in the house with him, he gets upon some entertaining and interesting topic of conversation; if by himself, some book is read to him, sometimes when visitors are there even, if agreeable to the company. Then he has a rest, and after that either takes up a book or resumes his conversation in preference to reading. By-and-by he goes out for a drive in his carriage, either with his wife, a most admirable woman, or with some friend: a happiness which

lately was mine.—How agreeable, how delightful it is getting a quiet time alone with him in this way! You could imagine you were listening to some worthy of ancient times! What deeds, what men you hear about, and with what noble precepts you are imbued! Yet all delivered with so modest an air that there is not the least appearance of dictating. When he has gone about seven miles, he gets out of his chariot and walks a mile more, after which he returns home, and either takes a rest or goes back to his couch and writing. For he composes most elegant lyrics both in Greek and Latin. So wonderfully soft, sweet, and gay they are, while the author's own unsullied life lends them additional charm. When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and in summer about two, he undresses himself and, if their happen to be no wind, walks for some time in the sun. After this he has a good brisk game of tennis: for by this sort of exercise too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself upon his couch, but waits a little before he begins eating, and in the meanwhile has some light and entertaining author read to him. In this, as in all the rest, his friends are at full liberty to share; or to employ themselves in any other way, just as they prefer. You sit down to an elegant dinner, without extravagant display, which is served up in antique plate of pure silver. He has another complete service in Corinthian metal, which, though he admires as a curiosity, is far from being his passion. During dinner he is frequently entertained with the recital of some dramatic piece, by way of seasoning his very

pleasures with study; and although he continues at the table, even in summer, till the night is somewhat advanced, yet he prolongs the entertainment with so much affability and politeness that none of his guests ever finds it tedious. By this method of living he has preserved all his senses entire, and his body vigorous and active to his seventy-eighth year, without showing any sign of old age except wisdom. This is the sort of life I ardently aspire after; as I purpose enjoying it when I shall arrive at those years which will justify a retreat from active life. Meanwhile I am embarrassed with a thousand affairs, in which Spurinna is at once my support and my example: for he too, so long as it became him, discharged his professional duties, held magistracies, governed provinces, and by toiling hard earned the repose he now enjoys. I propose to myself the same career and the same limits: and I here give it to you under my hand that I do so. If an ill-timed ambition should carry me beyond those bounds, produce this very letter of mine in court against me; and condemn me to repose, whenever I enjoy it without being reproached with indolence. Farewell.

XXVII – To BAEBIUS MACER

IT gives me great pleasure to find you such a reader of my uncle's works as to wish to have a complete collection of them, and to ask me for the names of them all. I will act as index then, and you shall know the very order in which they were written, for the studious reader likes to know this. The first work of his was a treatise in one volume, "On the Use of the Dart by Cavalry"; this he wrote when in command of one of the cavalry corps of our allied troops, and is drawn up with great care and ingenuity. "The Life of Pomponius Secundus,"[46] in two volumes. Pomponius had a great affection for him, and he thought he owed this tribute to his memory. "The History of the Wars in Germany," in twenty books, in which he gave an account of all the battles we were engaged in against that nation. A dream he had while serving in the army in Germany first suggested the design of this work to him. He imagined that Drusus Nero[47] (who extended his conquest very far into that country, and there lost his life) appeared to him in his sleep, and entreated him to rescue his memory from oblivion. Next comes a work entitled "The Student," in three parts, which from their length spread into six volumes: a work in which is discussed the earliest training and subsequent education of the orator. "Questions of Grammar and Style," in eight books, written in the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in

literary pursuits requiring freedom and elevation of tone. He has completed the history which Aufidius Bassus[48] left unfinished, and has added to it thirty books. And lastly he has left thirty-seven books on Natural History, a work of great compass and learning, and as full of variety as nature herself. You will wonder how a man as busy as he was could find time to compose so many books, and some of them too involving such care and labour. But you will be still more surprised when you hear that he pleaded at the bar for some time, that he died in his sixty-sixth year, that the intervening time was employed partly in the execution of the highest official duties, partly in attendance upon those emperors who honoured him with their friendship. But he had a quick apprehension, marvellous power of application, and was of an exceedingly wakeful temperament. He always began to study at midnight at the time of the feast of Vulcan, not for the sake of good luck, but for learning's sake; in winter generally at one in the morning, but never later than two, and often at twelve.[49] He was a most ready sleeper, insomuch that he would sometimes, whilst in the midst of his studies, fall off and then wake up again. Before day-break he used to wait upon Vespasian' (who also used his nights for transacting business in), and then proceed to execute the orders he had received. As soon as he returned home, he gave what time was left to study. After a short and light refreshment at noon (agreeably to the good old custom of our ancestors) he would frequently in the summer, if he was disengaged from business, lie down

and bask in the sun; during which time some author was read to him, while he took notes and made extracts, for every book he read he made extracts out of, indeed it was a maxim of his, that "no book was so bad but some good might be got out of it." When this was over, he generally took a cold bath, then some light refreshment and a little nap. After this, as if it had been a new day, he studied till supper-time, when a book was again read to him, which he would take down running notes upon. I remember once his reader having mis-pronounced a word, one of my uncle's friends at the table made him go back to where the word was and repeat it again; upon which my uncle said to his friend, "Surely you understood it?" Upon his acknowledging that he did, "Why then," said he, "did you make him go back again? We have lost more than ten lines by this interruption." Such an economist he was of time! In the summer he used to rise from supper at daylight, and in winter as soon as it was dark: a rule he observed as strictly as if it had been a law of the state. Such was his manner of life amid the bustle and turmoil of the town: but in the country his whole time was devoted to study, excepting only when he bathed. In this exception I include no more than the time during which he was actually in the bath; for all the while he was being rubbed and wiped, he was employed either in hearing some book read to him or in dictating himself. In going about anywhere, as though he were disengaged from all other business, he applied his mind wholly to that single pursuit. A shorthand writer constantly attended him, with book and tablets,

who, in the winter, wore a particular sort of warm gloves, that the sharpness of the weather might not occasion any interruption to my uncle's studies: and for the same reason, when in Rome, he was always carried in a chair. I recollect his once taking me to task for walking. "You need not," he said, "lose these hours." For he thought every hour gone that was not given to study. Through this extraordinary application he found time to compose the several treatises I have mentioned, besides one hundred and sixty volumes of extracts which he left me in his will, consisting of a kind of common-place, written on both sides, in very small hand, so that one might fairly reckon the number considerably more. He used himself to tell us that when he was comptroller of the revenue in Spain, he could have sold these manuscripts to Largius Licinus for four hundred thousand sesterces,[50] and then there were not so many of them. When you consider the books he has read, and the volumes he has written, are you not inclined to suspect that he never was engaged in public duties or was ever in the confidence of his prince? On the other hand, when you are told how indefatigable he was in his studies, are you not inclined to wonder that he read and wrote no more than he did? For, on one side, what obstacles would not the business of a court throw in his way? and on the other, what is it that such intense application might not effect? It amuses me then when I hear myself called a studious man, who in comparison with him am the merest idler. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits by numberless affairs both

public and private? Who amongst those whose whole lives are devoted to literary pursuits would not blush and feel himself the most confirmed of sluggards by the side of him? I see I have run out my letter farther than I had originally intended, which was only to let you know, as you asked me, what works he had left behind him. But I trust this will be no less acceptable to you than the books themselves, as it may, possibly, not only excite your curiosity to read his works, but also your emulation to copy his example, by some attempts of a similar nature. Farewell.

XXVIII – To ANNIUS SEVERUS

I HAVE lately purchased with a legacy that was left me a small statue of Corinthian brass. It is small indeed, but elegant and life-like, as far as I can form any judgment, which most certainly in matters of this sort, as perhaps in all others, is extremely defective. However, I do see the beauties of this figure: for, as it is naked the faults, if there be any, as well as the perfections, are the more observable. It represents an old man, in an erect attitude. The bones, muscles, veins, and the very wrinkles, give the Impression of breathing life. The hair is thin and failing, the forehead broad, the face shrivelled, the throat lank, the arms loose and hanging, the breast shrunken, and the belly fallen in, as the whole turn and air of the figure behind too is equally expressive of old age. It appears to be true antique, judging from the colour of the brass. In short, it is such a masterpiece as would strike the eyes of a connoisseur, and which cannot fail to charm an ordinary observer: and this induced me, who am an absolute novice in this art, to buy it. But I did so, not with any intention of placing it in my own house (for I have nothing of the kind there), but with a design of fixing it in some conspicuous place in my native province; I should like it best in the temple of Jupiter, for it is a gift well worthy of a temple, well worthy of a god. I desire therefore you would, with that care with which you always perform my requests, undertake this commission and give

immediate orders for a pedestal to be made for it, out of what marble you please, but let my name be engraved upon it, and, if you think proper to add these as well, my titles. I will send the statue by the first person I can find who will not mind the trouble of it; or possibly (which I am sure you will like better) I may myself bring it along with me: for I intend, if business can spare me that is to say, to make an excursion over to you. I see joy in your looks when I promise to come; but you will soon change your countenance when I add, only for a few days: for the same business that at present keeps me here will prevent my making a longer stay. Farewell.

XXIX – To CANINIUS RUFUS

I HAVE just been informed that Silius Italicus[51] has starved himself to death, at his villa near Naples. Ill-health was the cause. Being troubled with an incurable cancerous humour, he grew weary of life and therefore put an end to it with a determination not to be moved. He had been extremely fortunate all through his life with the exception of the death of the younger of his two sons; however, he has left behind him the elder and the worthier man of the two in a position of distinction, having even attained consular rank. His reputation had suffered a little in Nero's time, as he was suspected of having officiously joined in some of the informations in that reign; but he used his interest with Vitellius, with great discretion and humanity. He acquired considerable honour by his administration of the government of Asia, and, by his good conduct after his retirement from business, cleared his character from that stain which his former public exertions had thrown upon it. He lived as a private nobleman, without power, and consequently without envy. Though he was frequently confined to his bed, and always to his room, yet he was highly respected, and much visited; not with an interested view, but on his own account. He employed his time between conversing with literary men and composing verses; which he sometimes read out, by way of testing the public opinion: but they evidence more industry than genius. In the decline of his years he entirely

quitted Rome, and lived altogether in Campania, from whence even the accession of the new emperor[52] could not draw him. A circumstance which I mention as much to the honour of Cæsar, who was not displeased with that liberty, as of Italicus, who was not afraid to make use of it. He was reproached with indulging his taste for the fine arts at an immoderate expense. He had several villas in the same province, and the last purchase was always the especial favourite, to the neglect of all the rest, These residences overflowed with books, statues, and pictures, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored; particularly that of Virgil, of whom he was so passionate an admirer that he celebrated the anniversary of that poet's birthday with more solemnity than his own, at Naples especially where he used to approach his tomb as if it had been a temple. In this tranquillity he passed his seventy-fifth year, with a delicate rather than an infirm constitution.

As he was the last person upon whom Nero conferred the consular office, so he was the last survivor of all those who had been raised by him to that dignity. It is also remarkable that, as he was the last to die of Nero's consuls, so Nero died when he was consul. Recollecting this, a feeling of pity for the transitory condition of mankind comes over me. Is there anything in nature so short and limited as human life, even at its longest? Does it not seem to you but yesterday that Nero was alive? And yet not one of all those who were consuls in his reign now remains! Though why should I wonder at this? Lucius Piso (the father of that Piso who was so infamously assassinated by Valerius Festus in Africa)

used to say, he did not see one person in the senate whose opinion he had consulted when he was consul: in so short a space is the very term of life of such a multitude of beings comprised! so that to me those royal tears seem not only worthy of pardon but of praise. For it is said that Xerxes, on surveying his immense army, wept at the reflection that so many thousand lives would in such a short space of time be extinct. The more ardent therefore should be our zeal to lengthen out this frail and transient portion of existence, if not by our deeds (for the opportunities of this are not in our power) yet certainly by our literary accomplishments; and since long life is denied us, let us transmit to posterity some memorial that we have at least LIVED. I well know you need no incitements, but the warmth of my affection for you inclines me to urge you on in the course you are already pursuing, just as you have so often urged me. "Happy rivalry" when two friends strive in this way which of them shall animate the other most in their mutual pursuit of immortal fame. Farewell.

XXX – To SPURINNA AND COTTIA[53]

I DID not tell you, when I paid you my last visit, that I had composed something in praise of your son; because, in the first place, I wrote it not for the sake of talking about my performance, but simply to satisfy my affection, to console my sorrow for the loss of him. Again, as you told me, my dear Spurinna, that you had heard I had been reciting a piece of mine, I imagined you had also heard at the same time what was the subject of the recital, and besides I was afraid of casting a gloom over your cheerfulness in that festive season, by reviving the remembrance of that heavy sorrow. And even now I have hesitated a little whether I should gratify you both, in your joint request, by sending only what I recited, or add to it what I am thinking of keeping back for another essay. It does not satisfy my feelings to devote only one little tract to a memory so dear and sacred to me, and it seemed also more to the interest of his fame to have it thus disseminated by separate pieces. But the consideration, that it will be more open and friendly to send you the whole now, rather than keep back some of it to another time, has determined me to do the former, especially as I have your promise that it shall not be communicated by either of you to anyone else, until I shall think proper to publish it. The only remaining favour I ask is, that you will give me a proof of the

same unreserve by pointing out to me what you shall judge would be best altered, omitted, or added. It is difficult for a mind in affliction to concentrate itself upon such little cares. However, as you would direct a painter or sculptor who was representing the figure of your son what parts he should retouch or express, so I hope you will guide and inform my hand in this more durable or (as you are pleased to think it) this immortal likeness which I am endeavouring to execute: for the truer to the original, the more perfect and finished it is, so much the more lasting it is likely to prove. Farewell.

XXXI – To JULIUS GENITOR

IT is just like the generous disposition of Artemidorus to magnify the kindnesses of his friends; hence he praises my deserts (though he is really indebted to me) beyond their due. It is true indeed that when the philosophers were expelled from Rome,[54] I visited him at his house near the city, and ran the greater risk in paying him that civility, as it was more noticeable then, I being praetor at the time. I supplied him too with a considerable sum to pay certain debts he had contracted upon very honourable occasions, without charging interest, though obliged to borrow the money myself, while the rest of his rich powerful friends stood by hesitating about giving him assistance. I did this at a time when seven of my friends were either executed or banished; Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidius having just been put to death, while Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fannia, were sent into exile; and scorched as it were by so many lightning-bolts of the state thus hurled and flashing round me, I augured by no uncertain tokens my own impending doom. But I do not look upon myself, on that account, as deserving of the high praises my friend bestows upon me: all I pretend to is the being clear of the infamous guilt of abandoning him in his misfortunes. I had, as far as the differences between our ages would admit, a friendship for his father-in-law Musonius, whom I both loved and esteemed, while Artemidorus himself I entered into the closest

intimacy with when I was serving as a military tribune in Syria. And I consider as a proof that there is some good in me the fact of my being so early capable of appreciating a man who is either a philosopher or the nearest resemblance to one possible; for I am sure that, amongst all those who at the present day call themselves philosophers, you will find hardly any one of them so full of sincerity and truth as he. I forbear to mention how patient he is of heat and cold alike, how indefatigable in labour, how abstemious in his food, and what an absolute restraint he puts upon all his appetites; for these qualities, considerable as they would certainly be in any other character, are less noticeable by the side of the rest of those virtues of his which recommended him to Musonius for a son-in-law, in preference to so many others of all ranks who paid their addresses to his daughter. And when I think of all these things, I cannot help feeling pleasurably affected by those unqualified terms of praise in which he speaks of me to you as well as to everyone else. I am only apprehensive lest the warmth of his kind feeling carry him beyond the due limits; for he, who is so free from all other errors, is apt to fall into just this one good-natured one, of overrating the merits of his friends. Farewell.

XXXII – To CATILIUS SEVERUS

I WILL come to supper, but must make this agreement beforehand, that I go when I please, that you treat me to nothing expensive, and that our conversation abound only in Socratic discourse, while even that in moderation. There are certain necessary visits of ceremony, bringing people out before daylight, which Cato himself could not safely fall in with; though I must confess that Julius Cæsar reproaches him with that circumstance in such a manner as redounds to his praise; for he tells us that the persons who met him reeling home blushed at the discovery, and adds, "You would have thought that Cato had detected them, and not they Cato." Could he place the dignity of Cato in a stronger light than by representing him thus venerable even in his cups? But let our supper be as moderate in regard to hours as in the preparation and expense: for we are not of such eminent reputation that even our enemies cannot censure our conduct without applauding it at the same time. Farewell.

XXXIII – To ACILIUS

THE atrocious treatment that Largius Macedo, a man of praetorian rank, lately received at the hands of his slaves is so extremely tragical that it deserves a place rather in public history than in a private letter; though it must at the same time be acknowledged there was a haughtiness and severity in his behaviour towards them which shewed that he little remembered, indeed almost entirely forgot, the fact that his own father had once been in that station of life. He was bathing at his Formian Villa, when he found himself suddenly surrounded by his slaves; one seizes him by the throat, another strikes him on the mouth, whilst others trampled upon his breast, stomach, and even other parts which I need not mention. When they thought the breath must be quite out of his body, they threw him down upon the heated pavement of the bath, to try whether he were still alive, where he lay outstretched and motionless, either really insensible or only feigning to be so, upon which they concluded him to be actually dead. In this condition they brought him out, pretending that he had got suffocated by the heat of the bath. Some of his more trusty servants received him, and his mistresses came about him shrieking and lamenting. The noise of their cries and the fresh air, together, brought him a little to himself; he opened his eyes, moved his body, and shewed them (as he now safely might) that he was not quite dead. The murderers immediately made

their escape; but most of them have been caught again, and they are after the rest. He was with great difficulty kept alive for a few days, and then expired, having however the satisfaction of finding himself as amply revenged in his lifetime as he would have been after his death. Thus you see to what affronts, indignities, and dangers we are exposed. Lenity and kind treatment are no safeguard; for it is malice and not reflection that arms such ruffians against their masters. So much for this piece of news. And what else? What else? Nothing else, or you should hear it, for I have still paper, and time too (as it is holiday time with me) to spare for more, and I can tell you one further circumstance relating to Macedo, which now occurs to me. As he was in a public bath once, at Rome, a remarkable, and (judging from the manner of his death) an ominous, accident happened to him. A slave of his, in order to make way for his master, laid his hand gently upon a Roman knight, who, turning suddenly round, struck, not the slave who had touched him, but Macedo, so violent a blow with his open palm that he almost knocked him down. Thus the bath by a kind of gradation proved fatal to him; being first the scene of an indignity he suffered, afterwards the scene of his death. Farewell.

XXXIV – To NEPOS

I HAVE constantly observed that amongst the deeds and sayings of illustrious persons of either sex, some have made more noise in the world, whilst others have been really greater, although less talked about; and I am confirmed in this opinion by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is a grand-daughter to that celebrated Arria, who animated her husband to meet death, by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, no less heroic than this applauded action of hers, though taken less notice of, and I think you will be as surprised to read the account of them as I was to hear it. Her husband Caecinna Paetus, and her son, were both attacked at the same time with a fatal illness, as was supposed; of which the son died, a youth of remarkable beauty, and as modest as he was comely, endeared indeed to his parents no less by his many graces than from the fact of his being their son. His mother prepared his funeral and conducted the usual ceremonies so privately that Paetus did not know of his death. Whenever she came into his room, she pretended her son was alive and actually better: and as often as he enquired after his health, would answer, "He has had a good rest, and eaten his food with quite an appetite." Then when she found the tears, she had so long kept back, gushing forth in spite of herself, she would leave the room, and having given vent to her grief, return with dry eyes and a

serene countenance, as though she had dismissed every feeling of bereavement at the door of her husband's chamber. I must confess it was a brave action[55] in her to draw the steel, plunge it into her breast, pluck out the dagger, and present it to her husband with that ever memorable, I had almost said that divine, expression, "Paetus, it is not painful." But when she spoke and acted thus, she had the prospect of glory and immortality before her; how far greater, without the support of any such animating motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully to act the mother, when a mother no more!

Scribonianus had taken up arms in Illyria against Clatidius, where he lost his life, and Paetus, who was of his party, was brought a prisoner to Rome. When they were going to put him on board ship, Arria besought the soldiers that she might be permitted to attend him: "For surely," she urged, "you will allow a man of consular rank some servants to dress him, attend to him at meals, and put his shoes on for him; but if you will take me, I alone will perform all these offices." Her request was refused; upon which she hired a fishing-boat, and in that small vessel followed the ship. On her return to Rome, meeting the wife of Scribonianus in the emperor's palace, at the time when this woman voluntarily gave evidence against the conspirators —"What," she exclaimed, "shall I hear you even speak to me, you, on whose bosom your husband Scribonianus was murdered, and yet you survive him?"—an expression which plainly shews that the noble manner in which she put an end to her life was

no unpremeditated effect of sudden passion. Moreover, when Thrasea, her son-in-law, was endeavouring to dissuade her from her purpose of destroying herself, and, amongst other arguments which he used, said to her, "Would you then advise your daughter to die with me if my life were to be taken from me?" "Most certainly I would," she replied, "if she had lived as long, and in as much harmony with you, as I have with my Paetus." This answer greatly increased the alarm of her family, and made them watch her for the future more narrowly; which, when she perceived, "It is of no use," she said, "you may oblige me to effect my death in a more painful way, but it is impossible you should prevent it." Saying this, she sprang from her chair, and running her head with the utmost violence against the wall, fell down, to all appearance, dead; but being brought to herself again, "I told you," she said, "if you would not suffer me to take an easy path to death, I should find a way to it, however hard." Now, is there not, my friend, something much greater in all this than in the so-much-talked-of "Paetus, it is not painful," to which these led the way? And yet this last is the favourite topic of fame, while all the former are passed over in silence. Whence I cannot but infer, what I observed at the beginning of my letter, that some actions are more celebrated, whilst others are really greater. Farewell.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.