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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report
of
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Katherine Jennings for the degree of Master of Arts.

They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


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May 24 1914

Pliny and The Society of the First Century.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of Minnesota

by

Katherine B. Jennings

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the

degree of

Master of Arts

June

1921.

MOM
8 J444

Pliny and The Society of the First Century.

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Pliny and the Society of the First Century.

Chapter I.

Attitude of Tacitus and Juvenal.

Tacitus.

The popular conception of the society of the first century is that of a people entirely corrupt, vicious, with no redeeming features or characters, no ray of light sending its beams thru the darkness. How often have we heard and seen expressed the sentiment that the destruction of Pompeii was a divine judgment upon that entirely abandoned city, and a solemn warning to Rome and the rest of a perditionous and wanton world!

This all dark idea of the age we find reflected from formal history which naturally centers its interest almost exclusively in the life of the court circle. The crimes of a Tiberius, the feebleness of a Claudius, the wantonness of a Nero, the cruelty of a Domitian are portrayed in panorama before the horrified mental vision of the reader.

No other author has contributed so extensively to the history of this time as has Tacitus, who, in his *Agricola* and *Germania*, his *Annals* and *Histories* has carefully portrayed the events of these years. He wrote during the tolerant reign of Trajan, when the Roman world seemed to have resumed normal respiration. He was a senator, thoroly imbued with all the reverence for the traditional dignity of that order. However, he had seen its degradation, its ranks decimated, its members humbled and enslaved to the tyrant, its

authority and dignity set at naught. The gloom and the bitterness, the horror and disgust that those years of servility and enforced submission, and silence have engendered, he can not shake from his ⁽¹⁾ spirit.

This feeling flavors his history, and cannot but be increased in the mind of him who reads. He was a curiously vivid ⁽²⁾ painter of character, alike of individuals, peoples and periods. His history is written from the standpoint of a moralist who is watching the stages of decline, and the gradual but inevitable ⁽³⁾ plunge to ignominy and disaster. A representative of the senatorial class who were still under the influence of the noble dream of reconciling the ~~empire~~ with the old republican ideals, Tacitus seems ⁽⁴⁾ to feel the empire fatal to both subject and prince. He had seen the sons of proud families betray members of their own households to save themselves from an emperor's fury, and then kiss the hand ⁽⁵⁾ that had been at their throats; he had watched a single will sport with the lives and fortunes of men in its power.

Once portents are related occurring in Nero's reign which should have presaged the emperor's death, but he says "they occurred without the regard of the gods", for Nero continued his principate ⁽⁶⁾ and crimes for many years. Again he says "the gods give the same ⁽⁷⁾ treatment to good and bad." The license of the age has impaired his faith in divine providence. He continually envies the Germans their freedom from these great corruptors of Roman character, the lust for gold, and the calculating sterility which cut itself from nature's purest pleasure, to be surrounded on the deathbed by a ⁽⁸⁾ crowd of shameless, hungry sycophants.

(1) Dill. p21-11.15 (2) Dill. 25 (3) Dill. 24-11.35 (4) Dill. 52-11-35
 (5) Ann. XV-71 (6) Ann. XIV-12 (7) Ann. XVI-33 (8) Dill. 28

What bitter scorn has Tacitus for the nobles whose adulation and subservient weakness led them to acquiesce in every foible of the emperor! When Octavia was disgraced and murdered offerings were voted at the temples "as always after an outrage"⁽⁹⁾: After the murder of Agrippina, Nero's shudderings were allayed by the adulation of his retinue and friends, the thank-offering in the Campanian towns,⁽¹⁰⁾ and by his welcome with great enthusiasm and celebration when he returned to Rome in a triumphal procession to the Capitol to make a thanksgiving for the accomplishment of the baneful deed. The description here is almost as bitter as Juvenal might have depicted.

A most detailed account of the conspiracy of Piso is given in the Annals, with the facts always pointing to the weakness and cringing cowardice of the high rank. Scaevinus betrayed the plot,⁽¹¹⁾ after he had been accused by a freedman and a knight. Lucan, the poet, accused his own mother in a vain attempt to save himself; others of high rank were guilty of like baseness. Contrasted with remarkable force, and given in complete detail, is the account of a poor freed girl Epicharis who is tortured to death rather than reveal any names or facts that might work harm to men whom she did not know.⁽¹²⁾ A terrible massacre followed the discovery of the plot, but such was the craven spirit that while the bodies of their own relatives were being taken out for burial, they decked their houses as for a celebration, and wearied the hand of the assassin, Nero, with kisses.⁽¹³⁾ The Senate voted a thanksgiving and honors, for his preservation,⁽¹⁴⁾ and the consul elect moved that a temple be built to Divine Nero! Vestinus, the consul, was not a conspirator, and when

(9)Ann. XIV-64 (10) Ann. XIV-10+12 (11)Ann.XV-54 (12)Ann.XV-57
 (13) Ann. XV-71 (14)Ann. XV-74

the jealous emperor had waited in vain for him to be implicated, he finally threw legal forms aside and sent an order for his death; (15) Vestinus opened his veins, without a murmur. When the tribune was ordered to command Seneca's death, he boldly went out of his course to ask Faenius Rufus, the praetorian prefect, if he should execute the order. He was advised in the affirmative, says Tacitus, "such (16) deadly cowardice had seized everyone". Piso received the urgent council of his friends to escape to the army, and try the temper of the legions toward him. The same advice had been given to Rubellius Plautus by his father-in-law, when it was known that Nero's fear of (17) Plautus' wealth and rank had culminated in a death sentence. Neither man moved a finger in his own behalf, but calmly and meekly submitted to their fate! Most of the nobles, when convinced that their hours were numbered, made Nero, or perhaps Tigellinus his favorite, large legacies, in order that they might be certain that the rest (18) would be allowed to the proper heirs. This servility, Vetus, the father-in-law of Rubellius Plautus, refused to do, and gave his ready money and property to his slaves.

After the death of Nero a dreadful year followed, during which time the nobles seem to have but one idea, - not to be on the losing side. The game was most dangerous to play, for as they were flattering one prince, another advanced at the head of his legions. These cringing Senators showed themselves marvels at cautious (19) flattery to the new emperor. Many of these nobles, with the names (20) of great Romans, were entirely dependent on the emperor's bounty. Many were reduced to reckless inactivity and disinterest by the (21) hopelessness of the struggle against the power of the Caesars.

(15) Ann. XV-68,69 (16)XV-61 (17)Ann. XIV-58 (18)Ann. XVI-11
 (19)Dill. 50 Hist.III-37 (20)Ann. XIII-34 (21)Hist. 35

The people, whom the emperors flatter, fear to have Nero leave the city, lest they be deprived of their 'corn and Circuses', while the nobles scarce know whether they fear him more at home, or
 (22) abroad. Piso was by no means a man of grave habits and morals but this very fact was pleasing to the majority of his partisans, men from all classes, who "do not desire a prince too strict, when vice
 (23) is so sweet". In most bitter words Tacitus relates the vices of the Quinquennial Games. All day, and even all night was consumed
 (24) in wanton pleasure, "lest any time might remain for virtue".

"The tone of Tacitus is sometimes that of a man who should have lived in the age of the Samnite or Carthaginian war, before luxury and factious ambition had sapped the moral strength of the great aristocratic class, while his feelings are divided between grim anger at a cruel destiny, and scornful regret for the weakness and self-abandonment of a class which had once been so great. His feelings find vent in words which sometimes veil a pathos too proud for effusive utterance, sometimes cut like lancet points, and which, in their concentrated moral scorn, have left an eternal brand of
 (25) infamy on names of historic renown."

(22)Ann. XV-36

(23)Ann. XV-48

(24)Ann. XIV-20

(25)Dill. p-21
p-22

Juvenal.

In addition to Tacitus, whose history savors so much of the satirist and moralist, the poems of Juvenal, which are avowedly satires, give us a picture of the life of the early empire. Never were there more fiery invectives hurled upon an age! Never could there be more burning indignation at the outrages, vices and villainies of contemporaries.

Juvenal belonged to the middle class. He had in his being that ardent pride of old plebeian class which scorned the ostentation of the newly rich, the freedman in power, and at the same time despised the scion of an old house who had become degenerate. He displays the power of his descriptive talent in burning deluges upon the materialism of his day. He is an utter pessimist in regard to the social conditions of his age. "When was vice more rampant?⁽²⁶⁾ When was avarice more pronounced? Gambling so reckless? Though⁽²⁷⁾ talent were lacking, indignation would force me to write satire!"

Every class of society is assailed. The noble has become degenerate and poor. He gambles all night before the smoky images of his illustrious ancestors, beginning to sleep at the hour when⁽²⁸⁾ they were moving standards and camps. Another one whirls past the bones and ashes of his ancestor, as his own muleteer in a chariot race. This too when he is of ripe age for military service and⁽²⁹⁾ public duties. He spends his days in company with cutthroats and thieves in low down taverns. These disgraces to their ancestry, with nothing to honor them but a name, indulge in such practices as⁽³⁰⁾ would disgrace a huckster and send a slave to the prisons. Damisip-

(26) Satires I-87 (27) Satires I-79 (28) S.VIII-10 (29) VIII-147
(30) VIII-180

pus, having exhausted his patrimony in riotous living hires his voice to the stage, or another becomes an actor, others, Fabii and Mamerci, enter the lists as gladiators. Trojan blood is among the throng which crowds round the wealthy man's door for the dole; the slave distributor calls the praetor first, and then the tribune. The provinces are plundered by their governors, and even though an indictment hangs over them they, like Marius, live in luxury in their exile.

A burning picture of vain adulation is that of an assembly of the senate called by Domitian to a consultation, for no dish had been found in the royal household large enough to contain a turbot that had been presented to the emperor. The trembling senators hurriedly appear, as though summoned to consult about a grave danger to the state. Among them are Crispus, who has lived to eighty with spineless servility for an effective weapon; Acilius, the same type and his son, who was soon to incur the jealousy of the emperor, and to feign madness in the arena, though in vain; Rubrius, guilty of a hideous crime; Montanus, the bloated glutton, the connoisseur of food; Crispinus, a freedman, now a wealthy vulgar fop; Pompeius, the whispering delator; Fuscus, who planned battle in marble halls; blind, death-dealing Catullus - such were the members of this august assembly! Such are the momentous questions submitted to their discussion! And yet, says the satirist, "Would that Domitian had rather given to follies such as these all those days of cruelty when he robbed the city of its nobles and choicest souls, with none to punish or avenge!"

(31)VIII-185; 200 (32)I-100 (33)I-49 (34)Satire IV (35)IV-150

Juvenal pictures, too, the elevated, haughty freedman. At the distribution of the dole, he insists on being first, a privilege due his wealth and power. Crispinus, who came from Egypt as a slave, then became a vender of his cheap native fish, now is wealthy and voluptuous, a glutton, serving feasts equalling or mayhap surpassing those of the emperor. He pays for a single fish enough to buy the fisherman! Men who used to blow the horns in the country circuses are now giving gladiatorial shows themselves. The quondam barber now challenges all the nobility with his wealth. How vain is the existence of the tradesman, who risks his life continually, as well as his wares, before the winds and storms, for the sake of mere gold and added wealth. "These, Fortune raises to wealth and power, whenever she desires to enjoy a laugh."

The women on Juvenal's canvas are hopeless. A pure woman is as rare as a black swan. A man who plans to marry is surely out of his senses. Why does he want to be dominated by a woman, who will surely elope with a gladiator, singer or actor; mayhap toss off two pints before dinner, perhaps fight in the arena or wrestling matches, or have her maid flogged for dislodging a lock of her hair. The mother-in-law teaches and aids the wife to despoil her husband to deceive him, and intrigue with others, and even to dispatch him by poison. Very probably she will become a musician, or even discuss with men the affairs of the empire, or balance the merits of Homer and Vergil. She may be led astray by foreign cults, Isis, the Jew; the astrologer and fortune teller always find her an easy

(36)I-102Sq (37)IV-1-37 (38)III-34-Sq. (39)I-24 and 25
 (40)XIV-255-98 (41)Sat. III-40 (41)VI. 165-205 (42)VI-427
 (43)VI-252 (44)VI-493 (45)VI-233 (46)I-71

prey. This condition, says the satirist, is due to filthy lucre -
(47)
to luxury and departure from the simplicity and purity of poverty.

What scorn there is for the legacy-hunter who rushes to
the gates of the wealthy man who falls ill! He prepares the cost-
liest presents, is ready to sacrifice his slaves or a marriageable
daughter, if need be; he flatters and consoles the poor rich man,
meanwhile hoping and longing for his death! And the reward is forth-
coming! He is given a noble legacy and piles high his mass of
(48)
gold!

Then there is the poverty and misery of the poor client,
who attends his patron on his rounds of business or social engage-
ments, rushes to make his early morning call, lest another gain the
favours, - all this, only to be sent home to his poor meal of boiled
(49)
cabbage. Or perhaps he receives the long awaited invitation to
dinner! He can take the last place on the lowest couch, eat poor
food and drink sour wine; he is carefully watched by a slave lest
he make depredations on some of the silver or jewels! He may watch
(50)
while the host is served with the finest dainties!

The city has been conquered by foreigners! Especially is
the wily, crafty, wicked Greek an object for hatred! He is an
adept at flattery; he is clever and adaptable; he has gained his en-
trance into every phase of Roman life. He has conquered his con-
(51)
querors! Neither is there any chance for a poor man. He never gets
a legacy; he is shoved out at the theatres by the profligate sons
of the nobles and wealthy; he is never chosen for a son-in-law; his
house may fall in ruins any moment, or be burned, in which case no
one offers him a meal or assistance; while if a rich man's house

(47)VI-292-308 (48)XII-100-130 (49)I-134 (50)V-24-Sq.
(51)III-58-126

burns, he is loaded with gifts, until he has more than before. The sick die from want of sleep because of the noise; the poor are trampled upon by the slaves of the wealthy, as they carry their master along, or are crushed by loaded wagons in the street. (52)

Better in these days be an auctioneer or an undertaker than a man of letters. (53) The days of literary patrons are over; now they themselves write, in order to cheat the poet out of their patronage, and do no more for him than occasionally loan a hall for a reading; the poet has to bear the expense of chairs and the like. (54) The vender of the Acta Diurna has more wealth and attention than the historian. The rhetorician is likewise slighted. He has to fight for his stipend; (55) likewise the grammarian, (56) who is expected to know everything. (57) The advocate fares no better. The courts are filled with men of wealth who use their ostentation to draw clients. The poor advocate must rent a flashy ring in order to attract a client; (58) he is often paid by a barrel of fish or a cask of poor wine.

The age is utterly corrupted by Wealth. No deity is held in such reverence among this people, though no temple or altar is yet constructed for her! (59) The rich man, as has been said, displaces the poor at the distribution of the dole! The rich man's slave put the poor man out of the way; a witness when summoned is asked first, "How many slaves do you have? How many acres do you own? How big and how many are your dinner dishes?" His word is believed according to his bank account. (60) "All things at Rome have their price!" (61) If a fairy were suddenly to give the poor client a nice fortune,

(52) Satire III (53) VII-3-7 (54) VII-39Sq (55) VII-3-7 (55) VII-157Sq
 (56) VII 215Sqq. (57) VII-171 (58) 139-Sq. (59) I-112Sq (60) III-137-145
 (61) III-183

how his patron would flatter and bow to him⁽⁶²⁾. No longer are mere purses, but whole patrimonies and treasure chests the stake at the gambling table.⁽⁶³⁾ Everyone dresses above his means. If anyone wants⁽⁶⁴⁾ to be famous, let him commit a crime.

Such is the picture of the Satirist!

(62)V-132 Sq.

(63)I-90

(64)I -73

Chapter II.

Pliny's Picture of His Age.

In marked contrast to the unlovely pictures Juvenal and Tacitus have left us, is the pleasant, calm and attractive portrait which the pen of the Pliny the Younger has drawn. Pliny, the man of refinement and culture, an aristocrat, supplied with a fair amount of wealth, living a life almost puritanical, in the centre of a group of literary friends, and, if we may believe him, admirers.

This circle that is painted in such glowing terms in the Letters of Pliny is almost like a brotherhood, with powerful ties of loyalty and friendship, and similarity of ideals. How they rejoice over honors received by one another! How each aids the other in every possible way! Pliny procures a friend of his as tutor for another friend; when Julius Naso is a candidate for office, Pliny (65) summons Fundanus to come and help support him with his influence. (66) So whole-hearted is his support that he says a rejection of Naso would mean his own repulse. The older men in this circle support, and mould and introduce the younger, who were very willing to be (67) led and advised. Pliny himself had been elected, trained, advised (68) and held in the narrow way by Corellius Rufus. Verginius Rufus, (69) his guardian, had also served in such a capacity. Junius Avitus was invested with the purple stripe on the toga - the mark of a senator, in Pliny's house; his interest supported him for offices;

(65)Ep. III-3 (66)Ep. VI-6 (67)Ep. VIII-23 (68)Ep. I-12 12
 (69)Ep. II-1

he modelled his conduct according to Pliny's direction and example. At this death, the grief of his older friend was as real as though he had lost a son!⁽⁷⁰⁾

How the heart of this literary devotee goes out to all those young men of rank who are earnest, prudent, wise and modest, unsullied and respectful, which Pliny assures us is rare enough! How joyfully he assisted Salinator and Quadratus, and coached them in the undertaking of the Centumviral conflicts. Quadratus wrote for advice as to the kind of cases to undertake, receiving as a reply a quotation from the stoic Thræsea, "There are three sorts of causes one should undertake; for our friends, for the deserted, and those which tend to form a precedent!"⁽⁷¹⁾ Of this young man Pliny is very proud, for he has been reared amid wantonness, and has grown to noble manhood, having avoided all temptation.⁽⁷²⁾

Among this group are such men as Verginius, who has more than once refused the royal purple, and Vestricius Spurinna one of Otho's generals, who had held the consulship more than once, an old man of nearly eighty, who lived in pleasant leisure and whose life Pliny considered quite ideal, - spent in the younger days for the state, in the latter, in literature and repose. Here, too, is Arrius Antoninus, twice consul, Silius Italicus, and Martial, Suetonius and Tacitus, men known as the best writers of the day. Corellius Rufus, Capito the historian, Pegasus, the learned jurist, Trebonius Rufus, the triumvir at Vienna, and Junius Mauricus, an advocate, are also in the number. That he is a bit too prodigal in his expression of friendship Pliny frankly admits. When in the city all his time is taken up by the business of his friends.⁽⁷⁵⁾⁽⁷⁶⁾

(70)Ep. VIII-23 (71)Ep. VI-29 (72)Ep. VII-24 (73)Ep. III-1
 (74)Ep. IV-3 (75)Ep. VII-28 (76)Ep. VIII-9

Tacitus and Pliny correct one another's manuscripts; Pliny obtained the rights of a man with three children for Voconuis Romanus, and writes to Priscus, who is at the head of ^{an} army that out of affection for himself, he should advance Romanus, who is altogether worthy ⁽⁷⁷⁾ and of a noble family,- a fact which ever has weight with Pliny - and he is an old school friend. Again he writes to Priscus demanding the payment of an old debt by a friend of his to a friend of Pliny. He maintains in strong terms that this injury to his friend, ⁽⁷⁸⁾ who is a most excellent man, is the same as to himself! Such then, is the friendship and loyalty and spirit of mutual assistance in this circle; but the strongest bond that held them was that of literature.

Almost all of these friends of Pliny were interested in writing of some sort, either for the sake of a diversion, or perhaps as a means of gaining immortality, for, says Pliny "Immortality consists of living forever in the memory and praise of men, and, as we live such a short time, let us have something to prove to men ⁽⁷⁹⁾ that we have at least lived." Arrius Antoninus was a devotee of ⁽⁸⁰⁾ Greek literature and Pliny praises highly his epigrams and mimes "as Attic as Athens" and exactly like the ancients; and vainly did ⁽⁸¹⁾ our lover of letters try to translate them into adequate Latin, finding, as he said, the Greek so much richer. Spurinna was spending his later days in rural ease, in a routine of life that Pliny considers quite ideal, composing lyrics in both Greek and Latin, ⁽⁸²⁾ which the moral worth of the author renders even more lovely!

In close friendship with these two men is Sentius Augurianus, because of whom the age should be congratulated, for his

(77)Ep. II-13 (78)Ep. VI-8 (79)Ep. III-7 (80)Ep. IV-3
 (81)Ep. IV-18 (82)Ep. III-1

genius in writing verses, - a man whose virtues render him still more illustrious'! Vergilius Romanus wrote comedies resembling Aristophanes, so fine that some day they would serve as a model. Some of them, modelled after Menander, are on a par with Plautus and Terence. His probity of morals, elegance of wit, variety of work, make him famous. Pliny recommends him to Caninius Rufus, who also was from the town of Como, and whose genius Pliny fears continually, will be allowed to be dormant because of the allurements of his villa. He assures Rufus that its many beauties will pass on to many masters, but his writings alone will be ever his own. Later he is delighted to find that Caninius has planned to write an epic on the Dacian War. He thinks the subject worthy of his genius, though the Dacian names will need the license of a Homer. Passenus Paulus has a genius that resembles Propertius, whose kinship he claims, and perhaps even rivals Horace. Titius Capito has written the histories of several illustrious persons who were executed under the terror. He is a patron of letters, loans his house for readings, is a 'restorer and reformer of literature which is falling into decrepitude'. Suetonius Tranquillus, the historian was one of Pliny's closest friends. He was an advocate; Pliny obtained from him the IUS TRIUM LIBRORUM, though he soon asked that it be transferred to a friend. Pliny's uncle is a model of extreme literary activity, spending almost no time that was free from studies. Saturninus, the man of eloquence imitating the ancients in his histories; a poet, copying Catullus or Calvius. "Had he

(83)Ep. IV-27 (84)Ep. VI-21 (85)Ep. I-3 (86)Ep. VIII-4
 (87)Ep. VI-15; IX-22 (88)Ep. VIII-12 (89)Ep. X-94 (90)I-18
 (91)Ep. III-8 (92)Ep. III-5

flourished in a distant age, not only works but pictures and statues
of him would be greatly desired. (93) The poet satirist Martial was
given travelling expenses by Pliny as a testimony of friendship and
to make a return for a poem written about him. (94) Pliny had grave
doubts as to the immortality of Martial's poems. He greatly admires
as well as emulates Tacitus; he wrote the story of his uncle's
death for Tacitus, assuring him his works were destined for fame. (95)
Italicus wrote an epic on the Second Punic War, which Pliny thought
a work of labor only and posterity has passed the same judgment.
He had been a delator during Domitian's time, but later had reform-
ed, retiring as an honorable man of literary taste. (96) That these
dilettanti were by no means all noble, we learn from a letter to
Spurinna telling of the elegy of Calpurnius Piso on the mythology
of the Constellations. This poem was soft, flowing and easy, not
lacking even sublimity, when the topic demanded, rose and fell with
the varying theme, - but all the more commendable because a thing
uncommon in a person of quality! (97)

The general trend of this literary activity is poetry.
Each poet, however, seems to be servilely copying some one of past
fame, and his degree of excellency is proportional to his ability
to imitate. Nothing new or original is mentioned. Even such a man
as Pliny was affected by this tendency, and when a friend wonders
that a man of his gravity has been indulging in hendecsyllabics,
Pliny tells him that it had occurred to him that Cicero and other
famous orators had been fond of such composition. So he had decided
to follow their example, and his poems have been rewarded by popular

(93)Ep. I-16 (94)Ep. III-21 (95)Ep. VI-16 (96)Ep. III-7
(97)Ep. V-17

(98)

demand and the singing of them to the lyre. A group of friends, gathered at the house of Titus Aristo discussed Pliny's poems, many of them disapproving the doubtful character of them. It seems impossible that a man like Pliny would be the author of a poem of lubricious tendency, but he admits it, defending himself, apparently indisputably, by saying that he has in this imitated the old masters (99) of literature, Cicero, Calvus, Hortensius, Brutus and others. So great was the thralldom to the past. Pliny tells his friend Fuscus that to pursue his studies, while in rural retirement, he should begin with translations of Latin to Greek and Greek to Latin; then emulate the writer comparing the production with the pattern; study (100) oratory, history and letter-writing, - poetry perhaps too, for diversion. To Titinius Capito, who urges him to write History, he replies that History and Oratory are too different. History treats only of what is recondite, splendid, elevated, and it is adapted to embellishments and what one may call 'top-knots' of style. It should be "diffusive, bland and ever dulcet, and should be, as (101) Thucidides suggested 'a possession'". These are no doubt the ideals of the men who wrote History; yet they wrote the truth as they saw it, with free use of names, for there is a letter to Pater-nus telling how a reader of History was persuaded by friends of a certain person not to continue, since they did not enjoy hearing a (102) recounting of what they did not scruple to do.

Pliny was a literary enthusiast, but no doubt voiced the sentiments of his circle. He says that 'True happiness is the consequence of our studies'. He banishes sorrow, and concern for his

(98)Ep. VII-4 (99)Ep. V-3 (100)Ep. VII-9 (101)Ep. V-8
 (102)Ep. IX-27

(103)

wife's ill health only by delving into books. He was greatly disgruntled to have to waste his time signing documents, as president of the tribunal, and writing 'unliterary letters'. He carefully revises each oration after it has been given, and sends it to his friends to correct and criticise. He first reviews his own writings, then reads them to two or three friends; then gives them to others to be criticized, then reads them again with one or two, then to a large audience, for 'diligence increases in proportion to the sollicitude'. The silence or approbation of audience determines. He probably was the first to give readings of orations, since he writes that many object to it, and his friends were truly long suffering, hearing one oration earnestly and with appreciation for two days. He read the Panegyric to Trajan for three. However, he gladly reciprocated, hearing Sentius Augurinus for as long a time.

These public readings, however, were not always attended with great enthusiasm. It was customary to send circular billets around, announcing the reading, and to keep reminding everyone what was met for several days beforehand, but mostly men were 'otherwise engaged', or if they did attend, they felt that they had lost a day. Not so with Capito, and especially Pliny, for most of the literary men were his friends, and he felt it his duty, in any case, to assist these noteworthy attempts, in spite of the public unenthusiasm, at composition. Even when the crowd has assembled, often the largest part lingers in the antechamber, spends the time of recitation in conversation, sending in occasionally to find how the piece

(103)Ep. VIII-19 (104)EP. I-10 (105)Ep. III-13; VII-17
 (106)Ep. VII-17 (107)Ep. IV-5 (108)EP. IV-27
 (109)EP. III-18 (110)Ep. I-13 (11)Ep. I-13

is progressing, and when it ends, merely look in and then withdraw stealthily, some even unceremoniously. It was not ever thus; Claudius Caesar had once chanced to hear a poet reading, and had entered and honored the man by hearing him to the end. Sometimes a liberal patron like Capito lends a hall; again the reading is held at a friend's house; as Pliny in one letter mentions a reading on the Palatine, perhaps there were lecture rooms with or near the library, used for this purpose; it maybe that theatres served in this capacity.

These readings were held with a threefold purpose; to win a bit of fame, that might perhaps be only temporary; to obtain corrections upon a work before publishing; for the purpose of advertisement. Pliny expected his friends to correct; he had unbounded faith in the opinion of the crowd. The silence or applause gave the verdict. He, however, only read to large groups of friends; he read every bit of the composition, contrary to the custom of many for he desired, not the praise of the assembly, but of future generations, and hence careful correction was desirable. He often invited dinner guests, and, after having tablets placed before each upon which he might write his comments, read his poems. Finding he read verse poorly, he decided to follow the prevailing custom of entrusting that duty to a freedman. Then came the quandary as to what he should do. Should he sit silent or quiet, or follow the reader with eyes, hands, and voice, as many do? At one rehearsal two or three of the audience failed to make applause; they neither commended with lips and hands, nor rose to their feet;- evidently

(112)Ep. I-13 (113)Ep. VI-17 (114)Ep. VII-17 (115)Ep. VIII-21
 (116)Ep. IX-34

the usual forms of commendation. Pliny was enraged because these snobbish men had wasted a whole day in offending a man whom they had visited as a particular friend. One should give applause, for to do so enhances the glory of one's own literary efforts, be they greater or less than his. (117) Once as Passeannus Paulus was reciting a poem, he began, "Priscus, thou dost command -". Absentminded Iavolenus Priscus, one of his good friends, who was present, cried out "But I don't command!" Everyone burst out laughing and Paulus (118) received rather cool applause consequently!

It is doubtful if these literary men were deeply interested in philosophy. Pliny says that on this subject he himself (119) speaks as an amateur. He seems to put to little account its formal teachings. One letter tells how the lessons of the sick-bed are better than long books of the philosophers. We should be as virtuous in health as we resolve to be in sickness! (120) He numbers several philosophers among his friends. Euphrates is praised in eloquent terms, as a man full of that humanity he professes. Pliny learned to know him when he was in the army in Syria. His eloquence is like Plato; his style seduces one even unwilling. He wears long hair and beard, is neat, grave in manner, yet affable. He directs his eloquence against vice, not people, and reclaims the wanderer without chastising him. His two sons and daughter he is educating with great care. When Pliny makes complaint that his time is taken by altogether unliterary pursuits so that no time is left to hear the discussions, Euphrates tells him that to be engaged in the service of the public is the noblest part of philosophy, for it is the

putting into practice the speculations of the professors! In Asia
 Minor Pliny also, formed a friendship with Artemidorus, who was ex-
 pelled from Rome by Domitian, along with other philosophers. He
 visited him in exile and lent him money, at the risk of his life.
 There is not one among the philosophers so genuine and sincere, so
 devoted to work, indifferent to pleasures of the table, so strict
 in self-discipline. Yet all these are mere trifles when compared
 to sundry other virtues that caused Musonius to choose him for a
 son-in-law in preference to suitors from all ranks. There is a
 Titus Aristo who does not assume the garb of this sect, does not
 frequent public places, nor indulge in endless controversies as
 many of these men do; but he is erudite, pleads as an advocate and
 counsels his friends; in dress and diet and habits of life he re-
 minds one of the simplicity of the old Romans. His mind is the
 noblest ornament; he takes no pleasure in ostentation and seeks the
 reward of a virtuous action in the action and not the applause.
 The professed moralist can not produce his superior in piety,
 justice and fortitude.

Suicide was by no means contrary to the philosophic moral
 code. When Aristo was ill and suffering greatly, his fortitude was
 remarkable; yet he called his friends to consult with his physician
 and ascertain if the malady was incurable. If not, he would endure
 for the sake of his wife and friends; if so, death by his own voli-
 tion should be immediate. "This resolution is most praiseworthy",
 says Pliny, "for men so frequently rush into death without due re-
 flection; it is the mark of a truly great mind to calmly balance
 the motives for life and death, and let reason make the decision."

Corellius Rufus decided upon death as a relief from long torture from an inherited disaffection. Disregarding entreaties of wife and friends, soon after the death of the tyrant Domitian whom he had prayed to outlive, he made an end to his sufferings. Pliny feels more intense grief because it was possible for his friend to have lived, yet he cannot but feel that he is justified! Silius Italicus died from voluntary starvation, at the age of seventy-six, because he, too, was afflicted with an incurable disease. "He grew weary of life under such uneasy circumstances, and put an end to it with the most determined courage." (124) A woman finding that her husband was enduring great suffering from an incurable ulcer, persuaded him to escape it by death. She, having resolved to share his fate, bound herself to him and together they threw themselves into the lake. (125)

The woman in the story just related is nameless; she is, however, but one in the gallery of noble women whom Pliny's pen has painted. Arria, wife of Caecinna Paetus was a woman of the old Roman type. Her husband and most loved son were both dangerously ill. The son died, but Arria concealed the fact from her husband, lest it should increase the strength of his illness. When he inquired, she said the boy was resting well, or was better; if she could no longer restrain her tears, she left the sick room and returned later with a serene face. Her husband was apprehended in Dalmatia for complicity in a plot against the emperor and taken to Rome. She begged leave to be his sole servant during the voyage. Permission was refused, but nothing daunted, she hired a fishing boat, and braved the dangers of the sea in so light a craft rather

(124) Ep. III-7

(125) Ep. VI-24

than remain behind. She had determined not to outlive her beloved spouse. When he had been commanded to voluntary death and she saw signs of wavering, she seized a sword, plunged it into her heart and exclaimed, "Paetus, it gives no pain!" Pliny felt, however, that to play the mother, after she had no longer any child was far the greater mark of courage. ⁽¹²⁶⁾ When Arria had met the wife of Scribonianus who had become evidence for the prosecution, she had exclaimed, "What! Am I to suffer to address me, you, who saw your husband murdered even in your very arms, and yet survive him?" Her daughter, Arria, the wife of Thrasea, was altogether admirable. Their daughter, Fannia, was the wife of a Stoic of Domitian's time, Helvidius. Twice she endured exile with him and was once banished on her own account, for having persuaded Senecio to write the life of her husband, furnishing him with private memoirs for that purpose. When on trial she uttered no word to lessen her peril; when her effects were confiscated she sequestered, as a companion of her exile, ⁽¹²⁷⁾ a copy of those memoirs which the senate had ordered suppressed. This woman, of such puritanical character, was nevertheless amiable, pleasing in conversation, charming and kind. She nursed a relative, Junia, a vestal, thru a fever; she contracted the disease and for her it proved fatal.

⁽¹²⁸⁾

In one letter, we are allowed a glimpse of lovely girlhood. It is the picture of a charming maid of thirteen years. She has already the wisdom of age and sedateness of a matron joined with youthful sweetness and girlish modesty. How fondly she embraces her father! How courteous to his friends! She is an excellent student and indulges in play sparingly and discreetly. She

is affectionate toward all those who have charge of her, tutors, nurses and servants. During a long illness she displayed sweetness and patience, encouraging her father and sister, showing no fear of death. She had been betrothed to a worthy youth and the wedding day was near at hand! After her death, the sorrowing father expended the value of the jewels and finery that were to have been for the bride upon myrrh and spices for her funeral. The Roman maid, then, became a wife at a very early age. Her husband was selected for her by her father or guardian. Junius Mauricus asked (129) Pliny to contemplate a husband for his niece. A letter in reply recommends a certain friend, Municius Acillianus, and shows the grounds for choice, that probably were commonly observed in his circle. He comes from a municipal city which still retains much of the ancient sobriety and frugality. His family, though not consular, are very worthy and honorable. He, himself, is a man of vivacity, application, modesty and charm. He has passed thru the posts of quaestor, tribune, and praetor, (which means he was at least thirty!). He has a distinguished bearing, which is a proper tribute to the maid's innocence. Last, but by no means least, his father is very rich. Pliny, with all due modesty, yet not without special care makes this last point. "In such a family, this would be no consideration, - please excuse me for mentioning it - yet the laws of Rome rank a man according to his possessions as well as does prevailing custom. Also the possibility of rearing a family makes wealth a point of concern."

Calpurnia, Pliny's third wife, is a beautiful type of womanhood. Descended from an old aristocratic family at Como, reared by her Aunt Calpurnia Hispulla, who was a warm friend of

Pliny's mother, she had been surrounded by all that was pious and moral. She is discerning and thrifty; her affection for her husband shows itself in her interest in his pursuits. His compositions she reads and memorizes, worries with him over his pleadings and rejoices when they are over. Messengers are stationed to keep her informed of his success, how he is received and the applause. When he recites, close at hand, and behind a curtain, sits Calpurnia, listening for his praises. She sings his verses, having set them to the lyre, with no instructor but Love. When forced to go to Campania to regain her health, he is in constant anxiety and begs her to write every day or even twice a day. He reads her letters over and over, and imagines, at night, that he is conversing with her; by day he involuntarily goes to her apartment at the usual hour, returning like an excluded lover; there is only one respite from his loneliness - pleading the causes of his friends. Her consolation is found in reading his works which she puts in his accustomed place. At the time of her grandfather's death she was in Bithynia with her husband, since she felt she must hurry home to her aunt, Pliny gave her a passport, sending at the same time an explanation to Trojan. That generous prince replies in a most friendly and considerate manner, commending the act. Pliny and his Calpurnia were not among those who shrank from the duties of parenthood, and they were tremendously disappointed when they were again and again denied offspring. The old grandfather and the aunt of Calpurnia were as disappointed as they.

Calpurnia was not alone in her interest in her husband's literary pursuit. The wife of Pompeius Saturninus wrote lovely

(130)Ep. IV-19 (131)Ep. VI-4 and 7 (132)Ep. VII-5
 (133)Ep. X-120 and 121 (134)Ep. VIII 10 and 11

letters, resembling Plautus or Terence, in prose. Her husband, however, Pliny says, deserves the credit, for she was a mere girl (135) when he married her. The epistles mention other women; the wife of Corellius Rufus is praised as capable of being trusted with the highest secrets; (136) the wife of Macrinus is a lady whose virtues would have made her a pattern, even in ancient times. She had lived (137) thirty-nine years with her husband, in uninterrupted harmony!

Corellia, sister of Corellius Rufus is honored with the greatest respect. (138) The wife of Domitius Tullius had incurred popular censure by her alliance with an old rich man, but her faithful care of him thru a long and utterly helpless illness had changed this feeling (139) to one of admiration. In all this long list of women who belong to Pliny's group, there is but one of whom he cannot speak with the deepest respect and highest praise. This is Numidia Quadratilla, an octogenarian, who enjoyed her pantomines and chess. Yet while he cannot approve of her altogether, he is inclined to excuse her. She had excessive spirit and vitality,- shown by her extreme vigor at such an age, and, not being a man, with law courts and the like where she might exercise her energies, she had indulged in these amusements. She never had allowed the chess nor the pantomines in the presence of her grandson. She did not heed legacy hunters (140) and her grandchildren became her heirs.

The son of the family was under the discipline of his (141) father which was often extremely severe. Pliny had occasion once to call to the attention of a friend that he was the father of a man; the youth had been reprimanded as too lavish in dogs and (142) horses. In the early years the boy lived in his mother's society

(135)Ep. I-16 (136)Ep. I-12 (137)Ep. VIII-5 (138)Ep. VII-11
 (139)Ep. VIII-18 (140)Ep. VII-24 (141)Ep. IX-12 (142)Ep. III-3

with teachers and preceptors at home, who were chosen with great
 (143) care. A great many were heard before one could be chosen for the
 children of Mauricus. In many towns the preceptor was chosen and
 (144) supported by the public. When the youth becomes more mature, he is put
 into the care of a rhetorician, who, Pliny tells Corellia, must be
 a man of high morals and character. He will be the tutor, guardian
 (145) and guide; his first care is to form manners, his second, eloquence.
 Another epistle greatly praises the eloquence of Isaeus, a rhetori-
 cian of sixty years, who has never pleaded at the bar. He is "the
 most eloquent, and happy man in the world". He has a simplicity,
 sincerity, a goodness that lawyers never attain, due to the habitual
 (146) rancour of the courts.

We find Pliny and his friends are studiously humane in
 the treatment of slaves. In one letter he says he has no bond
 slaves to put upon an estate; again, in his Laurentian villa the
 servants' apartments are finished so nicely that they can, if
 (147) necessary, be used for guests. An epidemic had run thru his house-
 hold and taken a heavy toll. He consoles himself in his very real
 sorrow by scrupulously carrying out their legacies, exactly as
 though they had been legal. He has indulged them in the matter of
 wills, on the condition that they shall name no one outside of the
 household, for to men of their station, that is their state or city.
 He takes additional comfort in the fact that he has always very
 readily manumitted slaves, so that those who lived long enough to
 (148) obtain freedom, seem not to have died quite so immaturely. He can
 not feel with some men that it is a mark of sense and spirit to feel

(143)Ep. II-18

(144)Ep. IV-13 (145)Ep. III-3 (146)Ep. II-3 (147)Ep. II-17

(148)Ep. VIII-16

a misfortune like this as merely 'pecuniary loss". Though a slave could not legally inherit, he insists on a legacy to one whom the owner had failed to manumit being delivered entire. When his friend Tiro, a praetor, was travelling near Comum, Pliny arranged that he might turn aside and visit Fabatus, his grand-father-in-law, for the purpose of formally manumitting a number of slaves who had been freed already in the presence of friends; greatly does he rejoice that so many new citizens have been added. The statement is made without comment that the physicians even in the case of the same disorder, treat the free with more tenderness than a slave. Public slaves were employed to care for public services, guard prisons and such things. These received an annual stipend. In their number were those older men who had been condemned to punishment; they cleansed the common sewer, repaired the streets and roads and attended the public baths. While Pliny was in Bithynia, two slaves were found in the army. Trajan wrote in reply to an inquiry regarding them that if they presented themselves, evidently preferring that life to that of a slave, they must die; if they were sent as proxies for someone, those persons must be ascertained and punished, if levied by officers, they must bear the consequences. All three of these possibilities throw interesting light on the life of a slave. An inquiry came asking the emperor what should be done about children of free parents who had been exposed, rescued and reared in slavery. The decision was in favor of their freedom, if they claimed it, and that they were under no obligation to pay for maintenance to obtain it. This would seem to indicate that a humane spirit

(149)Ep. IV-10 (150)Ep. VII-16, 32 (151)Ep. VIII-24
 (152)Ep. X-19, 20, 31 (153)Ep. X-32 (154)Ep. X-29
 (155)Ep. X-65 and 66

was growing, - a feeling that the slave was a human being.

To Valerius Paulinus, who he says treats his slaves humanely, our kindly man of letters writes his distress because of his freedman Zosimus, who is ^agifted comedian and musician, and otherwise talented, able and loyal. His throat had once before been strained by his too violent efforts, and he had to recuperate in Egypt. Now he has a return of this affliction, and Pliny begs his friend for the use of his villa for him, for which he will gladly pay all expenses. (156) A number of freedmen shared his studies. He mentions a Marcus who was skilled in literature. (157) Others read his poems, as stated above. The pantomines and dancers whom Quadratilla kept were freedman. In addition to those who aid his studies are those who acted as agents in business affairs, as in the case of the man whom he sent to sell his property to Corellia. (158) At his table they were always treated as equals. A certain Sabanianus is entreated to reinstate a young freedman who has offended his patron; and later, when the repentant fellow has again been restored to the household, Pliny urges his friend to be more placable hereafter towards erring slaves. (159) A master might free his slaves, but citizenship was conferred by the emperor, usually at the request of the patron. Because he had been cared for thru a long illness by a physician, Pliny begs Trajan to grant him citizenship as the only adequate means of rewarding him. (160) At the request of Antonia Maximilla, a lady of high rank, given thru Pliny, the emperor bestows the rights of citizens on her two freedwomen. Paulinus left to Pliny upon his death, the patronage of his slaves. (161) Citizenship was at once asked for and readily granted, for three of them, with a promise to do the same for the rest as soon as requested. (162) As to

(156)Ep. V-19 (157)Ep. VII-27 (158)Ep. VII-11 (159)Ep. IX-21, 24
 (160)Ep. X-5 (161)Ep. X-104 (162)Ep. X-105

his own freedmen, Trajan will have no favors shown them, although
 the people, in a suit against him, attempt to follow precedent,
 and give him special preference. (163)

As would be expected in a man of Pliny's disposition, he carefully adhered to the forms of religious worship followed by the ancient Romans. By the advice of the aruspices he repaired, or rather rebuilt the temple of Ceres at Comum. Here, on the thirteenth of September vows were offered and paid and affairs transacted, for which purpose he resolved to add a portico to protect the people from rain and sun. He petitioned Trajan for a vacant Augurate that he might make publicly the vows for his prosperity which he daily made to the gods in private. In Bithynia he was worried greatly by the prevalence of the Christian sect, which had caused the temples of the Gods to be almost deserted. To prove that a man, when accused, did not adhere to this new sect, he was asked to offer incense, to invoke the gods, make libations to the emperor's image and the statues of the deities. A renewing of zeal for worship and a demand for sacrificial animals as well as a revival of sacred festivals follows. And yet with all this rigid conformity to custom, he says that the gods rejoice more in the innocence of the worshipers than in elaborate prayers; the man who enters their temples with a pure heart is more agreeable to them than one who recites a carefully prepared form. (164)

A firm belief in dreams and omens is manifested in the epistles. Suetonius, terrified by a dream begged Pliny to have a cause, which he was to plead, postponed, for he feared ill success. By no means does our 'Typical Roman of the Empire' ridicule his (165)

(163)Ep. VI-31 (164)Ep. IX-39 (165)Ep. X-13 (166)Ep. X-96

(167)Thomas P-331

friend's superstition. He tries rather to persuade him the omen is favorable, since he himself had been visited by such an one before he had spoken in a very important cause from which he could not withdraw; it had chanced that he won great fame and praise therefrom. In a letter to Sura, Pliny tells three ghost stories, asking his friend whether he is to believe there really are ghosts or whether they are only the result of a terrified imagination. He is very strongly inclined to believe them as they appear to be. Curtius Rufus, while attending a new governor of Africa, one afternoon was told by an apparition that he would go back to Rome, hold office return as proconsular and die there. All happened as the ghost had said. When he returned, he was seized by a fatal illness, with no apparent cause. Again - there was in Athens a house haunted by a ghost in chains. All tenants avoided it, until the philosopher Athenodorus, attracted by its cheapness, rented it. As he sat alone, the first evening, occupied in writing, the ghost appeared with clanking chains, and led him to the courtyard, where it vanished. The philosopher marked the spot and persuaded the magistrates to investigate. They found the bones of a man, fettered by chains, buried there. After ceremonies of burial, the ghost appeared no more. The third story is of two different boys from among Pliny's own slaves, who were visited by nightly apparitions with shears. They clipped the slave boys' hair, leaving it scattered about the room. He interprets this to have presaged his escape from the hand of Domitian, due only to his death, since an accusation against him was found among that prince's private papers. Accused persons allow their hair to grow, - hence the interpretation. Regulus, the enemy and rival of our good advocate, wears a white patch for good

(168)Ep. I-18 (169)Ep. VII-27

luck, transferring it from over the right to the left eye, according as he is pleading for or against the plaintiff. This man also consulted the soothsayers with regard to every case, which Pliny (170) calls inordinate superstition! At a banquet, the conversation turned upon miraculous occurrences. A story was told which Pliny affirms to be true, though he admits it sounds like a fable. It is of ^a Dolphin which approached the boys of an African town, while they were swimming, and carried one of them on his back to the deep water, and then safely returned him. This happened day after day, and everyone wondered; the deputy governor anointed the Dolphin with oil while lying on the bank one day. So many magistrates came to the town to see this unwonted sight, that the quiet of the place as well as its finances were seriously impaired, and the creature (171) was privately killed. This is written to Caninius Rufus with a view to using it for material for a poem.

The burial of the dead was attended with elaborate ceremony. The funeral of Verginius Rufus was a most striking and memorable spectacle, 'doing honor to the age, the emperor, and to eloquence herself' (172), for Cornelius Tacitus, the consul, pronounced the customary oration. Regulus, at the funeral of his son, slew the boy's little saddle horses, dogs, parrots, blackbirds and nightingales, round the pyre. Many, many busts and statues did the father have made of him; he read his memoirs before a vast audience, though he was a mere boy. A thousand copies were made and spread broadcast, as well as read in the municipal towns. This Pliny tells, however, with bitter scorn (173). As an honor to deceased relatives gladiatorial games were held. Maximus gave them for the Veronese

after his wife's demise. He had ordered panthers imported from
(174)
Africa in great numbers but they were detained by tempests.

While Pliny applauds his friend Maximus for these that he gave in his wife's honor, he writes a rare letter of bitter censure about the childishness of the thousands who view over and over again the Circensian games. It is not the horses nor races that they care for, but only the colors of the charioteers. Were they to interchange garments, so quickly would their partisans change sides. Not the common crowd only, but certain men of gravity and worth are thus enthralled - a thing not comprehensible to this dignified litterateur. He is spending the leisure time among his
(175)
papers! During the Saturnalis, he escapes the noise and tumult in
(176)
a sanctum sanctorum built expressly for that purpose. He is not alone in his feeling against the licentiousness of these popular amusements. A legacy had been left at Vienna to be used for gymnastic games. Trebonius Rufus, the Duumvir, a friend of Pliny, ordered them abolished, because of the bad effect on the morals of the town. His right as an official to take such action was brought in to question. After he had plead his own cause, with all the dignity of a good Old Roman, expressions of opinion were called for. Junius Mauricus, a man of great strength of character, upheld Rufinus, adding, "Would they could be abolished at Rome as well!" Rufinus won the day and the games were not restored. By way of comment, Pliny adds that the vices of the Viennese are within their own walls, but those of Rome spread far and wide. The wrongs that
(177)
spread from the capital are naturally the most dangerous.

In the letters to Trajan, written while he was governor Bithynia, Pliny gives an interesting glimpse of the prolific build-
(173)Ep. IV-7, IV-2 (174)Ep. VI-34 (175)Ep. IX-6 (176)Ep. II-17
(177)Ep. IV-22

ing propensity of the time. Imperial permission was necessary for all new erections. Such a request was granted for a new bath at Prusa, which was to be built 'as the glory of the reign and the dignity of the city demanded!' The bath was built upon the ruins of an old mansion, thus making an ugly place lovely. At Nicomedia two aqueducts had been begun and abandoned. Trojan sanctions a third, to bring water to the upper city as well, on arches partly of square blocks and partly of bricks: 'its utility and beauty would be worthy of Trojan's reign'. A new Forum was also built in that city. At Nicea, a new theatre was allowed. Private individuals had guaranteed decoration of it with colonnades above the auditorium and basilicas around. Before finished, it sank and left great fissures so that it could not be repaired. Their old Gymnasium had burned and a larger one had been laid out. The architect declared the walls were too weak for such a load, though it was twenty-two feet in thickness. An aqueduct at Sinope was not refused by Trojan on condition that the expense would not be too great for the city. It would contribute to health and benefit. At Amastris, a long stately street was bordered by an unpleasant open water course. This the emperor agreed might be covered at city-expense. Huge baths were being built at Claudiopolis. Part of the funds necessary for such public edifices was obtained by the cities as entrance-money paid by those elected to offices, senate or other honors, the fees varying according to the importance of the position. In some places private individuals gave money to finance these building projects, as in Nicea, where one gave the colonnade, another a basilica etc. This building in a distant province must be a

(178)Ep. X-43, 44 (179)Ep. X-70 (180)Ep. X-37, 38 (181)Ep. X-49, 50
 (182)Ep. X-39 (183)Ep. X-90 (184)Ep. X-98, 99 (185)Ep. X-39
 (186)Ep. X-39

reflection of as great, or more probably far greater efforts of the same kind in Rome and the nearer provinces. The impelling motive seems to have been a desire to beautify the cities and procure the greatest possible convenience, but also to establish monuments to the glory of the reign.

Pliny tells of three different temples he built at his own expense. One was to show his affection to the people of Comum (187) his native town. One was in honor of the statues of the emperors which have come to him as family heirlooms. He begs Trajan's permission to include his statue, and to grant him leave of absence (188) in which to make the plans for the building. The third was the temple to Ceres mentioned above; Mustius is requested to obtain (189) four marble pillars for its adornment. He had purchased an antique Corinthian bronze statue of great value to be placed in one of these; there is a letter asking Annius Severus to procure a pedestal for it, to be engraved with Pliny's name, - and his honors, if (190) it is thought proper! His wife's grandfather, Fabatus, dedicated a portico, and adorned a gate of the city as a benefaction to the (191) public.

Not only in the form of public buildings did the beneficent spirit of the wealthy express itself. Pliny had been born at Comum and his interest in that city never flagged. He established (192) for them a public library and settled an annual income for the (193) maintenance of young persons of good families and small fortunes. In order that this might not be squandered, if given as land, the donor sold a piece of property worth more than five hundred thousand (194) sesterces. This he carefully explains to Caninius who desires to

(187)Ep. IV-1 (188)Ep. X-8 (189)Ep. IX-39 (190)Ep. III-6
 (191)Ep. V-12 (192)Ep. I-8 (193)Ep. I-8 (194)Ep. VII-18

settle a sum of money on the people of Comum for an annual feast.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

Upon finding that this city maintained no school, sending her youth to Milan and elsewhere to study, Pliny decided that boys and girls should be kept under home influence and made lovers of their native city. Therefore he pledges to maintain one-third of the cost of the school. He would undertake its entire support, but that he fears it would be perverted and turned to private ends, as it often is where teachers are engaged by local authorities. Parents will have more care and interest in the disposal, if they finance part themselves.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾

To this same Comum Saturninus left a legacy of four hundred thousand sesterces, though the law allowed no city to be an heir to a will. Pliny was determined however that the people should have the benefit of this money, and as he was executor of the will, he proceeded accordingly.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Sometimes the public gift took the form of a statue erected in the Forum, as in the case of Capito, who obtained Trojan's consent to thus honor Silanus, who had been put to death by Nero.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ The most of Pliny's benefactions, however, seem to have been personal. He gave his old nurse a hundred thousand sesterces in a piece of land.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ He sent fifty thousand to a friend, Quintilian, to outfit his daughter in a suitable manner for marriage with a Roman noble.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ A Roman whose bank account does not quite equal the sum needful for the rank of knight, is aided by a gift of the amount lacking.⁽²⁰⁰⁾ He insists that Calvina must execute her father's will as left, lest reproach of poverty fall upon his name; hence he refuses to accept the debt owed to himself, with the

(194)Ep. VII-18 (195)Ep. IV-13 (196)Ep. V-7 (197)Ep. I-17
 (198)Ep. VI-3 (199)Ep. VI-32 (200)Ep. I-19

remark that any deficit which he may find in his income, he shall overcome by strictest economy. This is in keeping with other sentiments of this generous Roman, as we shall see at our next glance.

For let us imagine ourselves as guest at the banquet in the home of Pliny, or one of his good friends. Our food is excellent, but cannot be called luxurious. The intervals between courses are interspersed with philosophical conversation; there is no indulgence in the immoral gossip that we have read about, and instead we are charmed by the theories and tales of some of the guests. When the food has been removed, our host asks if we prefer a reader, music or comedy, and since we are unable to decide, he entertains us with all three. At his table, we notice, freedmen and all guests are served exactly alike, for he bitterly scathes the man who has classes of guests at his table, saying that if he can not afford fine wine for all, he will drink that set before the freedmen. A friend complains of his disgust with the buffoons, lascivious dancers and jestors at a home where he has dined. Our host replies that he is neither shocked nor entertained by such; but he will not complain, for those men who indulge in such entertainments are tremendously bored by his literary diversions.

Nothing aside from literature is more prominent in Pliny's picture than the seeking of office. Most of these old republican offices had surely lost a great deal, if not all of their former importance and power, but yet they were earnestly desired and diligently canvassed for. In this circle all the friends of a young man combined their influence in his favor. Pliny warmly solicits his friends, entreats, makes house to house visits,

(201)Ep. II-4 (202)Ep. I-15; III-12 (203)Ep. III-12
 (204)Ep. II-6 (205)Ep. IX-17

perambulates the places of public resort, and uses all his influence and popularity in petitions on behalf of Sextus, whose father and uncle had been of assistance to him, probably in like manner. (206) The wise young man begins early to look about for friendship with men of influence. (207) When Naso became a candidate, Pliny wrote his friend Fandanus to hasten to town and help, for he had made it "publicly known that I am soliciting for him, hence, if Naso succeeds, the honor is his own, if defeated, the disgrace is mine". (207)

Formerly it had been customary for candidates to give entertainments, make presents and deposit money with agents for bribes. These were forbidden by Trajan, who ordered no expense for the candidate and added that he must have a third part of his fortune in land in Italy, since those aspiring to honors seem to look upon Rome and Italy as merely an inn on their way as travelers. A great selling of land in provinces and buying near Rome ensued. (208) Over and over again Pliny's letter is a request for an office for a friend, either from the emperor or some powerful friend. Even in the case of the tribunate, the least and emptiest of all these offices, we find him considering the honor a sacred and inviolable function, and giving up his duties of advocate to perform it. He chose to appear as Tribune of all, rather than advocate of a few; the two offices seemed to him incompatible, for the former afforded (209) a reverence that the latter never would receive. In reply to congratulations on the recently acquired augurate, he says it is glorious to receive a mark of approbation from so wise and judicious a prince; it is an ancient and sacred institution to be held for (210) life.

(206) Ep. II-9 (207) Ep. VI-6 (208) Ep. VI-19 (209) Ep. I-23
 (210) Ep. IV-8

The election took place in the senate and was considered a most solemn occasion. Until Trajan's time it had been given by voice, but the disorder of the several candidates running forward with their patrons, and the throng in the center with small groups around, had become unendurable. A secret ballot had been introduced to remedy the evil. (211) Pliny was apprehensive of this, and it resulted as he feared. Some of the tablets contained jests and even indecencies; one had the names of the patrons instead of the candidates. The Senate was enraged and threatened the emperor's vengeance upon the authors. Their identity, however, was concealed; perhaps they were among the very ones who were expressing most strongly their indignation. What would such men do in private, who could play such pranks in such an important affair, at such a solemn time! (212) The assuming of office was attended by all friends, and was a dignified ceremony. Verginius Rufus and Corellius invariably attended Pliny, though they otherwise were infrequently seen in Rome. (213) Pliny apologizes to Valerius Paulinus for his absence on the day of his consulate. The emperor selected the consuls, and they made a formal speech of thanks to him. (214) The consul named the quaestor. (215) Pliny entreats Pompeius to give the tribunate to a friend, and receives his promise before he names the friend. (216)

Among the great ceremonies that our Roman gentleman must, out of courtesy, attend, was the making of the will. Aurelia, a lady of great prosperity, dressed herself in a very splendid manner, as a bride might, before she met the witnesses of her testament. (217) Very often large legacies were settled on advocates, as Pliny and

(211)Ep. III-20 (212)Ep. IV-25 (213)Ep. II-1 (214)Ep.VI-27; II-1
 (215)Ep. IV-15 (216)Ep. VII-22 (217)Ep. II-20

Tacitus, this being an adequate method to reward them for ser-
 (218) vices. It was by no means uncommon to leave large sums to be used
 for games or feasts for the people of a municipia. While in Bi-
 thynia, a Julius Largus whom he had never seen left to Pliny his
 wealth to be divided between two cities for either public works or
 (219) Quintennial Games in Trajan's honor.

How eagerly this dignified ceremony of drawing up the
 will was attended by the captators, who had carefully courted and
 wooed the wealthy testator! Pliny thoroughly despised men of this
 class. Regulus, his rival in law, and personal enemy is one of the
 basest of these. He, with consummate audacity, visited Veronia
 whose husband he had so sorely wronged, when she lay dangerously
 ill. He forced entrance to her bedside, predicted by astrology and
 sacrifice that she would get well, and so gained a handsome legacy.
 (220) Blaesus, a consular of great wealth, in his last illness decided to
 change his will. Regulus, having already gained some favor in his
 sight, urged the physicians to prolong the sick man's life. After
 the will had been signed, he entreated them to give him an easy
 death. When the will was opened, after the death had taken place,
 lo! Regulus was not even so much as named, after all his trouble
 and flattery! (221) This captator had raised himself by such villainies
 to immense wealth. He once had consulted the omens to know how
 soon he should be worth sixty million sesterces. A double liver
 was found in the victim which, he said, promised he should possess
 twice that sum. "And so he will, if he continues to dictate wills
 (221) for other people!", remarked Pliny. To his son, who had an estate
 left him by his mother, he gave his freedom, in order that he might

(218)Ep. VII-20; V-1 (219)Ep. X-75 (220)Ep. II-20
 (221)Ep. II-20

get possession of it. Then Regulus tried to wheedle the boy out
 (222) of it. Pliny has no words strong enough to express his contempt
 for such a father! Domitius Tullius, who had encouraged the atten-
 tions of legacy hunters, left his estate, finally, to members of
 his family. A great deal of talk was evidenced at Rome, some call-
 ing him feigning and ungrateful, but our warm hearted philanthro-
 pist feels that their own dishonest purposes were betrayed by such
 arraignment of a man who had three generations of descendants.

Others applaud Domitius as wise and prudent to have thus disappoint-
 (223) ed this infamous tribe of men. In several letters Pliny writes
 of the advantage of the childless. He considers it a mark of great
 honor that Asinius Rufus has a number of children, in an age when
 even one child is thought a burden, and prevents that lucrative
 (224) adulation which is usually paid to those who have none. Even
 Regulus the captator is beset by men of the same type immediately
 (225) upon his son's death.

Many interesting glances into the life of an advocate are
 given us in the epistles, for Pliny himself followed that profession.
 (226) At the age of nineteen he began to plead, after having studied for
 (227) a considerable time under Quintilian, in the court of the Cen-
 (228) tunviri, which he refers to as 'mea arena'. "Oratory", he says,
 "is still held in honor!", for, once when he was entering the Julian
 (230) Basilica, he found the crowd so great that he had to enter by way
 of the tribunal. One of the young auditors had had his tunic torn
 in the crowd, and stood there in his toga merely, for seven hours
 while Pliny spoke. He does not always speak so jubilantly however.

(222)Ep. IV-2 (223)Ep. VIII-18 (224)Ep. IV-15 (225)Ep. IV-2
 (226)Ep. V-8 (227)Ep. II-14 (228)Ep. VI-12 'my main scene of
 operation' (229)Ep. IV-16 (230)Ep. IV-16

Another letter reads, "I am engrossed in pleading before the Centumviri, a business which brings me more fatigue than pleasure; the causes are trivial and jejune; seldom anything considerable either from importance of question or rank of persons concerned comes before them. Few counsels frequent the court, with whom I can take any satisfaction in appearing; mostly obscure young men come hither from the schools to practice declaiming." They had not the proper introduction by older advocates as had been customary. They had an audience of hired claqueurs, dole was handed around openly. Two of Pliny's own slaves were hired at three denarii apiece. The signal was given to applaud, for the audience was too ignorant to know the appropriate moment. The man who has loudest commendation is usually the worst orator. Pliny tells his friend that he is preparing a gradual retreat, lest he be thought to be evading the labor. In another letter, he discloses his irritation at the laxness of respect for ancient rights of advocates. The complaint is want of time and rushing thru cases in one or two hours. When he serves as juror he gives all the time asked, to the advocate. We hear, at this point, a note of praise for Regulus, because he always claimed plenty of time for his speeches. There was a law limiting an advocate to a fee of ten thousand sesterces, to be received after the trial was completed. That it was customary to pay them by means of legacies has been mentioned above. In a letter to Tacitus, a man noted for his conciseness of style, Pliny carefully explains his preference for copious style of oratory;

*In good compositions, as in everything else that is valuable, the more there is of them, the better." He is exceedingly proud of his forensic career, designing to revise the speeches after he has

(231)Ep. II-14 (232)Ep. VI-2 (233)Ep. V-21 (234)Ep. I-20

(235)
 given them, to make them suitable for literature. His interest in eloquence extends to the young men who are attempting to gain fame by its means. He hears them practice, pleading on opposite sides, and is overjoyed at their success.

In the capacity of advocate Pliny was called, with a number of other men, by the emperor as assessor in his private court. They met at the emperor's villa at Centumcellae, where they were entertained well, but not lavishly. They spent the day hearing the cases, the evenings in pleasant conversation or entertained with interludes. On the last day the emperor sent each a present at his departure.

Our advocate was often engaged in causes heard by the senate, especially those for provincials. This body had greatly degenerated under the empire. Pliny says in his youth (under Domitian) it sat trembling and silent, with no choice but hypocrisy; it was summoned only for ridicule or to sanction villainy; it had been so entirely subjected to the sway of the tyrant, had performed no real function for so many years that the customs and usages had broken down. Yet he ever speaks of it with respect, as august and venerable. When Marius Priscus was being tried for extortion in the province of Africa, the senate met in great dignity for three full days, with the emperor as Consul presiding. With his usual love for 'mores maiorum', Pliny exalts that it was in the manner of Ancient Rome. In every case he seems perfectly satisfied with the decisions of the senate. He mentions once that other orders reproached the senate for severity towards others, but mutually conniving in case of each other. Priscus, guilty of the

(235)Ep. V-9; IV-9 (236)Ep. VI-11 (237)Ep. VI-31 (238)Ep. VIII-14
 (239)Ep. II-11 (240)"Ancient Customs" (241)Ep. II-11 (242)Ep. IX-13

grossest misgovernment was fined seven hundred thousand sesterces, and banished from Rome with the rest of his ill-gotten gains. His lieutenant Funinus was merely to be left out when the allotment of provinces was made to past consuls. Pliny upholds this as a really severe penalty. No doubt to a man of his sensibilities it would
(243)

be.

The deprivation of senatorial honors without exemption from the laborious duties of the senator seemed a very real punishment. All that could be attained after holding the consulship, in the way of honors, was the allotment of a governorship in a province. This post was by no means all flowers, even for a scrupulous man.

Lustricus Brutianus was accused by his legate, whom he had trusted,
of
(244)

/misdemeanors in the province. He circumvented him by lodging an accusation against him, and Pliny writes his friend, a governor, that he must be very careful in whom he trusts. If however, he is imposed upon, he will find satisfaction at the hands of the senate.

One letter, written to Maximus who has just been allotted the province of Greece, gives him some excellent advice. He should be ever mindful that he has wonderful Greece, home of culture, in his hands. Besides, he should be moderate, for no man needs support his authority by asperity, if he holds the authority of the state! Thirdly, he has gained excellent reputation in former

offices, which he must now rival. It must not be thought that he
(245)

was more noble formerly than at this time. There are several in-
(246)

stances of dishonorable governors, as Priscus and Classicus, the governor of Baetica in the same year. The Bithynians accused

two past governors within one year. There was, however, a law

(243)Ep. II-12 (244)Ep. VI-22 (245)Ep. VIII-24 (246)Ep. III-9

against even accepting presents from the provincials, and the senate took up these cases with great care.

What a delightful contrast the Letters draw between city and rural life! "All the day in the city seems to be spent in perpetual hurry in the doing of nothing." A noble must receive his early morning callers, he goes to witness a friend's son take the 'toga virilis'; he witnesses a marriage contract; a wedding; he is invited to witness a will, to attend the hearing of a cause; another called him for advice. All these things seem of great consequence and under no condition to be refused or avoided. They are continually interspersed with 'whispers of malice', with rumour and anxieties of hope and fear. However, all this is included in formal social etiquette, and no part of it is to be scorned!

However, the first opportunity is to be sought for leaving the noisy city where there is no time for literary reflection; and seeking the quiet and leisure of rural life. Here the day is his to use as his own; he is his own master. He may sleep or wake as he pleases, and lays aside the Roman official dress. At Tusculum Pliny wakes at sunrise, spends several hours with closed windows merely meditating on his writings, then after opening the windows, dictates his thoughts to an amanuensis; later he walks on the terrace or in the galleries, dictating meanwhile. After that he reads or studies while he rides. In the afternoon, after sleeping a while, his voice and lungs are cleared and exercised by reading aloud; while he walks or enjoys the bath he hears a book read, or dictates. Then comes the evening meal, during which there is

(247)Ep. I-9 (248)Ep. III-12 (249)'The toga of manhood'
 (250)Ep. IX-6 (251)Ep. VII-3

usually reading or occasionally other entertainment. Sometimes to vary the program, he rides on horseback, allotting a small amount of time to tenants, whose conversation, however, ⁽²⁵²⁾ is tedious and crude. Spurrina, in his old age retired to his rural estate, spent ⁽²⁵³⁾ his time in much the same fashion.

Beside this country seat at Tusculum Pliny had several ⁽²⁵⁴⁾ other rural estates. There were several estates on Lake Como, one in Tuscany, others at Tibur and Praeneste, and one of which he was especially fond, at Laurentum, only seventeen miles from Rome, near enough so that he could ride thither on horseback at the end of the ⁽²⁵⁵⁾ day's work at Rome, with no special loss of time. Nor is he alone in his desire for rural luxury. His friend Italicus had several villas, even in the same region, the last purchase always being the favorite. Caninius Rufus spent his time in the country; he was an object of envy to Pliny, and greatly did he fear lest this friend ⁽²⁵⁷⁾ of his should be lured by his rural ease to neglect his studies. As Pliny looks out from his Laurentian house, he sees a coastline ⁽²⁵⁸⁾ dotted with villas. The Anio seems to be invited and detained by the ⁽²⁵⁹⁾ villas on its bank. It was especially desirable to own an estate possessed formerly by one known to fame. Italicus owned one of ⁽²⁶⁰⁾ Cicero's villas and the tomb of Virgil. Calpurnius Macer is congratulated on his possession of a villa which was the retreat of a ⁽²⁶¹⁾ noted Roman. Pliny is amazed to find that some really learned men have preferred country retirement to the round of offices and ⁽²⁶²⁾ political life at Rome. Such a man is Terentius Junior.

(252)Ep. IX-36 (253)Ep. III-1 (254)Ep. IX-7 (255)Ep. II-17
 (256)Ep. III-7 (257)Ep. I-3 (258)Ep. II-17 (259)Ep. VIII-17
 (260)Ep. III-7 (261)Ep. V-18 (262)Ep. VII-25

Pliny tells us that his Laurentian villa is most convenient, though not expensive to maintain. There seems to be little thought for the external effect of these buildings, so that the smallest covered much ground and resembled a town. The guiding principle seems to have been the delight of the mind, eyes and body of the inhabitants. This one is located so close to the sea that the spray strikes one corner of it. Some of the dining rooms are arranged to catch the rays of the sun and also the reflected rays from the waves. One room receives the sunshine all day, very pleasant in winter; another is entirely protected and cool which is practicable for hot days of summer. A furnace with heating pipes lies under the floor in one part. There are both warm and cold baths, from one of which the bather could have a view out onto the sea. From one of the drawing rooms one has a view of the sea in three directions, "three seas", as Pliny puts it; from several we have long distance views toward wood and hills. In one part of the house there is a room completely surrounded by a hallway, so that no sound of servants or sea or aught else can enter. Here the learned, quiet, refined and elegant man of letters takes refuge during the noisy Saturnalia. Out side there are tennis courts, a circus for exercise on horseback, and a portico for vehicles. Long sunny galleries stretch out to right and left, and gardens of box-wood, fig and mulberry trees, rosemary and violets. At the Tuscan country-seat there are very ornate gardens; terraces divided into geometric figures, box hedges, box trees cut into patterns, acanthus, evergreens trimmed into various designs. Statues, monuments, fountains, fish-ponds, canals and aviaries are all to be seen.

In such a place as this did our noble Roman read, write, and take his exercise. For diversion there was hunting in the woods, and fishing in the lakes; in fact one villa is so close to the lake that one can fish from the window. One of the disposition of the owner of this Laurentian villa, however, cares not to hunt without tablet, book and pencil, that he may be sure to come home with some fruit of his labors; though he may have captured three wild boars, he is much more interested in the literary accomplishment of the day.

Pliny was contemplating the purchase of a new estate. It lay next to his, which would necessitate his keeping but one in fine repair - a statement which makes us think the upkeep of a villa was quite expensive. He would need but one overseer, gardener, housekeeper, one set of workmen and one apparatus for catching game. The estate can be purchased for three million sesterces, though it usually sold for five, due to the run-down condition, for though the land was rich and well watered, with meadows, vineyards and woods, the last owner had frequently seized and sold the tenants' stock for debts, hence exhausted the resources. He would have to contract for laborers, for he has no bond slaves, and there are none on the property. There was a question whether it was advisable to buy one property so near another. It would destroy the pleasure of traveling from one estate to another; it would be doubly disastrous in case of unfavorable seasons, such as the hail storm which destroyed the produce of one season at Tuscany, or a flood of the Anio where pieces of villas, costly furniture, ploughs, and oxen all float far and wide.

(266)Ep. I-6 (267)Ep. III-19 (268)Ep. IV-6 (269)Ep. VIII-17

The owner of an estate had many burdens derived from it as well as joys. One year hail destroyed the produce, as mentioned above, and the cheapness of grain made the rest of little value. Another time a small vintage made plenty of leisure time for literature, but there was no money to buy paper. From a very different part of Italy, Romanus wrote that his vintage, too, was small, At the time of vintage, Pliny took his domestics from Rome to preside over the rural affairs. He himself was at hand, but with his pen and his tablet. One year he sold his vintage to merchants who bought it at too high a price. He resolved to share the loss with them, remitting a greater per cent to those who had invested heaviest, and who paid first. He felt that a landlord should share the losses with the tenant, also. One friend he assured that the Laurentine was his most profitable villa, for it had no estate, and so produced more literature. Instead of barns full of stock, it had cases full of books.

The management of property took much time and thought, which Pliny greatly begrudged. The claims and complaints of the tenants wearied him greatly. Then a farm overseer was needed, who must needs be of rough cast and rustic breeding, who was not above the labor, care and melancholy solitude of such relegation, - a man rather difficult to procure. It was customary to let the land to tenants for a period of five years, for a fixed money rent. Pliny, however, found his men constantly running behind, and finally, despairing of ever paying the sum, they became careless and extravagant. He devised a new system of renting, a fixed share of

(270)Ep. VIII-15 (271)Ep. VIII-2 (272)Ep. IX-37 (273)Ep. IV-6
 (274)Ep. I-3 (275)Ep. IX-15 (276)Ep. VI-30

the produce, instead of money rent. This required a great deal of
(277)
care and supervision by servants, but was far more satisfactory.

The fact that practically every man of rank owned many villas in various parts of Italy, caused much travelling. They also travelled abroad, in Greece, Asia and Egypt, for the purpose
(278)
of seeing natural wonders and the works of man. At home their conveyances were carriages or sedan chairs, so easy that studies were
(279)
pursued en route. Once when ill, Pliny travelled in a litter so
(280)
covered that he was as though in a bed chamber. In one letter he
(281)
jestingly chides a friend for not having visited "Italy first".
(281)
He carefully describes the floating islands of Lake Vadimon, and
(282)
again the Clitumnean spring, which most beautiful spot is much visited as a sort of pleasure resort for nature lovers. Travelling was attended with grave dangers, however. A distinguished Roman knight, Robustus disappeared while on a journey. His son asked Pliny for aid in finding him, but that worthy and sympathetic gentleman greatly fears the same thing has happened in his case as in that of his friend Crispus. He had procured for Crispus a company in the army, and had given him a sum of money when he had set out. He never had heard from him. He thought he might have been murdered by his slaves, or with them. These men, from their rank must have had a large retinue; the dangers, then, must really have been very great. When travelling by sea, the boats were often detained by contrary winds. Pliny arrived in Bithynia only after a
(284)
great deal of delay and annoyance.

Once in a while we see a shadow flit across the serene outlook of this busy and contented man of letters, but for the most

(277)Ep. IX-37 (278)Ep. VIII-20 (279)Ep. III-5 (280)Ep. VII-21
(281)Ep. VIII-20 (282)Ep. VIII-8 (293)Ep. VI-25 (284)Ep. X-17

part the picture is clear and sunny, depicting a world full of men of honor and worth and women of charm and virtue.

Chapter III.

Reconciliation of Discrepancies.

The first two of these three pen pictures harmonize very well. We can easily believe that Juvenal's idea of women might be drawn from the Messalina, Agrippina and Poppea of Tacitus; the overbearing rich freedman of Juvenal will correspond well with Tacitus' description of Pallas and Narcissus; the vice and degradation of the nobility is pictured in both. But how shall we reconcile Pliny's 'Gallery of Good Women' with the sixth Satire of Juvenal? His long list of virtuous, illustrious and kindly men with the servile, luxuriating degenerates satirized by the other two?

Perhaps one solution of the discrepancy lies in the character and social standing of the writers themselves. Juvenal was of the lower middle class. He had suffered, no doubt, the very indignities of client dependence that he so fiercely berates, and how could it but embitter him? He could scarcely have had intimate knowledge of the society he maligns; his information must surely have been the gossip obtained by a hanger-on, or heard and reported in a lower circle of society. His temperament, being, at best, excitable, exaggerated the situation, and caused him to judge a whole class by the action of one or two individuals. Also he had been long trained as a rhetorician. Whole sections of his poems read precisely as a declamation; the habit of exaggeration had been instilled in him by perhaps forty years of constant practice.

Tacitus was an aristocrat, and belonged to the same circle as did Pliny. However he seems by disposition gloomy. This, no doubt, has been greatly enhanced by the particular kind of studying in which he has indulged. As he has heard from his father-in-law Agricola, the loyalty, chastity and hardihood of the Germans; as he has delved deeply into the history of the early Romans, and caught the primitive spirit of simple living, he has, without doubt, been unable to check an unfavorable comparison with the age he knows well, and has been inoculated with a fear and gloomy foreboding that imprints itself upon every figure as he draws it.

Pliny was a sanguine, kind hearted, goodnatured gentleman, living the life of an aristocrat, with wealth and position at his right hand. He frankly admits that he idealizes his friends. It is quite probable that he shuts his eyes to any moral defects in them, in the same fashion as he felt obliged to honor all their literary efforts. His interest is in the law-courts and he finds his time very much taken up by this pursuit. He also feels it necessary to hear many rehearsals; when he writes, as he often does, it is poetry or his orations that claim his attention; he refuses to write history. This style of living may be partly responsible for his surprising optimism. At any rate, a man of pronounced tendency to either pessimism or its opposite can find sufficient material in almost any age, to make a good case for his mode of thinking.

It has been said that an age should be judged by its ideal of goodness rather than its moral aberrations. And certain it is that the age of Pliny, Tacitus and Juvenal had a high moral

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ideal, notwithstanding the reign of its tyrant Domitian. We see standing out in the works of each writer a passionate longing for a revival of the simplicity and virtue of bygone days; each one has the virility of ancient Rome for his ideal. A sympathy for slaves, and a consideration for the status of others and for virtue marks the tone of each. Juvenal says the slaves whom we scorn and maltreat are of the same element as ourselves. The child should be kept from the knowledge of wrong and the father should be held in check by the thought of his child at home. Revenge indicates smallness of spirit. Nature gave us priceless tears to shed in sympathy, when a friend suffers calamity, or a babe's death, or that of a young maid, occurs. It cannot be that they alone held these high moral ideals. They must surely have been encouraged and instilled by others of the same persuasion. Had society been as hopelessly corrupt as Juvenal would have us believe, had there been no upright and honor-loving individuals in the Roman world, that society could hardly have maintained itself for four hundred more years. The greater number of the men whom Pliny depicts were natives of the provinces, reared in more or less old fashioned simplicity, yet spending the active part of their days in the somewhat artificial life at Rome. Tacitus mentions men who came from the provinces who were unable or unwilling to share in the wantonness of the games. Pliny mentions Brixia as a municipal town that

(288) Dill 143 (289) Tac. Ann. III-26; Juv. Sat. XI-785

(289) Pl. Ep. VIII-14, Ep. I-14 (290) Sa. XIV-16sq

(291) Sat. XIV-31sq. (292) Sat. XIII-190 (293) Sat. XV-135 Sq.

(294) Ann. XVI-5

(295)

keeps it oldfashioned strict morals. Men from such surroundings, taking up residence in Rome, must necessarily temper the atmosphere, though it were as foul as Juvenal paints it.

In this age, too, flourished the stoics; it was "the

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glorious age of practical stoicism". Caecinna. Paetus, Thrasea, Helvidius, were the most famous, but by no means constitute the complete list of these men, ready to brave the dangers from a Nero or a Domitian, standing for law, honor and morality, and their wives in each case, as brave as they, following them to exile or death. The great stoic doctrine of brotherhood and equality of men as fellow citizens of a great commonwealth, the duty of redeeming the captive and aiding the poor were taught by Cicero a century

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and more before this time, and the influence of their teachings from that time to this, no doubt is responsible for that softer tone that we find inculcated by Juvenal, depicted in a few of his characters by Tacitus, and in full flower in the spirit of Pliny. During the Terrible Days, the better class of men had probably kept the ideals of the stoic and the virtue of ancient Rome, alive and glowing, secluded in their retreats at a distance from the gay and bohemian city life; and when the calm of Trajan's reign followed the storm, they came out again into the rays of the sun, as Pliny

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pictures them.

There is no doubt that there were tremendous fortunes in these days, spent, too, in luxurious and wasteful living, in extensive and extravagantly furnished palaces, in costly foods, in great households of slaves, in lavish adornment and every kind of exorbitant expenditure. This however, ^{custom} demanded of men of rank; the

(295)Ep. I-14 (296)Dill. 2 (297)Dill. 3,190 (Cic. De off. II-18)
(298)Dill 2

man who had too small a retinue or lived in too little luxury lost
 (299) greatly in prestige. One author says that the cry of the poor
 voiced by Juvenal is not a cry of revolt. It is rather an appeal
 for pity and a modest share in a wasted abundance. "The spirit of
 benevolence was in the air, the constant invectives of poet and
 philosopher against wealth and luxury is not so much a sign of
 growing selfishness, as of a spreading sense of duty of the fortu-
 (300) nate to the miserable. Nor was this call, that finds expression
 in Juvenal, entirely unheeded. Tacitus tells us how the emperors
 gave money to needy senators, helped build up municipal towns and
 furnished to the people their 'bread and circuses'. Pliny, as has
 been mentioned in a preceding chapter, was a man of lavish generos-
 ity, though he could scarcely be classed among the wealthiest men
 of his day. He tells us of others such as his wife's grandfather
 and friends at Comum who likewise benefitted their native city.
 The inscriptions of the early empire prove to us that these men
 were by no means alone in this generosity. These gifts were to
 "add beauty or dignity or convenience to the parent city, to light-
 en the dullness of ordinary life, to bring all ranks together in
 common scenes of enjoyment, to relieve want and suffering among the
 indigent." Sometimes they were in the form of gladiatorial games
 and circuses, but mostly baths, theatres, roads, aqueducts and
 public banquets. These feasts were given to all orders, even
 children and slaves were allowed, thus letting down the bars be-
 tween ranks and alleviating poverty. Pliny, Trajan and others
 planned for the rearing of poor children; in Lorium a spice dealer
 made a legacy of the free distribution of medicine to the indigent

of the town. There were numberless gifts and legacies to the colleges to which the poor resorted for care. These things prove definitely a spirit of charity. (301)

As has just been said, the general opinion prevailed thru the Roman world that wealth, rank and position imposed great obligations, and that the possession of a large fortune required not only a proportionate expenditure in public service, but also a generous distribution of superfluous wealth among the poor. Princely generosity was expected from the great men of Rome, then, and at a time when interest in poetry was so keen and general, this was bound to be particularly advantageous to the poet. Poets certainly were entirely dependent on the favor and generosity of the wealthy and influential, which however they probably enjoyed then to a greater extent than at any other time. Hence Juvenal, who represents the poet's lot as one of abject poverty, to which any calling is to be preferred, (302) has surely greatly overstated his case. Here, (303) too, perhaps he is merely trying to call the rich who have been a bit neglectful to the duty that was expected of them!

That the upper class at Rome had become greatly demoralized can not be disputed. Divorces were exceedingly common, abnormal corruption and ingenious wantonness were prevalent; capricious carousals like those of Messalina described by Tacitus, (304) were hardly to be called an exception to rule. Roman matrons were extravagant in dress and ornaments. Married when mere children they were subject to all sorts of temptations. They were seduced by men of all ranks, emperors, nobles, singers, gladiators, freedmen and slaves. Some

(301) Dill 194, 195 Gr. Herz. 114 (302) Friedl. V-3, 50-51
 (303) Sat. VII-3-1700 (304) Ann. Tac. XI-31

had even developed like Messalina, a desire for frequenting low
 (305) taverns and stews. Though this depravity can not be doubted, literature prefers to dwell on the frailties and vices of women, rather than on the inconspicuous virtues; hence most of this description
 (306) is limited to the evil side. Pliny gives us the other side.

Seneca, Tacitus and also Plutarch held high ideals of spotless and high minded women and of pure wedlock. Even Ovid, by no means noted for purity, writes with pure affection to his wife, from
 (307) exile. The inscriptions prove that among the middle and lower classes there was much of the old Roman honor and uprightness, as well as affection. One reads, "To my dear wife, with whom I passed eighteen happy years; for love of her I have sworn never to re-
 (308) marry!" This is the general sentiment on many such monuments.

One more thing we must notice in passing. Juvenal was a conservative, (as was also Tacitus). His ideal of woman was the old Roman matron, rearing her family in the seclusion of her home, weaving and spinning in austere simplicity. This status had long since been left in the past; the vices attributed by Juvenal to the women of his day had been somewhat prevalent even in the days of Cato the Elder. Juvenal's wrath is directed, as has been said in a former chapter, against the woman who is interested in politics, who reads and discusses literature, hears a philosopher discuss his theories or writes a little herself, as well as against her who indulges in gross immoralities.

As to the senate, "much can be forgiven to the class which was daily and hourly exposed to such danger, so sudden in its out-sets, so secret and stealthy, so all pervading. The haunting fear

(305)Ann. XI-26 (306)Fried. I-26/ (307) Dill 77

(308)Fried. VI-265

of death had an unnerving effect. To the emperors the only real
 (309)
 hindrance to power lay, or appeared to lie in the senate. The
 common people seemed to favor the emperor who conciliated them and
 lavished generosity, rather than the senate, proud and haughty; the
 legions were ever at the back of the emperor. Only the senate
 thwarted his will, hence the destruction of senators who were es-
 (310)
 pecially prominent by a prince who was "ille scaenicus", and the
 confiscation of their great wealth to maintain the heavy expendi-
 (311)
 tures of such lavish living, generosity and building.

Tacitus is not, like Juvenal, a complete pessimist. He
 relates many incidents of loyalty, love and devotion. In summing
 up the horrors and confusion of the period, he adds that noble
 deeds were not unknown. "Mothers accompanied their children in
 flight, wives followed their husbands into exile; we have seen re-
 lations courageous, son-in-laws faithful and loyalty of slaves
 proof against cruel tortures. We have seen illustrious men receive
 their death warrant without flinching, and men dying deaths every
 whit as noble as those so highly 'praised in the case of former
 (312)
 generations". He gives a vivid account of Pollita, wife of
 Rubellius Plautus. She had embraced the bleeding neck of her hus-
 band, when Nero had caused his murder, had preserved the blood-
 (313)
 stained garments, and resolved to remain a widow. She besieged the
 doors of Nero's palace with entreaties for the acquittal of her
 father, whom a freedman accused. When it was found hopeless she
 (314)
 and her father and grandmother died together by their own hand.
 Lateranus, slain in the place of slave executions by the hand of a

(309) Dill 51 (310) Tac. XV-59 "That actor"-term of contempt
 (311) Dill 56 (312) Hist. 1, 3 (313) Ann. XVI-10
 (314) Ann. XVI-10

(315)

fellow accomplice, died without a word of accusation. Octavia, pure and spotless in the palace of Nero was defended by her serving maids, and by the people who even overthrew the statues of Poppea. (316)

When a city prefect had been slain by a slave and the ancient law requiring the death penalty of the entire household, was revived, the senate showed a large percent in favor of mercy, and the populace besieged the senate and almost prohibited the execution of the sentence. (317)

A tribune of the praetorian guard told Nero how he had loved him at first and later hated him for his murders and atrocities. (318)

Pliny, on the other hand again and again heaves a sigh as he thinks of something that he apparently tries not to let his thoughts dwell upon. In one letter he says "The thirst for gain is so excessive that men seem to be possessed by wealth, not to possess it." (319) He refuses to censure lascivious entertainments, at banquets; (320)

he commends the friend who desired to suppress the games, saying they had a bad effect on the city. (321) He speaks most scornfully of legacy hunters; with horror are mentioned the crimes of Classicus and Priscus. (322)

The senate was broken under Domitian and has not yet been able to recover; in comparison with Cicero the age is uninspiring. He sighs that the youth now are sure of themselves and want no advice; they are disrespectful to age; in a time when youth has countless temptations, a tutor of stainless character is needed. (324)

(325)

There was much corruption and avarice among the army officers and advocates. There is a Numidia Quadratilla among the list of good

(315)Ann.XV-60 (316)Ann. XIV-61 (317)Ann. XIV-42 (318)Ann. XV-67
 (319)Ep. IX-30 (320)Ep. IX-17 (321)Ep. IV-22 (322)Ep. II.11; Ep. III-9
 (323)Ep. VIII-14 (324)Ep. VIII-23 (325)Ep. III-3 (322)Ep. VIII.18

(326)

women, and some cruel masters are slain by slaves, from whom there
 (327)
 is always danger.

"The truth is that society in every age presents the most
 startling moral contrasts and no single comprehensive description
 of its moral condition can ever be true entirely. This has been
 too often forgotten by those who have passed judgment on the moral
 state of Roman society, both in the first age of the Roman empire
 (328)
 and the last". "If there is no graduated scale of morality of a
 period well known, least of all is there one for these centuries in
 regard to which we possess only isolated statements, partly limited
 to definite spheres, partly exaggerated or one sided.---To the form-
 er belong the description of the horrors of the imperial house, the
 awful consequences of an absolute terrorism, the fearful suppression
 of the aristocracy by Caesarism, in Tacitus and other historians,
 and the accounts of the corruption, filth and immorality which Rome,
 like every other great city, fostered in abundance, in Juvenal and
 (329)
 the satirists. If we leave out of consideration those declamations
 about the disappearance of the 'Good old times', it will be diffi-
 cult to find any evidence in the literature of the age that men
 thought they were living in a period of general decay, but rather
 the reverse. Seneca and Tacitus both were convinced that everything
 (329)
 was not better in earlier times."

The picture, therefore, of no one of our three artists
 can be taken as a conclusive and undisputed evidence of the con-
 dition of society of the day. We shall have to combine and balance
 the points of contradiction and similarity, and, employing a large

(326)Ep. VII-24 (327)Ep. III-14 (328)Dill 142
 (329)Fried. V-3 Page 280

measure of human sympathy and consideration for the circumstances of the period, draw the picture for ourselves, somewhere between the extreme limits of the ideal baseness of Juvenal, with the pessimism and gloom of Tacitus, and the sunny optimism and complacency of the sanguine Pliny.