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OLD AGE

AND

FRIENDSHIP
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CICERO.

From a Bust in the
Vatican Museum, Roma.
INTRODUCTION.

It was in the year’s interval of troubled life between the murder of Cæsar and his own violent death, under the proscription of the Triumvirate, that Cicero, who had not quite completed his sixty-fourth year at the time when he was murdered, wrote these Essays on Old Age and Friendship. He found rest from his cares in philosophic thought. He wrote at the same time on the Nature of the Gods, on Divination, Glory, Fate, and began his famous ethical book on the duties of life, “De Officiis.”

The essays on Old Age and Friendship were addressed by Cicero to his intimate friend Atticus, to whom also he wrote many private letters, which were collected, and remain among his works, throwing much light on the vexed question of his personal character. Of his genius there is no question.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was born in the year before Christ 106, of a well-to-do plebeian family, near Arpinum, in what is now the kingdom of Naples. His father lived on a little estate, among rocks and woods and streams, where the Fibreno flows into the Garigliano, and there Cicero was born. Cicer means a
vetch, and the family name may have been first given to an ancestor who grew vetches. Plutarch says that when Cicero entered public life he was advised to change his humble name, but he answered that he would make it more glorious than the names of the Scauni and the Catuli.

Cicero had a brother, Quintus, who was sent with him to be educated in Rome, where they studied Greek, and had Greeks for their chief teachers. His artistic sense of literature caused Cicero, without being a poet, to write verse in his youth. He studied rhetoric, and at the age of six-and-twenty made his first appearance as an advocate. Next year the ability of his defence of Sextus Roscius, falsely accused of parricide, brought him many clients. There was no direct payment for pleadings. The profits of a leading Roman orator were great, but indirect. Strenuous work as an advocate broke down Cicero's health, and he went for rest to Athens; he travelled next in Asia Minor, still studying under famous rhetoricians, and had been away two years when he returned to Rome, thirty years old, with his health fully restored. Cicero was soon afterwards advocate for another Roscius—Roscius the actor. He took also, or had taken, a wife, Terentia, with whom he lived happily for many years. She was the mother of two children very dear to him, but, for reasons now unknown, he divorced her after they had lived together thirty years, his age then being sixty-one, hers fifty.
INTRODUCTION.

He replaced her with a young Publilia, who made him unhappy, and whom he divorced promptly, paying back her dowry.

At the age of thirty-two Cicero was sent as quaestor to the province of Sicily. After his year of office he returned to Rome and continued his life as a pleader till the age of thirty-eight, when he was admitted to the Senate and elected Curule Aedile. In the next year, 68 B.C., we have the beginning of those published letters to Atticus, in which we find the personal charm of a kindly nature in a man of refined scholarship, whose house, he said, wanted a soul until its books were in it. From these familiar letters also there may be drawn reasonings about faults in the character of Cicero, its weak and its strong points, in any way we will.

Cicero had by this time possession of a country-seat on a spot favoured by many wealthy Romans, a hill-top by the city of Tusculum. Here was his Tusculan villa, from which he could see Rome across the Campagna. It was built to look like a small copy of the Academy at Athens. Cicero had other villas in other places; one of them was near Pompeii, another at Formiae, near Gaëta. Part of the wealth that supported these various homes had come in presents from foreign suitors, who desired the goodwill of the leading orator in Rome. In one of his Philippics, Cicero said that he had received upwards of twenty million sesterces
—equivalent to about £178,000—in legacies from friends.

At the age of forty-one Cicero was made Prätor of the city, and the advocate became a criminal judge, without ceasing to plead causes. He might after this have secured greater wealth by obtaining government of a province: but his mind was fixed on the Consulship, and to obtain that he remained in Rome. In the year B.C. 65, at the age of forty-two, he was elected Consul.

In his consulship he had to deal with the conspiracy of Catiline, and from this time Cicero's life became part of the history of Rome, until he was murdered in his Formian villa in the year 43 B.C.

Titus Pomponius Atticus, to whom these Essays are addressed, unlike his friend Cicero, was wholly without political ambition. He sought no office in the State, and used his ample means in aid of friends on either side in the civil wars with which the State was torn. He protected Antony's wife and family when Antony was thought to have been hopelessly ruined by the battle of Modena. He sent aids to Brutus when Brutus could not stay in Rome; but he refused to attend any meeting or join in any subscription that would commit him as a partisan to either side. His friendship with men eager in rivalry helped sometimes to make rivals friends. Thus he joined in good fellowship Cicero and Hortensius, who was his rival
in oratory. He sought no power for himself, and followed no great man for patronage. He was punctual in the performance of all duties, intolerant only of falsehood; actively kind to many, he bore malice to none. To the charm of such a character, with ease and wealth, he added a fine sense of literature, and himself wrote well. He lived to the age of seventy, and, by his own wish, his body was carried without pomp to his family tomb upon the Appian road.

William Melmoth, the translator of these essays, was the son of a William Melmoth, bencher of Lincoln's Inn, who published in 1711 a treatise—"The Great Importance of a Religious Life Considered"—which had a sale of a hundred thousand copies. William Melmoth, the son, settled at Bath, and first published these translations of Cicero's Cato and Lælius, each in a distinct volume with many appended notes, in 1773. He was then in high repute as a translator. He had begun in 1746 with "The Letters of Pliny the Consul, with Occasional Remarks"; had followed that in 1753 with "Cicero's Letters to several Friends," these being also "with remarks"; and then came, twenty years later, "with remarks," these versions of the De Senectute and De Amicitia. William Melmoth the younger, as translator of these pieces, was, like Cicero when he wrote them, sixty-three years old. He lived to be eighty-nine, and died in the last year of the eighteenth century. H. M.
CATO;
OR,
AN ESSAY ON OLD AGE.

To Titus Pomponius Atticus.

"Ah, could my numbers charm thy anxious breast
And lull the sorrows of thy soul to rest;
Would'st thou not deem the poet's lenient lay
More worth than sums of countless gold could pay?"

For well, may I address you, my friend, in those lines of the honest bard,

"Far less for wealth than probity renowned,"

with which he opens his poem inscribed to Flamininus. I am sensible at the same time that when the poet adds,

"Each rising sun beholds thy ceaseless grief,
And night returning brings thee no relief,"

he holds a language by no means applicable to you. I perfectly well know the moderation and equanimity you possess; and that you have derived from Athens, not only an honourable addition to your name, but that calm and philosophic spirit
which so peculiarly distinguishes your character. Nevertheless, I have reason to believe that the present unpleasing posture of public affairs sometimes interrupts your tranquillity of mind; as it frequently, I confess, discomposes my own. But it is not my present purpose to offer you any consolation upon that subject: the case requires a very powerful application; and I will reserve what I have to say upon it to some future opportunity. My design at this time is only to communicate to you a few reflections concerning Old Age: the infirmities whereof we are now beginning to feel, or at least are advancing fast towards them: and I am desirous of rendering the burthen as easy as possible both to you and to myself. I am well convinced indeed that as you have hitherto borne its weight, so you will continue to support its increasing pressure, with the same good sense and composure of mind which you have so happily discovered upon every other important occasion. However, having resolved to publish some reflections upon the subject, I determined to address them to you, who have a peculiar claim to this pledge of my affection: and it is a present to which we may both of us have recourse with equal advantage. For myself, at least, the considerations
I now lay before you have had so happy an effect on my own mind, as not only to reconcile me to all the inconveniencies of old age, but to render it even an agreeable state to me.

Can we sufficiently then express our sense of the obligations we owe to philosophy, who thus instructs her disciples how to pass through every successive period of human life with equal satisfaction and complacency? The advantages to be derived from her precepts, in other important situations, is a topic upon which I have frequently had occasion to expatiate, and shall often perhaps resume: but in the papers I now send you, my purpose is to consider those advantages with respect only to our declining years. To have put these reflections into the mouth of an imaginary character, like the Tithonus of Aristo, would have made but little impression upon the reader: in order therefore to give them the greater force, I have represented them as delivered by the venerable Cato. To this end I have introduced Scipio and Lælius, as expressing to him their admiration of the wonderful ease with which he supported his old age: and this gives him occasion to enter into a full explanation of his ideas upon the subject. If you should think that he discovers,
in this conversation, a richer vein of literature than appears in his own compositions, you must impute it to the acquaintance he afterwards made with the Greek authors, whose language and philosophy, it is well known, he passionately studied in the latter end of his long life. I have only to add, that in delivering the sentiments of Cato, I desire to be understood as fully declaring my own.

   Scipio.—I have frequently, Cato, joined with our friend Lælius, in admiring that consummate wisdom and virtue, which upon all occasions so eminently distinguishes your character; but particularly, in that singular ease and cheerfulness with which you seem to bear up under those years which are pressing upon you. I could never observe that they are attended with the least inconvenience to you: whereas the generality of men, at your time of life, usually complain of old age as the heaviest and most insupportable of burthens.

   Cato.—There is nothing, my friends, in the circumstance you have remarked, that can justly, I think, deserve your admiration. Those indeed who have no internal resource of happiness, will find
themselves uneasy in every stage of human life: but to him who is accustomed to derive all his felicity from within himself, no state will appear as a real evil into which he is conducted by the common and regular course of nature. Now this is peculiarly the case with respect to old age: yet such is the inconsistency of human folly, that the very period which at a distance is every man's warmest wish to attain, no sooner arrives than it is equally the object of his lamentations. It is usual with men at this season of life to complain that old age has stolen upon them by surprise, and much sooner than they expected. But if they were deceived by their own false calculations, must not the blame rest wholly on themselves? For, in the first place, old age surely does not gain by swifter and more imperceptible steps on manhood, than manhood advances on youth; and in the next, in what respect would age have sitten less heavily upon them, had its progress been much slower, and, instead of making his visit at fourscore years, it had not reached them till four hundred? For the years that are elapsed, how numerous soever they may have been, can by no means console a weak and frivolous mind under the usual consequences of long life. If I have any claim therefore
to that wisdom which you tell me, my friends, you have often admired in my character (and which I can only wish indeed were worthy of the opinion you entertain of it, and the appellation the world has conferred upon me), it consists wholly in this, that I follow nature as the surest guide, and resign myself with an implicit obedience to all her sacred ordinances. Now it cannot be supposed that nature, after having wisely distributed to all the preceding periods of life their peculiar and proper enjoyments, should have neglected, like an indolent poet, the last act of the human drama, and left it destitute of suitable advantages. Nevertheless, it was impossible but that in the life of man, as in the fruits of the earth, there should be a certain point of maturity, beyond which the marks of decay must necessarily appear: and to this unavoidable condition of his present being, every wise and good man will submit with a contented and cheerful acquiescence. For to entertain desires repugnant to the universal law of our existence; what is it, my friends, but to wage war, like the impious giants, with the gods themselves?

LÉLIUS.—You will confer, then, a very acceptable service on both of us, Cato (for I will venture
to answer for my friend Scipio as well as for myself), if you will mark out to us by what means we may most effectually be enabled to support the load of incumbent years. For although we are at present far distant from old age, we have reason, however, to expect—at least to hope—that it is a period we shall live to attain.

Cato.—Most willingly, Laelius, I yield to your request, especially as you assure me that my compliance will be equally agreeable to both of you.

Scipio.—Yes, my venerable friend; like travellers who mean to take the same long journey you have gone before us, we should be glad (if it be not imposing too much trouble upon you) that you would give us some account of the advanced stage at which you are now arrived.

Cato.—I am ready, Scipio, to the best of my power, to give you the information you desire. And, indeed, I am the more qualified for the task you assign me, as I have always (agreeably to the old proverb) associated much with men of my own years. This has given me frequent opportunities of being acquainted with their grievances; and I particularly remember to have often heard Caius Salinator and Spurius Albinus (men of consular rank and nearly of the same age as myself) bewail
their condition. The principal subject of their complaint was, in the first place, that they were no longer capable of enjoying the sensual gratifications without which, in their estimation, life was of no value; and in the next, that they found themselves neglected by those who had formerly paid their court to them with the greatest attention. But they imputed their grievances, I think, to a wrong cause. For had they arisen merely from the circumstance of their age, they would have been common to myself, and to every other man of the same advanced years. But the fact is much otherwise; and I have known many, at that period of life, who passed their time without the least repining—who neither regretted that they were released from the dominion of their passions, nor had reason to think themselves treated with disrespect by any of their connections. In fact, the true grievance, in all complaints of this kind, lies in the man and not in the age. They whose desires are properly regulated, and who have nothing morose or petulant in their temper and manners, will find old age, to say the least of it, is a state very easily to be endured, whereas unsubdued passions and a froward disposition will equally embitter every season of human life.
Lelius.—Your observations, Cato, are undoubtedly just. Yet some, perhaps, may be apt to say, that your ample possessions, together with the power and influence of your rank and character, have very much contributed to soften the inconveniences of old age, and render it more than usually easy to you, but that these are advantages which cannot possibly fall to the lot of many.

Cato.—I must acknowledge that the circumstances you mention have some beneficial influence, but I can by no means admit that the whole depends upon them. When a certain native of the paltry island of Seriphos told Themistocles, in an altercation which arose between them, that he was indebted for the lustre of his fame not to the intrinsic splendour of his actions, but to the country in which he had the good fortune to be born. "It may be so," replied the Athenian general, "for if I had received my birth at Seriphos, I could have had no opportunity of producing my talents; but give me leave to tell you, that yours would never have made a figure though you had been born in Athens." The same sentiment is justly applicable to the case in question; for although it must be confessed that old age, under the pressure of extreme indigence, cannot possibly prove an easy
state, not even to a wise and virtuous mind, yet without those essential qualities it must necessarily prove the reverse, although it should be accompanied with every external advantage. Believe me, my young friends, the best and surest guard against the inconveniences of old age, is to cultivate in each preceding period the principles of moral science, and uniformly to exercise those virtues it prescribes. The good seeds which you shall thus have sown in the former seasons of life will, in the winter of your days, be wonderfully productive of the noblest and most valuable fruit—valuable not only as a possession which will remain with you even to your latest moments (though, indeed, that circumstance alone is a very considerable recommendation), but also as a conscious retrospect on a long life marked with an uninterrupted series of laudable and beneficent actions affords a perpetual source of the sweetest and most exquisite satisfaction.

When I was very young I conceived as strong an affection for Quintus Maximus (the celebrated General who recovered Tarentum) as if we had been of equal years. There was a dignity in the deportment of this excellent old man, which was tempered with singular politeness and affability of manners,
and time had wrought no sort of alteration in his amiable qualities. He was not, it is true, at a time of life which could properly be called infirm age when I first began to cultivate his friendship; but he was certainly, however, advanced in years, for I was not born till the year before his first consulate. In his fourth, I served a very young man in the army he commanded at Capua; and five years afterwards I was his Quæstor at Tarentum. From that post I succeeded to the Edileship; and four years after, in the consulate of Tuditanus and Cethagus, I was chosen Praetor. It was at this period that, by the advice and eloquence of my venerable friend, who was now become extremely old, the Cincian law concerning donatives was enacted. This great man led our troops to battle in his old age with as much spirit as if he had been in the prime and vigour of life; and when Hannibal, with all the gaiety of a youthful conqueror, was exulting in the success of his arms, he gave a check to his victories by a cool and patient perseverance in avoiding a general engagement. It is to this part of his judicious conduct that those famous lines of my friend Ennius allude:—

"'Twas his to save the State by wise delay,
   Regardless what the censuring world might say."
Time proves the merit of the glorious deed,
His fame still rising as the years succeed."

How wonderful was the judgment he displayed,
and the vigilance he exerted, in retaking the city
of Tarentum! I remember when Salinator (who,
after having been driven by the besiegers from the
city, retired to the citadel) was boasting to Maximus, in my presence, that it was by his means he regained possession of the town. "Very true," replied Maximus, with a smile; "for if you had not lost it, I certainly could never have recovered it." Nor were his spirit and abilities more conspicuous as a soldier than a statesman. In his second consulship, when C. Flamininus, in direct opposition to the authority of the Senate, was dividing among the soldiers the conquered lands in the provinces of Gaul and Picentia, he had the courage singly, and unsupported by his colleague Carvilius, to withstand, as far as it was possible, the popular measures of that factious tribune. And even when he was Augur, he had the honest boldness, upon a particular occasion, openly to declare that "every omen ought to be considered as favourable or inauspicious, as the interest of the State determined."

But there is no trait among the many shining
qualities which adorned this great man's character
that I observed with warmer admiration than the
fortitude with which he supported the death of his
illustrious son. The funeral oration he pronounced
upon that affecting occasion is in everybody's hands;
and which of the philosophers, I will venture to
ask, does not sink in our esteem after the perusing
of this admirable performance? The truth is, it
was not solely in the conspicuous paths of the
world, and when he was acting in the public view,
that this excellent man was truly great; he ap-
peared still greater in the private and domestic
scenes of life. How pleasing and instructive was
his conversation! how profound his knowledge of
antiquity! how deep his skill in the laws and in-
stitutions concerning augury! To which I may
add; that he was better acquainted with the
Grecian literature than is usual for a Roman.
His memory, too, was so remarkably faithful, that
there was not a single event of any note that had
happened in the wars, either with our neighbours
in Italy or with the more distant nations, with
which he was not perfectly well acquainted. In
short, from my first connection with him, I as
eagerly embraced every opportunity of enjoying
his society as if I had then presaged, what the
event has verified, that after his death I should never again meet with so wise and informing a companion.

I have entered thus minutely into the character and conduct of Maximus, in order to convince you that it would be an affront to virtue to suppose that old age, to a man endowed with such principles and dispositions, could possibly have been a state of infelicity. It must be acknowledged, at the same time, that it is not in every one's power to be a Maximus or a Scipio; to enliven the gloom of declining years by the animating recollection of the towns he has taken, the battles he has won, and the triumphs that have honoured his successful arms. But it is not the great and splendid actions of the hero or the statesman alone that lead to an easy and agreeable old age; that season of life may prove equally placid and serene to him who hath passed all his days in the silent and retired paths of elegant and learned leisure. Of this kind, we are told, was the old age of Plato, who continued to employ himself with great satisfaction in his philosophical studies, till death put an end to them in his eighty-first year. Such, too, was that of Isocrates, who is said to have composed his famous discourse, intituled "Panathenaicus," in the ninety-
fourth year of his age, and his death did not happen till five years afterwards. His preceptor, Leon- tinus Gorgias, lived to complete his one hundred and seventh year, continuing his studies with undiminished spirit and application to his last moments. This celebrated veteran being asked, Why he did not put an end to such a tedious length of life? "Because," said he, "I find no reason to complain of old age"—an answer truly noble, and altogether worthy of a philosopher! They whose conduct has not been governed by the principles of wisdom and virtue are apt to impute to old age those infirmities for which their former irregularities are alone accountable. Far different were the sentiments of Ennius, whom I just now had occasion to quote; he compares his declining years to those of a generous steed:

"Who victor oft in famed Olympia's fields,  
To sweet repose his age-worn members yields."

You are not too young, my friend, to remember the person of this veteran poet, for his death happened so late as the consulate of Cæpio and Philippus, which is not more than nineteen years ago. And let me observe, by the way, notwithstanding I was at that time full sixty-five years of
age, I spoke in defence of the Voconian law with great exertion of voice and vehemence of action. But I was going to remark that this venerable bard, who lived to seventy, bore up under age and indigence with such wonderful cheerfulness and good humour, that one would almost have imagined he derived even a satisfaction from those circumstances which the generality of mankind look upon, of all others, as the most dispiriting and oppressive.

When I consider the several causes which are usually supposed to constitute the infelicity of old age, they may be reduced, I think, under four general articles. It is alleged that "it incapacitates a man for acting in the affairs of the world," that "it produces great infirmities of body," that "it disqualifies him for the enjoyment of the sensual gratifications," and that "it brings him within the immediate verge of death." Let us therefore, if you please, examine the force and validity of each of these particular charges.

"Old age," it seems, "disqualifies us from taking an active part in the great scenes of business." But in what scenes? let me ask. If in those which require the strength and vivacity of youth, I readily admit the charge. But are there no other; none which are peculiarly appropriated to the evening
of life, and which, being executed by the powers of the mind, are perfectly consistent with a less vigorous state of body? Did Quintus Maximus, then, pass the latter end of his long life in total inactivity? Tell me, Scipio, was your father, and my son's father-in-law, the excellent Lucius Paulus, were the Fabricii, the Curii, and the Coruncanii, utterly bereaved of all useful energy when they supported the interests of the Republic by the wisdom of their counsels and the influence of their respectable authority? Appius Claudius was not only old, but blind, when he remonstrated in the Senate with so much force and spirit against concluding a peace with Pyrrhus, to which the majority of the members appeared strongly inclined. And upon this occasion it was that he broke forth into those animated expostulations which Ennius has introduced into his poem:—

'Shall folly now that honoured Council sway,
Where sacred wisdom wont to point the way?'

Together with the rest of those spirited lines with which you are no doubt well acquainted. This celebrated harangue, which is still extant, Appius delivered seventeen years after his second consulate, between which and his first there was an
interval of ten years, and prior to both he had exercised the office of Censor. It is evident, therefore, that he must have been a very old man at the time of the Pyrrhic war. And, indeed, the tradition received from our forefathers has always represented him as such.

It appears, therefore, that nothing can be more void of foundation than to assert that old age necessarily disqualifies a man for the great affairs of the world. As well might it be affirmed that the pilot is totally useless and unengaged in the business of the ship, because while the rest of the crew are more actively employed in their respective departments, he sits quietly at the helm and directs its motions. If in the great scenes of business an old man cannot perform a part which requires the force and energy of vigorous years, he can act, however, in a nobler and more important character. It is not by exertions of corporal strength and activity that the momentous affairs of state are conducted; it is by cool deliberation, by prudent counsel, and by that authoritative influence which ever attends on public esteem, qualifications which are so far from being impaired, that they are usually strengthened and improved by increase of years. And in this opinion, my noble friends, I am per-
suaded I shall have your concurrence, unless, per-adventure, you look upon me as an useless and idle member of the commonwealth, because after having regularly passed through the several gradations of military service, from the private soldier to the commander-in-chief, and been concerned in each of those capacities in a variety of engagements, both by sea and land, I now no longer lead forth our armies to battle. But if I forbear to enter personally into the fatigues of war, I represent to the Senate its most proper object, and point out in what manner the operations may best be carried on. In short, I am perpetually urging the expediency of declaring war against the Carthaginians, in order to anticipate them in those hostilities which they have long been meditating against us. As in truth I shall never cease to be apprehensive of that commonwealth till it shall no longer have any existence. And may the glory of extirpating that insidious State be reserved, Scipio, for your arms, that you may have the honour of accomplishing the great work which your illustrious ancestor so happily began! Thirty-three years have now elapsed since the death of that great man, but his virtues are still fresh on the minds of his fellow-citizens, and will be had in honourable
remembrance throughout all generations. His death happened the year before I was elected Censor, and nine years after his second consulate, in which office he was chosen my colleague. But had the life of this excellent man been extended even through a whole century, can it be imagined that he would have considered the closing period of such honourable days as a state to be regretted? For it was not agility in the robust and manly exercises, or skill and prowess in the management of arms, it was his judgment, his counsel, and his authority alone which he would then have had occasion to display. If abilities of this latter kind were not the peculiar attributes of old age, our wise ancestors would not surely have distinguished the supreme Council of the State by the appellation of Senate. The Lacedæmonians, for the same reason, give to the first magistrates in their commonwealth the title of Elders. And, in fact, they are always chosen out of that class of men.

If you look into the history of foreign nations you will find frequent instances of flourishing communities, which, after having been well-nigh ruined by the impetuous measures of young and unexperienced statesmen, have been restored to their former glory by the prudent administration of
more discreet years. "Tell me," says one of the
personages in that dramatic piece of Nævius, called
the School, addressing himself to a citizen of a cer-
tain Republic, "tell me whence it happened that
so considerable a State as yours has thus suddenly
fallen to decay?" The person questioned assigns
several reasons, but the principal is "that a swarm
of rash, unpractised young orators had unhappily
broken forth and taken the lead among them."
Temerity, indeed, is the usual characteristic of
youth, as prudence is of old age.

But it is farther urged "that old age impairs the
memory." This effect, I confess, it may probably
have on those memories which were originally in-
firm, or whose native vigour has not been preserved
by a proper exercise. But is there any reason to
suppose that Themistocles, who had so strong a
memory that he knew the name of every citizen in
the commonwealth, lost his retentive power as his
years increased, and addressed Aristides, for in-
stance, by the appellation of Lysimachus? For
my own part, I still perfectly well recollect the
names, not only of all our principal citizens now
living, but of their ancestors also. And I am so
little apprehensive of injuring this faculty (as is
vulgarly believed) by the perusing of sepulchral
inscriptions, that, on the contrary, I find them of singular service in recalling to my mind those persons whom death hath long since removed from the world. In fact, I never yet heard of any veteran whose memory was so weakened by time as to forget where he had concealed his treasure. The aged, indeed, seem to be at no loss in remembering whatever is the principal object of their attention, and few there are at that period of life who cannot readily call to mind what recognisances they have entered into, or with whom they have had any pecuniary transactions. Innumerable instances of a strong memory in advanced years might be produced from among our celebrated lawyers, pontiffs, augurs, and philosophers; for the faculties of the mind will preserve their powers in old age, unless they are suffered to lose their energy and become languid for want of due cultivation. And the truth of this observation may be confirmed not only by those examples I have mentioned from the more active and splendid stations of the world, but from instances equally frequent to be met with in the paths of studious and retired life. Sophocles continued in extreme old age to write tragedies. As he seemed to neglect his family affairs whilst he was wholly intent on his dramatic compositions,
his sons instituted a suit against him in a court of judicature, suggesting that his understanding was impaired, and praying that he might be removed from the management of his estate; agreeably to a custom which prevails likewise in our own country, where if a father of a family by imprudent conduct is ruining his fortunes, the magistrate commonly interposes and takes the administration out of his hands. It is said that when the old bard appeared in court upon this occasion he desired that he might be permitted to read a play which he had lately finished, and which he then held in his hand; it was his Oedipus in Colonos. His request being granted, after he had finished the recital he appealed to the judges whether they could discover in his performance any symptoms of an insane mind? And the result was that the court unanimously dismissed the complainants' petition.

Did length of days weaken the powers of Homer, Hesiod, or Simonides, of Stesichorus, Isocrates, or Gorgias? Did old age interrupt the studies of those first and most distinguished of the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras or Democritus, Plato or Xenocrates? or, to descend into later times, did grey hairs prove an obstacle to the
philosophic pursuits of Zeno, Cleanthes, or that famous stoic whom you may remember to have seen in Rome, the venerable Diogenes? On the contrary, did not all of these eminent persons persevere in their respective studies with unbroken spirit to the last moment of their extended lives?

But not to enter farther into the consideration of old age in respect to the nobler and more exalted application of the human faculties, I could name among my friends and neighbours in the country several men far advanced in life who employ themselves with so much industry and activity in the business of agriculture that they never suffer any of the more important articles of their husbandry to be carried on when they are not themselves present to supervise and direct the work. I will acknowledge, at the same time, that these spirited labours of the persons I allude to are not perhaps a matter of much wonder with regard to those objects of tillage which are sown and reaped within the year, as no man is so far advanced in age as not to flatter himself that he may at least survive to enjoy the benefit of the next harvest. But those rural veterans I am speaking of are occupied also in branches of husbandry, from which they are
sure that they themselves cannot possibly live to derive the least advantage:—

"The future shade for times unborn they raise,"
as my friend Cæcilius expresses it in his play called *The Youthful Companions*. Agreeably to this generous principle, the oldest husbandman when he is asked, "to what purpose he lays out his labours in the business of planting?" may well reply, "In obedience to the immortal gods, by whose bountiful providence as I received these fields from my ancestors, so it is their will that I should deliver them down with improvement to posterity."

The poet's sentiment in the verse I just now repeated is far more just than in those lines he afterwards adds:—

"Severe the doom that length of days impose!  
To stand sad witness of unnumbered woes,  
Ah, had old age no other ills in store,  
Too well might man its dire approach deplore;"

for if long life may occasion our being the painful spectators of many calamities which an earlier death would have concealed from our view, it may equally afford us the satisfaction of seeing many happy events which could not otherwise have come within our notice. Not to mention that disagreeable scenes will unavoidably occur to the young no
less than to the old. But the observation of my dramatic friend is still more unwarrantable when he farther declares that:

"Of all the ills which drooping e'dl await,
'Tis sure the worst to stand the scorn, or hate,
Of happier years."

Why should he suppose that old age necessarily lays us open to a mortification of this kind? As men of good sense in the evening of life are generally fond of associating with the younger part of the world, and when they discover in them the marks of an amiable disposition, find a sort of alleviation of their infirmities in gaining their affection and esteem; so, on the other hand, well-inclined young men think themselves equally happy to be conducted into the paths of knowledge and virtue by the guidance and instruction of experienced age. For my own part, at least, I have reason to believe that my company is not less acceptable to you, my youthful friends, than yours most assuredly is to me.

But to resume the particular point under consideration. It appears that old age is so far from being necessarily a state of languor and inactivity that it generally continues to exert itself in that sort of occupation which was the favourite object
of its pursuit in more vigorous years. I will add that instances might be produced of men who in this period of life have successfully applied themselves even to the acquisition of some art or science to which they were before entirely strangers. Thus Solon, in one of his poems written when he was advanced in years, glories that "he learnt something every day he lived." And old as I myself am, it is but lately that I acquired a knowledge of the Greek language, to which I applied with the more zeal and diligence, as I had long entertained an earnest desire of becoming acquainted with the writings and characters of those excellent men to whose examples I have occasionally appealed in the course of our present conversation. Thus Socrates, too, in his old age learnt to play upon the lyre, an art which the ancients did not deem unworthy of their application. If I have not followed the philosopher's example in this instance (which, indeed, I very much regret), I have spared, however, no pains to make myself master of the Greek language and learning.

The next imputation thrown upon old age is, that "it impairs our strength," and it must be acknowledged the charge is not altogether without foundation. But, for my own part, I no more
regret the want of that vigour which I possessed in my youth, than I lamented in my youth that I was not endowed with the force of a bull or an elephant. It is sufficient if we exert with spirit, upon every proper occasion, that degree of strength which still remains with us. Nothing can be more truly contemptible than a circumstance which is related concerning the famous Milo of Crotona. This man, when he was become old, observing a set of athletic combatants that were exercising themselves in the public circus: "Alas!" said he, bursting into a flood of tears and stretching forth his arm, "alas! these muscles are now totally relaxed and impotent." Frivolous old man; it was not so much the debility of thy body as the weakness of thy mind thou hadst reason to lament, as it was by the force of mere animal prowess, and not by those superior excellences which truly ennable man, that thou hadst rendered thy name famous. Never, I am well persuaded, did a lamentation of this unworthy kind escape the mouth of Coruncanius, or Ælius, or the late Publius Crassus; men whose consummate abilities in the science of jurisprudence were generously laid out for the common benefit of their fellow-citizens, and whose superior strength of understanding continued in
all its force and vigour to the conclusion of their numerous years.

It must be confessed, however, that the powers of an orator (as his function cannot be successfully executed by the force of genius alone, but requires great exertion, likewise, both of voice and gesture) must necessarily become languid and enfeebled by age. Nevertheless, there is a certain sweetness of utterance which, I know not how, is not subject to be impaired by years, and this melody of voice (old as you see I am) I may venture to say I have not yet lost. There is, indeed, a species of calm and composed elocution extremely graceful and perfectly well adapted to advanced years, and I have frequently observed an eloquent old man captivate the attention of his audience by the charms of this soft and milder tone of delivery. But if age should render the orator unequal even to this less laborious application of his talents, they may still be usefully exerted. They may be employed in forming young men of genius (yourself, for instance, Scipio, or our friend Lælius) to a nervous and manly eloquence. And can there be a more pleasing satisfaction to an old man, than to see himself surrounded by a circle of ingenuous youths, and to conciliate by these laudable means their well-merited esteem.
and affection? It will not, I suppose, be denied that old age has at least a sufficient degree of strength remaining to train the rising generation and instruct them in every duty to which they may hereafter be called, and there cannot, certainly, be a more important or a more honourable occupation. Accordingly, I have always thought it a very considerable happiness to your relations, Cneus and Publius Scipio, together with your two grandfathers, Lucius Æmilius and Publius Africanus, that they were usually accompanied by a train of young nobles, who attended them for the advantage of their instructions. Indeed there is a satisfaction in communicating useful knowledge of every kind, which must render any man happy, how much soever time may have impaired the powers of his body, who employs the talents of his mind to so noble and beneficial a purpose.

But after all, this imbecility of body is more frequently occasioned by the irregularities of youth, than by the natural and unavoidable consequences of long life. A debauched and intemperate young man will undoubtedly, if he live, transmit weakness and infirmities to his latter days. The virtuous Cyrus, in the discourse which Xenophon relates he held when he lay on his death-bed, and which
happened at a very late period of life, declares he had never perceived that his old age had been attended with any sensible decay. I perfectly well remember Lucius Metellus when I was a boy. Four years after his second consulate he was chosen chief pontiff, and he presided two and twenty years in the sacred college. This venerable personage preserved such a florid old age to his last moments as to have no reason to lament the depredations of time. If I were to mention myself as an instance of the same kind, it would be only taking an old man's allowed privilege. Homer, you know, represents Nestor, although his years had extended even to the third generation, as frequently boasting of his extraordinary prowess. And, indeed, he might well be indulged in the vanity of being the hero of his own true tale; for, as the poet sings—

"Words sweet as honey from his lips distilled."

And let me remark by the way, that in order to pour forth this mellifluous and persuasive eloquence great strength of body was by no means necessary; so much otherwise, that the celebrated general of the Grecian forces never wishes for ten Ajaxes, but for ten such officers as Nestor, to be secure of soon laying the walls of Troy level with the ground
But I was going to observe that I am now in my eighty-fourth year, and I wish I had reason to boast with Cyrus that I feel no sensible decay of strength. But although I do not possess it in the same degree as when I made my first campaign in the Carthaginian war, in the course of which I was advanced to the rank of questor; or when, during my consulship, I commanded the army in Spain; or when four years afterwards I was military tribune at the battle of Thermopylae; yet I can with truth, you see, affirm that old age has not totally relaxed my nerves and subdued my native vigour. My strength has not yet been found to fail me, either in the Senate or the assemblies of the people, when my country or my friends, my clients or my hosts, have had occasion to require my service. The truth is I have never governed myself by the cautious maxim of that ancient proverb so frequently quoted, which says, "You must be old soon if you would be old long;" on the contrary, I would rather abate some years from that season of my life than prematurely anticipate its arrival. In consequence of this principle I have hitherto been always open to access whenever any person desired to be introduced to me for my advice or assistance in his affairs.
But you will tell me, perhaps, that my strength is much inferior to yours. Undoubtedly it is, and so is yours to that of Pontius the athletic centurion, but is he therefore a more valuable man? A moderate degree of force is sufficient for all the rational purposes of life, and whoever will not attempt to exert his particular portion farther than he is well able, will assuredly have no great cause to regret that he is not endued with a more considerable share. Milo is said to have walked the full length of the course at the Olympic games bearing the whole enormous weight of an ox upon his shoulders. Now tell me which would you choose to possess—this man's extraordinary powers of body or the sublime genius of Pythagoras? In a word, my friends, make a good use of your youthful vigour so long as it remains, but never let it cost you a sigh when age shall have withdrawn it from you; as reasonably, indeed, might youth regret the loss of infancy or manhood the extinction of youth. Nature conducts us, by a regular and insensible progression, through the different seasons of human life, to each of which she has annexed its proper and distinguishing characteristic. As imbecility is the attribute of infancy, ardour of youth, and gravity of manhood,
so declining age has its essential properties, which gradually disclose themselves as years increase.

I am persuaded, Scipio, I need not tell you what extraordinary things that ancient host of your ancestors, Massinissa, is still capable of performing. You have heard, no doubt, that although he is at this time ninety years of age, he takes long journeys, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horseback, without once relieving himself throughout the whole way by alternately changing from the one mode of travelling to the other; that he is so exceedingly hardy, that no severity of weather, when he is abroad, can induce him to cover his head; and that having preserved by these means a thin and active habit of body, he still retains sufficient strength and spirits for discharging in person the several functions of his royal station. I particularise these circumstances as a proof, that by temperance and exercise a man may secure to his old age no inconsiderable degree of his former spirit and activity.

If it must be acknowledged that time will inevitably undermine the strength of man, it must equally be acknowledged that old age is a season of life in which great vigour is by no means required. Accordingly, by the laws and institutions
of our country, we who are advanced to a certain age are excused from those offices which demand robust powers to discharge. Far from being compelled to undertake what is beyond our force, we are not called upon to exert our strength even to its full extent. If it be alleged that there are numberless old men so totally worn out and decayed, as to be incapable of every kind of civil or social duty, it must be confessed there are; but may not this debility have arisen from an original weakness of constitution? a misfortune by no means peculiar to old age, but common to every period of human life. How great a valetudinarian was that son of Scipio Africanus, who adopted you for his heir; so great indeed, that he scarcely ever enjoyed a day of uninterrupted health. Had he been formed with a less delicate constitution he would have shone forth a second luminary of the Commonwealth, for with all the spirit and magnanimity of his illustrious father he possessed a more improved and cultivated understanding. What wonder then if age is sometimes oppressed with those infirmities from which youth, we see, is by no means secure!

As to those effects which are the necessary and natural evils attendant on long life, it imports us
to counteract their progress by a constant and resolute opposition, and to combat the infirmities of old age as we would resist the approaches of a disease. To this end we should be regularly attentive to the article of health, use moderate exercise, and neither eat nor drink more than is necessary for repairing our strength, without oppressing the organs of digestion. Nor is this all: the intellectual faculties must likewise be assisted by proper care, as well as those of the body. For the powers of the body, like the flame in the lamp, will become languid and extinct by time, if not duly and regularly recruited. Indeed the mind and body equally thrive by a suitable exertion of their powers; with this difference, however, that bodily exercise ends in fatigue, whereas the mind is never wearied by its activity. When Cæcilius therefore represents certain veterans as "fit subjects for the comic muse," he alludes only to those weak and credulous old doting mortals, whose infirmities of mind are not so much the natural effect of their years as the consequence of suffering their faculties to lie dormant and unexerted in a slothful and spiritless inactivity. The fact in short is plainly this: as irregular indulgences of the amorous passions, although a vice to which youth is in
general more prone than age, is a vice, however, with which those young men alone are infected who are unrestrained by principles of virtue; so that species of delirium which is called dotage, is not a common weakness incident to every old man in general, but to those only who have trifled away their frivolous days in idleness and folly. In support of this observation I will instance the venerable Appius. His family consisted of four sons, who were arrived at the state of manhood, and five daughters, together with a numerous train of clients and dependants; yet, far advanced as he was in years, and totally deprived of his sight, he would not commit the management of this very considerable household to any other hands than his own. And he was abundantly equal to the important charge, having kept the spring and energy of his mind in constant action, nor suffered himself tamely to sink down under the weight of incumbant years. In consequence of this spirited conduct he maintained a more than parental authority over his family; his commands were obeyed as so many imperial mandates. In fine, feared by his servants, reverenced by his children, and endeared to all, he exhibited in his house a striking specimen of that simplicity and good order, which so
eminently distinguished the domestic economy of our forefathers. Age is truly respectable in the man who thus guards himself from becoming the property of others, vindicates his just rights, and maintains his proper authority to the last moments of his life.

As I love to see the fire of youth somewhat tempered with the gravity of age, so I am equally pleased when I observe the phlegm of age somewhat enlivened with the vivacity of youth; and whoever unites these two qualities in his character, may bear, indeed, the marks of years in his body, but will never discover the same traces in his mind. In pursuance of this maxim, I am now employed in adding a seventh book to my antiquities; in collecting all the ancient records I can meet with that relate to my subject; in finishing a revisal of the speeches I made in the several important causes in which I have been engaged; as also in drawing up some observations concerning the augural, pontifical, and civil law. And in order to exercise my memory, I practise the advice of the Pythagorean philosophers, by recalling to my mind every night all that I have said, or done, or heard, the preceding day. These are the employments by which I keep the faculties of my understanding in play, and
preserve them in due vigour: employments in which I have little reason surely to lament the want of mere animal strength. Nor are my occupations wholly confined to those of a sedentary nature: on the contrary, I not only assist my friends in the courts of judicature, but frequently too, uncalled upon, attend the senate, where I propose such measures for the consideration of that assembly as I have previously weighed and duly matured in my own thoughts. And these I support, not indeed by strength of voice and power of lungs, but by the better force of reason and argument. But were I so worn down by age as to be incapable of exerting myself in the manner I have mentioned, yet one satisfaction nevertheless would still remain with me; the satisfaction of meditating on these subjects as I lay on my couch, and of performing in imagination what I could no longer execute in reality. Thanks, however, to that regular and temperate course of life I have ever led, I am still capable of taking an active part in these public scenes of business. In fine, he who fills up every hour of his life in such kind of labours and pursuits as those I have mentioned, will insensibly slide into old age without perceiving its arrival; and his powers, instead of being suddenly and prematurely
extinguished, will gradually decline by the gentle and natural effect of accumulated years.

Let us now proceed to examine the third article of complaint against old age, as "bereaving us," it seems, "of the sensual gratifications." Happy effect indeed, if it deliver us from those snares which allure youth into some of the worst vices to which that age is addicted. Suffer me upon this occasion, my excellent young friends, to acquaint you with the substance of a discourse which was held many years since by that illustrious philosopher Archytas, of Tarentum, as it was related to me when I was a young man in the army of Quintus Maximus, at the siege of that city. "Nature," said this illustrious sage, "has not conferred on mankind a more dangerous present than those pleasures which attend the sensual indulgences; as the passions they excite are too apt to run away with reason, in a lawless and unbridled pursuit of their respective enjoyments. It is in order to gratify inclinations of this ensnaring kind that men are tempted to hold clandestine correspondence with the enemies of the state, to subvert governments, and turn traitors to their country. In short, there is no sort of crimes that affect the public welfare to which an inordinate love of the sensual pleasures
may not directly lead. And as to vices of a more private tendency—rapes, adulteries and every other flagitious violation of the moral duties—are they not perpetrated solely from this single motive? Reason, on the other hand," continued Archytas, "is the noblest gift which God, or nature, has bestowed on the sons of men. Now nothing is so great an enemy to that divine endowment, as the pleasures of sense. For neither temperance, nor any other of the more exalted virtues, can find a place in that breast which is under the dominion of the voluptuous passions. Imagine to yourself a man in the actual enjoyment of the highest gratification that his animal nature is capable of receiving; there can be no doubt that during his continuance in that state, it would be utterly impossible for him to exert any one power of his rational faculties." From hence our philosopher inferred "that the voluptuous enjoyments are attended with a quality of the most noxious and destructive kind; since, in proportion to their strength and duration, they darken or extinguish every brighter faculty of the human soul."

Archytas expressed these sentiments in a conversation with Caius Pontius, father of that famous Samnite commander who obtained a victory over
the consuls Spurius Postumius and Titus Veturius, at the battle of Caudium: and it was related to me by our faithful ally, and my very worthy host, Nearchus, of Tarentum. My friend assured me he received this account by tradition from his ancestors: and he added, that Plato was a party in this conversation. This circumstance is indeed by no means improbable; as I find that philosopher visited Tarentum in the consulate of Lucius Camillus and Appius Claudius.

The inference I mean to draw from the authority I have cited is, that if the principles of reason and virtue have not been sufficient to inspire us with a proper contempt for the sensual pleasures, we have cause to hold ourselves much obliged to old age at least, for weaning us from those appetites which it would ill become us to gratify. For the voluptuous passions are utter enemies to all the nobler faculties of the soul; cast a mist, if I may so express it, before the eye of reason, and hold no sort of commerce or communion with the manly virtues.

To illustrate the truth of this assertion by a particular instance, I will mention a fact concerning Lucius Flamininus, who was brother to that brave commander Titus Flamininus. It was with much regret that seven years after he had been
raised to the dignity of consul, I found myself under the necessity of expelling him from the senate; but I thought his scandalous debaucheries ought not to pass without marks of public disgrace. This unworthy man when he commanded, during his consulship, our army in Gaul, was prevailed upon by his pathic at an entertainment, to put to death one of the prisoners who were in confinement for a capital offence; and this infamous act escaped with impunity during the time that his brother Titus was censor. But when I succeeded him in that office, neither myself nor my colleague Flaccus, could by any means be induced to think that so wanton and flagitious an instance of abandoned cruelty and lewdness ought to pass without severe and distinguished animadversion; especially as it reflected dishonour, not only on the base perpetrator himself, but in some measure too on the high office with which he was invested.

I have frequently heard from some of my friends who were much my seniors, a traditionary anecdote concerning Fabricius. They assured me, that in the early part of their lives they were told by certain very old men of their acquaintance, that when Fabricius was ambassador at the court of Pyrrhus, he expressed great astonishment at the
account given him by Cineas, of a philosopher at Athens (for a philosopher, it seems, he styled himself), who maintained that the love of pleasure was universally the leading motive of all human actions. My informers added that when Fabricius related this fact to Marcus Curius and Titus Coruncanius, they both joined in wishing that Pyrrhus and the whole Samnite nation might become converts to this extraordinary doctrine, as the people who were infected with such unmanly principles could not fail, they thought, of proving an easy conquest to their enemies. Marcus Curius had been intimately connected with Publius Decius, who in his fourth consulate (which was five years before the former entered upon that office) gloriously sacrificed his life to the preservation of his country. This generous patriot was personally known likewise both to Fabricius and Coruncanius, and they were convinced by what they experienced in their own breasts, as well as from the illustrious example of Decius, that there is in certain actions a natural grace and beauty that captivate by their intrinsic charms; and which, with a noble contempt of what the world calls pleasure, every great and generous mind will ardently and invariably pursue.

I have dwelt the longer upon this article, in
order to convince you, that the little relish which old age leaves us for enjoyments of the sensual kind, is so far from being a just imputation on this period of life, that on the contrary it very considerably raises its value. If age render us incapable of taking an equal share in the flowing cups, and luxuriant dishes of splendid tables, it secures us too from their unhappy consequences—from painful indigestions, restless nights, and disordered reason. Accordingly, the divine Plato justly represents pleasure as the bait by which vice ensnares and captivates her deluded votaries. But if this enticement cannot always be resisted, if the palate must sometimes be indulged, I do not scruple to say that an old man, although his years will guard him from excess, is by no means excluded from enjoying, in a moderate degree, the convivial gratifications. I remember frequently to have seen, when I was a boy, that illustrious commander who obtained our first naval victory over the Carthaginians, the venerable Duilius, returning from evening entertainments of this festive kind, preceded by a considerable number of flambeaux and instruments of music. He seemed particularly fond of being distinguished by such a pompous and splendid train; and indeed he is the first instance
of a man not invested with a public character, that ventured to appear with this sort of ostentatious parade, a privilege, however, which in consideration of his heroic achievements, he might well be allowed to assume.

But to pass from the practice of others to my own, I will acknowledge that I always took a singular satisfaction in frequenting the meetings of those little societies which are known by the name of confraternities, and which were first instituted when I was quæstor, on occasion of the statue of Cybele being received into our public worship. At the return of these anniversary assemblies I used to partake with my brethren of the society in their festive meals—never to excess, indeed; but, however, with a certain freedom natural to the gay spirits which usually animate that period of life, and which gradually subside as more serious years advance. But the principal satisfaction I received from these entertainments arose much less from the pleasures of the palate than from the opportunity they afforded me of enjoying the company and conversation of a very large circle of my friends. Agreeably to this way of thinking our ancestors distinguished these kinds of amicable feasts by the name of convivial banquets, as being
chiefly calculated for the more rational purposes of social and friendly intercourse; whereas the Greeks denominate them by a term expressive merely of eating and drinking, as if those two articles, which ought to be considered as the least and lowest objects of the meeting, were first and principal in their estimation. For my own part, I receive so much pleasure from those hours which are thus devoted to cheerful discourse, that I love to prolong my meals, not only when the company is composed of men of my own years (few of which, indeed, are now remaining), but when it chiefly consists of such young persons as yourselves; and I acknowledge my obligations to old age for having increased my passion for the pleasures of conversation at the same time that it has abated it for those which depend solely on the palate. I would not, however, be thought so professed an enemy to the latter as to deny that, within certain limits, they may very reasonably, perhaps, be indulged; and I declare, for the satisfaction of those who are unwilling to part with this kind of gratifications, that I do not find old age is a disqualification for the enjoyment of them. On the contrary, I take delight in joining those social parties where, agreeably to a good old custom instituted by our ancestors, a
president of the club is appointed, and am much diverted to hear him deliver out his important edicts. I rejoice, too, in those moderate and refreshing cups which Socrates recommends in Xenophon's Banquet, and am well pleased with those artificial methods of cooling, or warming the wine, as the different seasons of the year invite. Even when I am in the country among my Sabine neighbours I allow myself the same kind of indulgences, as I every day add one to the number of their evening societies, which we generally lengthen out by a variety of amusing conversation till the night is far advanced.

If it be farther objected "that the pleasures of the senses are not so exquisite in old age as in youth," my answer is that neither is the inclination towards them equally strong; and certainly there can be no loss where there is no desire. Sophocles, when he was become old, being asked if he engaged in amorous commerce with the fair sex? "Heaven forbid!" replied the venerable bard; "and glad I am to have made my escape from the tyranny of so imperious a passion." The truth is, to be deprived of enjoyments of this kind may be an uneasy state perhaps to those who are stimulated by warm desires; but where the passion is sufficiently sub-
dued and extinguished, the privation is more eligible than the fruition—if, indeed, one can properly be said to be deprived of a pleasure who is utterly void of all inclination towards it. I maintain, therefore, that there is more satisfaction in being delivered from the dominion of this passion than in its highest gratification.

If it must be admitted that in the fine season of life the soul receives a stronger and more exquisite impression from the pleasures of the senses, it will also be admitted, in the first place, that these pleasures are in themselves but of little value; and in the next, that notwithstanding old age cannot enjoy them in their utmost extent and perfection, yet it is not absolutely, however, excluded from them. If a spectator who sits in the first row of the theatre enters more thoroughly into the beauties of Turpio's acting than he who is placed in the remotest ranks, the latter, nevertheless, is not totally debarred from all share in the entertainment. In the same manner, if youth holds a less obstructed communication with the sensual gratifications than the circumstances of age will admit, an old man, though not equally, perhaps, affected with delight, feels at least as quick a relish of them as is necessary to content his more subdued desires.
But whatever may be the condition of old age with respect to the instances I have been examining, inestimable surely are its advantages if we contemplate it in another point of view; if we consider it as delivering us from the tyranny of lust and ambition, from the angry and contentious passions, from every inordinate and irrational desire—in a word, as teaching us to retire within ourselves, and look for happiness in our own bosoms; if to these moral benefits naturally resulting from length of days be added that sweet food of the mind which is gathered in the fields of science, I know not any season of life that is passed more agreeably than the learned leisure of a virtuous old age.

It was thus, Scipio, that your father's intimate friend, Caius Gallus, employed himself to the very last moments of his long life; and I saw him expire, I had almost said, in measuring the distances of the heavenly orbs, and determining the dimensions of this our earth. How often has the sun risen upon his astronomical meditations? how frequently has the night overtaken him in the same elevated studies! And with what delight did he amuse himself in predicting to us, long before they happened, the several lunar and solar eclipses! Other
ingenious applications of the mind there likewise are—though of a lighter nature, indeed—which may greatly contribute to enliven and amuse the concluding scene of human life. Thus Nævius in composing his poem on the Carthaginian war, and Plautus in writing his two last comedies, filled up the leisure of their latter days with wonderful com-placency and satisfaction. I can affirm the same of our dramatic poet, Livius, whom I remember to have seen in his old age, for although the first play he brought upon the stage was in the consulate of Cento and Tuditanus, six years before I was born, yet his death did not happen till I was nearly arrived at manhood. To those venerable personages whom I have already named, I might add Licinius Crassus, celebrated for his consummate skill in the pontifical and civil laws of his country, as also Publius Scipio, who very lately, you know, was elected chief pontiff. These, together with every one of the rest whom I have mentioned, I saw in the last period of life pursuing their respective studies with the utmost ardour and alacrity. But let me not forget to add to this memorable list the example of Marcus Cethegus, whom Ennius justly styled the "soul of eloquence," and whom I likewise saw in his old age exercising
even his oratorical talents with uncommon force and vivacity.

Tell me now, can the gay amusements of the theatre, the splendid luxuries of the table, or the soft blandishments of a mistress, supply their votaries with enjoyments that may fairly stand in competition with these calm delights of the intellectual pleasures? pleasures which, in a mind rightly formed and properly cultivated, never fail to improve and gather strength with years. What Solon, therefore, declares in the verse I just now cited, that he "learnt something in his old age every day he lived," is much to his honour; as, indeed, to be continually advancing in the paths of knowledge is one of the most pleasing satisfactions of the human mind.

From the pleasures which attend a studious old age, let us turn our view to those which at that season of life may be received from country occupations, of which I profess myself a warm admirer. These are pleasures perfectly consistent with every degree of advanced years, as they approach the nearest of all others to those of the purely philosophical kind; they are derived from observing the nature and properties of this our earth, which yields a ready obedience to the cultivator's in-
dustry, and returns with interest whatever he deposits in her charge; if not always, indeed, with equal increase, yet always with some.

But the profit arising from this principle of fertility is by no means, in my estimation, the most desirable circumstance of the farmer's labours. I am principally delighted with observing the power, and tracing the process, of Nature in these her vegetable productions. Thus when the ground is sufficiently broken and prepared, the seedsman disseminates the grain, which is afterwards harrowed into the bosom of the earth, by the vital warmth and moisture of which it is gradually expanded and pushed forth into the green blade; this blade shoots up into a knotted stem, which is nourished and supported by the various fibres of the root. The stem terminates in the ear, wherein the grain is lodged in regular order, and defended from the depredations of the smaller birds by a number of little bearded spikes. And let me add (for I take great pleasure in bringing you acquainted with every article that contributes to soothe and alleviate my bending years) that I am particularly entertained with marking the growth of the vine, and following it in its progress from the seed-plot to its perfect maturity. Not to enlarge on that
wonderful power with which Nature has endowed every species of the vegetable kingdom—of con-
tinuing their several kinds by their respective seeds, and which from the smallest grain, as the fig, or from little stones, as the vine, most amazingly swell into large trunks and branches —not to dwell, I say, on this method of generation common to all the various tribes of plants on the face of the earth, is it possible to observe the different modes of propagating the vine by suckers, by layers, by the root, or by slips, without being affected with the most pleasing admiration? This shrub, which by its form is a trailing plant, must necessarily creep upon the ground, unless it be supported, for this reason: Nature has furnished it with little tendrils, which serve as a sort of claws to lay hold of whatever stands within its reach, in order to raise itself into a more erect posture. And here the art of the husbandman is required to check its luxuriant growth, to train the irregular and depending shoots, and to prevent them, by a judi-
cious pruning, from running into wood. After the vines have undergone this autumnal dressing they push forth in spring from the joints of the remaining branches little buds, which are distinguished by the name of gems. From this gem the future
grapes take their rise, which gradually increase in size by the nourishment they draw from the earth, in conjunction with the genial warmth of the sun. At their first appearance they are extremely bitter, but in process of time, and when duly matured, they acquire a most sweet and delicious flavour. In the meanwhile, being covered and guarded by the leaves, they receive a moderate degree of heat without being too much exposed to the solar rays.

There cannot, surely, be a landscape more pleasing to the eye, as well as more profitable to the owner, than a plantation of this kind. It is not, however, as I have already declared, the utility resulting from this species of agriculture with which I am principally charmed; the mere cultivation itself of this generous plant, and the observing of its nature and properties, abstracted from all considerations of emolument, afford me a most amusing occupation; in short, every circumstance that relates to the management of this useful shrub, the regular arrangement of the vine props, the forming of them into arcades, the pruning some of the branches, and fixing layers of others, are employments in which I take much delight. To this I may add the cutting of proper channels
for supplying the plantation with water, the stirring of the earth round their roots, and the trenching of the ground—works which are in themselves extremely entertaining, and which greatly contribute at the same time to ameliorate and fertilise the soil. As to the advantage of manure (an article which Hesiod has not taken the least notice of in his poem on husbandry), I have sufficiently explained my sentiments in the treatise I formerly published on the same subject. Homer, however (who flourished, I am inclined to think, many ages before Hesiod), in that part of the "Odyssey" where he represents Laertes as diverting his melancholy for the absence of Ulysses by cultivating his little farm, particularly mentions the circumstance of his manuring it with compost.

But the amusement of farming is not confined to one species of agriculture alone, to the cultivation of vineyards or woodlands, of arable or meadow grounds; the orchard, the kitchen-garden, and the parterre contribute also to diversify its pleasures—not to mention the feeding of cattle and the rearing of bees. And besides the entertainment which arises from planting, I may add the method of propagating trees by the means of engrafting, an art which is one of the most ingenious improve-
ments, I think, that ever was made in the business of horticulture.

I might proceed to point out many other pleasing articles of rural occupations, if I were not sensible that I have already been too prolix. But if the love I bear to this agreeable art, together with that talkative disposition which is incident to my time of life (for I would not appear so partial to old age as to vindicate it from all the infirmities with which it is charged)—if I have dwelt longer, I say, upon this subject than was necessary, I rely, my friends, on your indulgence for a pardon. Suffer me, however, to add that Manius Curius, after having conquered the Samnites, the Sabines, and even Pyrrhus himself, passed the honourable remainder of his declining years in cultivating his farm. The villa in which he lived is situated at no great distance from my own, and I can never behold it without reflecting, with the highest degree of admiration, both on the singular moderation of his mind and the general simplicity of the age in which he flourished. Here it was, while sitting by his fireside, that he nobly rejected a considerable quantity of gold which was offered to him on the part of the Samnites, and rejected it with this memorable
saying, "that he placed his glory not in the abundance of his own wealth, but in commanding those among whom it abounded." Can it be doubted that a mind raised and ennobled by such just and generous sentiments must render old age a state full of complacency and satisfaction?

But not to wander from that scene of life in which I am myself more particularly concerned, let us return to our farmers. In those good days I am speaking of, the members of the senate, who were always men advanced in years, were called forth from their fields as often as the affairs of the state demanded their assistance. Thus Cincinnatus was following his plough, when notice was brought to him that he was created Dictator. It was during his exercise of this high office that his master of the horse, Servilius Ahala, in consequence of the spirited orders he received from the Dictator, seized upon Spurius Maelius, and instantly put him to death before he had time to execute his traitorous purpose of usurping the reins of government. Curius, too, and all the rest of the venerable senators of that age, constantly resided at their villas. For which reason a particular officer was appointed (called a courier, from the nature of his employment) whose business
it was to give them notice when there was a meeting of the senate.

Now tell me, my friends, could the old age of these respectable patriots, who thus amused their latter years in cultivating their lands, be justly deemed a state of infelicity? In my opinion, indeed, no kind of occupation is more pregnant with happiness; not only as the business of husbandry is of singular utility to mankind in general, but as being attended also (to repeat what I have already observed) with peculiar and very considerable pleasures. I will add, too, as a farther recommendation of rural employment (and I mention it in order to be restored to the good graces of the voluptuous) that it supplies both the table and the altar with the greatest variety and abundance. Accordingly, the magazines of the skilful and industrious farmer are plentifully stored with wine and oil, with milk, cheese, and honey, as his yards abound with poultry, and his fields with flocks and herds of kids, lambs, and porkets. The garden also furnishes him with an additional source of delicacies; in allusion to which the farmers pleasantly call a certain piece of ground allotted to that particular use their dessert. I must not omit, likewise, that in the intervals of
their more important business, and in order to heighten the relish of the rest, the sports of the field claim a share in the variety of their amusements.

I might expatiate on the beauties of their verdant groves and meadows, on the charming landscape that their vineyards and their olive-yards present to view; but to say all in one word, there cannot be a more pleasing nor a more profitable scene than that of a well-cultivated farm. Now old age is so far from being an obstacle to enjoyments of this kind that, on the contrary, it rather invites and allures us to the fruition of them. For where, let me ask, can a man in that last stage of life more easily find the comforts in winter of a warm sun or a good fire? or the benefit in summer of cooling shades and refreshing streams?

In respect to the peculiar articles of rural diversions, let those of a more firm and vigorous age enjoy the robust sports which are suitable to that season of life; let them exert their manly strength and address in darting the javelin, or contending in the race; in wielding the bat, or throwing the ball; in riding, or in swimming; but let them, out of the abundance of their many other recreations, resign to us old fellows the sedentary
games of chance. Yet if they think proper even in these to reserve to themselves an exclusive right, I shall not controvert their claim; they are amusements by no means essential to a philosophic old age.

The writings of Xenophon abound with a variety of the most useful observations; and I am persuaded it is altogether unnecessary to recommend them to your careful perusal. In his treatise entitled "Economics," with what a flow of eloquence does he break forth in praise of agriculture! an art above all others, you will observe, which he deemed worthy of a monarch's attention. In view to this, he introduces Socrates informing his friend Critobulus, that when Lysander of Lacedæmon, a man of great and eminent virtues, was deputed by the confederate states to the Court of Sardis with their respective presents to the younger Cyrus, that great prince, no less distinguished by his genius than by the glory of his reign, received him in the most gracious manner; and, among other instances of affability, conducted him to an enclosure laid out with consummate skill and judgment. Lysander, stricken with the height and regularity of the trees, the neatness of the walks and borders, together with the beauty and fra-
grance of the several shrubs and flowers, expressed great admiration not only at the industry, but the genius that was discovered in the scene he was surveying; upon which the prince assured him that the whole was laid out by himself, and that many of the trees were even planted by his own hand. Lysander, astonished at this declaration from the mouth of a monarch whom he beheld arrayed in all the splendour of Persian magnificence, replied with emotion, "O, Cyrus, I am now convinced that you are really as happy as report has represented you; since your good fortune is no less eminent than your exalted virtues."

The good fortune to which Lysander alluded is an article of felicity to which old age is by no means an obstacle; as the pleasure resulting from every rational application of the intellectual faculties, but particularly from the study of husbandry, is consistent even with its latest period. Accordingly tradition informs us that Valerius Corvus, who lived to the age of a hundred, spent the latter part of his long life in the cultivation and improvement of his farm. It is remarkable of this celebrated person that no less than forty-six years intervened between his first and his last consulship, so that his career of honours was
equal to that period which our ancestors marked out for the commencement of old age. But his felicity did not terminate with his retiring from public affairs; on the contrary, he was in one respect at least even happier in the latter part of his life than when he filled the first offices of the state; as his great age, at the same time that it exempted him from the fatigue of bearing an active part in the administration of the commonwealth, added weight and influence to his general credit and authority.

The crown and glory of grey hairs is, indeed, that kind of authority which thus arises from a respectable old age. How considerable did this appear in those venerable personages—Cæcilius Metellus and Attilius Calatinus! You remember, no doubt, the singular and celebrated eulogy inscribed on the monument of the latter: that "All nations agreed in esteeming him as the first of Romans." The influence he maintained over his fellow-citizens was certainly founded upon the most unquestionable claim, since his merit was thus universally acknowledged and admired. To the instances already mentioned, I might add our late chief pontiff Publius Crassus, together with Marcus Lepidus, who succeeded him in that dignity.
And, if it were necessary, I might enlarge this illustrious list with the revered names of Paulus Æmilius, Scipio Africanus, and Fabius Maximus, the latter of whom I have already taken occasion to mention with peculiar esteem. These were all of them men of such approved and respected characters, that even their very nod alone carried with it irresistible authority. In a word, that general deference which is ever paid to a wise and good old man, especially if his virtues have been dignified by the public honours of his country affords a truer and more solid satisfaction than all the pleasures which attend on the gay season of life.

But let it be remembered, my noble friends, that when I speak thus advantageously of that portion of life we are now considering, I would be understood to mean only that respectable old age which stands supported on the firm foundation of a well-spent youth. Agreeably to this principle, I once declared upon a public occasion that "miserable indeed must that old man be whose former life stood in need of an apology"—a sentiment which, I had the satisfaction to observe, was received by the whole audience with uncommon applause. It is not merely wrinkles and grey hairs which can command that authoritative veneration
of which I have been speaking. He alone shall taste this sweet fruit of revered age, whose former years have been distinguished by an uniform series of laudable and meritorious actions.

But besides those more important advantages I have already pointed out as attending an honourable old age, it may be further observed that there are certain customary deferences and attentions which, although they may be considered perhaps as common and insignificant ceremonials, are undoubtedly, however, very honourable marks of general respect. Observances of this kind are strictly practised in our own country, as indeed they likewise are in every other, in proportion to its advancement in civilised and polished manners. It is said that Lysander, whom I just now took occasion to mention, used frequently to remark that Lacedaemon, of all the cities he knew, was the most eligible for an old man's residence; and it must be acknowledged there is no place in the world where age is treated with so much civility and regard. Accordingly it is reported that a certain Athenian, far advanced in years, coming into the theatre at Athens when it was extremely crowded, not one of his countrymen had the good manners to make room for him; but when he approached
that part of the theatre which was appropriated to the Lacedaemonian ambassadors, they every one of them rose up and offered him a place among them. Repeated claps of applause immediately ensued from the whole assembly; upon which one of the spectators remarked, "that the Athenians understood politeness much better than they practised it."

There are many excellent rules established in the Sacred College of which I am a member; one of these, as it relates to the particular circumstance immediately under consideration, I cannot forbear mentioning. Every augur delivers his opinion upon any question in debate according to his seniority in point of years; and he takes precedence of all the younger members, even although they should be in the highest degree his superiors in point of rank.

And now I will venture once more to ask if there is a pleasure in any of the mere sensual gratifications which can equal the satisfaction arising from these valuable privileges thus conferred on old age? To which I will only add that he who knows how to enjoy these honourable distinctions with suitable dignity to the conclusion of his days, may be considered as having supported his part on
the great theatre of the world with uniform spirit and propriety, and not, like an unpractised player, to have disgracefully failed in the last finishing act of the drama.

I shall be told, perhaps, that if we look into the world, we shall find "petulance, moroseness, and even avarice itself are infirmities which generally break out and discover themselves in old age." But the fact is, these moral diseases of the mind are rather the constitutional imperfections of the man in whom they reside, than necessary defects inseparable from the wane of life. Indeed, this peevishness of temper may—I will not say be justified—but certainly at least in some measure excused from that suspicion which old men are too apt to entertain of their being generally marked by the younger part of the world as objects of their scorn and derision. Add to this, that where the constitution is broken and worn out, the mind becomes the more sensible of every little offence, and is disposed to magnify unintentional slights into real and designed insults. But this captious and irritable disposition incident to this season of life may be much softened and subdued in a mind actuated by the principles of good manners and improved by liberal accomplishments. Examples
of this kind must have occurred to every man's experience of the world, as they are frequently exhibited also on the stage. What a striking contrast, for instance, between the two old men in Terence's play called *The Brothers!* Mitio is all mildness and good humour; whereas Demea, on the contrary, is represented as an absolute churl. The fact, in short, is plainly this: as it is not every kind of wine, so neither is it every sort of temper, that turns sour by age. But I must observe at the same time there is a certain gravity of deportment extremely becoming in advanced years, and which, as in other virtues, when it preserves its proper bounds, and does not degenerate into an acerbity of manners, I very much approve. As to avarice, it is inconceivable for what purpose that passion should find admittance into an old man's breast. For surely nothing can be more irrational and absurd than to increase our provision for the road, the nearer we approach to our journey's end.

It remains only to consider the fourth and last imputation on that period of life at which I am arrived. "Old age, it seems, must necessarily be a state of much anxiety and disquietude, from the near approach of death." That the hour of
dissolution cannot possibly be far distant from an old man is most undoubtedly certain; but unhappy indeed must he be, if in so long a course of years he has yet to learn that there is nothing in that circumstance which can reasonably alarm his fears. On the contrary, it is an event either utterly to be disregarded, if it extinguish the soul's existence, or much to be wished, if it convey her to some region where she shall continue to exist for ever. One of those two consequences must necessarily ensue the disunion of the soul and body, there is no other possible alternative. What then have I to fear, if after death I shall either not be miserable, or shall certainly be happy? But after all, is there any man, how young soever he may be, who can be so weak as to promise himself, with confidence, that he shall live even till night? In fact, young people are more exposed to mortal accidents than even the aged. They are also not only more liable to natural diseases, but, as they are generally attacked by them in a more violent manner, are obliged to obtain their cure, if they happen to recover, by a more painful course of medical operations. Hence it is that there are but few among mankind who arrive at old age; and this (to remark it by the way) will suggest a
reason why the affairs of the world are no better conducted. For age brings along with it experience, discretion, and judgment; without which, no well-formed government could have been established, or can be maintained. But not to wander from the point under our present consideration, why should death be deemed an evil peculiarly impending on old age, when daily experience proves that it is common to every other period of human life? Of this truth, both you and I, Scipio, have a very severe conviction in our respective families: in yours, by the premature decease of your two brothers, who had given their friends a most promising earnest that their merit would one day raise them to the highest honours of the state; and in mine, by the loss of my truly excellent son.

It will be replied, perhaps, that "youth may at least entertain the hope of enjoying many additional years; whereas an old man cannot rationally encourage so pleasing an expectation." But is it not a mark of extreme weakness to rely upon precarious contingencies, and to consider an event as absolutely to take place, which is altogether doubtful and uncertain? But admitting that the young may indulge this expectation with
the highest reason, still the advantage evidently lies on the side of the old; as the latter is already in possession of that length of life which the former can only hope to attain. "Length of life," did I say? Good gods! what is there in the utmost extent of human duration that can properly be called long, even if our days should prove as numerous as those of Arganthonius, the king of the Tartessi, who reigned, as history tells us, eighty years, and lived to the age of a hundred and twenty? In my own opinion, indeed, no portion of time can justly be deemed long that will necessarily have an end, since the longest, when once it is elapsed, leaves not a trace behind, and nothing valuable remains with us but the conscious satisfaction of having employed it well. Thus, hours and days, months and years glide imperceptibly away—the past never to return, the future involved in impenetrable obscurity. But whatever the extent of our present duration may prove, a wise and good man ought to be contented with the allotted measure, remembering that it is in life as on the stage, where it is not necessary in order to be approved, that the actor's part should continue to the conclusion of the drama; it is sufficient, in whatever scene he shall make his final exit, that
he supports the character assigned him with deserved applause. The truth is, a small portion of time is abundantly adequate to the purposes of honour and virtue. But should our years continue to be multiplied, a wise man will no more lament his entrance into old age than the husbandman regrets, when the bloom and fragrancy of the spring is passed away, that summer or autumn is arrived. Youth is the vernal season of life, and the blossoms it then puts forth are indications of those future fruits which are to be gathered in the succeeding periods. Now the proper fruit to be gathered in the winter of our days is, as I have repeatedly observed, to be able to look back with self-approving satisfaction on the happy and abundant produce of more active years.

But to resume the principal point we were discussing. Every event agreeable to the course of nature ought to be looked upon as a real good, and surely none can be more natural than for an old man to die. It is true, youth likewise stands exposed to the same dissolution, but it is a dissolution contrary to Nature's evident intentions, and in direct opposition to her strongest efforts. In the latter instance, the privation of life may be resembled to a fire forcibly extinguished by a
deluge of water; in the former, to a fire spontaneously and gradually going out from a total consumption of its fuel. Or to have recourse to another illustration, as fruit before it is ripe cannot, without some degree of force, be separated from the stalk, but drops of itself when perfectly mature, so the disunion of the soul and body is effected in the young by dint of violence, but is wrought in the old by a mere fulness and completion of years. This ripeness for death I perceive in myself, with much satisfaction; and I look forward to my dissolution as to a secure haven, where I shall at length find a happy repose from the fatigues of a long voyage.

Every stage of human life, except the last, is marked out by certain and defined limits; old age alone has no precise and determinate boundary. It may well therefore be sustained to any period, how far soever it may be extended, provided a man is capable of performing those offices which are suited to this season of life, and preserves at the same time a perfect indifference with respect to its continuance. Old age under these circumstances, and with these sentiments, may be animated with more courage and fortitude than is usually found even in the prime of life. Ac-
cordingly Solon, it is said, being questioned by the tyrant Pisistratus, what it was that inspired him with the boldness to oppose his measures, bravely replied, "My old age." Nevertheless, the most desirable manner of yielding up our lives is when Nature herself, while our understanding and our other senses still remain unimpaired, thinks proper to destroy the work of her own hand, as the artist who constructed the machine is best qualified to take it to pieces. In short, an old man should neither be anxious to preserve the small portion of life which remains to him, nor forward to resign it without a just cause. It was one of the prohibitions of Pythagoras "not to quit our post of life without being authorised by the Commander who placed us in it," that is, not without the permission of the Supreme Being."

The epitaph which the wise Solon ordered to be inscribed on his monument, expresses his wish that his death might not pass undistinguished by the sorrowful exclamations of his surviving friends. It was natural, I confess, to desire to be remembered with regret by those with whom he had been intimately and tenderly connected; yet I am inclined to give the preference to the sentiment of Ennius, in those famous lines—
"Nor loud lament nor silent tear deplore
The fate of Ennius when he breathes no more."

In this poet's estimation, death, which opens the way to immortality, is by no means a subject of reasonable lamentation. The act of dying may indeed be attended with a sense of pain; but a pain, however, which cannot be of long continuance, especially to a man greatly advanced in years. And as to the consequence of death, it must either be a state of total insensibility, or of sensations much to be desired. This is a truth upon which we ought continually to meditate from our earliest youth, if we would be impressed with a just and firm contempt of death; as without this impression it is impossible to enjoy tranquillity. For as death is a change which, sooner or later, perhaps even this very moment, we must inevitably undergo, is it possible that he who lives in the perpetual dread of an event with which he is every instant threatened, should know the satisfaction of possessing an undisturbed repose and serenity of mind?

When I reflect on the conduct of Junius Brutus, who lost his life in the support of the liberties of his country; on the two Decii, who rushed to certain death from the same patriotic principle;
on Marcus Attilius, who delivered himself up to the torture of a most cruel execution, that he might not forfeit his word of honour which he had pledged to the enemy; on the two Scipios, who, if it had been possible, would willingly have formed a rampart with their own bodies against the invasion of the Carthaginians; on Lucius Paulus, your illustrious grandfather, who by his heroic death expiated the ignominy we sustained by the temerity of his colleague at the battle of Cannae; on Marcus Marcellus, whose magnanimity was so universally respected that even the most cruel of our enemies would not suffer his dead body to be deprived of funeral honours—when I reflect, I say, not only on the generous contempt of life which these heroic personages exhibited, but that whole legions of our troops (particular instances of which I have produced in my treatise on Roman Antiquities) have frequently marched, with undaunted courage and even alacrity, to attacks from which they were well persuaded not one of them could live to return, it should seem there is little occasion to enlarge upon the contempt of death. For if the very common soldiers of our armies, who are frequently raw, illiterate young peasants, are thus capable of despising its imaginary terrors, shall old
age, with all the superior advantages of reason and philosophy, tremble at the thoughts of its near approach?

The distaste with which, in passing through the several stages of our present being, we leave behind us the respective enjoyments peculiar to each, must necessarily, I should think, in the close of its latest period, render life itself no longer desirable. Infancy and youth, manhood and old age, have each of them their peculiar and appropriated pursuits. But does youth regret the toys of infancy, or manhood lament that it has no longer a taste for the amusements of youth? The season of manhood has also its suitable objects, that are exchanged for others in old age; and these, too, like all the preceding, become languid and insipid in their turn. Now when this state of absolute satiety is at length arrived, when we have enjoyed the satisfactions peculiar to old age, till we have no longer any relish remaining for them, it is then that death may justly be considered as a mature and seasonable event.

And now, among the different sentiments of the philosophers concerning the consequence of our final dissolution, may I not venture to declare my own? and the rather, as the nearer death advances
towards me, the more clearly I seem to discern its real nature.

I am well convinced, then, that my dear departed friends, your two illustrious fathers, are so far from having ceased to live, that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called life. The soul, during her confinement within this prison of the body, is doomed by fate to undergo a severe penance. For her native seat is in heaven; and it is with reluctance that she is forced down from those celestial mansions into these lower regions, where all is foreign and repugnant to her divine nature. But the gods, I am persuaded, have thus widely disseminated immortal spirits, and clothed them with human bodies, that there might be a race of intelligent creatures, not only to have dominion over this our earth, but to contemplate the host of heaven, and imitate in their moral conduct the same beautiful order and uniformity so conspicuous in those splendid orbs. This opinion I am induced to embrace, not only as agreeable to the best deductions of reason, but in just deference also to the authority of the noblest and most distinguished philosophers. Accordingly, Pythagoras and his followers (who were formerly distinguished by the name of the Italic Sect) firmly maintained
that the human soul is a detached part, or emanation, from the great universal soul of the world. I am further confirmed in my belief of the soul's immortality, by the discourse which Socrates, whom the oracle of Apollo pronounced to be the wisest of men, held upon this subject just before his death. In a word, when I consider the faculties with which the human mind is endowed; its amazing celerity; its wonderful power in recollecting past events, and sagacity in discerning future; together with its numberless discoveries in the several arts and sciences—I feel a conscious conviction that this active comprehensive principle cannot possibly be of a mortal nature. And as this unceasing activity of the soul derives its energy from its own intrinsic and essential powers, without receiving it from any foreign or external impulse, it necessarily follows (as it is absurd to suppose the soul would desert itself) that its activity must continue for ever. But farther: as the soul is evidently a simple un compounded substance, without any dissimilar parts or heterogeneous mixture, it cannot therefore be divided, consequently it cannot perish. I might add that the facility and expedition with which youth are taught to acquire numberless very difficult arts, is a strong presumption that the soul
possessed a considerable portion of knowledge before it entered into the human form; and that what seems to be received from instruction is, in fact, no other than a reminiscence, or recollection, of its former ideas. This, at least, is the opinion of Plato.

Xenophon, likewise, represents the elder Cyrus, in his last moments, as expressing his belief in the soul's immortality in the following terms: "O, my sons, do not imagine when death shall have separated me from you that I shall cease to exist. You beheld not my soul whilst I continued amongst you, yet you concluded that I had one, from the actions you saw me perform; infer the same when you shall see me no more. If the souls of departed worthies did not watch over and guard their surviving fame, the renown of their illustrious actions would soon be worn out of the memory of men. For my own part, I never could be persuaded that the soul could properly be said to live whilst it remained in this mortal body, or that it ceased to live when death had dissolved the vital union. I never could believe either that it became void of sense when it escaped from its connection with senseless matter, or that its intellectual powers were not enlarged and improved when it was dis-
charged and refined from all corporeal admixture. When death has disunited the human frame, we clearly see what becomes of its material parts, as they apparently return to the several elements out of which they were originally composed; but the soul continues to remain invisible, both when she is present in the body, and when she departs out of it. Nothing so nearly resembles death as sleep, and nothing so strongly intimates the divinity of the soul as what passes in the mind upon that occasion. For the intellectual principle in man, during this state of relaxation and freedom from external impressions, frequently looks forward into futurity, and discerns events ere time has yet brought them forth—a plain indication this what the powers of the soul will hereafter be, when she shall be delivered from the restraints of her present bondage. If I should not therefore be mistaken in this my firm persuasion, you will have reason, my sons, when death shall have removed me from your view, to revere me as a sacred and celestial spirit. But although the soul should perish with the body, I recommend it to you, nevertheless, to honour my memory with a pious and inviolable regard, in obedience to the immortal gods, by whose power and providence this beautiful fabric
of the universe is sustained and governed." Such were the sentiments of the dying Cyrus; permit me now to express my own.

Never, Scipio, can I believe that your illustrious ancestors, together with many other excellent personages, whom I need not particularly name, would have so ardently endeavoured to merit the honourable remembrance of posterity, had they not been persuaded that they had a real interest in the opinion which future generations might entertain concerning them. And do you imagine, my noble friends (if I may be indulged in an old man's privilege to boast of himself), do you imagine I would have undergone those labours I have sustained, both in my civil and military employments, if I had supposed that the conscious satisfaction I received from the glory of my actions was to terminate with my present existence? If such had been my persuasion, would it not have been far better and more rational to have passed my days in an undisturbed and indolent repose, without labour and without contention? But my mind, by I know not what secret impulse, was ever raising its views into future ages, strongly persuaded that I should then only begin to live when I ceased to exist in the present world.
Indeed, if the soul were not naturally immortal, never, surely, would the desire of immortal glory be a passion which always exerts itself with the greatest force in the noblest and most exalted bosoms.

Tell me, my friends, whence it is that those men who have made the greatest advances in true wisdom and genuine philosophy are observed to meet death with the most perfect equanimity; while the ignorant and unimproved part of our species generally see its approach with the utmost discomposure and reluctance? Is it not because the more enlightened the mind is, and the farther it extends its view, the more clearly it discerns in the hour of its dissolution (what narrow and vulgar souls are too short-sighted to discover) that it is taking its flight into some happier region?

For my own part, I feel myself transported with the most ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends, your illustrious fathers, whose characters I greatly respected, and whose persons I sincerely loved. Nor is this, my earnest desire, confined to those excellent persons alone with whom I was formerly connected; I ardently wish to visit also those celebrated worthies, of whose honourable conduct I have heard and read
much, or whose virtues I have myself commemorated in some of my writings. To this glorious assembly I am speedily advancing; and I would not be turned back in my journey, even upon the assured condition that my youth, like that of Pelias, should again be restored. The sincere truth is, if some divinity would confer upon me a new grant of my life, and replace me once more in the cradle, I would utterly, and without the least hesitation, reject the offer; having well-nigh finished my race, I have no inclination to return to the goal. For what has life to recommend it? Or rather, indeed, to what evils does it not expose us? But admit that its satisfactions are many, yet surely there is a time when we have had a sufficient measure of its enjoyments, and may well depart contented with our share of the feast; for I mean not, in imitation of some very considerable philosophers, to represent the condition of human nature as a subject of just lamentation. On the contrary, I am far from regretting that life was bestowed upon me, as I have the satisfaction to think that I have employed it in such a manner as not to have lived in vain. In short, I consider this world as a place which nature never designed for my permanent abode, and I look upon my
departure out of it, not as being driven from my habitation, but as leaving my inn.

O, glorious day, when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene, to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits, and not with those only whom I just now mentioned, but with my dear Cato, that best of sons and most valuable of men. It was my sad fate to lay his body on the funeral pile, when by the course of nature I had reason to hope he would have performed the same last office to mine. His soul, however, did not desert me, but still looked back upon me in its flight to those happy mansions, to which he was assured I should one day follow him. If I seemed to bear his death with fortitude, it was by no means that I did not most sensibly feel the loss I had sustained; it was because I supported myself with the consoling reflection that we could not long be separated.

Thus to think and thus to act has enabled me, Scipio, to bear up under a load of years with that ease and complacency which both you and Laelius have so frequently, it seems, remarked with admiration; as indeed it has rendered my old age not only no inconvenient state to me, but even an agreeable one. And after all should this my firm persuasion
of the soul's immortality prove to be a mere delusion, it is at least a pleasing delusion, and I will cherish it to my latest breath. I have the satisfaction in the meantime to be assured that if death should utterly extinguish my existence, as some minute philosophers assert, the groundless hope I entertained of an after-life in some better state cannot expose me to the derision of these wonderful sages, when they and I shall be no more. In all events, and even admitting that our expectations of immortality are utterly vain, there is a certain period, nevertheless, when death would be a consummation most earnestly to be desired. For Nature has appointed to the days of man, as to all things else, their proper limits, beyond which they are no longer of any value. In fine, old age may be considered as the last scene in the great drama of life, and one would not, surely, wish to lengthen out his part till he sunk down sated with repetition and exhausted with fatigue.

These, my noble friends, are the reflections I had to lay before you on the subject of old age, a period to which, I hope, you will both of you in due time arrive, and prove by your own experience the truth of what I have asserted to you on mine.
Lælius;

or,

An Essay on Friendship.
LÆLIUS;
OR, AN
ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP.

To Titus Pomponius Atticus.

Quintus Mucius, the Augur, used to relate, in a very agreeable manner, a variety of particulars which he remembered concerning his father-in-law, the sage Lælius, as he constantly styled him. My father introduced me to Mucius as soon as I was invested with the manly robe, and he so strongly recommended him to my observance that I never neglected any opportunity in my power of attending him. In consequence of this privilege I had the advantage to hear him occasionally discuss several important topics, and throw out many judicious maxims, which I carefully treasured up in my mind, endeavouring to improve myself in wisdom and knowledge by the benefit of his enlightened observations. After his death I attached myself in the same manner, and with the same views, to his relation, Mucius Scævola, the chief
pontiff; and I will venture to say that, in regard both to the powers of his mind and the integrity of his heart, Rome never produced a greater nor more respectable character. But I shall take some other occasion to do justice to the merit of this excellent man; my present business is solely with the Augur.

As I was one day sitting with him and two or three of his intimate acquaintance in his semi-circular apartment where he usually received company, among several other points he fell into discourse upon an event which had lately happened, and was, as you well know, the general subject of conversation; for you cannot but remember (as you were much connected with one of the parties) that when Publius Sulpicius was Tribune, and Quintus Pompeius Consul, the implacable animosity that broke out between them, after having lived together in the most affectionate union, was universally mentioned with concern and surprise. Mucius having casually touched upon this unexpected rupture, took occasion to relate to us the substance of a conference which Lælius formerly held with him and his other son-in-law, Caius Fannius, a few days after the death of Scipio Africanus, upon the subject of Friendship. As I perfectly well recollect
the general purport of the relation he gave us, I have wrought it up, after my own manner, in the following essay. But that I might not encumber the dialogue with perpetually interposing "said I" and "said he," I have introduced the speakers themselves to the reader, by which means he may consider himself as a sort of party in the conference.

It turns on a subject upon which you have frequently pressed me to write my thoughts, and, indeed, besides being peculiarly suitable to that intimacy which has so long subsisted between us, it is well worthy of being universally considered and understood. I have the more willingly, therefore, entered into the discussion you recommended, as it affords me an opportunity of rendering a general service at the same time that I am complying with your particular request.

In the treatise I lately inscribed to you on Old Age, I represented the elder Cato as the principal speaker, being persuaded that no person could, with more weight and propriety, be introduced as delivering his ideas in relation to that advanced state than one who had so long flourished in it with unequalled spirit and vigour. In pursuance of the same principle, the memorable amity which,
we are told, subsisted between Laelius and Scipio rendered the former, I thought, a very suitable character to support a conversation on the subject of Friendship, and the reasoning I have ascribed to him is agreeable to those sentiments which Mucius informed us he expressed.

This kind of dialogue, where the question is agitated by illustrious personages of former ages, is apt, I know not how, to make a stronger impression on the mind of the reader than any other species of composition. This effect, at least, I have experienced in my own writings of that kind, as I have sometimes imagined, when I was revising the essay I lately inscribed to you, that Cato himself, and not your friend in his name, was the real speaker. As in that performance it was one veteran addressing another on the article of Old Age, so in the present it is a friend explaining to a friend his notions concerning Friendship. In the former conference, Cato, who was distinguished among his contemporaries by his great age and superior wisdom, stands forth as the principal speaker; in this which I now present to you, Laelius, who was no less respected in the times in which he flourished for his eminent virtues and faithful attachment to his friend, takes the lead in the discourse. I must
request you, therefore, to turn your thoughts a while from the writer and suppose yourself conversing with Lælius.

For this purpose you are to imagine Fannius and Mucius making a visit to their father-in-law soon after the death of Scipio Africanus, and from that circumstance giving occasion to Lælius to enter upon the subject in question. I will only add that in contemplating the portrait of a true Friend, as delineated in the following pages, you cannot be at a loss to discover your own.

FANNIUS.—I agree with you entirely, Lælius, no man ever possessed more amiable or more illustrious virtues than Scipio Africanus. Nevertheless, let me entreat you to remember that the public eye is particularly turned towards you upon the present occasion, and extremely attentive to observe how Lælius, the sage Lælius (as, by a very singular distinction you are universally both called and acknowledged) behaves under the great loss he has sustained. When I say "by a very singular distinction," I am not ignorant that the late Marcus Cato, in our own times, and Lucius Attilius, in the days of our forefathers, were generally mentioned
with the same honourable addition; but I know, too, that it was for attainments somewhat different from those which have so justly occasioned it to be conferred on you. To the latter it was given in allusion to his eminent skill in the laws of his country, as it was to the former on account of the wonderful compass and variety of his knowledge, together with his great experience in the affairs of the world. Indeed, the many signal proofs that Cato gave, both in the forum and the senate, of his judgment, his spirit, and his penetration, produced such frequent occasions to speak of his wisdom with admiration, that the epithet seems, by continually recurring, to have been considered in his latter days as his original and proper name. But the same appellation (and I cannot forbear repeating it again) has been conferred on you for qualifications not altogether of the same nature; not merely in respect to the superior excellency of your political accomplishments and those intellectual endowments which adorn your mind, but principally in consequence of the singular advancement you have made in the study and practice of moral wisdom. In short, if Lælius is never named without the designation I am speaking of, it is not so much in the popular as in the philosophical sense
of the term that this characteristic is applied to him, and in that sense I will venture to say there is not a single instance throughout all the states of Greece of its ever having been thus attributed to any man by the unanimous consent of a whole people. For as to those famous sages who are commonly known by the general denomination of "the seven wise men of Greece," it is asserted by the most accurate inquirers into their history that they cannot properly be ranked in the class of moral philosophers. One celebrated Grecian, however, there was, a native of Athens, whom the oracle of Apollo declared to be the wisest of the sons of men, and believe me, Lælius, it is the same species of wisdom which this excellent moralist displayed that all the world is agreed in ascribing to you; that wisdom, I mean, by which you hold virtue to be capable of fortifying the soul against all the various assaults of human calamities, and are taught to consider happiness as depending upon yourself alone.

In consequence of this general opinion I have been frequently asked (and the same question, I believe, has no less often, Scævola, been proposed to you) in what manner Lælius supports the loss he has lately sustained. And this inquiry was the
rather made, as it was remarked that you absented yourself from our last monthly meeting in the gardens of Brutus, the Augur, where you had always before very regularly assisted.

Scaevola. — I acknowledge, Lælius, that the question which Fannius mentions has repeatedly been put to me by many of my acquaintance, and I have always assured them that, as far as I could observe, you received the wound that has been inflicted upon you by the death of your affectionate and illustrious friend with great composure and equanimity. Nevertheless, that it was not possible, nor indeed consistent with the general humane disposition of your nature, not to be affected by it in a very sensible manner; however, that it was by no means grief, but merely indisposition, which prevented you from being present at the last meeting of our assembly.

Lælius. — Your answer, Scaevola, was perfectly agreeable to the fact. Ill, certainly, would it become me, on account of any private affliction, to decline a conference which I have never failed to attend when my health permitted. And, indeed, I am persuaded that no man who possesses a proper firmness of mind will suffer his misfortunes, how heavily soever they may press upon his heart, to
interrupt his duties of any kind. For the rest, I consider the high opinion, Fannius, which you suppose the world entertains of my character, as an obliging proof of your friendship; but it is an opinion which, as I am not conscious of deserving, I have no disposition to claim. As little am I inclined to subscribe to your judgment concerning Cato; for if consummate wisdom, in the moral and philosophic idea of that expression, was ever to be found in the character of any human being (which, I will confess, however, I very much doubt), it certainly appeared throughout the whole conduct of that excellent person. Not to mention other proofs, with what unexampled fortitude, let me ask, did he support the death of his incomparable son? I was no stranger to the behaviour of Paulus, and, was an eye-witness to that of Gallus, labouring under an affliction of the same kind; but the sons whom they were respectively bereaved of died when they were mere boys. Whereas Cato's was snatched from him when he had arrived at the prime of manhood and was flourishing in the general esteem of his country. Let me caution you, then, from suffering any man to rival Cato in your good opinion, not excepting even him whom the oracle of Apollo, you say, declared to be the wisest of the human
race. The truth is, the memory of Socrates is held in honour for the admirable doctrine he delivered, but Cato's for the glorious deeds he performed.

Thus far in particular reply to Fannius. I now address myself to both; and if I were to deny that I regret the death of Scipio, how far such a disposition of mind would be right, I leave philosophers to determine. But far, I confess, it is from the sentiments of my heart. I am sensibly, indeed, affected by the loss of a friend whose equal no man, I will venture to say, ever possessed before, and none, I am persuaded, will ever meet with again. Nevertheless, I stand in want of no external assistance to heal the wound I have received. My own reflections supply me with sufficient consolation. And I find it principally from not having given in to that false opinion which adds poignancy to the grief of so many others under a loss of the same kind. For I am convinced there is no circumstance in the death of Scipio that can justly be lamented with respect to himself. Whatever there is of private misfortune in that event consists entirely in the loss which I have sustained. Under the full influence of such a persuasion, to indulge unrestrained sorrow would be a proof not of a generous affection to one's friend, but of too interested a
concern for one's self. It is evident, indeed, that the colour of Scipio's days has, in every view of it, proved truly bright and glorious. For tell me, my friends, is there a felicity (unless he wished never to die—a wish, I am confident, he was too wise to entertain), is there a single article of human happiness that can reasonably be desired which he did not live to attain? The high expectations the world had conceived of him in his earliest youth were more than confirmed in his riper years, as his virtues shone forth with a lustre superior even to the most sanguine hopes of his country. He was twice, without the least solicitation on his own part, elected consul; the first time before he was legally qualified by his age to be admitted into that office, and the next, although not prematurely with respect to himself, yet it had well-nigh proved too late for his country. In both instances, however, success attended his arms, and having levelled with the ground the capitals of two states the most inveterately hostile to the Roman name, he not only happily terminated the respective wars, but secured us from all apprehension of future danger from the same powers. I forbear to enlarge upon the affability of his manners, the affection he showed to his mother, the generosity he exercised towards his
sisters, the kindness with which he behaved to the rest of his family, and the unblemished integrity that influenced every part of his conduct. They were qualities in his exemplary and amiable character with which you are perfectly well acquainted. It is equally unnecessary to add how sincerely he was beloved by his country; the general concern that appeared at his funeral renders it sufficiently evident. What increase, then, could the addition of a few more years have made to the glory and happiness of his life? For admitting that old age does not necessarily bring on a state of imbecility (as Cato, I remember, maintained in a conversation with Scipio and myself about a year before his death), it certainly impairs, at least, that vigour and vivacity which Scipio still possessed at the time of his decease.

Such, then, was the course of his happy and honourable days, that neither his felicity nor his fame could have received any farther increase. And as to his death, it was much too sudden to have been attended with any sensible degree of pain. By what cause that unexpected event was occasioned is by no means indeed clear; the general suspicions concerning it you well know. One circumstance, at least, is unquestionable: that
of all the many brilliant days he had enjoyed, the last of his life was the most completely illustrious. For it was on the very evening which preceded his death that he received the singular honour, at the breaking up of the senate, of being conducted to his house by all the members of that august assembly, attended by the several ambassadors both from Latium and the allies of the Roman Commonwealth. So that he cannot, it should seem, so properly be said to have descended into the regions of the infernal deities as to have passed at once from the supreme height of human glory to the mansions of the celestial gods. For I am by no means a convert to the new doctrine which certain philosophers have lately endeavoured to propagate; who maintain that death extinguishes the whole man, and his soul perishes with the dissolution of his body. Indeed, the practice of our ancestors alone, abstracted from the opinion of the ancient sages, weighs more with me than all the arguments of these pretended reasoners. For certainly our forefathers would not so religiously have observed those sacred rites which have been instituted in honour of the dead if they had supposed that the deceased were in no respect concerned in the performance of them. But the conviction
arising from this consideration is much strengthened when I add to it the authority of those great masters of reason, who enlightened our country by the schools they established in Great Greece, during the flourishing ages of that now deserted part of Italy. And what has a still farther influence in determining my persuasion is the opinion of that respectable moralist who, in the judgment of Apollo himself, was declared to be the wisest of mankind. This incomparable philosopher, without once varying to the opposite side of the question (as his custom was upon many other controverted subjects), steadily and firmly asserted that the human soul is a divine and immortal substance, that death opens a way for its return to the celestial mansions, and that the spirits of those just men who have made the greatest progress in the paths of virtue find the easiest and most expeditious admittance. This also was the opinion of my departed friend; an opinion which you may remember, Scaevola, he particularly enlarged upon in that conversation which, a very short time before his death, he held with you and me, in conjunction with Philus, Manilius, and a large company of his other friends, on the subject of government. For in the close of that conference, which continued, you know, during
three successive days, he related to us (as if he had been led into the topic by a kind of presentiment of his approaching fate) a discourse which Africanus delivered to him in a vision during his sleep concerning the soul's immortality.

If it be true, then, that the souls of good men, when enlarged from this corporeal prison, wing their flight into the heavenly mansions with more or less ease in proportion to their moral attainments, what human spirit can we suppose to have made its immediate way to the gods with greater facility than that of Scipio? To bewail, therefore, an event attended with such advantageous consequences to himself would, I fear, have more the appearance of envy than of friendship. But should the contrary opinion prove to be the fact, should the soul and body really perish together, and no sense remain after our dissolution, yet death, although it cannot indeed, upon this supposition, be deemed a happiness to my illustrious friend, can by no means however be considered as an evil. For if all perception be totally extinguished in him, he is, with respect to everything that concerns himself, in the same state as if he had never been born. I say "with respect to himself," for it is far otherwise with regard to his friends and to his country,
as both will have reason to rejoice in his having lived so long as their own existence shall endure.

In every view, therefore, of this event, considering it merely as it relates to my departed friend, it appears, as I observed before, to be a happy consummation. But it is much otherwise with regard to myself, who, as I entered earlier into the world, ought, according to the common course of nature, to have sooner departed out of it. Nevertheless, I derive so much satisfaction from reflecting on the friendship which subsisted between us, that I cannot but think I have reason to congratulate myself on the felicity of my life, since I have had the happiness to pass the greatest part of it in the society of Scipio. We lived under the same roof, passed together through the same military employments, and were actuated in all our pursuits, whether of a public or private nature, by the same common principles and views. In short, and to express at once the whole spirit and essence of friendship, our inclinations, our sentiments, and our studies were in perfect accord. For these reasons my ambition is less gratified by that high opinion (especially as it is unmerited) which Fannius assures me the world entertains of my wisdom, than by the strong expectations I have conceived that
the memory of our friendship will prove immortal. I indulge this hope with the greater confidence as there do not occur in all the annals of past ages above three or four instances of a similar amity. And future times, I trust, will add the names of Scipio and Lælius to that select and celebrated number.

FANNIUS. — Your expectations, Lælius, cannot fail of being realised. And now, as you have mentioned Friendship, and we are entirely disengaged, it would be extremely acceptable to me (and I am persuaded it would likewise be so to Scævola) if, agreeably to your usual readiness upon other occasions of just inquiry, you would give us your opinion concerning the true nature of this connection, the extent of its obligations, and the maxims by which it ought to be conducted.

SCÆVOLA. — Fannius has prevented me in the request I was intending to make; your compliance, therefore, will equally confer an obligation upon both of us.

LÆLIUS. — I should very willingly gratify your desires if I thought myself equal to the task, for the subject is interesting, and we are at present, as Fannius observed, entirely at leisure; but I am too sensible of my own insufficiency to venture
thus unprepared upon the disquisition of a topic which requires much consideration to be treated as it deserves. Unpremeditated dissertations of this kind can only be expected from those Grecian geniuses, who are accustomed to speak on the sudden upon any given question; and to those learned disputants I must refer you, if you wish to hear the subject properly discussed. As for myself, I can only exhort you to look on Friendship as the most valuable of all human possessions, no other being equally suited to the moral nature of man, or so applicable to every state and circumstance, whether of prosperity or adversity, in which he can possibly be placed. But at the same time I lay it down as a fundamental axiom that "true Friendship can only subsist between those who are animated by the strictest principles of honour and virtue." When I say this, I would not be thought to adopt the sentiments of those speculative moralists who pretend that no man can justly be deemed virtuous who is not arrived at that state of absolute perfection which constitutes, according to their ideas, the character of genuine wisdom. This opinion may appear true, perhaps, in theory, but is altogether inapplicable to any useful purpose of society, as it supposes a degree
of virtue to which no mortal was ever capable of rising. It is not, therefore, that notional species of merit which imagination my possibly conceive, or our wishes perhaps form, that we have reason to expect and require in a friend; it is those moral attainments alone which we see actually realised among mankind. And, indeed, I can never be persuaded to think that either Fabricius, or Coruncanius, or Curius, whom our forefathers justly revered for the superior rectitude of their conduct, were sages according to that sublime criterion which these visionary philosophers have endeavoured to establish. I should be contented, however, to leave them in the undisturbed possession of their arrogant and unintelligible notions of virtue, provided they would allow that the great persons I have named merited at least the character of good men; but even this, it seems, they are not willing to grant, still contending, with their usual obstinacy, that goodness is an attribute which can only be ascribed to their perfect sage. I shall venture, nevertheless, to adjust my own measure of that quality by the humbler standard of plain common sense. In my opinion, therefore, whoever (like those distinguished models I just now mentioned) restrains his passions within the bounds of reason, and uniformly
acts, in all the various relations of life, upon one steady, consistent principle of approved honour, justice, and benevolence, that man is in reality, as well as in common estimation, strictly and truly good; inasmuch as he regulates his conduct (so far, I mean, as is compatible with human frailty) by a constant obedience to those best and surest guides of moral rectitude, the sacred laws of Nature.

In tracing these laws it seems evident, I think, that man, by the frame of his moral constitution, is disposed to consider himself as standing in some degree of social relation to the whole species in general; and that this principle acts with more or less vigour, according to the distance at which he is placed with respect to any particular community or individual of his kind. Thus it may be observed to operate with greater force between fellow-citizens of the same commonwealth than in regard to foreigners, and between the several members of the same family than towards those among whom there is no common tie of consanguinity. In the case of relations, indeed, this principle somewhat rises in its strength, and produces a sort of instinctive amity; but an amity, however, of no great firmness or solidity. The inferiority of this species
of natural connection, when compared with that which is the consequence of voluntary choice, appears from this single consideration: that the former has not the least dependence upon the sentiments of the heart, but continues the same it was in its origin, notwithstanding every degree of cordiality between the parties should be utterly extinguished; whereas the kind affections enter so essentially into the latter, that where love does not exist friendship can have no being. But what still farther evinces the strength and efficacy of friendship above all the numberless other social tendencies of the human heart is that, instead of wasting its force upon a multiplicity of divided objects, its whole energy is exerted for the benefit of only two or three persons at the utmost.

Friendship may be shortly defined, "a perfect conformity of opinions upon all religious and civil subjects, united with the highest degree of mutual esteem and affection;" and yet from these simple circumstances results the most desirable blessing (virtue alone excepted) that the gods have bestowed on mankind. I am sensible that in this opinion I shall not be universally supported—health and riches, honours and power, have each of them their distinct admirers, and are respectively
pursued as the supreme felicity of human life; whilst some there are (and the number is by no means inconsiderable) who contend that it is to be found only in the sensual gratifications. But the latter place their principal happiness on the same low enjoyments which constitute the chief good of brutes, and the former on those very precarious possessions that depend much less on our own merit than on the caprice of fortune. They, indeed, who maintain that the ultimate good of man consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue, fix it, undoubtedly, upon its truest and most glorious foundation; but let it be remembered, at the same time, that virtue is at once both the parent and the support of friendship.

I have already declared that by virtue I do not mean, with the philosophers before alluded to, that ideal strain of perfection which is nowhere to be found but in the pompous language of enthusiastic declamation; I mean only that attainable degree of moral merit which is understood by the term in common discourse, and may be exemplified in actual practice. Without entering, therefore, into a particular inquiry concerning those imaginary beings which never have been realised in human nature, I think myself warranted in considering those persons
as truly good men who have always been so deemed in the general opinion of mankind—the Pauli, for instance, and the Catos, the Galli, the Scipios, and the Phili; for with such characters the world has reason to be well contented.

When Friendship, therefore, is contracted between men who possess a degree of virtue not inferior to that which adorned those approved personages I have just named, it is productive of unspeakable advantages. "Life would be utterly lifeless," as old Ennius expresses it, without a friend on whose kindness and fidelity one might confidently repose. Can there be a more real complacency, indeed, than to lay open to another the most secret thoughts of one's heart with the same confidence and security as if they were still concealed in his own? Would not the fruits of prosperity lose much of their relish were there none who equally rejoiced with the possessor in the satisfaction he received from them? And how difficult must it prove to bear up under the pressure of misfortunes unsupported by a generous associate who more than equally divides their load? In short, the several occasions to which friendship extends its kindly offices are unbounded, while the advantage of every other object of human desires is confined within
certain specific and determinate limits, beyond which it is of no avail. Thus wealth is pursued for the particular uses to which it is solely applicable; power, in order to receive worship; honours, for the sake of fame; sensual indulgences, on account of the gratifications that attend them; and health, as the means of living exempt from pain and possessing the unobstructed exercise of all our corporeal faculties. Whereas Friendship (I repeat again) is adapted by its nature to an infinite number of different ends, accommodates itself to all circumstances and situations of human life, and can at no season prove either unsuitable or inconvenient—in a word, not even fire and water (to use a proverbial illustration) are capable of being converted to a greater variety of beneficial purposes.

I desire it may be understood, however, that I am now speaking, not of that inferior species of amity which occurs in the common intercourse of the world (although this, too, is not without its pleasures and advantages), but of that genuine and perfect friendship, examples of which are so extremely rare as to be rendered memorable by their singularity. It is this sort alone that can truly be said to heighten the joys of prosperity, and mitigate the sorrows of adversity, by a generous participa-
tion of both; indeed, one of the chief among the many important offices of this connection is exerted in the day of affliction, by dispelling the gloom that overcasts the mind, encouraging the hope of happier times, and preventing the depressed spirits from sinking into a state of weak and unmanly despondence. Whoever is in possession of a true friend sees the exact counterpart of his own soul. In consequence of this moral resemblance between them, they are so intimately one that no advantage can attend either which does not equally communicate itself to both; they are strong in the strength, rich in the opulence, and powerful in the power of each other. They can scarcely, indeed, be considered in any respect as separate individuals, and wherever the one appears the other is virtually present. I will venture even a bolder assertion, and affirm that in despite of death they must both continue to exist so long as either of them shall remain alive; for the deceased may, in a certain sense, be said still to live whose memory is preserved with the highest veneration and the most tender regret in the bosom of the survivor, a circumstance which renders the former happy in death, and the latter honoured in life.

If that benevolent principle which thus inti-
mately unites two persons in the bands of amity were to be struck out of the human heart, it would be impossible that either private families or public communities should subsist—even the land itself would lie waste, and desolation overspread the earth. Should this assertion stand in need of a proof, it will appear evident by considering the ruinous consequences which ensue from discord and dissension; for what family is so securely established, or what government fixed upon so firm a basis, that it would not be overturned and utterly destroyed were a general spirit of enmity and malevolence to break forth amongst its members?—a sufficient argument, surely, of the inestimable benefits which flow from the kind and friendly affections.

I have been informed that a certain learned bard of Agrigentum published a philosophic poem in Greek, in which he asserted that the several bodies which compose the physical system of the universe preserve the consistence of their respective forms, or are dispersed into their primitive atoms, as a principle of amity, or of discord, becomes predominant in their composition. It is certain, at least, that the powerful effects of these opposite agents in the moral world is universally
perceived and acknowledged. Agreeable to this general sentiment, who is there, when he beholds a man generously exposing himself to certain danger, for the sake of rescuing his distressed friend, that can forbear expressing the warmest approbation? Accordingly, what repeated acclamations lately echoed through the theatre at the new play of my host and friend Pacuvius, in that scene where Pylades and Orestes are introduced before the king; who being ignorant which of them was Orestes, whom he had determined to put to death, each insists, in order to save the life of his associate, that he himself is the real person in question. If the mere fictitious representation of such a magnanimous and heroic contention was thus universally applauded by the spectators, what impression must it have made upon their minds had they seen it actually displayed in real life! The general effect produced upon this occasion, clearly shows how deeply nature hath impressed on the human heart a sense of moral beauty; since a whole audience thus unanimously conspired in admiring an instance of sublime generosity in another's conduct, which not one of them, perhaps, was capable of exhibiting in his own.

Thus far I have ventured to lay before you my
general notions concerning friendship. If aught remain to be added on the subject (and much there certainly does), permit me to refer you to those philosophers who are more capable of giving you satisfaction.

Fannius.—That satisfaction, Lælius, we rather hope to receive from you. For although I have frequently applied to those philosophers to whom you would resign me, and have been no unwilling auditor of their discourses, yet I am persuaded you will deliver your sentiments upon this subject in a much more elegant and enlightening manner.

Scævola.—You would have been still more confirmed in that opinion, Fannius, had you been present with us at the conference which we held not long since in the gardens of Scipio, upon the subject of government; when Lælius proved himself so powerful an advocate in support of natural justice, by confuting the subtle arguments of the very acute and distinguishing Philus.

Fannius.—To triumph in the cause of justice could be no difficult task, certainly, to Lælius, who is, confessedly, one of the most just and upright of men.

Scævola.—And can it be less easy for him who has deservedly acquired the highest honour
AN ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP.

by his eminent constancy, affection, and fidelity to
his friend, to explain, with equal success, the
principles and duties of friendship?

Lælius.—This is pressing me beyond all power
of resistance; and, indeed, it would be unreason
able, as well as difficult, not to yield to the desires
of two such worthy relations, when they request
my sentiments upon a point of so interesting and
important a nature.

Having frequently, then, turned my thoughts on
this subject, the principal question that has always
occurred to me is, whether Friendship takes its rise
from the wants and weaknesses of man, and is
cultivated solely in order to obtain, by a mutual
exchange of good offices, those advantages which
he could not otherwise acquire? Or whether
nature, notwithstanding this beneficial intercourse
is inseparable from the connection, previously dis-
poses the heart to engage in it upon a nobler and
more generous inducement? In order to deter-
mine this question, it must be observed that love
is a leading and essential principle in constituting
that particular species of benevolence which is
termed amity; and although this sentiment may
be feigned, indeed, by the followers of those who
are courted merely with a view to interest, yet it
cannot possibly be produced by a motive of interest alone. There is a truth and simplicity in genuine friendship, an unconstrained and spontaneous emotion, altogether incompatible with every kind and degree of artifice and simulation. I am persuaded, therefore, that it derives its origin not from the indigence of human nature, but from a distinct principle implanted in the breast of man; from a certain instinctive tendency, which draws congenial minds into union, and not from a cool calculation of the advantages with which it is pregnant.

The wonderful force, indeed, of innate propensities of the benevolent kind is observable even among brutes, in that tender attachment which prevails during a certain period between the dam and her young. But their strongest effects are more particularly conspicuous in the human species; as appears, in the first place, from that powerful endearment which subsists between parents and children, and which cannot be eradicated or counteracted without the most detestable impiety; and in the next, from those sentiments of secret approbation which arise on the very first interview with a man whose manners and temper seem to harmonise with our own, and in whom we think
we discover symptoms of an honest and virtuous mind. In reality, nothing is so beautiful as virtue; and nothing makes its way more directly to the heart: we feel a certain degree of affection even towards those meritorious persons whom we have never seen, and whose characters are known to us only from history. Where is the man that does not, even at this distance of time, find his heart glow with benevolence towards the memory of Fabricius or Curius, though he certainly never beheld their persons? On the contrary, who is there that feels not emotions of hatred and detestation when he reflects on the conduct of Tarquin, of Cassius, or of Mælius? Rome has twice contended for empire upon Italian ground, when she sent forth her armies to oppose the respective invasions of Pyrrhus and of Hannibal; and yet, with what different dispositions do we review the campaigns of those hostile chiefs! The generous spirit of the former very much softens our resentment towards him; while the cruelty of the latter must render his character the abhorrence of every Roman.

If the charms of virtue, then, are so captivating, as to inspire us with some degree of affection towards those approved persons whom we never
saw; or, which is still more extraordinary, if they force us to admire them even in an enemy; what wonder is it that in those with whom we live and converse they should affect us in a still more irresistible manner? It must be acknowledged, however, that this first impression is considerably strengthened and improved, by a nearer intercourse, by subsequent good offices, and by a general indication of zeal for our service—causes which, when they operate with combined force, kindle in the heart the warmest and most generous amity. To suppose that all attachments of this sort spring solely from a sense of human imbecility, and in order to supply that insufficiency we feel in ourselves, by the assistance we hope to receive from others, is to degrade friendship to a most unworthy and ignoble origin. Indeed, if this supposition were true, they who find in themselves the greatest defects would be the most disposed and the best qualified to engage in this kind of connection, which is contrary to fact. For experience shows that the more a man looks for his happiness within himself, and the more firmly he stands supported by the consciousness of his own intrinsic merit, the more desirous he is to cultivate an intercourse of amity, and the better friend he certainly proves.
In what respect, let me ask, had Scipio any occasion for my services? We neither of us, most assuredly, stood in need of the other's aid; but the singular virtues I admired in his character, together with the favourable opinion which in some measure, perhaps, he had conceived of mine, were the primary and prevailing motives of that affectionate attachment which was afterwards so considerably increased by the habitudes of intimate and unreserved converse. For although many and great advantages accrued to both from the alliance that was thus formed between us, yet sure I am that the hope of receiving those reciprocal benefits by no means entered into the original cause of our union. In fact, as generosity disdains to make a traffic of her favours; and a liberal mind confers obligations, not from the mean hope of a return, but solely from that satisfaction which nature has annexed to the exertion of benevolent actions, so I think it is evident that we are induced to form friendships, not from a mercenary contemplation of their utility, but from that pure disinterested complacency which results from the mere exercise of the affection itself.

That sect of philosophers who impute all human actions to the same motive which determines those of brutes, and refer both to one common principle
of self-gratification, will be very far, I am sensible, from agreeing with me in the origin I have ascribed to friendship. And no wonder, for nothing great and elevated can win the esteem and approbation of a set of men whose whole thoughts and pursuits are professedly directed to so base and ignoble an end.

I shall take no further notice, therefore, of their unworthy tenets, well convinced as I am that there is an implanted sense in man, by which nature allures his heart to the charms of virtue, in whomsoever her lovely form appears. And hence it is, that they who find in themselves a predilection for some particular object of moral approbation are induced to desire a nearer and more intimate communion with that person, in order to enjoy those pure and mental advantages which flow from an habitual and familiar intercourse with the good,—I will add, too, in order to feel the refined satisfaction of inspiring equal and reciprocal sentiments of affection, together with the generous pleasure of conferring acts of kindness without the least view of a return. A friendship placed upon this, its proper and natural basis, is not only productive of the most solid utility, but stands at the same time upon a firmer and more durable foundation than if it were raised upon a sense of human
wants and weakness. For if interest were the true and only medium to cement this connection, it could hold no longer than while interest, which is always fluctuating and variable, should continue to be advanced by the same hand; whereas genuine friendship, being produced by the simple efficiency of nature's steady and immutable laws, resembles the source from whence it springs, and is for ever permanent and unchangeable.

This may suffice concerning the rise of friendship, unless you should have anything to object to the principles I have endeavoured to establish.

FANNIUS.—Much otherwise. I will take the privilege, therefore, of seniority to answer for Scævola as well as for myself, by requesting you in both our names to proceed.

SCÆVOLA.—Fannius has very justly expressed my sentiments, and I join with him in wishing to hear what you have further to observe on the question we have proposed.

LÆLIUS.—I will lay before you, then, my excellent young man, the result of frequent conversations which Scipio and I have formerly held together upon the subject. He used to say that nothing is so difficult as to preserve a lasting and unbroken friendship to the end of life. For it
may frequently happen not only that the interest of the parties shall considerably interfere, or their opinions concerning political measures widely differ, but age, infirmities, or misfortunes are apt to produce very extraordinary changes in the tempers and dispositions of men. He illustrated this general instability of common friendships by tracing the revolutions they are liable to undergo from the earliest period in which this kind of connection can commence. Accordingly, he observed that those strong attachments which are sometimes formed in childhood were generally renounced with the puerile robe. But should a particular affection contracted in this tender age happen to continue to riper years, it is nothing unusual to see it afterwards interrupted, either by rivalship in a matrimonial pursuit, or some other object of youthful competition, in which both cannot possibly succeed. If these common dangers, however, should be happily escaped, yet others no less fatal may hereafter rise up to its ruin, especially if they should become opposite candidates for the same dignities of the state. For as with the generality of mankind, an immoderate desire of wealth, so among those of a more liberal and exalted spirit, an inordinate thirst of glory is usually the strongest
bane of amity; and each of them have proved the occasion of converting the warmest friends into the most implacable enemies.

He added, that great and just dissensions had arisen also in numberless instances on account of improper requests—where a man has solicited his friend to assist him, for example, in his lawless gallantries, or to support him in some other act of equal dishonour and injustice. A denial upon such occasions, though certainly laudable, is generally deemed by the party refused to be a violation of the rights of amity; and he will probably resent it the more, as applications of this nature necessarily imply that the person who breaks through all restraints in urging them is equally disposed to make the same unwarrantable concessions on his own part. Disagreements of this kind have not only caused irreparable breaches between the closest connections, but have even kindled unextinguishable animosities. In short, the common friendships of the world are liable to be broken to pieces by such a variety of accidents, that Scipio thought it required a more than common portion, not only of good sense, but of good fortune, to steer entirely clear of those numerous and fatal rocks.

Our first inquiry therefore, if you please, shall
be, "How far the claims of friendship may reasonably extend?" For instance, ought the bosom friends of Coriolanus (if any intimacies of that kind he had) to have joined him in turning his arms against his country; or those of Viscellinus, or Spurius Mælius, to have assisted them in their designs of usurping the sovereign power?

In those public commotions which were raised by Tiberius Gracchus, it appeared that neither Quintus Tubero, nor any other of those persons with whom he lived upon terms of the greatest intimacy, engaged in his faction, one only excepted, who was related to your family, Scævola, by the ties of hospitality: I mean Blosius, of Cumæ. This man (as I was appointed an assessor with the two consuls Lænas and Rupilius) applied to me to obtain his pardon, alleging, in his justification, that he entertained so high an esteem and affection for Gracchus, as to hold himself obliged to concur with him in any measure he might propose. What! if he had even desired you to set fire to the Capitol? "Such a request, I am confident," replied Blosius, "he never would have made." But admitting that he had, how would you have determined? "In that case," returned Blosius, "I should most certainly have complied." Infamous as this confession
was, he acted agreeably to it; or rather, indeed, his conduct exceeded even the impiety of his professions, for, not contented with encouraging the seditious schemes of Tiberius Gracchus, he actually took the lead in them, and was an instigator as well as an associate in all the madness of his measures. In consequence of these extravagant proceedings, and alarmed to find that extraordinary judges were appointed for his trial, he made his escape into Asia, where, entering into the service of our enemies, he met with the fate he so justly merited for the injuries he had done to the commonwealth.

I lay it down, then, as a rule without exception, "that no degree of friendship can either justify or excuse the commission of a criminal action." For true amity being founded on an opinion of virtue in the object of our affection, it is scarcely possible that those sentiments should remain, after an avowed and open violation of the principles which originally produced them.

To maintain that the duties of this relation require a compliance with every request a friend shall offer, and give a right to expect the same unlimited concessions in return, would be a doctrine, I confess, from which no ill consequences could
ensue, if the parties concerned were absolutely perfect, and incapable of the least deviation from the dictates of virtue and good sense. But in settling the principles by which our conduct in this respect ought to be regulated, we are not to form our estimate by fictitious representations, but to consider what history and experience teaches us that mankind truly are, and to select for our imitation such real characters as seem to have approached the nearest to perfection.

Tradition informs us that Papas Æmilius and Caius Luscinus, who were twice colleagues in the consular and censorial offices, were united also in the strictest intimacy; and that Manius Curius and Titus Coruncanius lived with them, and with each other, upon terms of the strictest and most inviolable friendship. It may well, therefore, be presumed (since there is not even the slightest reason to suspect the contrary) that none of these illustrious worthies ever made a proposal to his friend inconsistent with the laws of honour, or that fidelity he had pledged to his country. To urge that "if any overtures of that nature had ever been made, they would certainly have been rejected, and consequently must have been concealed from public notice," is an objection by no
means sufficient to weaken the presumption, when the sanctity of manners which distinguished these venerable persons shall be duly considered; for to be capable of making such proposals would be no less a proof of depravity than actually consenting to them. Accordingly, we find that both Carbo and Caius Cato, the friends of Tiberius Gracchus, did not refuse to take a part in his turbulent measures, as his brother Caius, although he was not indeed a very considerable actor in the scene at first, is now most zealously engaged in the same unworthy cause.

Let it be established, therefore, as one of the most sacred and indispensable laws of this connection, "never either to make, or to grant, a request which honour and virtue will not justify." To allege, in any instance of deviation from moral rectitude, that one was actuated by a warmth of zeal for his friend, is in every species of criminal conduct a plea altogether scandalous and inadmissible, but particularly in transactions that strike at the peace and welfare of the state. I would the more earnestly inculcate this important maxim, as, from the present complexion of the times, it seems peculiarly necessary to guard against introducing principles which may hereafter be productive
of fatal disturbances in the republic; and, indeed, we have already somewhat deviated from that political line by which our wiser ancestors were wont to regulate their public conduct.

Thus Tiberius Gracchus, who aimed at sovereign power—or rather, indeed, who actually possessed it during the space of a few months—opened a scene so totally new to the Roman people that not even tradition had delivered down to them any circumstance in former times which resembled it. Some of the friends and relations of this man, who had concurred with him in his lifetime, continued to support the same factious measures after his death; and I cannot reflect on the cruel part they acted towards Scipio Nasica without melting into tears. I will confess, at the same time, that, in consideration of the punishment which Tiberius Gracchus has lately suffered, I have protected his friend Carbo as far as it was in my power. As to the consequences we have reason to expect from the tribunate of Caius Gracchus, I am unwilling to indulge conjecture; but this I do not scruple to say, that when once a distemper of this kind has broken out in a commonwealth, the infection is apt to spread, and it generally gathers strength the wider it extends. In conformity to this observation,
the change which was made by the Gabinian law in the manner of voting was, two years afterwards, you know, carried still farther by the law which Cassius proposed and obtained. And I cannot but prophesy that a rupture between the people and the senate will be the result of both, as the most important affairs of the commonwealth will hereafter be conducted by the caprice of the multitude. It is much easier, indeed, to discover the source from which these disorders will arise, than to point out a remedy for the mischief they will occasion.

I have thrown out these reflections, as well knowing that no public innovations of this pernicious kind are ever attempted, without the assistance of some select and confidential associates. It is, necessary, therefore, to admonish those who mean well to the constitution of their country, that if they should inadvertently have formed an intimacy with men of a contrary principle, they are not to imagine themselves so bound by the laws of amity as to lie under an indispensable obligation to support them in attempts injurious to the community. Whosoever disturbs the peace of the commonwealth is a just object of public indignation; nor is that man less deserving of punishment
who acts as a second in such an impious cause than the principal. No person ever possessed a greater share of power, or was more eminently distinguished among the Grecian states, than Themistocles. This illustrious general, who was commander-in-chief of the Grecian forces in the Persian War, and who by his services upon that occasion delivered his country from the tyranny with which it was threatened, having been driven into exile by the jealousy his great talents had raised, did not acquiesce under the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens with the submission he ought; on the contrary, he acted the same traitorous part under this unmerited persecution as Coriolanus did amongst us about twenty years before. But neither the one nor the other found a coadjutor among their respective friends, in consequence of which just dereliction, they each of them perished by their own desperate hands.

It appears, then, from the principles I have laid down, that these kinds of wicked combinations under the pretended obligations of friendship, are so far from being sanctified by that relation, that on the contrary they ought to be publicly discouraged by the severest punishments; lest it should be thought an allowed maxim, that a friend is to
be supported in every outrage he may commit, even though he should take up arms against his country. I am the more earnest to expose the error of this dangerous persuasion, as there are certain symptoms in the present times which give me reason to fear that at some future period the impious principle I am combating may actually be extended to the case I last mentioned; and I am no less desirous that the peace of the republic should be preserved after my death than zealous to maintain it during my life.

The first and great axiom therefore in the laws of amity should invariably be—"never to require from a friend what he cannot grant without a breach of his honour; and always to be ready to assist him upon every occasion consistent with that principle." So long as we shall act under the secure guard of this sacred barrier, it will not be sufficient merely to yield a ready compliance with all his desires; we ought to anticipate and prevent them. Another rule likewise of indispensable obligation upon all who would approve themselves true friends, is, "to be ever ready to offer their advice, with an unreserved and honest frankness of heart." The counsels of a faithful and friendly monitor carry with them an authority which ought
to have great influence, and they should be urged not only with freedom, but even with severity, if the occasion should appear to require it.

I am informed that certain Greek writers (philosophers, it seems, in the opinion of their countrymen) have advanced some very extraordinary positions relating to the subject of our present inquiry; as, indeed, what subject is there which these subtle geniuses have not tortured with their sophistry? The authors to whom I allude dissuade their disciples from entering into any strong attachments, as unavoidably creating supernumerary disquietudes to those who engage in them, and as every man has more than sufficient to call forth his solicitude in the course of his own affairs, it is a weakness, they contend, anxiously to involve himself in the concerns of others. They recommend it also in all connections of this kind to hold the bands of union extremely loose, so as always to have it in one's power to straiten or relax them as circumstances and situations shall render most expedient. They add, as a capital article of their doctrine, that "to live exempt from cares is an essential ingredient to constitute human happiness, but an ingredient, however, which he who voluntarily distresses himself with cares in which he
has no necessary and personal interest, must never hope to possess."

I have been told, likewise, that there is another set of pretended philosophers of the same country, whose tenets concerning this subject are of a still more illiberal and ungenerous cast, and I have already, in the course of this conversation, slightly animadverted upon their principles. The proposition they attempt to establish is that "friendship is an affair of self-interest entirely, and that the proper motive for engaging in it is, not in order to gratify the kind and benevolent affections, but for the benefit of that assistance and support which is to be derived from the connection." Accordingly they assert that those persons are most disposed to have recourse to auxiliary alliances of this kind who are least qualified by nature or fortune to depend upon their own strength and powers; the weaker sex, for instance, being generally more inclined to engage in friendships than the male part of our species; and those who are depressed by indigence, or labouring under misfortunes, than the wealthy and the prosperous.

Excellent and obliging sages these, undoubtedly. To strike out the friendly affections from the moral world would be like extinguishing the sun in the
natural, each of them being the source of the best and most grateful satisfactions that the gods have conferred on the sons of men. But I should be glad to know what the real value of this boasted exemption from care, which they promise their disciples, justly amounts to? an exemption flattering to self-love, I confess, but which, upon many occurrences in human life, should be rejected with the utmost disdain. For nothing, surely, can be more inconsistent with a well-poised and manly spirit, than to decline engaging in any laudable action, or to be discouraged from persevering in it, by an apprehension of the trouble and solicitude with which it may probably be attended. Virtue herself, indeed, ought to be totally renounced, if it be right to avoid every possible means that may be productive of uneasiness; for who that is actuated by her principles can observe the conduct of an opposite character, without being affected with some degree of secret dissatisfaction? Are not the just, the brave, and the good necessarily exposed to the disagreeable emotions of dislike and aversion when they respectively meet with instances of fraud, of cowardice, or of villainy? It is an essential property of every well-constituted mind to be affected with pain, or pleasure, according to
the nature of those moral appearances that present themselves to observation.

If sensibility, therefore, be not incompatible with true wisdom (and it surely is not, unless we suppose that philosophy deadens every finer feeling of our nature) what just reason can be assigned why the sympathetic sufferings, which may result from friendship, should be a sufficient inducement for banishing that generous affection from the human breast? Extinguish all emotions of the heart and what difference will remain, I do not say between man and brute, but between man and a mere inanimate clod? Away then with those austere philosophers who represent virtue as hardening the soul against all the softer impressions of humanity. The fact, certainly, is much otherwise; a truly good man is upon many occasions extremely susceptible of tender sentiments, and his heart expands with joy or shrinks with sorrow, as good or ill fortune accompanies his friend. Upon the whole, then, it may fairly be concluded, that as in the case of virtue, so in that of friendship, those painful sensations which may sometimes be produced by the one, as well as by the other, are equally insufficient for excluding either of them from taking possession of our bosoms.
There is a charm in virtue, as I have already had occasion to remark, that by a secret and irresistible bias draws the general affection of those persons towards each other in whom it appears to reside, and this instantaneous goodwill is mutually attended with a desire of entering into a nearer and more intimate correspondence; sentiments which, at length, by a natural and necessary consequence, give rise to particular friendships. Strange, indeed, would it be that exalted honours, magnificent mansions, or sumptuous apparel, not to mention other splendid objects of general admiration, should have power to captivate the greater part of our species, and that the beauty of a virtuous mind, capable of meeting our affection with an equal return, should not have sufficient allurements to inspire the most ardent passion. I said "capable of meeting our affection with an equal return;" for nothing, surely, can be more delightful than to live in a constant interchange and vicissitude of reciprocal good offices. If we add to this, as with truth we may, that a similitude of manners is the most powerful of all attractions, it must be granted that the virtuous are strongly impelled towards each other by that moral tendency and natural relationship which subsists between them.
No proposition therefore can be more evident, I think, than that the virtuous must necessarily, and by an implanted sense in the human heart, receive impressions of goodwill towards each other, and these are the natural source from whence genuine friendship can only flow. Not that a good man's benevolence is by any means confined to a single object; he extends it to every individual. For true virtue, incapable of partial and contracted exceptions to the exercise of her benign spirit, enlarges the soul with sentiments of universal philanthropy. How, indeed, could it be consistent with her character to take whole nations under her protection, if even the lowest ranks of mankind, as well as the highest, were not the proper objects of beneficence?

But to return to the more immediate object of our present consideration. They who insist that "utility is the first and prevailing motive which induces mankind to enter into particular friendships," appear to me to divest the association of its most amiable and engaging principle. For to a mind rightly composed it is not so much the benefits received as the affectionate zeal from which they flow, that gives them their best and most valuable recommendation. It is so far, indeed, from being verified by fact, that a sense of our
wants is the original cause of forming these amicable alliances; that, on the contrary, it is observable that none have been more distinguished in their friendships than those whose power and opulence, but above all, whose superior virtue (a much firmer support) have raised them above every necessity of having recourse to the assistance of others. Perhaps, however, it may admit of a question, whether it were desirable that one's friend should be so absolutely sufficient for himself, as to have no wants of any kind to which his own powers were not abundantly adequate. I am sure, at least, I should have been deprived of a most exquisite satisfaction if no opportunity had ever offered to approve the affectionate zeal of my heart towards Scipio, and he had never had occasion, either in his civil or military transactions, to make use of my counsel or my aid.

The true distinction, then, in this question is, that "although friendship is certainly productive of utility, yet utility is not the primary motive of friendship." Those selfish sensualists, therefore, who lulled in the lap of luxury presume to maintain the reverse, have surely no claim to attention, as they are neither qualified by reflection nor experience to be competent judges of the subject.
Good gods! is there a man upon the face of the earth who would deliberately accept of all the wealth and all the affluence this world can bestow if offered to him upon the severe terms of his being unconnected with a single mortal whom he could love or by whom he should be beloved? This would be to lead the wretched life of a detested tyrant, who, amidst perpetual suspicions and alarms, passes his miserable days a stranger to every tender sentiment, and utterly precluded from the heartfelt satisfactions of friendship. For who can love the man he fears? or how can affection dwell with a consciousness of being feared? He may be flattered, indeed, by his followers with the specious semblance of personal attachment, but whenever he falls (and many instances there are of such a reverse of fortune) it will appear how totally destitute he stood of every genuine friend. Accordingly it is reported that Tarquin used to say in his exile, that "his misfortunes had taught him to discern his real from his pretended friends, as it was now no longer in his power to make either of them any returns." I should much wonder, however, if, with a temper so insolent and ferocious, he ever had a sincere friend.

But as the haughtiness of Tarquin's imperious
deportment rendered it impossible for him to know the satisfaction of enjoying a faithful attachment, so it frequently happens that the being advanced into exalted stations equally proves the occasion of excluding the great and the powerful from possessing that inestimable felicity. Fortune, indeed, is not only blind herself but is apt to affect her favourites with the same infirmity. Weak minds, elated with being distinguished by her smiles, are generally disposed to assume an arrogant and supercilious demeanour; and there is not in the whole compass of nature a more insufferable creature than a prosperous fool. Prosperity, in truth, has been observed to produce wonderful transformations even in persons who before had always the good sense to deport themselves in a modest and unassuming manner; and their heads have been so turned by the eminence to which they were raised, as to look down with neglect and contempt on their old friends, while their new connections entirely engaged all their attention and favour. But there cannot surely be a more flagrant instance of weakness and folly than to employ the great advantages of extensive influence and opulent possessions in the purchase of brilliant equipages, gaudy raiment, elegant vases, together
with every other fashionable decoration which wealth and power can procure; and yet neglect to use the means they afford of acquiring that noblest and most valuable ornament of human life, a worthy and faithful friend! The absurdity of this conduct is the more amazing, as after all the base sacrifices that may have been made to obtain these vain and ostentatious embellishments, the holding of them must ever be precarious. For whoever shall invade them with a stronger arm, to him they will infallibly belong; whereas a true friend is a treasure which no power, how formidable soever, can be sufficient to wrest from the happy possessor. But admitting that the favours of fortune were in their nature permanent and irrevocable, yet how joyless and insipid must they prove if not heightened and endeared by the society and participation of a bosom friend.

But not to pursue reflections of this sort any farther, let me rather observe that it is necessary to settle some fixed standard or measure, by which to regulate and adjust the kind affections in the commerce under consideration. To this intent, three different criterions I find have been proposed. The first is, "that in all important occurrences we should act towards our friend precisely
in the same manner as if the case were our own:"
the second, "that our good offices should be ex-
actly dealt out, both in degree and value, by the
measure and merit of those we receive from him;"
and the last, "that our conduct in relation to all his
carens should be governed by the same kind of
sentiments with which he appears to be actuated
in respect to them himself."

Now there is not one of these several rules to
which I can entirely give my approbation. The
first is by no means I think just; because there
are many things I would undertake on my friend's
account, which I should never prevail with myself
to act on my own. For instance, I would not
scruple on his behalf to solicit, nor even to sup-
plicate a man of a mean and worthless character,
nor to repel with peculiar acrimony and indig-
nation, any affront or injury that might be offered
to him. And this conduct, which I could not hold
without blame in matters that merely concerned
myself, I very laudably might in those which relate
to my friend. Add to this that there are many
advantages which a generous mind would willingly
forego, or suffer himself to be deprived of, that his
friend might enjoy the benefit of them.

With regard to the second criterion, which
determines the measure of our affection and good offices, by exactly proportioning them to the value and quality we receive of each, it degrades the connection into a mere mercantile account between debtor and creditor. True friendship is animated by much too liberal and enlarged a spirit to distribute her beneficence with a careful and penurious circumspection, lest she should bestow more abundantly than she receives: she scorns to poise the balance so exactly equal that nothing shall be placed in the one scale without its equivalent in the other.

The third maxim is still less admissible than either of the two former. There are some characters who are apt to entertain too low an opinion of their personal merit, and whose spirits are frequently much too languid and depressed to exert themselves with proper vigour and activity for the promotion of their own interest or honours. Under circumstances of this kind shall the zeal of a friend rise no higher than one's own, but cautiously be restrained within the same humble level? On the contrary, he ought to endeavour by every means in his power to dispel the gloom that overcasts the mind of his desponding associate, and animate his hopes with livelier and more sanguine expectations.
And now, having pointed out the insufficiency of the several criteria I have mentioned, it is necessary I should produce some other more adequate and satisfactory. But before I deliver my opinion in respect to this article, suffer me previously to observe that Scipio used frequently to say there never was a caution advanced more injurious to the principles of true amity than the famous precept which advises, "so to regulate your affection towards your friend as to remember that the time may possibly come when you shall have reason to hate him." He could never, he said, be persuaded that Bias, a man so distinguished for wisdom as to be ranked among the seven celebrated sages of Greece, was really the author, as he is generally supposed, of so unworthy a precaution. It was rather the maxim, he imagined, of some sordid wretch, or perhaps of some ambitious statesman, who, a stranger to every nobler sentiment of the human heart, had no other object in forming his connections but as they might prove conducive to the increase or establishment of his power. It is impossible certainly to entertain a friendship for any man of whom you cherish so unfavourable an opinion as to suppose he may hereafter give you cause to become his enemy. In reality, if this
axiom were justly founded, and it be right to sit thus loose in our affections, we ought to wish that our friend might give us frequent occasions to complain of his conduct, to lament whenever he acted in a laudable manner, and to envy every advantage that might attend him, lest unhappily he should lay too strong a hold on our heart. This unworthy rule, therefore, whoever was the author of it, is evidently calculated for the utter extirpation of true amity. The more rational advice would have been, as Scipio remarked, to be always so cautious in forming friendships as never to place our esteem and affections where there was a probability of their being converted into the opposite sentiments. But, at all events, if we should be so unfortunate as to make an improper choice, it were wiser, he thought, not to look forward to possible contingencies than to be always acting upon the defensive, and painfully guarding against future dissensions.

I think, then, the only measures that can be properly recommended respecting our general conduct in the article of friendship is, in the first place, to be careful that we form the connection with men of strict and irreproachable manners; and, in the next, frankly to lay open to each other all our
thoughts, inclinations, and purposes without the least caution, reserve, or disguise. I will venture even to add that in cases in which the life or good fame of a friend is concerned it may be allowable to deviate a little from the path of strict right in order to comply with his desires; provided, however, that by this compliance our own character be not materially affected. And this is the largest concession that should be made to friendship; for the good opinion of the public ought never to be lightly esteemed, nor the general affection of our fellow-citizens considered as a matter of little importance in carrying on the great affairs of the world. Popularity, indeed, if purchased at the expense of base condescensions to the vices or the follies of the people, is a disgrace to the possessor, but when it is the just and natural result of a laudable and patriotic conduct, it is an acquisition which no wise man will ever contemn.

But to return to Scipio. Friendship was his favourite topic, and I have frequently heard him remark that there is no article in which mankind usually act with so much negligence as in what relates to this connection. Everyone, he observed, informs himself with great exactness of what numbers his flocks and his herds consist, but who
is it that endeavours to ascertain his real friends with the same requisite precision! Thus, likewise, in choosing the former much caution is commonly used in order to discover those significant marks which denote their proper qualities. Whereas, in selecting the latter, it is seldom that any great attention is exerted to discern those moral signatures which indicate the qualifications necessary to constitute a friend.

One of the principal ingredients to form that character is a "steadiness and constancy of temper." This virtue, it must be confessed, is not very generally to be found among mankind, nor is there any other means to discover in whose bosom it resides than experience. But as this experience cannot fully be acquired till the connection is already formed, affection is apt to take the lead of judgment, and render a previous trial impossible. It is the part of prudence, therefore, to restrain a predilection from carrying us precipitately into the arms of a new friend before we have, in some degree at least, put his moral qualifications to the test. A very inconsiderable article of money may be sufficient to prove the levity of some men's professions of friendship; whilst a much larger sum in contest will be necessary to shake the constancy of
others. But should there be a few, perhaps, who are actuated by too generous a spirit to suffer any pecuniary interest to stand in competition with the claims of amity, yet where shall we find the man who will not readily surrender his friendship to his ambition when they happen to interfere? Human nature is, in general, much too weak to resist the charms which surround these glittering temptations; and men are apt to flatter themselves that although they should acquire wealth or power by violating the duties of friendship, the world will be too much dazzled by the splendour of the objects to take notice of the unworthy sacrifice they make to obtain them. And hence it is that real, unfeigned amity is so seldom to be met with among those who are engaged in the pursuit or possession of the honours and the offices of the commonwealth.

To mention another species of trial which few likewise have the firmness to sustain. How severe is it thought by the generality of mankind to take a voluntary share in the calamities of others! And yet it is in the hour of adversity, as Ennius well observes, that Friendship must principally prove her truth and strength. In short, the deserting of a friend in his distress, and the neglecting of him
in one's own prosperity, are the two tests which discover the weakness and instability of most connections of this nature. To preserve, therefore, in those seasons of probation, an immovable and unshaken fidelity is a virtue so exceedingly rare that I had almost called it more than human.

The great support and security of that invariable constancy and steadiness which I require in a friend is a strong and delicate sense of honour; for there can be no reliance upon any man who is totally uninfluenced by that principle, or in whom it operates but faintly. It is essential also, in order to form a permanent connection, that the object of our choice should not only have the same general turn of mind with our own, but possess an open, artless, and ingenuous temper; for where any one of those qualities are wanting, vain would it be to expect a lasting and faithful attachment. True friendship, indeed, is absolutely inconsistent with every species of artifice and duplicity; and it is equally impossible it should be maintained between persons whose dispositions and general modes of thinking do not perfectly accord. I must add, as another requisite for that stability I am speaking of, that the party should neither be capable of taking an ill-natured satisfaction in reprehending the frailties of his
friend, nor easily induced to credit those imputations with which the malice of others may asperse him.

These reflections sufficiently confirm that position I set out with in this conversation, when I asserted that "true friendship can only be found among the virtuous;" for, in the first place, sincerity is so essential a quality in forming a good—or, if you please, a wise—man (for they are convertible terms), that a person of that character would deem it more generous to be a declared enemy than to conceal a rancorous heart under a smooth brow; and in the next the same generous simplicity of heart would not only induce him to vindicate his friend against the accusation of others, but render him incapable of cherishing in his own breast that little suspicious temper which is ever apt to take offence and perpetually discovering some imaginary violation of amity.

Add to this that his conversation and address ought to be sweetened with a certain ease and politeness of language and manners, that wonderfully contribute to heighten and improve the relish of this intercourse. A solemn, severe demeanour may be very proper, I confess, in certain characters, to give them their proper impression; but friendship
should wear a more pleasing aspect, and at all
times appear with a complacent, affable, and uncon-
strained countenance.

And here I cannot forbear taking notice of an
extraordinary question which some, it seems, have
considered as not altogether without difficulty. It
has been asked, "Is the pleasure of acquiring a
new friend, supposing him endued with virtues
which render him deserving our choice, preferable
to the satisfaction of possessing an old one?" On
the same account I presume, as we prefer a young
horse to one that is grown old in our service, for
never, surely, was there a doubt proposed more un-
worthy of a rational mind! It is not with friend-
ships as with acquisitions of most other kinds, which,
after frequent enjoyment, are generally attended
with satiety; on the contrary, the longer we pre-
serve them, like those sorts of wine that will bear
age, the more relishing and valuable they become.
Accordingly the proverb justly says that "one
must eat many a peck of salt with a man before
he can have sufficient opportunities to approve
himself a thorough friend"—not that new con-
nections are to be declined, provided appearances
indicate that in due time they may ripen into the
happy fruits of a well contracted amity. Old
friendships, however, certainly have a claim to the superior degree of our esteem, were it for no other reason than from that powerful impression which ancient habitudes of every kind naturally make upon the human heart. To have recourse once more to the ludicrous instance I just now suggested—who is there that would not prefer a horse whose paces he had been long accustomed to before one that was new and untrained to his hand? Even things inanimate lay a strong hold on the mind by the mere force of custom, as is observable in that rooted affection we bear towards those places, though never so wild and uncultivated, in which a considerable part of our earlier days have been passed.

It frequently happens that there is a great disparity between intimate friends both in point of rank and talents. Now, under these circumstances, "he who has the advantage should never appear sensible of his superiority." Thus Scipio, who stood distinguished in the little group, if I may so call it, of our select associates, never discovered in his behaviour the least consciousness of his pre-eminence over Philus, Rupilius, Memmius, or any other of his particular connections, who were of subordinate abilities or station. And with regard
to his brother, Q. Maximus, who, although a man of great merit, and his senior, was by no means comparable with Scipio, he always treated him with as much deference and regard as if he had advanced as far beyond him in every other article as in point of years; in short, it was his constant endeavour to raise all his friends into an equal degree of consequence with himself, and his example well deserves to be imitated. Whatever excellences, therefore, a man may possess in respect to his virtues, his intellectual endowments, or the accidental favours of fortune, he ought generously to communicate the benefits of them with his friends and family. Agreeably to these principles, should he happen to be descended from an obscure ancestry, and see any of his relations in distressed circumstances, or that require the assistance of his superior power or abilities, it is incumbent upon him to employ his credit, his riches, and his talents, to supply their respective deficiencies, and reflect back upon them every honour and advantage they are capable of receiving. Dramatic writers, when the fabulous hero of their play, after having been educated under some poor shepherd ignorant of his true parent, is discovered to be of royal lineage, or the offspring, perhaps, of some celestial divinity,
always think it necessary to exhibit the noble youth as still retaining a grateful affection for the honest rustic to whom he had so long supposed himself indebted for his birth; but how much more are these sentiments due to him who has a legitimate claim to his filial tenderness and respect!—In a word, the most sensible satisfaction that can result from advantageous distinctions of every sort is in the pleasure a well-constituted mind must feel by exerting them for the benefit of every individual to whom he stands related, either by the ties of kindred or amity.

But if he who, on account of any of those superiorities which I have mentioned, appears the most conspicuous figure in the circle of his friends, ought by no means to discover in his behaviour towards them the least apparent sense of the eminence on which he stands, so neither should they, on the other hand, betray sentiments of envy or dissatisfaction in seeing him thus exalted above them. It must be acknowledged, however, that in situations of this kind the latter are too apt to be unreasonable in their expectations; to complain that their friend is not sufficiently attentive to their interest, and sometimes even to break out into open remonstrances, especially if they think
they are entitled to plead the merit of any considerable services to strengthen their respective claims. But to be capable of reproaching a man with the obligations you have conferred upon him is a disposition exceedingly contemptible and odious; it is his part, indeed, not to forget the good offices he has received; but ill, certainly, would it become his friend to be the monitor for that purpose.

It is not sufficient, therefore, merely to behave with an easy condescension towards those friends who are of less considerable note than oneself; it is incumbent upon him to bring them forward, and, as much as possible, to raise their consequence. The apprehension of not being treated with sufficient regard sometimes creates much uneasiness in this connection; and those tempers are most liable to be disquieted by this suspicion that are inclined to entertain too low an opinion of their own merit. It is the part therefore of a generous and benevolent mind to endeavour to relieve his friend from the mortification of these humiliating sentiments, not only by professions, but by essential services.

The proper measure by which these services ought to be regulated must be taken partly from
the extent of our own power, and partly from what
the person who is the object of our particular
affection has abilities to sustain. For how un-
limited soever a man's authority and influence
might be, it would be impossible to raise indis-
criminately all his friends by turns into the same
honourable stations. Thus Scipio, although he
had sufficient interest to procure the consular
dignity for Publius Rutilius, could not perform
the same good office for Lucius, the brother of that
consul. But even admitting that you had the
arbitrary disposal of every dignity of the state,
still it would be necessary well to examine whether
your friend's talents were equal to his ambition,
and sufficiently qualified him to discharge the
duties of the post in question, with credit to him-
self and advantage to the public.

It is proper to observe that in stating the duties
and obligations of friendship, those intimacies alone
can justly be taken into consideration which are
formed at a time of life when men's characters are
decided, and their judgments arrived at maturity.
As to the associates of our early years, the com-
panions and partners of our puerile pleasures and
amusements, they can by no means, simply on
that account, be deemed in the number of friends.
Indeed, if the first objects of our affection had the best claim to be received into that rank, our nurses and our pedagogues would certainly have a right to the most considerable share of our regard. Some degree of it is unquestionably due to them, but of a kind, however, far different from that which is the subject of our present inquiry. The truth is, were our early attachments the just foundation of amity, it would be impossible that the union should ever be permanent. For our inclinations and pursuits take a different turn as we advance into riper years; and where these are no longer similar, the true cement of friendship is dissolved. It is the total disparity between the disposition and manners of the virtuous and the vicious that alone renders their coalition incompatible.

There is a certain intemperate degree of affection towards one’s friends which it is necessary to restrain, as the indulging of it has frequently, and in very important situations, proved extremely prejudicial to their interest. To exemplify my meaning by an instance from ancient story: Neoptolemus would never have had the glory of taking Troy had his friend Lycomedes, in whose court he had been educated, succeeded in his too warm and
earnest solicitations not to hazard his person in that famous expedition. There are numberless occasions which may render an absence between friends highly expedient; and to endeavour, from an impatience of separation, to prevent it, betrays a degree of weakness inconsistent with that firm and manly spirit, without which it is impossible to act up to the character of a true friend. And this is a farther confirmation of the maxim I before insisted upon, that "in a commerce of friendship, mutual requests or concessions should neither be made nor granted, without due and mature deliberation."

But to turn our reflections from those nobler alliances of this kind which are formed between men of eminent and superior virtue, to that lower species which occurs in the ordinary intercourse of the world. In connections of this nature, it sometimes unfortunately happens, that circumstances arise which render it expedient for a man of honour to break with his friend. Some latent vice, perhaps, or concealed ill-humour, unexpectedly discovers itself in his behaviour either towards his friends themselves, or towards others, which cannot be overlooked without participating his disgrace. The most advisable and prudent conduct in situations
of this kind is to suffer the intimacy to wear out by silent and insensible degrees; or, to use a strong expression, which I remember to have fallen from Cato upon a similar occasion, "the bands of friendship should be gradually untied, rather than suddenly cut asunder;" always supposing, however, that the offence is not of so atrocious a nature as to render an absolute and immediate alienation indispensably requisite for one's own honour.

As it is not unusual (for I am still speaking of common friendships) that dissensions arise from some extraordinary change of manners or sentiments, or from some contrariety of opinions with respect to public affairs, the parties at variance should be much upon their guard, lest their behaviour towards each other should give the world occasion to remark that they have not only ceased to be cordial friends, but are become inveterate enemies, for nothing is more indecent than to appear in open war with a man with whom one has formerly lived upon terms of familiarity and good fellowship.

Scipio estranged himself from Quintus Pompeius, you well know, solely upon my account; as the dissensions which arose in the republic alienated him also from my colleague Metellus.
But in both instances he preserved the dignity of his character, and never suffered himself to be betrayed into the least improper warmth of resentment.

Upon the whole, then, the first great caution in this commerce should be studiously to avoid all occasions of discord; but if any should necessarily arise, the next is to manage the quarrel with so much temper and moderation that the flame of friendship shall appear to have gently subsided, rather than to have been violently extinguished. But above all, whenever a dissension happens between the parties, they should be particularly on their guard against indulging a virulent animosity; as a spirit of this exasperated kind, when unrestrained, is apt to break forth into expressions of the most malevolent contumely and reproach. In a case of this nature, if the language should not be too insulting to be borne, it will be prudent in consideration of their former friendship to receive it without a return, for by this forbearance the reviler, and not the reviled, will appear the person that most deserves to be condemned.

The sure, and indeed the only sure, means to escape the several errors and inconveniences I have pointed out is, in the first place, "never
hastily to engage in friendships;" and, in the next, "not to enter into them with those who are unworthy of the connection." Now, he alone is worthy whose personal merit, independent of all other considerations, renders him the just object of affection and esteem. Characters of this sort, it must be confessed, are extremely rare, as indeed every other species of excellence generally is, nothing being more uncommon than to meet with what is perfect in its kind in any subject whatsoever. But the misfortune is that the generality of the world have no conception of any other merit than what may be turned to interest. They love their friends upon the same principle, and in the same proportion, as they love their flocks and their herds; giving just so much of their regard to each as is equal to the profits they respectively produce.

Hence it is they are for ever strangers to the sweet complacencies of that generous amity which springs from those natural instincts originally impressed upon the human soul, and is simply desirable for its own abstracted and intrinsic value. To convince them, however, of the possible existence at least and powerful efficacy of an affection utterly void of all mercenary motives, they need only be referred to what passes in their own bosoms. For
the love which every man bears to himself does not certainly flow from any expected recompense or reward, but solely from that pure and innate regard which each individual feels for his own person. Now, if the same kind of affection be not transferred into friendship, it will be in vain to hope for a true friend; as a true friend is no other in effect than a second self.

To these reflections we may add that if two distinct principles universally prevail throughout the whole animal creation, in the first place, that love of self which is common to every sensitive being, and, in the next, a certain degree of social affection, by which every individual of the same species is led to herd with its kind, how much more strongly has nature infused into the heart of man, together with a principle of self-love, this herding disposition! By the latter he is powerfully impelled not only to unite with his species in general, but to look out for some particular associate with whom he may be so intimately blended in sentiments and inclinations as to form, I had almost said, one soul in two bodies.

The generality of mankind are so unreasonable, not to say arrogant, as to require that their friends should be formed by a more perfect model than
themselves are able or willing to imitate. Whereas the first endeavour should be to acquire yourself those moral excellences which constitute a virtuous character, and then to find an associate whose good qualities reflect back the true image of your own. Thus would the fair fabric of friendship be erected upon that immovable basis which I have so repeatedly recommended in the course of this inquiry. For what should endanger its stability when a mutual affection between the parties is blended with principles that raise them above those mean passions by which the greater part of the world are usually governed? Being equally actuated by a strong sense of justice and equity, they will at all times equally be zealous to exert their utmost powers in the service of each other, well assured that nothing will ever be required, on either side, inconsistent with the dictates of truth and honour. In consequence of these principles they will not only love, but revere each other. I say revere, for where reverence does not dwell with affection, amity is bereaved of her noblest and most graceful ornament.

It is an error, therefore, that leads to the most pernicious consequences to imagine that the laws of friendship supersede those of moral obligation,
and justify a participation with licentiousness and debauchery. Nature has sown the seed of that social affection in the heart of man for purposes far different; not to produce confederates in vice, but auxiliaries in virtue. Solitary and sequestered virtue is indeed incapable of rising to the same height as when she acts in conjunction with an affectionate and animating companion of her generous efforts. They who are thus leagued in reciprocal support and encouragement of each other's moral ambition may be considered as setting out together in the best company and surest road towards those desirable objects in which nature has placed the supreme felicity of man. Yes, my friends, I will repeat it again. An amity ennobled by these exalted principles, and directed to these laudable purposes, leads to honour and to glory, and is productive, at the same time, of that sweet satisfaction and complacency of mind which, in conjunction with the two former, essentially constitute real happiness. He, therefore, who means to acquire these great and ultimate beatitudes of human life must receive them from the hands of Virtue; as neither friendship or aught else deservedly valuable can possibly be obtained without her influence and intervention. For they
who persuade themselves that they may possess a true friend, at least, where moral merit has no share in producing the connection, will find themselves miserably deceived whenever some severe misfortune shall give them occasion to make the decisive experiment.

It is a maxim, then, which cannot too frequently nor too strongly be inculcated, that in forming the attachment we are speaking of "we should never suffer affection to take root in our hearts before judgment has time to interpose;" for in no circumstance of our lives can a hasty and inconsiderate choice be attended with more fatal consequences. But the folly is that we generally forbear to deliberate till consideration can nothing avail; and hence it is that after the association has been habitually formed, and many good offices perhaps have been mutually interchanged, some latent flaw becomes visible, and the union which was precipitately cemented is no less suddenly dissolved. Now this inattention is the more blameworthy and astonishing, as friendship is the only article among the different objects of human pursuit the value and importance of which is unanimously, and without any exception, acknowledged. I say the only article, for even Virtue herself is not
universally held in esteem; and there are many who represent all her high pretensions as mere affectation and ostentatious parade. There are, too, whose moderate desires are satisfied with humble meals and lowly roofs, and who look upon riches with sovereign contempt. How many are there who think that those honours which inflame the ambition of others are of all human vanities the most frivolous! In like manner throughout all the rest of those several objects which divide the passions of mankind, what some admire others most heartily despise. Whereas, with respect to friendship, there are not two different opinions; the active and the ambitious, the retired and the contemplative, even the sensualist himself (if he would indulge his appetites with any degree of refinement) unanimously acknowledge that without friendship life can have no true enjoyment. She insinuates herself, indeed, by I know not what irresistible charm into the hearts of every rank and class of men, and mixes in all the various modes and arrangements of human life. Were there a man in the world of so morose and acrimonious a disposition as to shun (agreeably to what we are told of a certain Timon of Athens) all communication with his species, even such an odious
misanthropist could not endure to be excluded from one associate, at least, before whom he might discharge the whole rancour and virulence of his heart. The truth is, if we could suppose ourselves transported by some divinity into a solitude replete with all the delicacies which the heart of man could desire, but secluded at the same time from every possible intercourse with our kind, there is not a person in the world of so unsocial and savage a temper as to be capable under these forlorn circumstances of relishing any enjoyment. Accordingly, nothing is more true than what Archytas of Tarentum, if I mistake not, is reported to have said, "That were a man to be carried up into heaven, and the beauties of universal nature displayed to his view, he would receive but little pleasure from the wonderful scene if there were none to whom he might relate the glories he had beheld." Human nature, indeed, is so constituted as to be incapable of lonely satisfactions; man, like those plants which are formed to embrace others, is led by an instinctive impulse to recline on his species, and he finds his happiest and most secure support in the arms of a faithful friend. But although in this instance, as in every other, Nature points out her tendencies by a variety of unambiguous
notices, and proclaims her meaning in the most emphatical language, yet, I know not how it is, we seem strangely blind to her clearest signals, and deaf to her loudest voice!

The offices of friendship are so numerous, and of such different kinds, that many little disgusts may arise in the exercise of them, which a man of true good sense will either avoid, extenuate, or be contented to bear, as the nature and circumstances of the case may render most expedient. But there is one particular duty which may frequently occur, and which he will at all hazards of offence discharge, as it is never to be superseded consistently with the truth and fidelity he owes to the connection; I mean the duty of admonishing, and even reproving, his friend, an office which, whenever it is affectionately exercised, should be kindly received. It must be confessed, however, that the remark of my dramatic friend is too frequently verified, who observes in his Andria that "obsequiousness conciliates friends, but truth creates enemies." When truth proves the bane of friendship we may have reason, indeed, to be sorry for the unnatural consequence; but we should have cause to be more sorry if we suffered a friend by a culpable indulgence to expose his character to just
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reproach. Upon these delicate occasions, however, we should be particularly careful to deliver our advice or reproof without the least appearance of acrimony or insult. Let our obsequiousness (to repeat the significant expression of Terence) extend as far as gentleness of manners and the rules of good breeding require; but far let it be from seducing us to flatter either vice or misconduct, a meanness unworthy, not only of every man who claims to himself the title of friend, but of every liberal and ingenuous mind. Shall we live with a friend upon the same cautious terms we must submit to live with a tyrant? Desperate indeed must that man's moral disorders be who shuts his ears to the voice of truth when delivered by a sincere and affectionate monitor! It was a saying of Cato (and he had many that well deserve to be remembered) that "some men were more obliged to their inveterate enemies than to their complaisant friends, as they frequently heard the truth from the one, but never from the other;" in short, the great absurdity is that men are apt, in the instances under consideration, to direct both their dislike and their approbation to the wrong object. They hate the admonition, and love the vice; whereas they ought, on the
contrary, to hate the vice, and love the admonition.

As nothing, therefore, is more suitable to the genius and spirit of true friendship than to give and receive advice—to give it, I mean, with freedom, but without rudeness, and to receive it not only without reluctance, but with patience—so nothing is more injurious to the connexion than flattery, compliment, or adulation. I multiply these equivalent terms, in order to mark with stronger emphasis the detestable and dangerous character of those pretended friends, who, strangers to the dictates of truth, constantly hold the language which they are sure will be most acceptable. But if counterfeit appearances of every species are base and dishonest attempts to impose upon the judgment of the unwary, they are more peculiarly so in a commerce of amity, and absolutely repugnant to the vital principle of that sacred relation; for, without sincerity, friendship is a mere name, that has neither meaning or efficacy. It is the essential property of this alliance to form so intimate a coalition between the parties that they seem to be actuated, as it were, by one common spirit; but it is impossible that this unity of mind should be produced when there is one of them in
which it does not subsist even in his own person, who, with a duplicity of soul which sets him at perpetual variance from himself, assumes opposite sentiments and opinions, as is most convenient to his present purpose. Nothing in nature, indeed, is so pliant and versatile as the genius of a flatterer, who always acts and pretends to think in conformity, not only to the will and inclination, but even to the looks and countenance of another. Like Gnatho in the play, he can prevail with himself to say either yes or no, as best suits the occasion; and he lays it down as his general maxim, never to dissent from the company.

Terence exposes this baseness of soul in the person of a contemptible parasite; but how much more contemptible does it appear when exhibited in the conduct of one who dares usurp the name of friend! The mischief is that there are many Gnathos, of a much superior rank and consequence, to be met with in the commerce of the world; and it is from this class of flatterers that the greatest danger is to be apprehended, as the poison they administer receives additional strength and efficacy from the hand that conveys it. Nevertheless, a man of good sense and discernment, if he will exert the requisite attention, will always be able to
distinguish the complaisant from the sincere friend, with the same certainty that he may in any other subject perceive the difference between the counterfeit and the genuine. It is observable in the general assemblies of the people, composed as they are of the most ignorant part of the community, that even the populace know how to discriminate the soothing insidious orator, whose only aim is to acquire popularity, from the firm, inflexible, and undesigning patriot. A remarkable instance of this kind lately appeared, when Caius Papirius proposed a law to enable the Tribunes, at the expiration of their office, to be re-elected for the ensuing year, upon which he employed every insinuating art of address to seduce and captivate the ears of the multitude. Not to mention the part I took myself upon that occasion, it was opposed by Scipio with such a commanding flow of eloquence, and invincible strength of reason, that this popular law was rejected by the very populace themselves. But you were present at the debate, and his speech is in everybody's hands. I cannot forbear giving you another instance likewise, although it is one particularly relating to myself. You may remember that in the consulate of Lucius Mancinus and Quintus Maximus, the
brother of Scipio, a very popular law was moved by Caius Licinius, who proposed that the privilege of electing to the sacerdotal offices should be transferred from the respective colleges to the general assemblies of the people; and let me remark, by the way, it was upon this occasion that Licinius, in complaisance to the people, first introduced the practice of addressing them with his back turned upon the Senate-house. Nevertheless, the pious reverence which is due to every circumstance that concerns the worship of the immortal gods, together with the arguments by which I exposed the impropriety of his motion, prevailed over all the specious colourings of his plausible oratory. This affair was agitated during my Prætorship, and I was not chosen Consul till five years afterwards, so that it is evident I owed my success more to the force of truth than to the influence of station.

Now, if in popular assemblies, a scene, of all others, in which fiction and fallacious representations have the greatest scope, and are usually employed with the most success, Truth, when fairly stated and properly enforced, could thus prevail, with how much more reason may she expect to be favourably heard in an intercourse of friendship, the very essence whereof depends upon sincerity!
In a commerce of this nature, indeed, if you are not permitted to see into the most hidden recesses of your friend's bosom, and do not with equal unreserve lay open to him the full exposure of your own, there can be no just ground for confidence on either side, nor even sufficient evidence that any affection subsists between you. With respect, however, to that particular deviation from truth which is the object of our present consideration, it must be acknowledged that, noxious as flattery is, no man was ever infected by it who did not love and encourage the offering. Accordingly, there is no turn of mind so liable to be tainted by this sort of poison as a disposition to entertain too high conceit of one's own merit. I must confess, at the same time, that conscious virtue cannot be void of self-esteem, as well knowing her own worth, and how amiable her form appears. But the pretenders to virtue are much more numerous than the really virtuous, and it is of the former only that I am now speaking. Men of that character are particularly delighted with adulation, as confirming their title, they imagine, to the merit they so vainly claim.

It appears then that genuine friendship cannot possibly exist where one of the parties is unwilling
to hear truth and the other is equally indisposed to speak it. Friends of this kind are by no means uncommon in the world, and, indeed, there would be neither propriety nor humour in the character of a parasite as exhibited by our comic writers, were a vain-glorious soldier, for example, never to be met with in real life. When the braggart captain in the play asks Gnatho, "Did Thais return me many thanks, say you?" An artless man would have thought it sufficient to answer "many," but the cunning sycophant replies, "immense, innumerable;" for a skilful flatterer perfectly well knows that a pleasing circumstance can never be too much exaggerated in the opinion of the person upon whom he means to practise.

But although flattery chiefly operates on those whose vanity encourages and invites the exercise of it, yet these are not the only sort of men upon whom it may impose. There is a delicate and refined species of adulation, against which even better understandings may not improperly be cautioned. Gross and open obsequiousness can deceive none but fools, but there is a latent and more ensnaring manner of insinuation, against which a man of sense ought to be particularly on his guard. A flatterer of this insidious and
concealed kind will frequently gain his point even by opposition; he will affect to maintain opinions which he does not hold, and dispute in order to give you the credit of a victory. But nothing is more humiliating than to be thus egregiously duped. It is necessary, therefore, to exert the utmost attention against falling into these covert snares, lest we should have reason to say, with one of the characters in the Heiress, "Never was old dotard on the stage so finely played upon as I have been by you to-day." This, indeed, would be to exhibit the mortifying personage of one of those ridiculous old men in our comedies, who listen with easy faith to every specious tale contrived to impose on their credulity. But I have insensibly wandered from the principal object I had in view, and instead of proceeding to consider Friendship as it appears in perfect characters (perfect, I mean, as far as is consistent with the frailty of human nature), I am talking of it as it is seen in the vain and frivolous connections of the world. I return therefore to the original subject of our conversation, and which it is now time to draw towards a conclusion.

It is virtue, yes, let me repeat it again, it is virtue alone that can give birth, strength, and
permanency to friendship. For virtue is a uniform and steady principle ever acting consistently with itself. They whose souls are warmed by its generous flame not only improve their common ardour by communication, but naturally kindle into that pure affection of the heart towards each other which is distinguished by the name of amity, and is wholly unmixed with every kind and degree of selfish considerations. But although genuine friendship is solely the offspring of pure goodwill, and no motive of advantage or utility has the least share in its production, yet many very beneficial consequences result from it, how little soever those consequences are the objects primarily in view. Of this disinterested nature was that affection which, in the earlier season of my life, united me with those venerable old men, Paulus, Cato, and Gallus, as also with Nasica and Gracchus, the father-in-law of my late honoured and lamented friend. That the principle I have assigned is really the leading motive of true friendship becomes still more evident when the connection is formed between men of equal years, as in that which subsisted between Scipio, Furius, Rupilius, Mummius, and myself. Not that old men may not also find a generous satisfaction in living upon terms of
disinterested intimacy with the young, as I have the happiness to experience in the friendship I enjoy, not only with both of you and Q. Tubero, but even with Publius Rutilius and Aulus Virginius, who are much your juniors. One would wish, indeed, to preserve those friends through all the successive periods of our days with whom we first set out together in this our journey through the world. But since man holds all his possessions by a very precarious and uncertain tenure we should endeavour, as our old friends drop off, to repair their loss by new acquisitions, lest one should be so unhappy as to stand in his old age a solitary, unconnected individual, bereaved of every person whom he loves and by whom he is beloved. For without a proper and particular object upon which to exercise the kind and benevolent affections, life is destitute of every enjoyment that can render it justly desirable.

As to the loss I have myself sustained by the death of Scipio, who was so suddenly and so unexpectedly snatched from me, he is still present in my mind's eye, and present he will ever remain; for it was his virtues that endeared him to my heart, and his virtues can never die. But not by me only, who had the happiness to enjoy a daily