THE GOOD BOOK

A SECULAR BIBLE

MADE BY

A. C. GRAYLING

BLOOMSBURY

Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

First published in Great Britain 2011

Copyright © A. C. Grayling 2011

A. C. Grayling has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the Publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
36 Soho Square
London W1D 3QY

www.bloomsbury.com

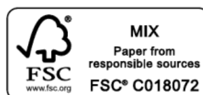
Bloomsbury Publishing, London, Berlin, New York and Sydney

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 7475 9960 9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Typeset by Hewer Text UK Ltd, Edinburgh
Printed in Great Britain by Clays Limited, St Ives plc



Copyrighted material

CONTENTS

Epistle to the Reader v

Genesis 1
Wisdom 12
Parables 30
Concord 57
Lamentations 72
Consolations 90
Sages 123
Songs 136
Histories 172
Proverbs 359
The Lawgiver 395
Acts 442
Epistles 560
The Good 591

Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

GENESIS

Chapter 1

1. In the garden stands a tree. In springtime it bears flowers; in the autumn, fruit.
2. Its fruit is knowledge, teaching the good gardener how to understand the world.
3. From it he learns how the tree grows from seed to sapling, from sapling to maturity, at last ready to offer more life;
4. And from maturity to age and sleep, whence it returns to the elements of things.
5. The elements in turn feed new births; such is nature's method, and its parallel with the course of humankind.
6. It was from the fall of a fruit from such a tree that new inspiration came for inquiry into the nature of things,
7. When Newton sat in his garden, and saw what no one had seen before: that an apple draws the earth to itself, and the earth the apple,
8. Through a mutual force of nature that holds all things, from the planets to the stars, in unifying embrace.
9. So all things are gathered into one thing: the universe of nature, in which there are many worlds: the orbs of light in an immensity of space and time,
10. And among them their satellites, on one of which is a part of nature that mirrors nature in itself,
11. And can ponder its beauty and significance, and seek to understand it: this is humankind.
12. All other things, in their cycles and rhythms, exist in and of themselves;
13. But in humankind there is experience also, which is what makes good and its opposite,
14. In both of which humankind seeks to grasp the meaning of things.

Chapter 2

1. Those who first set themselves to discover nature's secrets and designs, fearlessly opposing mankind's early ignorance, deserve our praise;
2. For they began the quest to measure what once was unmeasurable, to discern its laws, and conquer time itself by understanding.
3. New eyes were needed to see what lay hidden in ignorance, new language to express the unknown,
4. New hope that the world would reveal itself to inquiry and investigation.
5. They sought to unfold the world's primordial sources, asking how nature yields its abundance and fosters it,

Copyrighted material

6. And where in its course everything goes when it ends, either to change or cease.
7. The first inquirers named nature's elements atoms, matter, seeds, primal bodies, and understood that they are coeval with the world;
8. They saw that nothing comes from nothing, so that discovering the elements reveals how the things of nature exist and evolve.
9. Fear holds dominion over people when they understand little, and need simple stories and legends to comfort and explain;
10. But legends and the ignorance that give them birth are a house of limitations and darkness.
11. Knowledge is freedom, freedom from ignorance and its offspring fear; knowledge is light and liberation,
12. Knowledge that the world contains itself, and its origins, and the mind of man,
13. From which comes more knowledge, and hope of knowledge again.
14. Dare to know: that is the motto of enlightenment.

Chapter 3

1. All things take their origin from earlier kinds:
2. Ancestors of most creatures rose from the sea, some inhabitants of the sea evolved from land-dwelling forefathers;
3. Birds descend from creatures that once ran flightless on the ground;
4. Horned cattle, the herds and all the wild creatures of nature, that graze both the wasteland and the sown, are the progeny of earlier kinds.
5. Nor do fruits for ever keep their ancient forms, but grow new forms through time and nature's changing course.
6. Could such be the outcome of an anarchy in things, arbitrarily arising from nothing? No:
7. For nature is orderly, and works by measure; all things arise from the elements in their generations,
8. Each kind exists by its own nature, formed from the primal bodies that are their source, and descended by steps through life's rhythms.
9. We see lavished over the lands at spring the rose, at summer heat the corn,
10. The vines that mellow when autumn brings them to ripeness, because the seeds of things at their own season stream together,
11. And new forms and births are revealed when their due times arrive, and pregnant earth safely gives her offspring to the shores of light.
12. But if they came from nothing, without order and natural law, they might suddenly appear, unforeseen, in alien months, without parent;
13. Nor would they grow from living seeds, if life were an arbitrary product of emptiness or chaos:
14. Then the newborn infant would suddenly walk a man, and from the turf would leap a full-branched tree;
15. Rather, by nature each thing increases in order from its seed,

Copyrighted material

and through its increase conserves its kind.

Chapter 4

1. From this comes the proof that nature's bounty has proper origins in all its forms.
2. The fruitful earth, without its seasons of rains and sun, could not bear the produce that makes us glad,
3. And everything that lives, if deprived of nourishment, could neither survive nor further its kind.
4. We see that all things have elements in common, as we see letters common to many words.
5. Why should nature not make men large enough to ford the seas afoot, or tear mountains with their hands,
6. Or conquer time with great length of days, if it were not that all things are subject to proportion?
7. We see how far the tilled fields surpass the untilled, returning to the labour of our hands their more abounding crops;
8. Would we see, without toil of ours, the straight furrow and the tended orchard, fairer forms than ours coming from spontaneous generation? Yes;
9. For nature likewise is a husbandman, whose ploughshare turns the fertile soil and kneads the mould, quickening life to birth;
10. Nothing comes from nothing; all things have their origins in nature's laws, and by their edicts reach the shores of light.

Chapter 5

1. When things fall and decay they return to primal bodies again; nothing perishes to annihilation.
2. For if time, that wastes with age the works of all the world, destroyed things entirely, how would nature's generations replenish themselves, kind by kind?
3. How might the water-springs of the mountain, and the far-flowing inland rivers, keep the oceans full?
4. And what feeds the stars? Time and ages must otherwise eat all things away, except that nature's laws infallibly rule that nothing returns to nothing.
5. Behold, the rains, streamed down from the sky, sink into the earth; then springs up the shining grain,
6. And boughs are green amid the trees, and trees themselves are heavy with fruit.
7. By these gifts of nature mankind and all creatures are fed; so joyful cities thrive with children, and woodlands echo with birdsong;
8. Cattle, fat and drowsy, lay their bulk in the pastures while their milk flows, and sheep grow their wool on lush hillsides;
9. Nature offers its bounties; the kind earth gives up its stores; then what is given returns to its source, to prepare bounties anew;
10. Nothing perishes utterly, nor does anything come to birth but through some other thing's death,
11. For death is nothing but the origin

Copyrighted material

of life, as life is the compensation of death.

Chapter 6

1. And now, since nature teaches that things cannot be born from nothing,
2. Nor the same, when born, be recalled to nothingness, do not doubt this truth because our eyes cannot see the minute parts of things.
3. For mark those bodies which, though known and felt, yet are invisible:
4. The winds lash our face and frame, unseen, and swamp ships at sea when the waves rage, and rend the clouds,
5. Or, eddying wildly down, strew the plains with broken branches, or scour the mountaintops with forest-rending blasts.
6. The winds are invisible, yet they sweep sea, lands, the clouds along the sky, vexing and whirling all amain;
7. Invisible, yet mighty as the river flood that dashes houses and trees headlong down its raging course,
8. So that even a solid bridge cannot bide the shock when floods overwhelm: the turbulent stream,
9. Strong with a hundred rains, beats round the piers, crashes with havoc, and rolls beneath its waves down-toppled masonry and ponderous stone,
10. Hurling away whatever opposes it. Even so the blasts of the hurricane, like a mighty flood hither or thither driving all before,
11. Or sometimes in their circling vortex seizing and bearing helpless objects in whirlwinds down the world:
12. Yet these invisible winds are real, both in works and ways rivalling mighty rivers whose waters we can see.

Chapter 7

1. Consider, too, we know the varied perfumes of things, yet never see the scent touch our nostrils;
2. With eyes we do not see heat, nor cold, yet we feel them; nor do we see men's voices, yet we hear them: everything is corporeal,
3. All things are body or arise from it; the real is the corporeal, visible and invisible alike.
4. Raiment, hung by the surf-beaten shore, grows moist; the same, spread before the sun, then dries;
5. No one saw how the moisture sank in, nor how it was lifted by heat. Thus we know that moisture is dispersed in parts too small to see.
6. A ring upon the finger thins away along the under side, with the passing of the years;
7. Raindrops dripping from our roof's eaves will scoop the stone;
8. The hooked ploughshare, though of iron, wastes insidiously amid the furrows of the fields.
9. We see the rock-paved highways worn by many feet, and the gates' bronze statues show right hands leaner from the greeting touch of wayfarers.

Copyrighted material

and floods, to bones convert them, or to shells, or woods;

21. Stretch the vast beds of argil, lime and sand, and from diminished oceans form the land.

Chapter 10

1. Next, nerves unite their long synaptic train, and new sensations wake the early brain;
2. Through each new sense the keen emotions dart, flush the cheek, and swell the throbbing heart.
3. From pain and pleasure quick volitions rise, command the limbs and guide enquiring eyes;
4. With reason's light new-woken man direct, and right and wrong with balance nice detect.
5. Last, multiple associations spring, thoughts join to thoughts, feelings to emotions cling;
6. Whence in long trains of linkage quickly flow imagined joy and voluntary woe.
7. Organic life beneath the shoreless waves was born and nursed in ocean's pearly caves;
8. First forms minute, unseen by microscope, swim the sea, or climb the muddy slope;
9. These, as successive generations bloom, new powers acquire, and larger forms assume;
10. Whence countless forms of vegetation spring, and breathing realms of fin, and feet, and wing.
11. Thus came our world and life, a natural realm, from nature born, with nature at the helm:
12. By evolution, in the aeons vast, since life first rose, to complex life at last.

Chapter 11

1. In all species, nature works to renew itself as it works to nourish itself, and to protect itself from danger,
2. Each by its kind and for its kind, in the great work of continuation that is evolution.
3. In humankind the work of renewal lies in the work of affection, the bond of one to another made by desire;
4. Among the objects that nature everywhere offers desire, there is little more worthy of pursuit, little that makes people happier,
5. Than the enjoyment of another who thinks and feels as oneself,
6. Who has the same ideas, experiences the same sensations, the same ecstasies,
7. Who brings affectionate and sensitive arms towards one's own,
8. Whose embraces and caresses are followed with the existence of a new being who resembles its progenitors,
9. And looks for them in the first movements of life to embrace them,
10. Who will be brought up by their side to be loved together, whose happy birth already strengthens the ties that bind its parents together.
11. If there is anyone who could take offence at the praise given to the most noble and universal of

Copyrighted material

passions, let us evoke nature before him, and make it speak.

12. For nature would say: 'Why do you blush to hear the praise of pleasure, when you do not blush to indulge its temptations under cover of night?
13. 'Are you ignorant of its purpose and of what you owe to it?
14. 'Do you believe that your own mother would have imperilled her life to give you yours if there were not inexpressible charms in the embrace of her husband?
15. 'Be quiet, unhappy man, and consider that it was this pleasure that pulled you out of nothingness, and gave you life.
16. 'The propagation of beings is the greatest object of nature. It imperiously solicits both sexes as soon as they have gained their share of strength and beauty.
17. 'A vague and brooding restlessness warns them of the moment; their condition is mixed with pain and pleasure.
18. 'At that time they listen to their senses and turn their attention to themselves.
19. 'But if an individual should be presented to another of the same species and of a different sex,
20. 'Then the feeling of all other needs is suspended: the heart palpitates, the limbs tremble;
21. 'Voluptuous images wander through the mind; a flood of sensations runs through the nerves, excites them,
22. 'And proceeds to the seat of a new sense that reveals itself and torments the body.
23. 'Sight is troubled, delirium is born; reason, the slave of instinct, limits itself to serving the latter, and nature is satisfied.
24. 'This is the way things took place at the beginning of the world,
25. 'And the way they still take place among the silks of the wealthy boudoir, just as in the shadows of the savage's cave.'
26. Such is the great command of nature, that in a hundred thousand ways and forms, seeds flood in abundance and super-abundance,
27. Sea and air in season float myriads of possible lives; man and animals in season turn to their mates, obedient to desire;
28. Spring sees newborns emerge into light, or call from the nest for sustenance; and at the mother's breast the suckling lies,
29. Proof that no human law or folly can change the river of life, that must flow in its power from the beginning always onwards,
30. And seek every path to its future, accepting no obstacle or hindrance.
31. For its one monarch is nature, its one guide nature's hand, its one aim fulfilment of nature's great imperatives.

Chapter 12

1. I wander afield, thriving in studious thought, through unpathed groves of woods trodden by none before.

Copyrighted material

2. I delight to come on undefiled fountains there, to drink their cool waters deep,
3. To pluck new flowers, and the leaves of laurel and green myrtle,
4. To make a crown for my head from regions where inquiry never yet garlanded the brow of man.
5. For, since I teach concerning mighty things, and seek to loose man's mind from coils of blinding ignorance;
6. Since I vouchsafe themes so large, of smallest and greatest, of origin and end, in nature's broad empire,
7. I choose a path without brambles, and frame a lucid song, touching all throughout with charm,
8. As when physicians, needing to give infants the bitter wormwood, first spread the cup's brim with juice and honey,
9. That the unheeding child might be cajoled as far as the lips, and meanwhile swallow a healthsome draught;
10. So now I too expound in song, soft-speaking, to touch with honey the rim of truth.
11. If one thereby might teach the world, its multitudes would cease the strife that ignorances bring,
12. Knowing truth at last, and the nature of things.

Chapter 13

1. Let us admit no more causes of natural things than are both true and sufficient to explain what we see.
2. For it is observed that nature does nothing in vain, and more is vain where less will serve.
3. Nature is pleased with simplicity, and does not need the pomp of superfluous causes.
4. Always assign the same effects to the same causes, as respiration in a man and in a beast;
5. As the geological formations of mountains in Europe and in America;
6. As the heat of our cooking fire and the heat of the sun;
7. As the reflection of light on the earth and by the planets.
8. For the same laws apply everywhere, and the phenomena of nature are the same, whether here at hand or in a distant galaxy.
9. Those qualities of bodies, which admit neither intension nor remission of degrees,
10. And which are found to belong to all bodies within the reach of our investigations,
11. Are to be esteemed the universal qualities of bodies everywhere.
12. For since the qualities of bodies are only known to us by experiment, we are to hold for universal all such as universally agree with experiment.
13. We are not to ignore the evidence of experiments for the sake of dreams and fictions of our own devising;
14. Nor are we to part from the analogy of nature, which is simple, and always consonant to itself.

Copyrighted material

15. We know the extension of bodies only by means of our senses, and our senses do not reach into all the parts of bodies;
16. But because we perceive extension in everything that we can sense, therefore we ascribe it universally to what we cannot directly sense.
17. This is the order and discipline of science.
18. We are to look upon propositions collected by general induction from phenomena as accurately or nearly true, notwithstanding any contrary hypotheses that may be imagined,
19. Till such time as other phenomena occur, by which they may either be refuted, or made more accurate.
20. This rule we must follow, that the argument of induction may not be evaded by hypotheses.

Chapter 14

1. I am convinced that the human intellect makes its own difficulties, not using the true, sober and judicious methods of inquiry at our disposal,
2. From which comes the manifold ignorance of things which causes innumerable mischiefs in the world.
3. Therefore let us try to see whether that commerce between the human mind and the nature of things,
4. A commerce more precious than anything on earth, for it is nothing less than the search for truth,
5. Can be perfected; or if not, yet improved to a better condition than it now displays.
6. We cannot hope that the errors which have hitherto prevailed, and which will prevail for ever if inquiry is left uninstructed and uncorrected, will correct themselves;
7. Because the early notions of things, which our minds in childhood or without education so readily and passively imbibe,
8. Are false, confused, and overhastily abstracted from the facts; nor are the secondary and subsequent notions we form from them less arbitrary and inconstant.
9. It follows that the entire fabric of human reason employed in the inquisition of nature, is badly built up, like a great structure lacking foundations.
10. For while people are occupied in admiring and applauding the false powers of the mind, they pass by and throw away its true powers,
11. Which, if supplied with proper aids, and if content to wait upon nature instead of vainly affecting to overrule her, are within its reach.
12. Such is the way to truth and the advancement of understanding.

Chapter 15

1. There was but one course left, at the dawn of true science:
2. To try the whole anew on a better plan, and to commence a reconstruction of human knowledge on proper foundations.
3. And this, though in the project and undertaking it may seem a thing

Copyrighted material

infinite and beyond the powers of man,

4. Yet when it came to be dealt with was found sound and sober, vastly more so than what had been done before.
5. For from this there have been great advances; whereas earlier speculations, unscientific and fanciful,
6. Produced only a whirling and perpetual agitation, ending where it began.
7. And although the first encouragers of enquiry were aware how solitary an enterprise it would at first be,
8. To encourage science where there had been only ignorance drawn from the dreams of mankind's infancy,
9. And how hard a thing to win credit for, nevertheless they were resolved not to abandon the attempt,
10. Nor to be deterred from trying and entering upon the great path of truth open to human inquiry.
11. For it is better to make a beginning in that which may lead to something,
12. Than to engage in perpetual struggle and pursuit in courses which have no exit.
13. And certainly the two ways of contemplation are much like those two ways of action, so much celebrated, in this:
14. That the one, arduous and difficult in the beginning, leads out at last into open country;
15. While the other, seeming at first sight easy and free from obstruction, leads to pathless and precipitous places.
16. Moreover, because people did not know how long it might be before these things would occur to others,
17. Judging especially from this, that they had found no one who had hitherto applied thought to the like,
18. They resolved at once to say as much as they were able. The cause of which was not ambition for themselves, but solicitude for true knowledge;
19. That there might remain some outline and project of what could be achieved for the benefit of humanity.
20. Many other ambitions of the human breast seem poor compared with such work,
21. Seeing that the task is a thing so great that it can be content with its own merit, requiring no further reward:
22. For it is nothing less than seeking to understand the world, and mankind within it:
23. It is nothing less than science, mankind's greatest endeavour, greatest achievement, and greatest promise:
24. If only humanity will be wise in its use.

Copyrighted material

achieve, to understand, we shall have time enough to live.

19. Let us ever curiously test new ideas and court new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy.
20. Philosophy may help us gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded, for philosophy is the microscope of thought;
21. But theory which requires the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest we cannot enter, has no claim upon us.
22. It is life itself that has the first and last claim, and it is the fresh light and clear air that wisdom brings to life that answers it,
23. For to love and to strive, to seek to know, to attend to the best that has been thought, said and done in the world, and to learn from it, is wisdom:
24. And wisdom is life.
25. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 4

1. Who or what is the best counsellor, to counsel us to be wise? Nothing less than life itself.
2. The beginning of wisdom is the question, the end of wisdom is acceptance;
3. But in the interval, it is not enough to be wise only with the wisdom of one's day, for wisdom is of all time.
4. To be wise is to know when to act, and when to leave alone.
5. To be wise is to know when to speak, and when to be silent.
6. To be wise is to know that amity and peace do not come from nothing, nor do they sustain themselves without help, but require wisdom for their birth and continuance.
7. The gaining of knowledge is accumulation; the acquisition of wisdom is simplification.
8. Wisdom is the recognition of consequences, a respect for causality and the profit in foresight.
9. Wisdom lies in bringing the past to serve the future, and in opening one's ears to hear the voices of the past.
10. Learning may be had without wisdom, and wisdom without learning; but nothing can overthrow their combination.
11. No one came to be wise who did not sometimes fail;
12. No one came to be wise who did not know how to revise an opinion.
13. The wise change their minds when facts and experience so demand. The fool either does not hear or does not heed.
14. But the wise man knows that even a fool can speak truth.
15. Wisdom belongs to everyone, and is possible everywhere: none need lack it who will only allow experience to teach them.
16. Happy are those who encounter someone wise: he reveals treasure when he reproves and guides.
17. He will teach that as a rock is not shaken by the wind, so the wise are

Copyrighted material

steadfast through both blame and praise.

18. As a deep lake remains peaceful in all seasons, so are the wise when they reflect on good teaching.
19. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 5

1. Told of someone who had made a vast fortune, the wise man asked whether he had also made time to spend it.
2. Told of someone who had conceived a great love for another, the wise man said, 'It is better to love than to desire.'
3. Told of someone who had children, the wise man said, 'Let him treat his children as he would cook a small fish.'
4. The wise do not expect always to be healthy, or never to suffer hardship or grief. Instead they prepare.
5. The wise do not expect to master anything worthwhile without effort. Instead they make the effort.
6. The wise do not expect never to have adversaries or to meet disagreement. Instead they contemplate beforehand the best way of making difficulties useful.
7. From an enemy, a difficulty, an illness or a failure, the wise learn much, and grow wiser therefore.
8. The wise know the value of friendship, and that it is wisdom to be a friend to oneself too.
9. For who would harm a friend, instead of seeking the best for him, in advice and deed?
10. As a friend to oneself, can wisdom allow one to do less?
11. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 6

1. The meditation of the wise man is a meditation on life, not on death.
2. The wise see the necessity of things, and by this they free themselves from distress:
3. For the pain arising from loss is mitigated as soon as its inevitability is perceived;
4. And likewise no one pities a newborn baby for being unable to speak or walk, because this is natural to its state.
5. Thus the recognition of necessities is a liberation, and the wise are those who distinguish between necessity and contingency.
6. Emotion is bad if it hinders the mind from thinking. An emotion that opens the mind to contemplate several aspects of things at once is better than one that fixes thought to an obsession.
7. By framing a system of right conduct and practical precepts, one better bears adversity and resists evil.
8. The wise thus remember what is to their true advantage, and the good that follows from friendship, and the fact that men act by the necessity of their nature.

Copyrighted material

9. The wise thus moderate anger and resentment by understanding the causes of others' actions;
10. The wise thus reflect on the value of courage, and on the good that can be found even in negative things.
11. The wise ask themselves what they truly seek in wealth, or position, in love, or honour, in victory, or retirement from life;
12. For only clear and distinct ideas of these things guard against false objects of ambition.
13. He who would govern his emotions and appetites by the love of freedom strives, as far as he can, to gain knowledge of the virtues and their causes;
14. He will not wish to dwell on men's faults, or carp at his fellows, but by diligently observing and practising precepts he will direct his actions by the commandments of reason.
15. The wise know that the good and the bad can be absolute, and can be relative:
16. Absolute, when the demand is to seek good and act upon it;
17. Relative, when one recognises that the same thing can be good, bad or indifferent according to circumstance,
18. As when music is good to one who is melancholy, bad to one who mourns, indifferent to the deaf.
19. The wise call things good when they enhance the activity of life and bring benefit;
20. The wise call things bad when they hinder activity, and bring malignity, discord and pain.
21. But the wise recognise too that misperception of things, and inadequacy of ideas, can make things seem bad that have good in them, or are inevitable and must be borne;
22. For the grace of bearing life's inevitable evils is itself a good, and makes goodness arise even from evils by opposing them or enduring them with courage.
23. The mind has power over the emotions, and can be free. Whence it appears how potent are the wise, and how much they surpass the ignorant, who are driven by appetites and fears.
24. For the ignorant are distracted by external causes which never gain the true acquiescence of their minds, so that they live unwitting of themselves and of things.
25. Whereas the wise are less disturbed because they are more aware of themselves and of things, and understand necessities, and are capable of true acquiescence of mind.
26. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 7

1. Some things lie under our control and others not. Things we may control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions.

Copyrighted material

2. Things far less in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions.
3. What we can ourselves control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, limited, and belong to others.
4. Remember, then, that if you wrongly suppose that things which are slavish by nature are also free, and that what belongs to others is your own, you will be hindered.
5. You will lament, you will be disturbed, you will find fault both with the people about you and with the tools you use.
6. But if you rightly suppose those things are your own which are truly your own, and what belongs to others is not your own, then no one will be able to compel or hinder you.
7. And you will find fault with no one or accuse no one. To the extent possible in a world of conflicts, you will do nothing against your will, no one will hurt you, you will have no enemies, you will not be harmed.
8. Aiming therefore at such great things, remember that you must not allow yourself to be carried, even with a slight tendency, towards the attainment of lesser things.
9. Instead, entirely quit what is bad, and postpone what is doubtful. But if you would have these great things, and also desire power and riches, consider:
10. How can he gain the latter with honour and peace, if he aims at the former too?
11. Only the former guarantees happiness and freedom, while the latter are always uncertain.
12. Work, therefore, to be able to say to every harsh appearance, 'You are but an appearance, and not absolutely the thing you appear to be.'
13. Examine appearances by the rules of reason, first and chiefly by this: whether it concerns the things which are in our own control, or those which are not;
14. And, if it concerns anything not in our control, be prepared to say that it is nothing to you.
15. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 8

1. It has been said, that to learn how to philosophise is to learn how to die.
2. The wise die less than the unwise; the wise die fewer times than the unwise; for the unwise die in their imaginations and fears as often as they think of death.
3. But the evil of our own death is not death itself; it is the fear of death that is evil. To be free of the fear of one's own death is to be free indeed.
4. The death of others is the true

Copyrighted material

sorrow of death; and the remedies of sorrow are love, courage and time.

5. To learn how to philosophise is to learn how to bear the inevitability of loss. We desire life and are averse to death: this is the root of fearing death.
6. Remember that following desire promises the attainment of what you desire; and aversion promises the avoiding of that to which you are averse.
7. But he who fails to obtain what he desires, is disappointed; and he who suffers what he is averse to, is wretched.
8. If you are averse to sickness, or death, or poverty, you will be wretched: for death must come, and sickness and poverty may come too.
9. Remove aversion, then, from all things that are not in our control, and transfer it to things contrary to the nature of what is in our control.
10. Have regard to desire: for, if you desire any of the things which are not under your control, you must necessarily be disappointed;
11. And of those which are, and which it would be laudable to desire, do not desire them only, but pursue them.
12. Use only the appropriate actions of pursuit and avoidance; and even these lightly, and with gentleness and reservation.
13. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 9

1. With regard to the things that give you delight, are useful, or which you deeply love,
2. Remember to tell yourself of what general nature they are, beginning from the most insignificant things.
3. If, for example, you are fond of a specific cup, remind yourself that it is only a cup. Then, if it breaks, you will not be disturbed.
4. If you kiss your child, or your wife, say that you kiss what is human, and prepare to bear the grief that is the cost of loving, should you lose them.
5. When you are going about any action, remind yourself what nature the action is:
6. People are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and notions which they form concerning things.
7. Death, for instance, is not terrible, otherwise it would have appeared so to Socrates. Rather, the terror consists in our belief that death is terrible.
8. When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute the cause to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles.
9. An uninstructed person will lay the fault of his own bad condition upon others.
10. Someone just starting instruction will lay the fault on himself.
11. Someone who is perfectly instructed will place blame neither on others nor on himself if it is something from outside his control,

Copyrighted material

be a general, or a senator, or a consul, but rather: wish to be free;

10. And the only way to be completely free is the right attitude to things not in your own control.
11. Remember that insult does not come from the one who gives ill language or a blow, but from the principle which represents these things as insulting.
12. When, therefore, anyone provokes you, be assured that it is your own opinion which provokes you.
13. Try, therefore, in the first place, not to be hurried away with the appearance. For if you once gain time and respite, you will more easily command yourself.
14. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 13

1. Let death, illness, failure and loss, and any other thing which appears terrible, be frankly gazed upon, to be seen for what it is;
2. And chiefly death, which is no more than dreamless sleep, and rest from strife;
3. And you will cease to entertain abject thoughts; nor will you too eagerly covet anything, since all must be left behind one day.
4. If you have an earnest desire of attaining wisdom, prepare yourself from the first to be laughed at by the multitude,
5. To hear them say, 'He does not covet what we covet, or seek what we hasten after and pursue, but he stands apart.'
6. Do not mind such rejection, but keep steadily to those things which appear best to you.
7. For if you adhere to your principles, those very persons who at first ridiculed will afterwards admire you.
8. But if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.
9. If you turn your attention to externals, so as to wish to please anyone, be assured that you will hinder your scheme of life.
10. Be contented, then, in everything devoted to living wisely, and it will suffice you.
11. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 14

1. Do not allow such a consideration as this to distress you: 'I will be nobody anywhere.' Is it the meaning of life to get power, or to be admitted to the first rank?
2. And how is it true that you will be nobody anywhere, when you will be somebody in those things which lie under your own control, where you yourself matter most?
3. 'But my friends will be unassisted.' What do you mean by unassisted? Who told you that these are among the things in your own control, and not the affair of others? Who can give to another things that he himself does not have?

Copyrighted material

4. 'Well, but if I get them, then my friends too may have a share.' If I can get them with the preservation of my own honour and fidelity of mind, show me the way and I will get them, and willingly share them;
5. But if you require me to lose the proper good so that another may gain what is not good, let me decline.
6. Besides, which would you rather have, a sum of money, or a faithful friend? Rather assist me, then, to gain this character than require me to do those things by which I may lose it.
7. 'Well, but my country, as far as it depends on me, will be unassisted.' Here again, what assistance do you mean?
8. If I may serve my country with honour and fidelity of mind, let me serve it to the uttermost;
9. And most by supplying it with another citizen of honour and fidelity, which is of greater use to it.
10. 'What place, then, say you, will I hold in the state?' Whatever you can hold with the preservation of your fidelity and honour.
11. But if, by desiring to be useful to that, you lose these, of what use can you be to your country should you become faithless and void of shame?
12. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 15

1. Is anyone raised above you at a meeting, or given a greater compliment, or admitted to the counsels of the rulers where you are not invited?
2. If such things are good, you ought to be glad that the other has them; and if they are evil, do not be grieved that you do not have them.
3. Remember that you cannot, without using the same means as others do, acquire things not in your own control, or expect to be thought worthy of an equal share of them.
4. For how can he who does not frequent the door of some influential person, and serve him with flattery, have an equal share with him who does?
5. You are unjust, then, and insatiable, if you are unwilling to pay the price for which these things are sold, and wish to get them for nothing.
6. For how much is lettuce sold? Fifty pence, for instance. If another pays fifty pence and takes the lettuce, and you, not paying it, go without a lettuce, do not imagine that he has gained any advantage over you.
7. For as he has the lettuce, so you have the fifty pence which you did not spend. Likewise in the present case, you have not been invited to such a person's entertainment, because you have not paid him the price for which a supper is sold.
8. It is sold for praise; it is sold for

Copyrighted material

attendance. Give him then the value, if it is for your advantage.

9. But if you would, at the same time, not pay the one and yet receive the other, you are insatiable, and a blockhead.
10. Have you nothing, then, instead of the supper? Yes, indeed, you have: your honour, and self-sufficiency.
11. The right attitude may be learned from small things. For example, when our neighbour's boy breaks a cup, or the like, we say, 'These things will happen.'
12. Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup is broken.
13. Apply this in like manner to greater things, seeing illness and death, and grief for others, as what will happen because it must.
14. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 16

1. As a mark is not set up for the sake of missing the aim, so neither does the nature of evil exist in the world.
2. If a person gave your body to any stranger he met on his way, you would be angry.
3. Why then do you feel no shame in handing over your mind to be confused and mystified by anyone who tries to persuade you for his own advantage?
4. In every affair consider what precedes and follows, and then undertake it.
5. Otherwise you will begin with enthusiasm; but not having thought of the consequences, when some of them appear you will shamefully desist.
6. 'I would conquer at the Games.' But consider what precedes and follows, and then, if it is for your advantage, engage in the affair:
7. You must conform to rules, submit to a diet, refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether you choose it or not, at a stated hour, in heat and cold; you must drink no cold water, nor sometimes even wine.
8. In a word, you must give yourself up to your master, as to a physician. Then, in the combat, you may be thrown into a ditch, dislocate your arm, turn your ankle, swallow dust, be whipped, and, after all, not gain the victory.
9. When you have evaluated all this, if your inclination still holds, then do it, and with a will, with all your might; and for the sake of the good that comes of it, even if you do not win.
10. Otherwise you will behave like children who play at wrestling, or at gladiators, sometimes blow a trumpet, and sometimes act a tragedy when they have seen and admired it.
11. Thus you too will be at one time a wrestler, at another a gladiator, now a philosopher, then an orator; but

Copyrighted material

unless you do it with your whole will, you will be nothing at all.

12. Like an ape, you will mimic all you see, and one thing after another is sure to please you, but will fall out of favour as soon as it becomes familiar.
13. For unless you enter upon things with forethought and resolution to do your best, but instead rashly and with a cold inclination only, you will be a mimic and a playing child merely in all you do.
14. Consider first, then, what the matter is, and to what your own nature is suited.
15. If you would be a wrestler, consider your shoulders, your back, your thighs; for different persons are made for different things.
16. Do you think that you can act the fool, and be a philosopher? You must watch, you must labour, you must get the better of certain appetites,
17. You must set at their true value the honours and blandishments of the world.
18. When you have considered all these things round, approach, if you please; if, by parting with them, you have a mind to purchase freedom and strength of mind.
19. If not, do not come here; do not, like children, be for a while a philosopher, then a publican, then an orator, then an officer.
20. You must cultivate either your own ruling faculty or externals, and apply yourself either to things within or without you; that is, be either wise, or one who is led by others to do their will.
21. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 17

1. Prescribe a character and form of conduct to yourself, which you can keep both when alone and in company.
2. Be a listener, speak what is necessary, remember few words are better than many.
3. Enter into discourse when occasion calls for it, but not on vulgar and fruitless subjects, and principally not of men, so as either to blame, or praise, or make comparisons.
4. If you are able by your own conversation, bring over that of your company to proper subjects; if you happen to be among strangers, be for the most part silent.
5. Do not allow your laughter to be too much, nor on many occasions, nor profuse.
6. Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.
7. Avoid vulgar entertainments; but, if occasion calls you to them, keep alert, that you may not imperceptibly slide into vulgar manners.
8. For be assured that however sound a person is himself, yet, if his companion is infected, he who converses with him will be infected likewise.
9. Do not be troublesome and full of

Copyrighted material

reproofs to those who use liberties, nor frequently boast that you yourself do not: people are various, and merit sympathy.

10. If anyone tells you that such a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer: 'He does not know my other faults, else he would not have mentioned only these.'
11. Abstain from declamations and derision and violent emotions. When you are going to confer with anyone, and particularly with those in a superior station, represent to yourself how Socrates or Zeno would behave in such a case.
12. When you are going to anyone in power, represent to yourself that you will not find him at home; that you will not be admitted; that the doors will not be opened to you; that he will take no notice of your petition.
13. If, with all this, it is your duty to go, bear what happens, and never say, 'It was not worth so much.'
14. For if you went with a reason that was right, the disdain of the powerful will not make it wrong.
15. In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own actions and dangers.
16. For, however agreeable it may be to yourself to mention the risks you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures.
17. If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay.
18. Then bring to your mind both points of time: that in which you will enjoy the pleasure, and that in which you might have to repent and reproach yourself after you have enjoyed it;
19. And set before yourself, in opposition to these, how you will be glad and applaud yourself if you abstain.
20. And even though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed that its enticing, and agreeable and attractive force may not subdue you;
21. But set in opposition to this how much better it is to be conscious of gaining a victory over what leads you astray.
22. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 18

1. When you do anything from a clear judgement that it ought to be done, never delay to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it.
2. When eating with others, to choose the largest share is suitable to the bodily appetite, but inconsistent with the social nature of the occasion.
3. When you eat with another, then, remember not only the value to the body of those things which are set before you,

Copyrighted material

contradiction? What is truth? What is falsehood?

5. The third topic, then, is necessary on the account of the second, and the second on the account of the first.
6. But the most necessary, and that whereon we ought to act, is the first.
7. Yet we act just on the contrary: we spend all our time on the third topic, and employ all our diligence about that, and entirely neglect the first.
8. Therefore, at the same time that we lie, let us already be prepared to show how it is demonstrated that lying is not right;
9. And let us live by what reason and the right teach, without delay.
10. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Chapter 21

1. The characteristic of the unwise is, that they never expect either benefit or hurt from themselves, but from externals.
2. The condition and characteristic of the wise is that they expect all hurt and benefit from themselves.
3. The marks of the wise are, that they censure no one, praise where it is due, blame no one, accuse no one, say nothing concerning themselves as being anybody, or knowing anything:
4. When they are, in any instance, hindered or limited, they blame only themselves; if they are praised, they take it with modesty and proportion; if censured, they make no defence.
5. But they go about with the caution of sick or injured people, careful not to move anything that is set right, intent on putting right what is wrong.
6. When anyone shows himself overly confident in ability to understand and interpret the teachings of the sages, say,
7. 'Unless the sages taught obscurely, this person would have had no subject for his vanity.
8. 'But what do I desire? To understand nature and follow her. I ask, then, who interprets her, and, finding someone who does, I have recourse to his teaching.
9. 'If I do not understand his writings, I seek one to explain them.' So far there is nothing to value myself upon.
10. And when I find a teacher, what remains is to make use of his instructions. This alone is the valuable thing.
11. But, if I admire nothing but merely the teaching, what do I become more than a grammarian instead of a philosopher?
12. I blush when I cannot show my actions agreeable and consonant to the teachings of the good.
13. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'

Copyrighted material

Chapter 22

1. Whatever moral rules you have proposed to yourself after careful thought, abide by them as if they were laws.
2. Do not regard what anyone says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours, unless it is to your benefit to learn from it.
3. How long, then, will you put off thinking yourself worthy of the highest improvements and follow the distinctions of reason?
4. What other master, then, do you wait for, to throw upon that the delay of reforming yourself? You are no longer a child, but an adult.
5. If, therefore, you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and delay day after day until you will attend to yourself,
6. You will insensibly continue without proficiency, and, living and dying, persevere in being one of the thoughtless.
7. This instant, then, think yourself worthy of living as a grown-up. Let whatever is the best be your law.
8. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, of glory or disgrace, is set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the struggle, nor can it be put off.
9. And though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought to live as one desirous of becoming a Socrates, who said, 'The life most worth living is the life considered and chosen.'
10. The question to be asked at the end of each day is, 'How long will you delay to be wise?'
11. And the great lesson that the end of each day teaches is that wisdom and the freedom it brings must daily be won anew.

Copyrighted material

PARABLES

Chapter 1

1. A rich king named Plousios had planted a forest for his sport, and made an edict forbidding anyone to trespass in it.
2. Out hunting one day he came across a hut that a beggar named Penicros had built there, in violation of the edict.
3. In anger Plousios ordered Penicros to be hanged, and his hut destroyed; but Penicros said, 'If you hang me before you hear my wisdom, you will always regret it.'
4. 'What makes you think you are wise?' asked Plousios, and Penicros answered, 'Because I have built my lodging in Plousios' forest,
5. 'And in consequence have met him; which I wished to do, as having counsel to offer him.'
6. Amused by the temerity of this answer, Plousios ordered Penicros to be placed on a donkey and brought back with them to the city; and on the way questioned him.
7. 'Tell me the difference between a good man and a bad man,' said Plousios.
8. Penicros answered, 'A bad man quarrelled with a good man, saying "For every word of abuse I hear from you, I will retort ten."
9. 'The good man replied, "For every ten words of abuse I hear from you, I will not retort one."
10. 'That is the difference between a bad man and a good; and between a foolish man and a wise.'
11. Impressed by this answer, Plousios asked, 'Is it true that in both man and nature all things grow with time?'
12. And Penicros answered, 'There is one thing that does not; and that is grief.'
13. Plousios said, 'We are told to take care who we send with our messages. Why is that so?'
14. Penicros answered, 'Because the character of the sent tells the character of the sender.'
15. Plousios asked, 'Each animal has its colour, its spots or stripes, to conceal itself in the forest. What is the best method of concealment for man?' Penicros answered, 'Speech.'
16. Plousios asked, 'What kind of man is the worst among men?' Penicros answered, 'He who is good in his own esteem.'
17. Plousios asked, 'Would it not be sweet if a king's reign lasted for ever?' Penicros answered, 'If that had been the lot of your father, where would you be now?'
18. Plousios said, 'Levellers say there is

Copyrighted material

no difference between nobles and commoners. Is that true?'

19. And Penicros answered, 'There was once a nobleman who spoke contemptuously to a poor scholar, who replied in courteous terms.
20. 'After this had continued for some time, the scholar at last remarked, "It seems that your noble line ends with you, while mine might be beginning with me."
21. 'And again: a man of high birth spoke abusively to a wise man of lowly birth. "You say that my lineage is a blot on me," said the sage, "but you are a blot on yours."'
22. And Penicros said, 'Death is the dread of the rich and the hope of the poor. A story shows us a deeper truth about the difference between noble and commoner, rich and poor:
23. 'One like Plousios and one like Penicros were once travelling together, and were set upon by thieves.
24. '"Woe is me," said he who was like Plousios, "if they recognise me." "Woe is me," said he who was like Penicros, "if they do not recognise me."
25. 'And again: the heir of a wealthy man squandered his money, and a poor sage saw him eating bread and salted olives.
26. 'He said to the impoverished heir, "Had you thought that this might be your food, this would not be your food."
27. 'Such are the differences. As man and man, woman and woman, there is not – neither ought there to be – any difference between any two people in the eyes of a king or judge, for there is no difference between them in nature.'
28. Plousios asked, 'Why do we die?' And Penicros answered, 'Because we live.'
29. Plousios asked Penicros about enemies and friends, and Penicros answered, 'Rather a wise enemy than a foolish friend.'
30. Plousios asked, 'Is it ever right to tell a lie?' And Penicros answered, 'In three cases lying is permissible: in war, in reconciling man to man, and in appeasing one's spouse.
31. 'And more generally, it has been well said that it does an injury to tell an untimely truth.'
32. Plousios said, 'You are not a beggar but a wise man.' And Penicros answered, 'Indeed; for it is you who have been the beggar, asking wisdom from me.
33. 'In life reason is the pilot, law is the light it steers by, wisdom is knowing that the law comes from nature; and reason is nature's gift to man.
34. 'Man has neither claws to fight with nor a furred pelt to abide the winter, but may rule the clawed and furred if he will.'
35. Plousios said, 'For what you have taught me today, tell me what you would have as a reward.'
36. To which Penicros replied, 'It is said of Diogenes the philosopher that when Emperor Alexander

Copyrighted material

spoke to him as he lay in his barrel, offering him rewards, he answered, "Yes, you may reward me, by standing out of my sunlight."

37. 'But I will indeed accept a reward from you: allow me to build a hut in your forest, and to live there in peace.'
38. And Plousios, who that same day had ordered Penicros to be hanged for building a hut in his forest, granted him permission to live there ever afterwards.
39. Such is the recompense of wisdom.

Chapter 2

1. A man called Charicles, a scholar who lived in former times in the city of five gates and ten towers, told of a dream he once had,
2. In which he was woken from his afternoon sleep by a stranger carrying a basket of food,
3. Containing a round crusted loaf of bread, the white cheese of goat's milk, bunches of sweet grapes, and a flask of wine, red as rubies.
4. The stranger invited him saying, 'Come eat my bread and cheese, and drink the ruby-red wine with me, as if we were sons of the same mother.'
5. And the stranger carried a lit lamp, even though it was daylight and the sun cast its beams into every corner of the house.
6. Charicles pointed at the basket and asked the stranger, 'What are these things, and why are you offering them to me?'
7. The stranger replied, 'They are my wine, my bread and cheese, and my sweet grapes; come, eat with me, and drink, and we will be as if sons of the same mother.'
8. But Charicles said, 'I cannot eat until I have washed my face and hands, because sleep still hangs heavily on me in this afternoon heat.'
9. 'Wash,' said the stranger, 'if you will; then come eat my bread and grapes with me, and drink the ruby-red wine.'
10. So Charicles washed, and set himself down with the stranger, and began to eat;
11. And he ate some of the bread and cheese, and the grapes, but he declined to drink the wine.
12. 'Why will you not taste my wine?' asked the stranger. 'It is from my own vineyard, and the grapes were crushed by my own feet.'
13. 'I could not drink your wine,' said Charicles, 'or any wine. It blinds the eyes, robs the mind of wisdom and the body of strength, reveals the secrets of friends, and raises dissension between brothers.'
14. At this the stranger smiled. 'Why do you blaspheme against wine,' he said, 'and believe these falsehoods about it?
15. 'Wine brings joy; it chases away sorrow, strengthens the sentiments, makes hearts generous, prolongs pleasure, defers old age, and brings a shine to the face and brightness to the senses.

Copyrighted material

who after a few moments said, 'Ah! The pain has gone! You have cured me!'

7. The lion released him, and rejoiced to see him better; and the two continued as friends for a time after.
8. But then the lion fell victim to the headache, and suffered grievously; and went to the fox to ask for his help.
9. 'Remember how I cured your headache,' the lion asked, nursing his head, 'by tying you up? I ask you to do the same to me, for I suffer now as you did then.'
10. So the fox took bonds, and cast them round the feet of the lion, and tied him up tightly; and when he was bound, he went and fetched great stones, and hurled them on the lion's head to kill him; and by this trick and treachery ended the lion's life.
11. 'I urge you', said the leopardess, 'to think of this, and take warning of the fox's craftiness; for you should ask yourself, "Why has he shown me so sovereign a place, where he himself might take profit in your place?"'
12. The leopard did not wish to take his wife's advice, but at the same time her words had stirred a doubt in him. He told the fox that his wife did not wish to accompany him, and that his own feelings misgave him;
13. Whereupon the fox said, 'If you are guided by your wife in this, your fate will be like that of the silversmith. Do you know that story?'
14. And so he told the following story to the leopard.

Chapter 5

1. In ancient times, said the fox, there lived a very skilful silversmith, who made beautiful settings for gemstones,
2. But he worked very slowly, so that although his reputation was great, his wealth was small.
3. One day his wife said to him, 'We have not grown rich even though you are so good at your craft.
4. 'But I have a plan; and if you will listen to me I will make us the wealthiest residents of this city.'
5. So the silversmith put down his tools to listen to his wife, who spoke as follows.
6. 'Our lord the king has a new wife, very young and beautiful, and he dotes on her. Make a silver image of her, and I will take it to the palace as a gift.
7. 'We will be rewarded with far more than the value of the silver, and your fame will bring people from far away, who will pay twice for what you make.'
8. But the wife had not reckoned with the jealousy of the king, who could not abide the thought that another would dwell on his wife's beauty, and make an image of it;
9. So that when the silversmith's wife presented the silver statuette at the palace, he was enraged, and ordered the silversmith's arrest;

Copyrighted material

10. And when the silversmith was brought before him, the king ordered his right hand to be cut off, so that he could no longer work at his trade.
11. Every day thereafter the silversmith wept, until he and his wife at last died of hunger.
12. 'This tale', said the fox, 'teaches us never to listen to our wives' advice in matters of livelihood.'
13. The leopard shuddered to hear this tale; but the fox continued to press home the advantage he saw that he was gaining.
14. 'Have you not heard,' he asked, 'what the great Socrates said when asked why he had married a wife so short and thin? "In order to have of evil the least amount," he replied.
15. 'Have you heard what he said on seeing a woman hanging from a tree? "Would that all trees bore such fruit."
16. 'Have you heard what he replied when one said to him, "Your enemy is dead"? He replied, "I would rather hear that he was married."
17. With these ill tales and false reports the fox steeled the leopard against his wife,
18. And the leopard commanded his wife with anger to bring the cubs to the paradise of fatted deer and green meadows; and there they camped by the water.
19. The fox bade them farewell, his head laughing at his tail.
20. Seven days passed, and in the deep night of the eighth day the waters rose in a customary flood of the place, and engulfed the leopard family where they lay.
21. Even as the leopard struggled under the water of the flood he lamented, 'Woe is me that I did not listen to my wife,' and he and all his family died before their time.

Chapter 6

1. After hearing Charicles tell these stories the stranger said, 'I have shared my bread and cheese and ruby-red wine with you, that I grew in my own vineyard;
2. 'From these tokens of friendship you can see I am no fox who seeks to do you harm. I understand your reluctance;
3. 'But if you wish to learn something new, and to profit from opportunity, you must have courage, and take a risk.'
4. So with reluctance, but persuaded by the stranger's words, Charicles agreed to accompany him, and they started out together, riding on asses.
5. The stranger said to Charicles, 'Carry me, or I will carry you.' Charicles said, 'What do you mean? We are both riding on an ass. Why should either of us carry the other? Explain your words.'
6. The stranger replied, 'The explanation is given in the story of the peasant's daughter and the sage.' And he told Charicles the tale, as follows.

Copyrighted material

7. There was once a king with an extensive harem of wives and concubines. One night he dreamed that he saw a monkey among his women, and woke with a start.
8. He was very troubled, and thought, 'This is none other than a foreign king who will conquer my realm and take my harem for his prize.'
9. The king called one of his sages and asked him to find out what his ominous dream meant.
10. The sage set out on a mule, and rode into the countryside, where after a while he met an elderly peasant, also on a mule, travelling in the same direction.
11. He said to the peasant, 'Let us travel together,' and the peasant agreed. And as they set forward the sage said, 'Carry me, or I will carry you.'
12. 'But our mules carry us both,' said the peasant, amazed. 'What do you mean?'
13. 'You are a tiller of the earth, and you eat earth,' said the sage. 'And there is snow on the hills.'
14. Because it was the height of summer, the peasant laughed at this, and began to think the sage a madman.
15. They passed through the midst of a wheat field, with wheat growing on each side. 'A one-eyed horse has passed here,' said the sage, 'loaded with oil on one side and vinegar on the other.'
16. They saw a field rich in abounding corn, and the peasant praised it; 'Yes,' said the sage, 'such a field is to be praised until the corn is eaten.'
17. They went on a little further and saw a lofty tower. 'That tower is well fortified,' said the peasant. 'Yes,' said the sage, 'fortified without, if it is not ruined within.'
18. As they rode they passed a funeral. 'I cannot tell whether the man in the coffin is alive or dead,' said the sage.
19. The peasant was now convinced that the sage must be mad, to say such unintelligible things.
20. They arrived at the village where the peasant lived, and he invited the sage to pass the night with him and his family.

Chapter 7

1. In the dead of night the peasant told his wife and daughter of the foolish things the sage had said.
2. 'No,' said the daughter, 'they were not foolish things; you did not understand the depth of his meaning.
3. '"Carry me, or I will carry you" signifies that he who beguiles the way with stories, proverbs, riddles and songs, will make the journey light for his companion.
4. 'The tiller of the earth eats food grown from the earth. The snow on the hill is the white hairs on your head, father; you should have replied, "Time caused it."
5. 'He knew that a one-eyed horse had passed, because the wheat was eaten on one side of the path only.

Copyrighted material

6. 'And he knew what the horse carried, for the vinegar had parched the dust where it spilled, but the oil had not.
7. 'The corn of the field you passed would already have been eaten if its owner was poor. The lofty tower was not well fortified if there were division or argument among those within.
8. 'And as for the funeral: the dead man lived, if he had children; but was truly dead, if he left no progeny behind.'
9. At this the peasant and his wife marvelled, and understood; and unbeknown to them the sage, who was not sleeping as they thought, heard the daughter's words.
10. In the morning the daughter asked her father to give the sage some food she had prepared.
11. She gave her father thirty eggs, a dish of milk, and a whole loaf of bread, bade him eat and drink his fill, then take the remainder to the sage.
12. 'Ask him when you give him the remainder,' she said, 'how many days old the month is; ask him, is the moon new, and is the sun at its zenith?'
13. The peasant ate two eggs, a little of the loaf, and sipped some of the milk, then carried the rest to the sage and gave it to him.
14. When he returned to his daughter he laughed, and said, 'Surely the man is a fool; for it is the mid-month and the moon is full;
15. 'But when I gave him the remainder of the food, he said, "The sun is not full, neither is the moon, for the month is two days old."
16. 'Now I know for certain that the man is wise,' said the daughter, and she went to the sage and said, 'You are seeking something: tell me what it is and I will answer you.'
17. So the sage told her of the king's dream, and the daughter answered, 'I know the answer. But you must take me to the king himself so that I can tell him.'
18. When the sage and the peasant's daughter came before the king, she said, 'Search your harem; you will find among the women a man disguised as one of them,
19. 'For he is the lover of one of the women, and hides among them to be with her.'
20. The king's guards searched and found that it was true; and brought the offenders before the king. He said to the peasant's daughter,
21. 'Before I punish them, I wish to know what gift I can give you to express my thanks: ask what you will, and if it is agreeable to me, you shall have it.'
22. The peasant's daughter said, 'I ask two things. First, these two have transgressed because of love. I ask you to let them go, for can love ever be a crime that should be punished as other crimes?'
23. The king granted her request, sparing the erring couple's lives but

Copyrighted material

banishing them from the kingdom for ever.

24. Then the peasant's daughter gestured towards the sage and said, 'For my second request, I would have this man for my husband, if he will take me,
25. 'Because wisdom is the fountain of all good things, and is worthy of love itself; and this man is wise.'
26. Now because the sage had heard the peasant's daughter interpret all his sayings, he had loved her from that moment;
27. So he said to the king, 'And I would marry her for the same reason; for she is wise, and worthy of love in herself.'
28. So the peasant's daughter and the sage were married, and between them raised many wise children, and gave the king counsel whenever he asked.

Chapter 8

1. Charicles was pleased with this story, and thanked the stranger for telling it; and he began to think the stranger was good after all, to honour wisdom with a tale such as this.
2. 'You have carried me,' he said, 'with an instructive story, and made the journey light.' It was nightfall, and they were approaching a city, hoping to find an inn.
3. When Charicles recognised the city they were entering, he wept, and said, 'Here in this place lived one who was a dear friend of mine;
4. 'He died some years ago, but not so many years that my eyes can help filling when I think of him.
5. 'His name was Adasnes. He was a judge, and a good man. I will tell you a story to illustrate his cleverness.' And Charicles told the following tale.
6. A man once came to Adasnes in distress. His only daughter was betrothed to a young man, who with his father had visited the bride's house on the eve of the wedding to see her trousseau and the gifts that had been made ready there.
7. They had come accompanied by a musician who lived nearby, and who played his harp as they sat and enjoyed the rich things made ready for the wedding,
8. And other guests and visitors came too, who wished to salute the engaged couple, and wish them well for the next day.
9. The gathering made merry until midnight, and then departed, leaving the bride and her family to sleep.
10. When the bride and all the household rose the next morning, they found that the trousseau and all the gifts had been stolen.
11. The bride and her family were in despair, for every last penny of what they owned had been lavished on the trousseau and gifts.
12. When Judge Adasnes heard this report he went back with the bride's father to the house to inspect the scene of the robbery.

Copyrighted material

took possession of everything, and lived thereafter as a wealthy man.
8. Ten years passed, and the real son returned, his ship freighted with wealth many times greater than his father had given him on departing.
9. But before the ship had weathered the treacherous cape beyond which the harbour's mouth lay, a sudden storm blew up,
10. And drove the ship onto the rocks, where it foundered, and everything was lost, goods and lives all, except for the son himself,
11. Who struggled ashore, with nothing but the wet rags in which he had escaped death.
12. He went to his father's house, and entered; but the servant drove him away with harsh words, denying his identity, and calling him a beggar and imposter;
13. Though in truth the servant knew who he was, but he had no intention to share the old merchant's wealth with anyone; and was determined to claim himself the merchant's son.
14. The real son went to Adasnes the judge to lay his case before him. Adasnes said, 'Bring the merchant's heir before me too, who also says he is the son,' and the servant was summoned.
15. Then Adasnes said, 'Go to the merchant's grave, and dig up the bones; and bring them here to be burnt, as a posthumous punishment for making no will, and leaving his property to be a cause of strife.'
16. The servant immediately rose in obedience to go to the grave, there to dig up the bones for burning;
17. But the son also immediately rose and petitioned Adasnes, saying, 'Let this servant keep everything; I would not disturb my father's bones, or have him punished even in death.'
18. 'This proves that you are the true son,' said Adasnes the judge. 'Let all be restored to you, and take this man as your slave.'

Chapter 11

1. After their long journey, and these tales, Charicles and the stranger were weary, and slept; but they were woken early by the noise of the city, and decided to go on their way before the sun grew hot.
2. As they rode their asses along the main street, the stranger said, 'You can ask me anything, for I know the half of all knowledge.'
3. 'The half of all knowledge? I cannot believe that,' said Charicles with a laugh. 'Who can know the half of all knowledge?'
4. 'But I do know it,' insisted the stranger; 'I know the half of all knowledge in the world. Test me.'
5. So Charicles asked the stranger what he knew of medicine, and the stranger said, 'Nothing.'
6. And Charicles asked him what he knew of mathematics, and the stranger said, 'Nothing.'

Copyrighted material

7. And Charicles asked him what he knew of astronomy, and the stranger said, ‘Nothing.’
8. And Charicles asked him what he knew of philosophy, and the stranger said, ‘Nothing.’
9. And Charicles asked him what he knew of history, and the stranger said, ‘Nothing.’
10. And Charicles asked him what he knew of literature, and the stranger said, ‘Nothing.’
11. And Charicles asked him what he knew of this subject and that, and every time the stranger said, ‘Nothing.’
12. Eventually Charicles said, ‘How can you claim to know the half of all knowledge, which is something not even the wisest man would claim?
13. ‘For it is clear that when I ask you on any subject we study in the schools, you know nothing at all.’
14. To which the stranger replied, ‘Exactly so; for Aristotle says, “He who says, I do not know, has already attained the half of all knowledge.”’

Chapter 12

1. ‘And yet,’ said the stranger, ‘if only you will consider the questions you asked to test my knowledge, and what answers any man could give.
2. ‘He could answer that he knows medicine, because he can say that if a man is buried, he was formerly ill or had an accident;
3. ‘He knows astronomy, for he can tell that it is day when the sun shines, and night when he sees stars;
4. ‘He knows arithmetic, because he can ask for a second pot of beer to follow the first;
5. ‘He knows measurement, because he can tell whether his belly has grown bigger with feeding;
6. ‘He knows music, for he can tell the difference between the barking of a dog and the braying of an ass.
7. ‘What is the worth of mere words, if their true meanings make no difference to what a man does?
8. ‘In my land, to which I am taking you, though you feared to come with me, every stone has a story to tell of times past, and in every garden the roses bloom.
9. ‘The city sits on a hill, on whose slopes the vineyards flourish, and it overlooks a valley, where the vegetable plots are full of ripeness, and a river flows with clear waters.
10. ‘On the walls of our city, so pleasant and in a land so fruitful, we have inscribed the teachings of our sages.
11. ‘On the walls by the great gates we have placed the teachings of Tibon, who wrote to his son,
12. ‘“Plant your garden of flowers and herbs by the river; but let your bookshelves also be gardens and pleasure grounds;
13. ‘“Pluck the fruit that grows there, gather the spices and myrrh. If your heart grows weary, go from garden to garden of your bookshelves,

Copyrighted material

14. '"From flower bed to flower bed, scene to scene; and refresh yourself;
15. '"For how shall the heart not grow new when there are words of scholarship to teach it, and poetry to delight it,
16. '"And comedy to bring it laughter, and stories of love to make it yearn, and books of sorrows to unburden the tears of things that lie waiting within us all?
17. '"The greatest joy is when you pluck a flower from this garden of bookshelves, and carry it into the garden you have planted by the river,
18. '"There in the summer evening to read even while the music of the water flows quietly around you.
19. '"Then shall desire for the good renew itself in you, and your heart will be rich with manifold delight."
20. 'This is what our sage Tibon wrote to his son; and the words are carved on the walls so that everyone can learn them by heart.'
21. Charicles was impressed by this, and at last looked forward to seeing the stranger's homeland, which at first he had been so reluctant to visit.

Chapter 13

1. Charicles said, 'Now I am eager to visit your city on its hill, and its gardens, and to reading the wise words inscribed on its walls.
2. 'I was nervous to accompany you at first, a stranger; but you tell me good things; and the idea of gardens of flowers and books inspires me.'
3. The stranger said, 'In ancient Athens the philosophers thought out their best ideas walking up and down their groves; nature sobers us, and instructs us.
4. 'When we look up at the night sky we are giddied by its vastness, and the immense distance of the stars;
5. 'And when we look down the steeps of a mountain into the abyss below, we nearly fall;
6. 'And when the moon paints everything silver and white in the stillness of night, when all others sleep and only we ourselves wake, and are watchful and sad,
7. 'Then we hear the voice of thought, and come face to face with ourselves, with the brevity of life, with the lack of all we once had and have lost;
8. 'And yet, also, once we have been patient awhile and continued to listen, we come face to face with hope.
9. 'For we learn then, if we are brave, the power of mind, which is the greatest thing in man; of how, though man is small before nature, his mind can encompass all nature,
10. 'In thinking of it, and singing about it, searching it in science, and celebrating it in poetry.
11. 'So I think all the sages found both courage and modesty through the mind's contact with nature, and these two things are the begetters of hope.

Copyrighted material

12. 'Is there proof that they were right to hope? Well, only consider: it is many centuries since the first sages paced their groves, and their words and thoughts are with us today, and we speak of them;
13. 'Though nature conquered their bodies and their bodies are dispersed into the elements once more, the fruit of their minds is with us still.
14. 'I like to think of the philosophers walking in their groves. What a mistake it is to stop the child fidgeting (so they call it) over his book, for the body must be active as the mind learns.
15. 'It would be best to teach children while walking in a meadow. You see the scholars swaying as they recite their texts; mind is part of the dance; let the body be active when the mind is active too.
16. 'Though it is good to be in the kingdom of one's library, walking with the greatest of the past in thought, it is good to take the thoughts thus acquired into the air,
17. 'For though it is true that literature is the criticism of life, so is it also true that life is the criticism of learning.
18. 'Another of the sayings written on our city walls is this: let the door to the library of the world open from the library of one's books, and vice versa.'

Chapter 14

1. Charicles listened with great interest to these words, for as a scholar himself he enjoyed nothing more than talk of such things. He said,
2. 'You speak as if you know the text which says that books teach us without rods or stripes, unlike the lessons taught by impatient schoolmasters;
3. 'Without taunts or anger, without gifts or money. Books are not asleep when we approach them,
4. 'Nor do they deny us when we question them, or chide us when we err, or laugh at our ignorance.
5. 'No one is ever ashamed of turning to a book. We might blush to admit ignorance to a fellow human, but never to a dictionary.
6. 'Books are the golden pots of manna, which feed our hunger.
7. 'There is the story of a starving man who called out for food at the city gate, and a kind man gave him a scroll of words, which he ate: and it tasted of honey.
8. 'For this reason the wise man might say, "Eat the book, and be refreshed."
9. 'And he might further say, "Do not make your bookcase of acacia wood, covered with gold leaf, and doors of bevelled glass with mullions and a lock of brass;
10. '"But of plain wood, open to everyone who wishes to take down a volume and read."'
11. The stranger replied, 'These thoughts remind me of a story. There was a married couple in our city, who because they married

Copyrighted material

young were poor to begin with, while both studied before finding their first jobs.

12. 'They would go together to the bookstalls in the market every weekend, and look through the old torn books being sold cheaply,
13. 'And sometimes were able to afford one, but more often might not be able to resist one, even if it meant no supper that night;
14. 'But they did not feel hungry, because they had the book and could pore over it together, reading to each other by turns.
15. 'As their careers progressed and they became richer, it was easier to buy books; they bought them new, several at a time;
16. 'And many of the new books they bought lay unread, and were put on high shelves out of reach.
17. 'And then they could afford rare and beautiful old books, which they locked in a glass case and never touched, so delicate was the embossed gold leaf, and so fragile the ancient paper smelling of spices and history.
18. 'But one day the wife found one of the cheap old second-hand books they had bought with such excitement in their youthful days, and had read together with pleasure;
19. 'And she wept to think what had passed and been lost.'

Chapter 15

1. Charicles said, 'You remind us that reading profits most when, beside the book, you have someone with whom to talk of it.
2. 'If it is the book's author, good; if your teacher, better; if a friend, best of all.
3. 'The teacher knows he has succeeded when the pupil no longer needs him. But discussion between friends can never exhaust itself.
4. 'There is a saying: if you would study, find a fellow-student.
5. 'Those are wise words. Friendship made over a book is enduring, and a great solace.'
6. The stranger said, 'I would rather read a good book than meet its author. The best of him is, or should be, in the book; in person he might disappoint us, and ruin the book therefore.
7. 'Someone once said, "Respect the book, or you disrespect its author";
8. 'But it is better to respect not the author but the best of his mind from which his book came.
9. 'In that way we respect an immortality, not a life; lives burden the earth, but a good book is the distillation of something excellent, captured and stored to a use beyond the daily and the passing.'
10. With these conversations and meditations the second day of journeying was passed as lightly as the first, and Charicles and the stranger came to another city, and sought out an inn.

Copyrighted material

19. 'No,' said the monkey. 'We monkeys always leave our hearts at home, for otherwise we would be too afraid to go swinging in the trees, so high up from the ground. Did you not know that?'
20. 'Well,' said the hyena, disconsolate, 'what am I to do? You are right: she will be angry, and might eat me instead of you.'
21. 'I would not like that to happen to you,' said the monkey kindly. 'If you wait here I will hasten home and get my heart, and then I will have it with me when we reach the crocodile's wife.'
22. 'That's very kind,' said the hyena, most gratefully, and opened his jaws to let the monkey down.
23. The monkey leaped up into the trees, laughing again and even more loudly; and bade the hyena farewell.
24. 'There are many morals in this tale,' Charicles said, 'but one that always occurs to me is that the politician who takes your vote is like the monkey who promises to fetch his heart;
25. 'Once he has your vote and is in office, he is like the monkey who has tricked you and leaped into the tree;
26. 'But the one difference is, you discover that he has no heart at all.'

Chapter 18

1. With such stories the day's journey of Charicles and the stranger was beguiled. They rode through meadows of anemone, cyclamen, daffodil and iris,
2. Knee-deep in long sweet grass, and in the shade of woods thickly studded with oak and terebinth trees;
3. They rode by the side of streams, and their talk mingled with the sound of waters rushing over stones polished round and clean.
4. Just as the shadows were lengthening towards the east, and the starlings began to gather in the topmost branches of cedars, Charicles with astonishment noticed something:
5. That they had ridden out of a wood on a hillside overlooking his own home-town, where three days before the stranger had visited him.
6. He stopped his ass, and turned open-mouthed to the stranger to seek an explanation for how, all appearance to the contrary, they had ridden in a great circle, and arrived where they had begun.
7. And just as he did so he woke from the dream, but not before he heard the voice of the stranger say:
8. 'This is the country I told you of, when I said, "Come with me to my land and I will show you its happy environs and teach you its lore,"
9. 'For here your acquaintances and neighbours do not appreciate worth, nor know wisdom.
10. 'My country is like a pleasant garden, full of loving people, wise beyond all other people.
11. 'You are a scholar, and would learn

Copyrighted material

much from what I could show you; it would be for you to bring that wisdom back again, to teach it to your fellows.

12. 'And now you have seen my country; it exists in our talk; and it exists here in what your own country could be if it could be its best;
13. 'For all countries are my country if only they would make the effort to be it;
14. 'And if more such men would dream as you have dreamed today.'
15. At that Charicles came fully awake, and wondered mightily at his dream, which was as clear in his mind as if he dreamed it still.

Chapter 19

1. The king of the City of Stones was out riding one day when he saw an old man planting a fig tree in a garden.
2. The king stopped to ask him why he took such pains to plant a tree whose fruit he could in all probability not expect to eat, because of his age.
3. Said the old man, 'King, if I do not live long enough to taste the figs from this tree, my sons and their children will certainly do so.'
4. The king asked, 'How old are you?' to which the other replied, 'Some weeks short of ninety-one.'
5. The king said, 'If you live long enough to enjoy the fruit from this tree, be sure to let me know.'
6. Some years passed, and the king had forgotten this incident, when a page told him one day that an old man wished to present a basket of figs to him.
7. These words stirred the king's memory, and he asked for the old man to be brought before him.
8. Sure enough it was the ancient of the fig tree, who had brought the choicest specimens of the tree's offering.
9. The king accepted the gift with gracious words, and made the old man sit beside him as he tasted the figs,
10. Ordering his servants to put a fine cloak on the old man, and to give him a gold coin for every fig in the basket.
11. When the old man had gone the king's son asked, 'Father, why did you show such honour to that old man?'
12. And the king replied, 'He has been honoured by nature twice over: in preserving him to great age, and in providing him with abundance of fruits. Shall I honour him less?'
13. At home in his village the old man told the story of the king's kindness and generosity. An envious neighbour decided to outdo him, by filling a very large basket with figs and other fruits, and taking them to the king.
14. At the palace door he explained that he had heard of the king's bounty to the ancient, and wished to have the same reward in

Copyrighted material

proportion, for here was a basket even more numerously filled with fruits.

15. When the king heard this he ordered the grasping man to be pelted with his own fruits, and driven from the palace grounds.

Chapter 20

1. The king of the City of Stones one day heard two beggars calling out for alms in the street. One cried, 'Take pity on one less fortunate than yourself!'
2. And the other cried, 'Give alms to bring luck to the king and his kingdom!'
3. Pleased by the second beggar's attention to his interests, the king told his servants to take a roast fowl down to the street, stuffed with gold coins, and give it to the second beggar.
4. Now the second beggar was not in want of food, having plenty at home; and was chiefly interested in money.
5. But the first beggar was truly hungry. The second beggar said to him, 'I do not want this fowl; you may have it for the coins you have begged today.'
6. The first beggar said, 'The coins here are not many, and nowhere near the price of a cooked chicken.'
7. But the second said, 'You can have it anyway.' So they exchanged, and the second beggar went home.
8. The first beggar was of course vastly the gainer, finding as he satisfied his hunger the money hidden inside the chicken's carcase.
9. The next day the same thing happened; and again the first beggar found that he was vastly the gainer,
10. Even though he tried to tell the second beggar what a mistake he was making in selling the king's gift so cheaply.
11. For the second beggar did not wish to listen to one whom he thought a fool for giving away all his begged coins for a mere chicken.
12. As a result of this good fortune the first beggar had enough money to open a little shop on the street corner.
13. But again the second beggar came, crying out, 'Give alms to bring luck to the king and his kingdom!'
14. When the king heard the beggar cry out in this way for the third time, he grew impatient. 'I have given that beggar enough to start a little business of his own,' he said. 'Why does he continue to beg outside my palace windows?'
15. So he sent his servants to bring the beggar in, that he might question him. 'After all I have given you, why do you still beg in the street outside my windows?' asked the king. 'Are you so greedy that you cannot be satisfied with what is sent to you?'
16. And the second beggar said, 'But all I have had is the fowls you gave me, which, not requiring food, I sold for a few pennies to the other

Copyrighted material

beggar who cried in the street with me.'

17. At this the king marvelled, and said, 'The person who gained was one who asked us to think of the less fortunate;
18. 'The one who sought only to flatter me did not understand his good fortune.
19. 'Thus, justice has been done in how matters have here worked out.'

Chapter 21

1. The king of the City of Stones once disputed with his chamberlain whether more kindness was to be found among poor people than among the rich.
2. The chamberlain maintained that only those who are well-to-do show kindness and charity, because only they can afford it.
3. The king, not persuaded by this, summoned a scribe to write down the arguments he and the chamberlain had put forward, and then to lay up the document in a box.
4. After the chamberlain had departed, the king asked the scribe to accompany him in disguise around the kingdom, to see for themselves which of the king or chamberlain was right.
5. They walked in the darkness for a long time before seeing a distant light, which they discovered came from a poor goatherd's hut. There they knocked on the door, and were welcomed by the goatherd and his family, and offered bread and fruit.
6. The disguised king said, 'We are wayfarers who have taken a vow to eat only kidneys on our journey.'
7. Immediately the goatherd went and slaughtered all four of his goats, and removed their kidneys, so that he had something to offer his guests.
8. The disguised king said, 'Our vow also precludes us from eating before midnight; so we must travel on.'
9. So the goatherd lit them to their path with the only lantern in his hut, leaving his wife and daughters for a time in darkness.
10. The king and scribe then made their way to the mansion of the chamberlain, who had grown wealthy in the king's service;
11. And they found the chamberlain entertaining lavishly, with many guests and much food and wine burdening great tables in his hall.
12. The king and the scribe knocked at the door, and asked if they could have a little food and something to drink.
13. Hearing this the chamberlain strode to the door where they stood and said, 'Off with you beggars! If you do not leave my premises immediately I will have you whipped and beaten. How dare you trouble your betters!'
14. The next day the king sent his courtiers to bring the goatherd and his family to court, and likewise to summon the chamberlain.

Copyrighted material

15. He had the scribe take out and read the transcript of his discussion with the chamberlain; and then he and the scribe recounted the occurrences of the night before.
16. The king said to the chamberlain, 'You who have much were prepared to give nothing to someone who asked for little. The goatherd had very little, but gave it all to someone who asked.
17. 'This confirms what I argued in our debate: that those with little tend often to be kind because they know what it is to lack means, and they understand that kindness returns on itself in due time.
18. 'But those who have much grow selfish and inconsiderate, and wish to have nothing to do with people who do not equal them socially and in means.
19. 'So you yourself have refuted your own argument, and you will now learn not only what the truth is, but what it feels like.'
20. And the king ordered that the goatherd and his family be lodged in the chamberlain's palace, and the chamberlain in the goatherd's hut; and recommended the moral of this tale to all who heard it.

Chapter 22

1. On a day of fair weather and sunshine, Philologus saw his friend Toxophilus strolling in a meadow while intently reading a book, and went to him, saying,
2. 'You study too closely, Toxophilus.' To which the other replied, 'I study without effort, for the matter pleases and instructs me, which is all delight.'
3. Said Philologus, 'We physicians say that it is neither good for the eyes to read in bright sunlight, nor wholesome for the digestion to read so soon after dinner.'
4. 'I will never follow physic either in eating or studying,' said Toxophilus, 'for if I did I am sure there would be less pleasure in the one, or profit in the other. But what news brings you here?'
5. 'No news,' replied Philologus, 'just that as I was walking I saw several of our friends go to archery, there to shoot at the butts; but you were not with them.
6. 'So I sought you, and found you looking on your book intently; and thought to come and talk with you, lest your book should run away with you.
7. 'For by your wavering pace and earnest look I perceived that your book was leading you, not you it.'
8. 'There you are right,' said Toxophilus, 'For truly my thoughts were going faster than my feet.
9. 'I am reading a treatise of the mind, which says how well-feathered minds fly true and high, while those with moulted and drooping feathers sink always to base things.'
10. Said Philologus, 'I remember the passage well; it is wonderfully expressed. And now I see it is no marvel that your feet failed you, for

Copyrighted material

36. 'The space under that tree has become a school-house, and into it all the world comes through the pages of the books,
37. 'And the past and future gather round you when you and your teacher are sitting there.
38. 'So the sisters hunted deer in the clouds, and caught the wind in a net;
39. 'And they planted cornseeds in the treetops, and they have grown; and built huts out of water, stronger than huts of wood.'

Copyrighted material

CONCORD

Chapter 1

1. Fannius said to Laelius, 'Since you have mentioned the word friendship, and we are at leisure,
2. 'You would be doing us a great kindness, Laelius, if you would tell us what you mean by it, for you are famous for your friendships,
3. 'And before now have spoken so eloquently about their importance to us and to the possibility of good lives.'
4. Laelius replied: 'I should certainly have no objection if I felt confidence in myself, Fannius,
5. 'For the theme of friendship is a noble one, and we are indeed at leisure;
6. 'But who am I to speak of this? What ability do I have? What you propose is a task for philosophers;
7. 'For a set discourse on friendship, and an analysis of its meaning, you must go to them.'
8. To which Fannius said, 'But you have much practical experience in friendship, and are accounted the best of friends by your friends;
9. 'Surely this is the best qualification to speak of so important a relationship?
10. 'Not least, Laelius, is the fact that your great friendship with Scipio is the subject almost of legend; and from its example we all wish to learn.'
11. 'Well,' replied Laelius, 'all I can do is to urge you to regard friendship as indeed the greatest thing in the world,
12. 'For there is nothing which so fits human nature, or is so exactly what we both desire and need, whether in prosperity or adversity.
13. 'But I must at the very beginning lay down this principle: that true friendship can only exist between good people.
14. 'I do not, however, press this too closely, like those who give their definitions a pedantic accuracy.
15. 'There is no practical use in doing that: we must concern ourselves with the facts of everyday life as we find it, not imaginary and ideal perfections.
16. 'Let us mean by "good people" those whose actions and lives leave no question as to their honour, sense of justice, and generosity both of hand and heart;
17. 'Who have the courage to stand by their principles, and who are free from greed, intemperance and violence.
18. 'Such people as these are generally accounted "good", so let us agree to call them that,

Copyrighted material

19. 'On the ground that to the best of their ability they take nature and human fellow-feeling as the true guides to an honourable and well-lived life.'

Chapter 2

1. 'Now this truth seems clear to me, that nature has so formed us that a certain tie unites us all, but that this tie becomes stronger with proximity.
2. 'So it is that we prefer our fellow-citizens to foreigners, relations to strangers;
3. 'For in their case nature herself has caused a kind of friendship to exist, though it is one which lacks some of the elements of permanence.
4. 'Friendship excels mere acquaintanceship in this, that whereas you may eliminate affection from acquaintanceship,
5. 'You cannot do so from friendship. Without affection, acquaintanceship still exists in name; but friendship does not.
6. 'You may best understand friendship by considering that, whereas merely social ties uniting people are indefinite,
7. 'Friendship is a tie concentrated into affection, which is the bond one shares most deeply only with a few.
8. 'And now we can try to define friendship, as: enjoyment of the other's company, accord on many things, mutual goodwill and liking.
9. 'With the exception of wisdom, I am inclined to think nothing better than this can be found in human experience.
10. 'There are people who give the palm to riches or to good health, or to power and office;
11. 'Many give the name of the best thing in life to sensual pleasures.
12. 'But all these we may say are frail and uncertain, and depend less on our own prudence than on the caprice of fortune.
13. 'Then there are those who find the "chief good" in virtue. And that is a noble doctrine.
14. 'But the very virtue they talk of is the parent and preserver of friendship, and without it friendship cannot exist.'

Chapter 3

1. 'I repeat: let us account as good the persons usually considered so; such as are good in the true sense of everyday life;
2. 'And we need not trouble ourselves about ideal characters who are nowhere to be met.
3. 'Between people like these, Fannius, the advantages of friendship are almost more than I can say.
4. 'To begin with, how can life be worth living, which lacks the repose to be found in the companionship and goodwill of a friend?
5. 'What can be more delightful than to have someone you can say anything to, with the same absolute confidence as to yourself?
6. 'Is not prosperity robbed of half its

Copyrighted material

value if you have no one to share your joy?

7. 'On the other hand, misfortunes would be hard to bear if there were no one to feel them even more acutely than yourself.
8. 'In a word, other objects of ambition serve for particular ends:
9. 'Thus, riches for use, power for securing homage, office for reputation,
10. 'Pleasure for enjoyment, health for freedom from pain and the full use of the functions of the body.
11. 'But friendship alone embraces all advantages. Turn which way you please, you will find it at hand;
12. 'It is everywhere; and yet never out of place, never unwelcome. Fire and water themselves are not of more universal value.
13. 'I am not now speaking of the common or modified form of friendship, Fannius, though even that is a source of pleasure and profit,
14. 'But of that true and complete friendship which enhances prosperity, and relieves adversity of its burden by halving and sharing it.
15. 'And great and numerous as are the blessings of friendship, this certainly is the sovereign one, that it gives us bright hopes for the future, supports our weakness, and banishes despair.
16. 'In the face of a true friend we see as it were a second self. So that where a man's friend is, he is; if his friend be rich, he is not poor;
17. 'Though he be weak, his friend's strength is his; and in his friend's life he enjoys a second life after his own is finished.
18. 'This last is perhaps the most difficult to understand. But such is the effect of the respect, the loving remembrance, and the regret of friends which follow us to the grave.
19. 'While they take the sting out of death, they add a glory to the life of the survivors.
20. 'And indeed: if you eliminate from nature the tie of affection, there will be an end of house and city, nor will so much as the cultivation of the soil be left.'

Chapter 4

1. 'Anyone who does not see the virtue of friendship for its own sake, Fannius, may learn it by observing the effects of quarrels and feuds.
2. 'Was any family ever so well established, any state so firmly settled, as to be beyond destruction by animosities and factions?
3. 'This may teach the immense advantage of friendship; a truth which everybody understands through experience.
4. 'For if any instance of loyal friendship in confronting or sharing danger becomes apparent, everyone applauds it greatly.
5. 'One can easily see what a natural feeling it is, when men who would not have the courage to help a friend, themselves show how right they think it when another does so.

Copyrighted material

6. 'And it often occurs to me, when thinking about friendship, to ask: is it weakness and want of means that make friendship desired?
7. 'Is its aim an exchange of services, so that each may give that in which he is strong, and receive that in which he is weak?
8. 'Or is it not rather true that, although mutual help is an advantage naturally belonging to friendship,
9. 'Yet its original cause is quite other, prior in time, more noble in character, and springing more directly from human nature itself?
10. 'The Latin word for friendship, "amicitia", is derived from the word for love, "amor", and affection is the prime mover in forming bonds.
11. 'For as to material advantages, it often happens that they are obtained by people merely pretending friendship, who treat others with respect only from self-interest.
12. 'But friendship by its nature admits of no feigning, no pretence: it is both genuine and spontaneous.
13. 'Therefore, Fannius, I say that friendship springs from a natural impulse rather than a wish for help:
14. 'From an inclination of the heart, combined with a feeling of affection, rather than from calculation of the material advantage.
15. 'The strength of this feeling you may notice in animals. They show such love to their offspring for a time, and are so beloved by them, that they clearly display the bond of affection.
16. 'But this is even more evident in the case of humanity: first, in the affection between children and parents, an affection which only shocking wickedness can sunder;
17. 'Next, when the passion of love has attained mutual strength, on our finding someone with whose character and nature we are in full sympathy,
18. 'Because we think that we perceive in him the beacon-light of what we cherish or admire, respect or like.
19. 'For nothing inspires love, nothing conciliates affection, like the answering chord of what we see is good.
20. 'Why, in a certain sense we may be said to feel affection even for people we have never seen, owing to their reputation for honesty and virtue.
21. 'If the attraction of probity is so great that we can love it not only in those we have never seen,
22. 'But even in an enemy we respect, we need not be surprised if affections are roused when they meet goodness in those with whom intimacy is possible.'

Chapter 5

1. 'I do not deny that affection is strengthened by the receipt of benefits, Fannius, as well as by the perception of a wish to render service,
2. 'But when these are added to the original impulse of the heart, a great warmth of feeling springs up.

Copyrighted material

we should avoid close friendships, for fear that one person should have to endure the anxieties of several.

5. 'Each person, they say, has enough and to spare on his own hands; it is too bad to be involved in the cares of other people.
6. 'The wisest course is to hold the reins of friendship as loose as possible; you can then tighten or slacken them at your will.
7. 'For the first condition of a happy life, they say, is freedom from care, which no one can enjoy if he has to worry for others as well as himself.
8. 'Another opinion is still less generous: that friendships should be sought solely for the sake of the profit they give, not from motives of feeling and affection;
9. 'And that therefore just in proportion as a man's power and means of support are lowest, he is most eager to gain friendships.
10. 'What ignoble philosophy! For let us examine these two doctrines.
11. 'What is the value of this "freedom from care"? It might seem tempting at first sight, but in practice it has often to be put on one side.
12. 'For there is no business and no course of action demanded from us by our honour which we can consistently avoid from a mere wish to escape anxiety.
13. 'No, if we wish to avoid anxiety we must avoid virtue itself, which necessarily involves some anxious thoughts in abhorring qualities that are opposite to itself,
14. 'As for example kindness for ill-nature, self-control for licentiousness, courage for cowardice.
15. 'Thus you may notice that it is the just who are most pained by injustice,
16. 'The brave who are most pained by cowardly actions,
17. 'The temperate who are most pained by depravity.
18. 'It is then characteristic of a rightly ordered mind to be pleased at what is good and grieved at the reverse.'

Chapter 8

1. 'Seeing then that the wise are not exempt from heartache, why should we banish friendship from our lives, for fear of its involving us in some amount of distress?
2. 'If you take away emotion, what difference remains, I do not say between a man and a beast, but between a man and a stone or a log of wood?
3. 'So I say again, the clear indication of virtue, to which a mind of like character is naturally attracted, is the beginning of friendship.
4. 'When that is the case the rise of affection is a necessity.
5. 'For what can be more irrational than to take delight in objects incapable of response,
6. 'Such as office, fame, splendid buildings and personal decoration,
7. 'And yet to take little or no delight in a sentient being endowed with

Copyrighted material

virtue, who has the faculty of loving and returning love?

8. 'For nothing gives more pleasure than a return of affection, and the mutual interchange of kind feeling and good offices.

9. 'And if we add, as we may fairly do, that nothing so powerfully attracts one thing to itself as likeness does to friendship,

10. 'It will at once be recognised that the good love the good, and attach them to themselves as though they were united by blood and nature.

11. 'For nothing can be more eager for what is like itself than nature.

12. 'So, my dear Fannius, we may look upon this as an established fact, that between good people there is, as if of necessity, a kindly feeling, which is the true source of friendship.

13. 'Again, the believers in the "interest" theory appear to me to destroy the most attractive link in the chain of friendship.

14. 'For it is not so much what one gets from a friendship that gives one pleasure, as the warmth of the friend's feeling;

15. 'And we only care for a friend's service if it has been prompted by affection.

16. 'And so far from its being true that lack of means is a motive for seeking friendship, it is usually those who possess sufficient means,

17. 'And above all who possess virtue (which is a man's best support; so the virtuous are least in need of others), who are most open-handed and beneficent.

18. 'Indeed I am inclined to think that friends ought at times to be in want of something.

19. 'For instance, what scope would my affections have had if Scipio had never wanted my advice or co-operation at home or abroad?

20. 'It is not friendship, then, that follows material advantage, but material advantage follows friendship.'

Chapter 9

1. 'Who would choose a life of the greatest wealth and abundance on condition of neither loving nor being loved by any creature?

2. 'That is the sort of life tyrants endure. They can count on no fidelity, no affection, no security in the goodwill of anyone.

3. 'For them all is suspicion and anxiety; for them there is no possibility of friendship.

4. 'Who can love one whom he fears, or by whom he knows that he is feared?

5. 'Yet such men often have a show of friendship offered them, but it is only a fair-weather show.

6. 'If it ever happen that they fall, as it frequently does, they will at once understand how friendless they are.

7. 'It often happens in the case of men of unusually great means that their very wealth forbids genuine friendships.

8. 'For not only is fortune blind herself, but she generally makes

Copyrighted material

those blind also who enjoy her favours.

9. ‘Now, can anything be more foolish than that men who have all the opportunities that wealth can bestow, should secure all else that money can buy: horses, servants, costly plate;
10. ‘But do not secure friends, who are, if I may use the expression, the most valuable and beautiful furniture of life?
11. ‘And yet, when the rich acquire the former, they know not who will enjoy them, nor for whom they may be taking all this trouble;
12. ‘For such things will all eventually belong to the strongest: while each man has a stable and inalienable ownership in his friendships.
13. ‘Scipio often said that no one ever said anything more opposed to the essence of friendship than this: “You should love your friend with the consciousness that you may one day hate him.”
14. ‘For how can a man be friends with another, if he thinks it possible that he may be his enemy?
15. ‘Why, it will follow that he must wish and desire his friend to commit as many mistakes as possible, that he may have all the more handles against him;
16. ‘And, conversely, that he must be annoyed and jealous at the right actions or good fortune of his friends.
17. ‘This maxim, then, let it be whose it will, is the utter negation of friendship.
18. ‘The true rule is to take such care in the selection of our friends as never to enter upon a friendship with anyone whom we could come to hate.
19. ‘Scipio used to complain that there is nothing on which people bestow so little pains as friendship:
20. ‘That everyone could tell exactly how many goats or sheep he had, but not how many friends;
21. ‘And while they took pains in procuring the former, they were careless in selecting friends, and applied no thought to how they might judge of their suitability for friendship.’

Chapter 10

1. ‘The qualities we ought to look for in choosing friends are firmness, stability and constancy.
2. ‘Where shall we look for these in people who put friendship beneath office, civil or military promotions, and political power,
3. ‘And who, when the choice lies between these things on the one side and the claims of friendship on the other, do not give a strong preference to the former?
4. ‘It is not in human nature to be indifferent to power; and if the price men have to pay for it is the sacrifice of friendship,
5. ‘They think their treason will be eclipsed by the magnitude of the reward.
6. ‘This is why true friendship is so difficult to find among politicians and those who contest for office.

Copyrighted material

7. 'Where can you find the man to prefer his friend's advancement to his own?
8. 'And think how grievous and intolerable it is to most men to share political disaster. You will scarcely find anyone who can bring himself to do that.
9. 'And though it is true that the hour of need shows the friend indeed, yet it is in the following two ways that most people betray their untrustworthiness and inconstancy:
10. 'By disdaining friends when they are themselves prosperous, or by deserting them in their distress.
11. 'A person, then, who has shown a firm, unshaken and unvarying friendship in both these contingencies,
12. 'Must be reckoned as one of a class the rarest in the world, and all but superhuman.'

Chapter 11

1. 'What is the quality to look for as a promise of stability and permanence in friendship? Loyalty.
2. 'We should also look for simplicity, a sociable disposition, and a sympathetic nature, moved by what moves us.
3. 'You can never trust a character which is intricate and tortuous.
4. 'Nor is it possible for one to be trustworthy and firm who is unsympathetic by nature and unmoved by what affects others.
5. 'There are two characteristic features in his treatment of his friends that a good person will always display:
6. 'First, he will be entirely without make-believe or pretence of feeling;
7. 'For the open display even of dislike is more becoming to an ingenuous character than a studied concealment of sentiment.
8. 'Second, there should be a certain pleasantness in word and manner, for these add much flavour to friendship.
9. 'A gloomy temper and unvarying gravity may seem impressive; but friendship should be less unbending,
10. 'More indulgent and gracious, more inclined to all kinds of good-fellowship and good nature.
11. 'But here arises a question of some little difficulty. Are there any occasions on which, assuming their worthiness, we should prefer new to old friends, just as we prefer young to aged horses?
12. 'The answer is clear. There should be no satiety in friendship, as there is in other things. The older the sweeter, as in wines that keep well.
13. 'And the proverb is a true one, "You must eat many a peck of salt with a man to be thorough friends with him."'

Chapter 12

1. 'Have I yet said enough, Fannius, to show that in friendship, just as those who possess any superiority must put themselves on an equal

footing with those who are less fortunate,

2. 'So these latter must not be annoyed at being surpassed in genius, fortune, or rank.
3. 'People who are always mentioning their services to their friends are a nuisance. The recipient ought to remember them; the performer should never mention them.
4. 'In the case of friends, then, as the superior are bound to descend, so are they bound in a certain sense to raise those below them.
5. 'The measure of your benefits should be in the first place your own power to bestow,
6. 'And in the second place the capacity to bear them on the part of those on whom you bestow affection and help.
7. 'For, however great your personal prestige may be, you cannot raise all your friends to the highest state.
8. 'As a general rule, we must wait to make up our minds about friendships till men's characters and years have reached their full maturity.
9. 'People must not, for instance, regard as fast friends all whom in their youthful enthusiasm for hunting or football they liked because they shared the same tastes.
10. 'For difference of character leads to difference of aims, and the result of such diversity is to estrange friends.
11. 'Another good rule in friendship is this: do not let an excessive affection hinder the highest interests of your friends. This often happens.
12. 'Our first aim should be to prevent a breach; our second, to secure that, if it does occur, our friendship should seem to have died a natural rather than a quarrelsome death.
13. 'Next, we should take care that friendship is not converted into hostility, from which flow personal quarrels, abusive language and angry recriminations.
14. 'By "worthy of friendship" I mean the friendship of those who have in themselves the qualities that attract affection.
15. 'Such people are rare; and indeed all excellent things are rare; and nothing in the world is so hard to find as a thing entirely and completely perfect of its kind.
16. 'But most people not only recognise nothing as good in our life unless it is profitable,
17. 'But they also look upon friends as so much stock, caring most for those who will bring them most profit.
18. 'Accordingly they never possess that most beautiful and most spontaneous friendship which exists solely for itself, without any ulterior motive.'

Chapter 13

1. 'They fail also to learn about the nature and strength of friendship from their own feelings.
2. 'For everyone loves himself, not for any reward which such love may bring, but because he is dear to himself independently of anything else.

Copyrighted material

to us, for it is unworthy of a free-born man, to say nothing of a friend.

13. 'If a man's ears are so closed to plain speaking that he cannot bear to hear the truth from a friend, we may give him up in despair.
14. 'There are people who owe more to bitter enemies than to apparently pleasant friends: the former often speak the truth, the latter never.
15. 'It is a strange paradox that people are not at all vexed at having committed a fault, but very angry at being reproved for it.
16. 'For on the contrary, they ought to be grieved at the crime and glad of the correction.
17. 'If it is true that to give and receive advice – to give it with freedom and yet without bitterness, receive it with patience and without irritation – is peculiarly appropriate to friendship,
18. 'It is no less true that there can be nothing more subversive of friendship than flattery, adulation and base compliance.
19. 'I use as many terms as possible to brand this vice of light-minded, untrustworthy people, whose sole object is to please without regard to truth.
20. 'In everything false pretence is bad, for it negates our power of discerning the truth.
21. 'But to nothing is it so hostile as friendship; for it destroys that frankness without which friendship is an empty name.
22. 'For if the essence of friendship lies in the closeness of two minds, how can friendship exist if the two minds are in reality at variance?
23. 'Fannius, if we take reasonable care it is as easy to distinguish a genuine from a specious friend
24. 'As it is to distinguish what is coloured and artificial from what is sincere and genuine.
25. 'Fewer people are endowed with virtue than wish to be thought to be so. It is such people that take delight in flattery.
26. 'When they are flattered they take it as testimony to the truth of their own self-praises.
27. 'It is not then properly friendship at all when the one will not listen to the truth, and the other is prepared to lie.'

Chapter 16

1. 'And so I repeat: it is virtue, virtue, which both creates and preserves friendship.
2. 'On it depends harmony of interest, permanence, fidelity.
3. 'When virtue has shewn the light of her countenance, and recognised the same light in another,
4. 'She gravitates towards it, and in turn welcomes what the other has to show;
5. 'And from it springs up a flame which you may call either love or friendship. Both words are from the same root;
6. 'And love is just the cleaving to one whom you love without the

Copyrighted material

prompting of need or any view to advantage,

7. 'Though advantage blossoms spontaneously in friendship, little as you may have looked for it.
8. 'It is with such warmth of feeling, Fannius, that I cherished my friends. For it was their virtue that I loved, and even death has not taken that love away.
9. 'I declare that of all the blessings which either fortune or nature has bestowed upon me, I know none to compare with friendship.
10. 'In it I found sympathy in public business, counsel in private business; in it too I found a means of spending my leisure with unalloyed delight.
11. 'Why speak of the eagerness with which I and my friends always sought to learn something new,
12. 'Spending our leisure hours in the quest for knowledge, far from the gaze of the world?
13. 'If the recollection and memory of these things had perished with my friends, I could not possibly endure the regret for those so closely united with me in life and affection.
14. 'But these things have not perished; they are rather fed and strengthened by reflection and memory.
15. 'This is everything I have to say on friendship. One piece of advice on parting; make up your minds to this:
16. 'To seek the good is the first demand we should make upon ourselves;
17. 'But next to the good, and to it alone, the greatest of all things is friendship.'

Copyrighted material

LAMENTATIONS

Chapter 1

1. When I was without comfort, and sorrowing; when the grief of life was present to me, and afflictions common to man were upon me, then I lamented, and said:
2. We are born to suffer and die, and the days of our laughter are few in the land.
3. Every joy we foresee has its cost in the loss that must follow, for nothing survives its hour, and the first to fade is the season of pleasantness.
4. To love is to contract for sorrow, since one of two must depart first, and affections diminish and vanish.
5. To love what is made of nature is to love what changes and passes; and yet we must love, and so we must suffer.
6. Likewise to strive is to fail; even the taste of victory grows rank in the mouth, and success is fleeting;
7. And yet we must strive, for what is man if he does not strive; and so we must suffer.
8. To make and hold anything of value is to give hostages to the thieves of time, who owe us nothing in return but the promise to steal us too.
9. At the road's side lie possibilities of accident, disaster and disease;
10. At the road's end lie certainties of age and death; even from our first setting out we are beset.
11. What is the life of man and woman, but labour and vexation, and an ever-uncertain future?
12. What is the truth that accompanies life, other than that we must endure if we make no end before the end?
13. By hope we live, and by reliefs: best in the conversation of a friend, worst in a pot of liquor; but only the ultimate relief of death relieves all.
14. What is hope, but the illusion of possible good: for hope prolongs torments, yet offers itself as their only medicine.
15. No one would be sick, or captive, bereft or bereaved, unloved or a failure, a victim or a scapegoat, lonely or afraid:
16. Yet how rare is he who is not one or more of these at some time, passing as mankind must between the millstones of the months and years?
17. It is vain to comfort the grieving, for grief must have its fill;
18. Like the ashes of roses, or the roses' shadows, that alone remain when their petals have blown, and litter the path behind.

Copyrighted material

Chapter 2

1. All that seems new is nothing but what the past has forgotten.
2. All things have been tossed on the seas of time; some submerge, then are cast up again as novelty,
3. Some drown and are lost for ever that were for mankind's good, and some whose loss is for mankind's benefit.
4. So it is that envy and malice, and the cruelty and rapine of human to human, always seem of the times, but have been the coin of their exchange for ever.
5. Sects and factions, divisions and quarrels, unforgiving separations of brother and brother, appear as today's problems: but are older than amity.
6. What is it that troubles our sleep, but the pangs of bitterness for what happened yesterday, and the fear that tomorrow will bring the same.
7. It is the weight on the heart that presses out an acid lees, tainting all we drink for our burning thirst.
8. Nothing begins or ends without this: that life starts in another's pain, and ends in our own.
9. Nothing is understood for its worth, until stolen away; making us poor, and the world a wilderness.
10. The brief, effortful, confused span of existence between two nothings, burdened with care and trial, is a tale traced on water, a story written in dust.
11. It is a wild theme, rife with sorrow, an empty theme, deformed with grief,
12. A dark theme, full of falsehood, under a biting and bitter sky.
13. Why live? Why live on? What is there that tomorrow promises so faithfully that yesterday has not hurt us with already?
14. And they give answer who say: deceitful hope, that makes us continue into the narrowing corridor of the windowless future, as if it led to a garden.

Chapter 3

1. I have followed the bier to that opened oblong of earth, have heard the small rain fall on it, and felt my tears choking my throat and stinging my eyes,
2. Even in the cold and grey of the funeral day I have felt the tears coursing on my cheeks.
3. Why? Why? There are holes in the world, where she was, and where the unspoken words of kindness and love wait still to be said, but to the vacancy of the unretrievable past.
4. Now the anger and silences, the misunderstandings and missed opportunities, grow so large that they overshadow the larger seasons of happiness, and blight them;
5. At the last there was no time to undo the wrongs that were left, and with a final kiss to forgive, and establish the best parts of our love as its monument.
6. The threnody of all loves devoured

Copyrighted material

by ravenous time is 'I wish, I wish'; yet this inevitability makes no difference to what we do beforehand:

7. It is as if we say, in our folly and our ignorance or forgetfulness, 'We have eternity, therefore I will be angry.'
8. But there are no eternities other than grief while it lasts, no certainties other than that grief must come, no escape other than from life itself and what it asks us to endure.
9. I have followed the bier to opened oblongs of earth more than once now, as the years accumulate and the tired travellers fall aside one by one.
10. I see that rapacious death is a respecter neither of age nor of condition, though it best likes to choose those the good loved, to punish the goodness of the living.
11. For they, living on, alone or deprived, with the thorn of memory, the abyss of mourning, the unfair demand to remake their world out of ruins of sorrow: they are death's chief victims.
12. At night, and in the still stretches of day, at waking, at lying down to wearying half-sleep, the black bat of grief closes its wings over us and stifles our breath;
13. How unbearable, how inextinguishable by silence or utterance, is the weight of this stifling; how unlimited the horizon of suffering then, at its worst period.
14. To live is to wait for grief, or to be the occasion for it, or to witness it, or cause it, or be changed by it, or die of it.

Chapter 4

1. My prime of youth is a frost of cares, my feast of joy but a dish of pain,
2. My crop of corn is a field of tares, my wealth no more than dreams of gain;
3. My day is fled, yet I saw no sun; and though I live, my life is done.
4. My spring is past, but not yet sprung; the fruit is dead, with leaves still green;
5. My youth is past, though I still young; I saw the world, myself unseen.
6. My thread is cut, though not yet spun; and though I live, my life is done.
7. I sought for death, it was the womb; I looked for life, it was a shade;
8. I tread the ground, which is my tomb; and now I die, though just new made.
9. The glass is full, yet my glass is run; and though I live, my life is done.

Chapter 5

1. Is nature spiteful, that we live such a brief span? Life hastens by, and ends just as we learn how to live it.
2. Maybe the wise can make one lifetime into many, but the many make one lifetime into less;
3. For so much of it is wasted, and wasted moreover on the trivial and passing, the momentary and empty.

Copyrighted material

14. 'Consider how many have robbed you of life when you were not aware of what you were losing,
15. 'How much was taken up in useless sorrow, in foolish joy, in greedy desire,
16. 'In the allurements of society; see how little of yourself was left to you;
17. 'And then you will perceive that you are dying before your season!
18. 'What is the reason of this? You live as if you were destined to live for ever; no thought of your frailty ever enters your head, of how much time has already gone by you take no heed.
19. 'You squander time as if you drew from a full and abundant supply,
20. 'Though all the while that day which you bestow on some person or thing is perhaps your last.
21. 'You have all the fears of mortals and all the desire as if you were not mortal.
22. 'You will hear many men saying: "After my fiftieth year I shall retire into leisure, my sixtieth year shall release me from public duties."
23. 'And what guarantee, pray, have you that your life will last longer? Who will suffer your course to be just as you plan it?
24. 'Are you not ashamed to reserve for yourself only the remnant of life, and to set apart for wisdom only that time which cannot be devoted to business?
25. 'How late it is to begin to live just when we must cease to live!
26. 'What foolish forgetfulness of mortality to postpone wholesome plans to the fiftieth and sixtieth year, and to intend to begin life at a point which many do not even attain!'

Chapter 8

1. Alas! it is vain to exist: all existence is vain.
2. This vanity finds expression in the whole way in which things exist;
3. In the infinite nature of time and space, contrasted to the finite nature of individuals;
4. In the ever-passing present moment; in the dependence and relativity of all things;
5. In continual becoming without ever being; in constant wishing and never being satisfied;
6. In the long battle which forms the history of life, where every effort is checked by difficulties.
7. Time is that in which all things pass away; it is merely the form in which we discover that effort is vain;
8. It is the agent by which everything in our hands every moment becomes as nothing.
9. That which has been exists no more; it exists as little as that which has never been.
10. Hence a thing of great importance now past is inferior to something of little importance now present, because the latter alone seems real.
11. A man finds himself, to his great astonishment, suddenly existing,

Copyrighted material

after millions of years of non-existence:

12. He lives for a while, and then again comes an equally long period when he exists no more.
13. The heart rebels against this, and suffers at the thought.
14. Of every event in life we can say only for one moment that it is; for ever after, that it was.
15. Every evening we are poorer by a day. It makes us mad to see how rapidly our short span of time ebbs away;
16. This might lead us to believe that the greatest wisdom is to make the enjoyment of the present the supreme object of life,
17. Because that is the only reality, all else being merely the play of thought.
18. Yet such a course might as well be called the greatest folly:
19. For that which in the next moment exists no more, and vanishes utterly, like a dream, can never be worth serious consideration.
20. The whole foundation on which our existence rests is the ever-fleeting present.
21. It lies, then, in the very nature of our existence to take the form of constant motion,
22. And to offer no possibility of our ever attaining the rest for which we are always striving.
23. We are like people running downhill, who cannot keep on their legs unless they run on, and will inevitably fall if they stop;
24. Or, again, like a pole balanced on the tip of one's finger; or like a planet, which would fall into its sun the moment it ceased to hurry on its way.
25. Unrest is the mark of existence.
26. In a world where all is unstable, and nothing can endure, but is swept onwards at once in the hurrying whirlpool of change,
27. Where a man, if he is to keep erect at all, must always be advancing and moving, like an acrobat on a rope;
28. In such a world, happiness is inconceivable.

Chapter 9

1. The scenes of our life are like pictures in rough mosaic: looked at closely, they produce no effect.
2. There is nothing beautiful to be found in them, unless you stand some distance away.
3. So, to gain anything we have longed for is only to discover how vain and empty it is;
4. And even though we are always living in expectation of better things,
5. At the same time we often repent and long to have the past back again.
6. We look upon the present as something to be endured while it lasts.
7. Hence most people, if they glance back when they come to the end of life, will find that all along they have not been living, but merely waiting to live;

Copyrighted material

8. They will be surprised to find that the very thing they disregarded and allowed to pass them by unenjoyed, was the life they were expecting.
9. Of how many people may it not be said that hope made fools of them until they danced into the arms of death!
10. Then again, how insatiable a creature is a human being! Every satisfaction attained sows the seeds of some new desire,
11. So that there is no end to the wishes of each individual will.
12. And why? Because no single thing can ever give satisfaction, but only the whole, which is endless.
13. Life presents itself as a task – the task of surviving, of maintaining life and a precarious equilibrium.
14. Thus life is a burden, and then there comes the second task of fending off despair,
15. Which, like a bird of prey, hovers over us, ready to fall wherever it sees a life secure from need.
16. The first task is to win something; the second, to banish the feeling that it has been won; otherwise it is a burden.
17. Surely, human life is a mistake. Man is a compound of needs and necessities which are hard to satisfy,
18. And even when they are satisfied, all he obtains is a state of painlessness, where nothing remains to him but the danger of boredom.
19. This is proof that existence has no value in itself; for what is boredom but the feeling of the emptiness of life?
20. If life – the craving for which is the very essence of our being – had intrinsic value, there would be no such thing as boredom:
21. Existence would satisfy us in itself, and we should want for nothing.
22. But as it is, we take no delight in existence except when we are struggling for something;
23. And then distance and difficulties to be overcome make our goal look as though it would satisfy us: an illusion which vanishes when we reach it.
24. When we are not occupied by thought or striving, when we cast upon existence itself,
25. Its vain and worthless nature is brought home to us; and this is the essence of nullity.
26. If we turn from contemplating the world as a whole,
27. And the generations of people as they live their little hour of mock-existence and then are swept away in rapid succession;
28. If we turn from this, and look at life in its small details, how ridiculous it seems!
29. It is like a drop of water under a microscope, a single drop teeming with small things; or a speck of cheese full of mites invisible to the naked eye.
30. How we laugh as they bustle about so eagerly, and struggle with one another in so tiny a space!
31. And whether here, or in the little

Copyrighted material

span of human life, this terrible activity is merely comic.

32. It is only in the microscope that our life looks so big. It is an indivisible point, drawn out and magnified by the powerful lenses of time and space.

Chapter 10

1. Unless suffering is the object of life, our existence must entirely fail in its aim.
2. It is absurd to look upon the pain that abounds everywhere in the world, and originates in needs and necessities inseparable from life itself, as serving no purpose at all.
3. Each separate misfortune, as it comes, seems something exceptional; but misfortune in general is the rule.
4. We find pleasure not nearly so pleasant as we expected, and we find pain much more painful.
5. We are like lambs in a field, disporting themselves under the eye of the butcher, who chooses out first one and then another for his prey.
6. So it is that in our good days we are all unconscious of the evil that might presently be in store for us – sickness, poverty, mutilation, loss of sight or reason.
7. No little part of the torment of existence lies in this, that time is continually pressing upon us, never letting us take breath,
8. But always coming after us, a taskmaster with a whip.
9. If at any moment time stays its hand, it is only when we are delivered over to misery.
10. But misfortune has its uses; for, as our bodily frame would burst if the pressure of the atmosphere was removed,
11. So, if people were relieved of all need and adversity, if everything they undertook were successful, they would go mad.
12. Something of pain and trouble is necessary for everyone at all times: a ship without ballast is unstable and will not sail straight in the sea.
13. Work, worry, labour and trouble form the lot of almost all men all their lives.
14. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? What would they do with the time that would then oppress?
15. In youth, as we contemplate our coming life, we are like children in a theatre before the curtain is raised,
16. Eagerly waiting for the play to begin. It is fortunate that we do not know what is going to happen.
17. Could we foresee it, there are times when children might seem like innocent prisoners,
18. Condemned, not to death, but to life, and as yet all unconscious of what their sentence means.
19. Yet everyone desires to reach old age; a state of life of which it may be said: 'It is bad today, and it will be worse tomorrow; and so on till the worst of all.'

Copyrighted material

20. If two men who were friends in their youth meet again when old, the chief feeling they will have at sight of each other will be disappointment at life as a whole;
21. For their thoughts will go back to that earlier time when life seemed so promising,
22. As it lay spread out before them in the rosy light of dawn: only to end in so many failures and sufferings.
23. This feeling will so predominate that they will not consider it necessary to speak of it;
24. But on either side it will be silently assumed, and form the ground of all they talk about.
25. He who lives to see two or three generations is like a man who sits some time in the conjurer's booth at a fair, and witnesses the performance twice or thrice in succession.
26. The tricks were meant to be seen only once, and when they are no longer a novelty they cease to deceive; their effect is gone.
27. Life is a task to be done. It is a fine thing to say, 'He is dead'; it means he has done his task.
28. If children were brought into the world by an act of pure reason alone, would the human race continue?
29. Would not a man rather have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the burden of existence?
30. I shall be told philosophy is comfortless, because it speaks the truth; and people prefer illusions.
31. Go to the illusionists, then, and leave philosophers in peace! At any rate, do not ask us to accommodate our doctrines to your hopes.
32. That is what those rascals of illusion will do for you. Ask them for any doctrine you please, and you will get it.

Chapter 11

1. Every state of well-being, every feeling of satisfaction, is negative;
2. It merely consists in freedom from pain, which is the positive element of existence.
3. It follows that the happiness of any given life is to be measured not by its joys and pleasures,
4. But by the extent to which it has been free from suffering.
5. If this is the true standpoint, the lower animals appear to enjoy a happier destiny than man.
6. However varied the forms taken by human happiness and misery,
7. Leading a man to seek the one and shun the other, the basis of it all is bodily pleasure or pain.
8. The chief source of all passion is thought for what is absent or lies in the future; these are what exercise such a powerful influence on all we do.
9. This is the origin of our cares, hopes and fears – emotions unknown to the brutes.
10. In his powers of reflection, memory and foresight, man possesses an instrument for condensing and storing up his pleasures and sorrows.

Copyrighted material

Chapter 13

1. Wife! Yes, I do write to you less often than I ought, because, though I am always wretched,
2. Yet when I write to you or read a letter from you, I am in such floods of tears that I cannot endure it.
3. Oh, that I had clung less to life! I should at least never have known real sorrow, or not so much of it.
4. Yet if I have any hope of recovering any position ever again, I was not utterly wrong to do so:
5. If these miseries are to be permanent, I only wish, my dear, to see you as soon as possible and to die in your arms,
6. For the good we have striven to do has been thankless and goes unrecompensed.
7. I have been thirteen days at Brundisium in the house of Laenius, an excellent man, who has despised the risk to his own safety to keep me safe,
8. Nor has he been induced by the penalty of a most iniquitous law to refuse me the rights and good offices of hospitality and friendship.
9. May I sometime have the opportunity of repaying him! Feel gratitude I always shall.
10. What a fall! What a disaster! What can I say? Should I ask you to come – a woman of weak health and broken heart? Should I refrain from asking you? Am I to be without you, then?
11. I think the best course is this: if there is any hope of my restoration, stay to promote it and push the thing on:
12. But if, as I fear, it proves hopeless, pray come to me by any means in your power.
13. Be sure of this, that if I have you I shall not think myself wholly lost. But what is to become of our beloved daughter Tullia?
14. You must see to that now: I can think of nothing. But certainly, however things turn out, we must do everything to promote that poor girl's happiness and reputation.
15. Again, what is my son to do? Let him, at any rate, be ever in my bosom and in my arms.
16. I cannot write more. A fit of weeping hinders me. I do not know how you have got on; whether you are left in possession of anything, or have been, as I fear, entirely plundered.
17. To your advice that I should keep up my courage and not give up hope of recovering my position, I say that I only wish there were any grounds for such a hope.
18. As it is, when, alas! shall I get a letter from you? Who will bring it me? I would have waited for it at Brundisium, but the sailors would not allow it, being unwilling to lose a favourable wind.
19. For the rest, put as dignified a face on the matter as you can, my dear Terentia.
20. Our life is over: we have had our day: it is not any fault of ours that has ruined us, but our virtue.

Copyrighted material