Plutarch comforts Apollonius

Introduction

From Plutarch's *Moralia*, Loeb Classical Library Series, Vol. II (No. 222), published in 1928.
Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt.

The Letter of Condolence to Apollonius, into which quotations from earlier authors have been emptied from the sack rather than scattered by hand,[1] has in comparatively recent years fallen under suspicion as being perhaps not the work of Plutarch. The suspicion rests mainly on two grounds, the unusual length of the quotations, and certain incongruities of style. The latter may here be briefly dismissed with the remark that for every departure from accepted Plutarchean style a striking instance of conformity to his style may be cited, so that no very positive results are to be obtained in this way. Many of them are unusually long, although not longer than we find in other authors. Some of them, for example Euripides,[2] show an accuracy of MS. tradition so far superior that the reading given by Plutarch is commonly adopted by editors of Euripides in preference to the traditional reading of the MSS. of Euripides. On the other hand, the quotation from Plato,[3] shows many minor variations from our text of Plato; some of these are interesting in themselves, but none of them really disturbs the meaning of the passage.

We learn from the letter almost nothing about Apollonius and his departed son,[4] and hardly more about Plutarch. It lacks the intimate touch of a similar letter which was written by Plutarch to his wife.[5] Indeed we cannot be wholly sure that the boy was called Apollonius after his forefather, for one stroke of the pen to change the accusative to a vocative[6] would cause his name to disappear entirely.

The title of the letter is not found in Lamprias' list of Plutarch's works, nevertheless we have reference to it at a comparatively early date.

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[1] [*Thayer's note:* Tsk-tsk; our editor should probably have told us where he got this *bon mot* from: *Mor.*, 348a]

[2] *Suppliants*, 1110 and 1112, in: Plut., 110c

[3] *Gorgias*, 523a, in: Plut., 120e

[4] [Perhaps Alexander Pēloplatōn (Πηλοπλάτων), son of Alexander of Seleucia (also known as Straton) and Seleucis, whom Apollonius adopted after his father's untimely death. — ED. PHIL

> Cf. "Straton has indeed passed away from among men, and has left upon earth all that he had of mortality; but we who are here, still undergoing punishment, in other words still living, ought to have some concern for his affairs. One of us then must do one thing, another another, and it is our duty to do it now rather than later; for if in the past we were some of us known as his relations, and some of us merely as his friends, now is the time to show with all sincerity that we are really such, nor must we delay doing our duty to an indefinite future, supposing these names meant anything. I myself, however, am desirous in this matter to be especially your friend, and therefore I undertake to bring up myself Alexander who was his son by Seleucis, and to impart to him my own education. And I should certainly have given him money also, who am bestowing what is so much more important, if it were right that he should receive it." Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana*, Vol. II, (Epistle 13 to the Chief Councillors of Seleucia); *tr.* Conybeare.]

[5] *Moralia*, 608a

[6] 121e

Some striking similarities between the letter and Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* are doubtless to be explained by derivation from a common source, and this source was doubtless in large part the works of the Academic philosopher Crantor.

In the absence of actual knowledge it is convenient to assume an hypothesis (as in the realm of science one speaks "atoms" or "ions" or of the electric "current"). If we assume that this is the original rough draft of the letter which was to be sent to Apollonius, nearly everything can be made to square with the hypothesis. In selecting some of the quotations Plutarch had put down enough of the context, so that later the lines he might finally choose to insert could be smoothly interwoven with the text, and the text itself was no doubt to be subjected to further polish.

However, we may be profoundly grateful for the collection of extracts included in the letter, and, if the hypothesis be right, we may also be grateful for this glimpse of Plutarch's methods of composition.

We must bear in mind that this particular form of literary composition had developed a style of its own, the earliest example perhaps being the *Axiochus* (of Plato?), and we have records of many more now lost. Among the Romans also this form of composition was popular, and several examples may be found in the works of Seneca.

LOEB EDITOR

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EVEN BEFORE THIS TIME, APOLLONIUS, I felt for you in your sorrow and trouble, when I heard of the untimely passing from life of your son, who was very dear to us all — a youth who was altogether decorous and modest, and unusually observant of the demands of religion and justice both toward the gods and towards his parents and friends. In those days, close upon the time of his death, to visit you and urge you to bear your present lot as a mortal man should have been unsuitable, when you were prostrated in both body and soul by the unexpected calamity; and, besides, I could not help sharing in your feeling. For even the best of physicians do not at once apply the remedy of medicines against acute attacks of suppurating humours, but allow the painfulness of the inflammation, without the application of external medicaments, to attain some assuagement of itself.[1]

2. Now since time, which is wont to assuage all things, has intervened since the calamity, and your present condition seems to demand the aid of your friends, I have conceived it to be proper to communicate to you some words that can give comfort, for the mitigation of grief and the termination of mournful and vain lamentations. For

> Words are physicians for an ailing mind,
> When at the fitting time one soothes the heart.[2]

Since, according to the wise Euripides,[3]

> For divers ills are remedies diverse:
> The kindly speech of friends for one in grief,
> And admonitions when one plays the fool.

Indeed, though there are many emotions that affect the soul, yet grief, from its nature, is the most cruel of all. They say:

> To many there doth come because of grief
> Insanity and ills incurable,
> And some for grief have ended their own life.[4]

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[1] Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.29 (63), and Pliny, *Letters*, V.16; [full text in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

[2] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 379

[3] Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 692. The last two lines are cited *supra*, 69d.

[4] From Philemon: cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* II *p.* 512, Philemon, No. 106, where additional lines are given.

3. The pain and pang felt at the death of a son has in itself good cause to awaken grief, which is only natural, and over it we have no control. For I, for my part, cannot concur with those who extol that harsh and callous indifference, which is both impossible and unprofitable.[1] For this will rob us of the kindly feeling which comes from mutual affection and which above all else we must conserve. But to be carried beyond all bounds and to help in exaggerating our griefs I say is contrary to nature, and results from our depraved ideas. Therefore this also must be dismissed as injurious and depraved and most unbecoming to right-minded men, but a moderate indulgence is not to be disapproved.

> Pray that we be not ill,

says Crantor[2] of the Academy, "but if we be ill, pray that sensation be left us, whether one of our members be cut off or torn out." For this insensibility to pain[3] is attained by man only at a great price; for in the former case, we may suppose, it is the body which has been brutalized into such insensibility, but in the latter case the soul.

4. Reason therefore requires that men of understanding should be neither indifferent in such calamities nor extravagantly affected; for the one course is unfeeling and brutal, the other lax and effeminate. Sensible is he who keeps within appropriate bounds and is able to bear judiciously both the agreeable and the grievous in his lot, and who has made up his mind beforehand to conform uncomplainingly and obediently to the dispensation of things; just as in a democracy there is an allotment of offices, and he who draws the lot holds office, while he who fails to do so must bear his fortune without taking offence. For those who cannot do this would be unable sensibly and soberly to abide good fortune either.

Among the felicitous utterances the following piece of advice is to the point:

> Let no success be so unusual
> That it excite in you too great a pride,
> Nor abject be in turn, if ill betide;
> But ever be the same; preserve unchanged
> Your nature, like to gold when tried by fire.[4]

It is the mark of educated and disciplined men to keep the same habit of mind toward seeming prosperity, and nobly to maintain a becoming attitude toward adversity. For it is the take of rational prudence, either to be on guard against evil as it approaches, or, if it have already happened, to rectify it or to minimize it or to provide oneself with a virile and noble patience to endure it. For wisdom deals also with the good, in a fourfold way — either acquiring a store of goods, or conserving them, or adding to them, or using them judiciously. These are the laws of wisdom and of the other virtues, and they must be followed for better fortune or for worse.

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[1] Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.6 (12)

[2] Cf. Mullach, *Frag. Philos. Graec.* III *p.* 146; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.6 (12)

[3] Such Stoicism was required by the stricter Stoic school, but the philosophers of the Academy would have none of it.

[4] From an unknown play of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 963

For

> No man exists who's blest in everything,[1]

and truly

> What thou must do cannot be made "must not."[2]

5. For as there are in plants at one time seasons of fruitage and at another time seasons of unfruitfulness, and in animals at one time fecundity and at another time barrenness, and on the sea both fair weather and storm, so also in life many diverse circumstances occur which bring about a reversal of human fortunes. As one contemplates these reversals he might say not inappropriately:

> Not for good and no ill came thy life from thy sire,
> Agamemnon, but joy
> Thou shalt find interwoven with grief;
> For a mortal man thou art. Though against thy desire
> Yet the plans of the gods will so have it.[3]

and the words of Menander:[4]

> If you alone, young master, at your birth
> Had gained the right to do whate'er you would
> Through your life, and ever be in luck,
> And if some god agreed to this with you,
> Then you have right to feel aggrieved. He has
> Deceived and strangely treated you. But if
> Upon the self-same terms as we, you drew
> The primal breath of universal life
> (To speak you somewhat in the tragic style),
> You must endure this better, and use sense,
> To sum up all I say, you are a man,
> Than which no thing that lives can swifter be
> Exalted high and straight brought low again.
> And rightly so; for though of puny frame,
> He yet doth handle many vast affairs,
> And, falling, ruins great prosperity.
> But you, young master, have not forfeited
> Surpassing good, and these your present ills
> But moderate are; so bear without excess
> What Fortune may hereafter bring to you.

But, in spite of this condition of affairs, some persons, through their foolishness, are so silly and conceited, that, when only a little exalted, either because of abundance of money, or importance of office, or petty political preferments, or because of position and repute, they threaten and insult those in lower station, not bearing in mind the

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[1] From the *Stheneboea* of Euripides, *ibid.*, No. 661

[2] Author unknown; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 368

[3] Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, 29; cf. *Moralia*, 33e

[4] Cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* III *p.* 155, No. 531, and Allinson, *Menander* (in *L.C.L.*), *p.* 478

uncertainty and inconstancy of fortune, nor yet the fact that the lofty is easily brought low and the humble in turn is exalted, transposed by the swift-moving changes of fortune. Therefore to try to find any constancy in what is inconstant is a trait of people who do not rightly reason about the circumstances of life. For,

> The wheel goes round, and of the rim now one
> And now another part is at the top.[1]

6. Reason is the best remedy for the cure of grief, reason and the preparedness through reason for all the changes of life. For one ought to realize that, not merely that he himself is mortal by nature, but also that he is allotted to a life that is mortal and to conditions which readily reverse themselves. For men's bodies are indeed mortal, lasting but a day, and mortal is all they experience and suffer, and, in a word, everything in life; and all this

> May not be escaped nor avoided by mortals[2]

at all, but

> The depths of unseen Tartarus hold you fast by hard-forged necessities,

as Pindar[3] says. Whence Demetrius of Phalerum was quite right when, in reference to a saying of Euripides:[4]

> Wealth is inconstant, lasting but a day,

and also:

> Small things may cause an overthrow; one day
> Puts down the mighty and exalts the low,[5]

he said that it was almost all admirably put, but it would have been better if he had said not "one day," but "one second of time."

> Alike the cycle of earth's fruitful plants
> And mortal men. For some life grows apace,
> While others perish and are gathered home.[6]

And elsewhere Pindar[7] says:

> Somebody? Nobody? Which is which?
> A dream of a shadow is man.

Very vividly and skilfully did he use this extravagance of expression in making clear the life of mankind. For what is feebler than a shadow? And a dream of it! — that is

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[1] Author unknown; cf. Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Gr.* III *p.* 740

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, XII.326

[3] Pindar, Frag. 207 (ed. Christ)

[4] *Phoenissae*, 558

[5] See note on next page.

[6] Both this and the preceding quotation are from the *Ino* of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, Nos. 420 and 415, where additional lines are given.

[7] *Pythian*, VIII.135

something which defies any clear description. In similar strain Crantor,[1] endeavouring to comfort Hippocles upon the death of his children, says:

> All our ancient philosophy states this and urges it upon us; and though there be therein other things which we do not accept, yet at any rate the statement that life is oftentimes toilsome and hard is only too true. For even if it is not so by nature, yet through our own selves it has reached this state of corruption. From a distant time, yes from the beginning, this uncertain fortune has attended us to no good end, and even at our birth there is conjoined with us a portion of evil in everything. For the very seed of life, since it is mortal, participates in this causation, and from this there steal upon us defectiveness of soul, diseases of body, loss of friends by death, and the common portion of mortals.

For what reason have we turned our thoughts in this direction? It is that we may know that misfortune is nothing novel for man, but that we all have had the same experience of it. For Theophrastus[2] says:

> Fortune is heedless, and she has a wonderful power to take away the fruits of our labours and to overturn our seeming tranquillity, and for doing this she has no fixed season.

These matters, and others like them, it is easy for each man to reason out for himself, and to learn them from wise men of old besides; of whom the first is the divine Homer, who said:[3]

> Nothing more wretched than man doth the earth support on its bosom,
> Never, he says to himself, shall he suffer from evil hereafter,
> Never, so long as the gods give him strength and his knees are still nimble;
> Then when the blessed gods bring upon him grievous affliction,
> Still he endures his misfortune, reluctant but steadfast in spirit.

And:

> Such is the mood of the men who here on the earth are abiding,
> E'en as the day which the father of men and of gods brings upon them.[4]

And in another place:

> Great-hearted son of Tydeus, why do you ask of my fathers?
> As is the race of the leaves, such too is that of all mortals.
> Some of the leaves doth the winds scatter earthward, and others the forest
> Budding puts forth in profusion, and springtime is coming upon us.
> Thus is man's race: one enters on life, and another's life ceases.[5]

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[1] Cf. Mullach, *Frag. Philos. Graec.* III *p.* 147

[2] Frag. 73 (ed. Wimmer)

[3] Homer, *Odyssey*, XVIII.130

[4] *ibid.*, XVIII.136

[5] *Iliad*, VI.145

That he has admirably made use of this image of human life is clear from what he says in another place, in these words:

> To fight for the sake of mortals
> Wretched, who like to the leaves, at the one time all ardent
> Come to their fitting perfection, and eat of the fruit of their acres;
> Then again helpless they perish, nor is there aught that can help them.[1]

Pausanias, king of the Lacedaemonians, who persistently boasted of his own exploits, mockingly urged the lyric poet Simonides to rehearse for him some wise saying, whereupon the poet, being fully cognizant of his conceit, advised him to remember that he was only human.[2]

Philip, the king of the Macedonians, happened to have three pieces of good news reported to him all at once: the first, that he was victor at the Olympic games in the race of the four-horse chariots; the second, that Parmenio, his general, had vanquished the Dardanians in battle, and the third, that Olympias had borne him a male child; whereupon, stretching out his hands toward the heavens, he said:

> O God, offset all this by some moderate misfortune!

For he well knew that in cases of great prosperity fortune is wont to be jealous.[3]

While Theramenes, who afterwards became one of the Thirty Tyrants at Athens, was dining with several others, the house, in which they were, collapsed, and he was the only one to escape death; but as he was being congratulated by everybody, he raised his voice and exclaimed in a loud tone,

> O Fortune, for what occasion are you reserving me?

And not long afterward he came to his end by torture at the hands of his fellow tyrants.[4]

7. The Poet[5] is regarded as extraordinarily successful in bestowing consolation, where he represents Achilles as speaking to Priam, who has come to ransom Hector, as follows:

> Come then and rest on a seat; let us suffer our sorrows to slumber
> Quietly now in our bosoms, in spite of our woeful afflictions;
> Nothing is ever accomplished by yielding to chill lamentation.
> Thus, then, the gods have spun the fate of unhappy mortals,
> Ever to live in distress, but themselves are free from all trouble. →

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[1] *Iliad*, XXI.463

[2] Cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, IX.21

[3] Cf. *Moralia* 177c and Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, ch. iii (*p.* 666a)

[4] He was condemned to drink hemlock, according to the usual tradition; cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica*, II.3.54-56, and Aelian, *Varia Historia*, IX.21

[5] Homer, *Iliad*, XXIV.522; cf. also *Moralia*, 20f and 22b

> Fixed on Zeus' floor two massive urns stand for ever,
> Filled with gifts of all ills that he gives, and another[1] of blessings;
> He on whom Zeus, god of thunder, bestows their contents commingled
> Sometimes meets with the good, and again he meets only with evil.
> Him upon whom he bestows what is baneful he makes wholly wretched;
> Ravenous hunger drives him o'er the earth's goodly bosom,
> Hither and thither he goes, unhonoured of gods or of mortals.

Hesiod, who, although he proclaimed himself the disciple of the Muses, is nevertheless second to Homer in reputation as well as in time, also confines the evils in a great urn and represents Pandora as opening it and scattering the host of them over the whole land and sea. His words[2] are as follows:

> Then with her hands did the woman, uplifting the urn's massive cover,
> Let them go as they would; and on men she brought woeful afflictions.
> Hope alone where it was, with its place of abode yet undamaged,
> Under the rim of the urn still tarried; nor into the open
> Winged its way forth; for before it escaped she had put on the cover.
> More are the woes unnumbered among men now freely ranging.
> Full is the land now of evils, and full of them too is the ocean:
> Illnesses come upon men in the daytime, and others at night-time;
> Hither and thither they go, of themselves bringing evils to mortals;
> Silent they go, since the wisdom of Zeus has deprived them of voices.

8. Closely allied with this are the following words of the Poet[3] spoken with reference to those whose grief over such calamities is excessive:

> If only tears were remedy for ills,
> And he who weeps obtained surcease of woe,
> Then we should purchase tears by giving gold.
> But as it is, events that come to pass,
> My master, do not mind nor heed these things,
> But, whether you shed tears or not, pursue
> The even tenor of their way. What then
> Do we accomplish by our weeping? Naught.
> But as the trees have fruit, grief has these tears.

And Dictys, who is trying to console Danaë in her excessive grief, says:

> Think you that Hades minds your moans at all,
> And will send back your child if you groan?
> Desist. By viewing close your neighbour's ills
> You might be more composed, — if you reflect →

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[1] Such is the meaning of the passage as here quoted from Homer; but in two other places (*De audiendis poetis*, 24b, and *De exilio*, 600d) Plutarch follows Plato (*Republic*, *p.* 379d), who wrote *κηρῶν ἔμπλειοι, ὁ μὲν ἐσθλῶν αὐτὰρ ὁ δειλῶν*, thus making one urn of evil and one of good. Metrical considerations make it more than probable that the line found in Plato was not taken from Homer, but it is only fair to say that these considerations could have had no weight with Plutarch.

[2] *Works and Days*, 94; cf. also *Moralia*, 115a and 127d

[3] Philemon, in the *Sardius*; cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* II *p.* 497, Philemon, No. 73

> How many mortals have to toil in bonds,
> How many reft of children face old age,
> And others still who from a prosperous reign
> Sink down to nothing. This you ought to heed.[1]

For he bids her to think of the lot of those who are equally unfortunate or even more unfortunate than herself, with the idea that her grief will be lightened.

9. In this connexion might be adduced the utterance of Socrates[2] which suggests that if we were all to bring our misfortunes into a common store, so that each person should receive an equal share in the distribution, the majority would be glad to take up their own and depart.

The poet Antimachus, also, employed a similar method. For after the death of his wife, Lyde, whom he loved very dearly, he composed, as a consolation for his grief, the elegy called *Lyde*, in which he enumerated the misfortunes of the heroes, and thus made his own grief less by means of others' ills. So it is clear that he who tries to console a person in grief, and demonstrates that the calamity is one which is common to many, and less than the calamities which have befallen others, changes the opinion of the one in grief and gives him a similar conviction — that his calamity is really less than he supposed it to be.

10. Aeschylus[3] seems admirably to rebuke those who think that death is an evil. He says:

> Men are not right in hating Death, which is
> The greatest succour from our many ills.

In imitation of Aeschylus someone else has said:

> O Death, healing physician, come.[4]

For it is indeed true that

> A harbour from all distress is Hades.[5]

For it is a magnificent thing to be able to say with undaunted conviction:

> What man who recks not death can be a slave?[6]

and

> With Hades' help shadows I do not fear.[7]

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[1] From the *Dictys* of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 322

[2] Not original with Socrates, cf. Herodotus, VII.152; attributed to Solon by Valerius Maximus, VII.2, ext. 2

[3] From an unknown play; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Aeschylus, No. 353

[4] Somewhat similar to a line from the *Philoctetes* of Aeschylus; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Aeschylus, No. 255

[5] Author unknown; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 369

[6] From an unknown play of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 958, and Plutarch, *Moralia*, 34b

[7] Author unknown; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 370

For what is there cruel or so very distressing in being dead? It may be that the phenomenon of death, from being too familiar and natural to us, seems somehow, under changed circumstances, to be painful, though I know not why. For what wonder if the separable be separated, if the combustible be consumed, and the corruptible be corrupted? For at what time is death not existent in our very selves? As Heracleitus[1] says:

> Living and dead are potentially the same thing, and so too waking and sleeping, and young and old; for the latter revert to the former, and the former in turn to the latter.

For as one is able from the same clay to model figures of living things and to obliterate them, and again to model and obliterate, and alternately to repeat these operations without ceasing, so Nature, using the same material, a long time ago raised up our forefathers, and then in close succession to them created our fathers, and then ourselves, and later will create others and still others in a never-ending cycle; and the stream of generation, thus flowing onward perpetually, will never stop, and so likewise its counterpart, flowing in the opposite direction — which is the stream of destruction, whether it be designated by the poets as Acheron or as Cocytus. The same agency which at the first showed us the light of the sun brings also the darkness of Hades. May not the air surrounding us serve to symbolize this, causing as it does day and night alternately, which bring us life and death, and sleep and waking? Wherefore it is said that life is a debt to destiny, the idea being that the loan which our forefathers contracted is to be repaid by us. This debt we ought to discharge cheerfully and without bemoaning whenever the lender asks for payment; for in this way we should show ourselves to be most honourable men.

11. I imagine also that it was because Nature saw the indefiniteness and the brevity of life that she caused the time allowed us before death to be kept from us. And it is better so; for if we knew this beforehand, some persons would be utterly wasted by griefs before their time, and would be dead long before they died. Observe too the painfulness of life, and the exhaustion caused by many cares; if we should wish to enumerate all these, we should to readily condemn life, and we should confirm the opinion which now prevails in the minds of some that it is better to be dead than to live. Simonides[2] at any rate says:

> Petty indeed is men's strength;
> All their strivings are vain;
> Toil upon toil in a life of no length.
> Death hovers over them all,
> Death which is foreordained,
> Equal the share by the brave is attained
> In death with the base.

[1] Cf. Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, I *p.* 95, No. 88

[2] Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III, Simonides, No. 39

And Pindar[1] says:

> A pair of miseries with each good
> The deathless gods mete out to mortal man.
> The foolish cannot bear them as they should.

And Sophocles[2] says:

> Mourn you a mortal if he's passed away,
> Not knowing if the future brings him gain?

And Euripides[3] says:

> Know you the nature of this mortal world?
> I wot not. For whence could you? But hear me,
> By all mankind is owed a debt to death,
> And not a single man can be assured
> If he shall live throughout the coming day.
> For Fortune's movements are inscrutable.

Since, then, the life of men is such as these poets say it is, surely it is more fitting to felicitate those who have been released from their servitude in it than to pity them and bewail them, as the majority do through ignorance.

12. Socrates[4] said that death resembles either a very deep sleep or a long and distant journey, or, thirdly, a sort of destruction and extinction of both the body and the soul, but that by no one of these possibilities is it an evil. Each of these conceptions he pursued further, and the first one first. For if death is a sleep, and there is nothing evil in the state of those who sleep, it is evident that there is likewise nothing evil in the state of those who are dead. Nay, what need is there even to state that the deepest sleep is indeed the sweetest? For the fact is of itself patent to all men, and Homer[5] bears witness by saying regarding it:

> Slumber the deepest and sweetest, and nearest to death in its semblance.

In another place[6] also he says:

> Here she chanced to encounter the brother of Death, which is Slumber,

and

> Slumber and Death, the twin brothers,[7]

thereby indicating this similarity in appearance, for twins show most similarity. And again somewhere[8] he says that death is a "brazen sleep," in allusion to our insensi-

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[1] *Pythian.* III.82; cf. Homer, *Iliad*, XXIV.527, quoted *supra*, 105c

[2] From an unknown play; cf. Nauck, *T.G.F.*, Sophocles, No. 761

[3] *Alcestis*, 780

[4] Plato, *Apology*, *p.* 40c

[5] *Odyssey*, XIII.80

[6] *Iliad*, XIV.231

[7] *ibid.*, XVI.672, 682

[8] *ibid.*, XI.241

bility in it. And not inelegantly did the man[1] seem to put the case who called "sleep the Lesser Mysteries of death"; for sleep is really a preparatory rite for death. Very wise was the remark of the cynic Diogenes, who, when he had sunk into slumber and was about to depart this life, was roused by his physician, who inquired if anything distressed him. He said,

> Nothing, for the one brother merely forestalls the other.[2]

13. If death indeed resembles a journey, even so it is not an evil. On the contrary, it may even be a good. For to pass one's time unenslaved by the flesh and its emotions, by which the mind is distracted and tainted with human folly, would be a blessed piece of good fortune. Says Plato:[3]

> For the body in countless ways leaves us no leisure because of its necessary care and feeding. Moreover, if any diseases invade it, they hinder our pursuit of reality, and it fills us with lusts and desires and fears and all manner of fancies and folly, so that, as the saying goes, because of it we really have no opportunity to think seriously of anything. It is a fact that wars and strifes and battles are brought about by nothing else except the body and its desires; for all wars are waged for the acquisition of property, and property we are forced to acquire because of the body, since we are slaves in its service; and the result is that, because of these things, we have no leisure for study. And the worst of all is, that even if we do gain some leisure from the demands of the body, and turn to the consideration of some subject, yet at every point in our investigation the body forces itself in, and causes tumult and confusion, and disconcerts us, so that on account of it we are unable to discern the truth. Nay, the fact has been thoroughly demonstrated to us that, if we are ever going to have any pure knowledge, we must divest ourselves of the body, and with the soul itself observe the realities. And, as it appears, we shall possess what we desire and what we profess to long for — and that is wisdom — only, as our reasoning shows, after we are dead, but not while we are alive. For if it is impossible in company with the body to have any pure knowledge, then one of two things is true: either it is not possible to attain knowledge anywhere, or else only after death. For then the soul will be quite by itself, separate from the body, but before that time never. And so, while we live, we shall, as it appears, be nearest to knowledge if, as far as possible, we have no association or communion with the body, except such as absolute necessity requires, and if we do not taint ourselves with its nature, but keep ourselves pure of it until such time as God himself shall release us. And thus, being rid of the irrationality of the body, we shall, in all likelihood, be in the company of others in like state, and we shall behold with our own eyes the pure and absolute, which is the truth; since for the impure to touch the pure may well be against the divine ordinance.

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[1] Mnesimachus. Cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* II *p.* 422, Mnesimachus, No. 11. Initiation into the lesser mysteries (celebrated at Agrae, near Athens, in March) was required before one could be admitted to the great Eleusinian festival in September.

[2] Cf. A similar remark attributed to Gorgias of Leontini in Aelian, *Varia Historia*, II.35

[3] *Phaedo*, *p.* 66b

So, even if it be likely that death transports us into another place, it is not an evil; for it may possibly prove to be a good, as Plato has shown. Wherefore very wonderful were the words which Socrates[1] uttered before his judges, to this effect:

> To be afraid of death, Sirs, is nothing else than to seem to be wise when one is not; for it is to seem to know what one does not know. For in regard to death nobody knows even whether it happens to be for mankind the greatest of all good things, yet they fear it as if they knew well that it is the greatest of evils.

From this view it seems that the poet does not dissent who says:

> Let none fear death, which is release from toils,[2]

— ay, and from the greatest of evils as well.

14. It is said that the Deity also bears witness to this. For tradition tells us that many for their righteousness have gained this gift from the gods. Most of these I shall pass over, having regard to due proportion in my composition; but I shall mention the most conspicuous, whose story is on the lips of all men.

First I shall relate for you the tale of Cleobis and Biton, the Argive youths.[3] They say that their mother was priestess of Hera, and when the time had come for her to go up to the temple, and the mules that always drew her wagon were late in arriving, and the hour was pressing, these young men put themselves to the wagon and drew their mother to the temple; and she, overjoyed at the devotion of her sons, prayed that the best boon that man can receive be given them by the goddess. They then lay down to sleep and never arose again, the goddess granting them death as a reward for their devotion.

Of Agamedes and Trophonius, Pindar[4] says that after building the temple at Delphi they asked Apollo for a reward, and he promised to make payment on the seventh day, bidding them in the meantime to eat, drink, and be merry. They did what was commanded, and on the evening of the seventh day lay down to sleep and their life came to an end.

It is said that Pindar himself enjoined upon the deputies of the Bœotians who were sent to consult the god that they should inquire, "What is the best thing for mankind?" and the prophetic priestess made answer, that he himself could not be ignorant of it if the story which had been written about Trophonius and Agamedes were his; but if he desired to learn it by experience, it should be made manifest to him within a short time. As a result of this inquiry Pindar inferred that he should expect death, and after a short time his end came.

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[1] Plato, *Apology, p.* 29a

[2] Author unknown; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 371

[3] Cf. Herodotus, I.31, and Plutarch, *Moralia*, Frag. in vol. VII *p.* 126, Bernardakis

[4] Cf. Frag. 2 of Pindar (ed. Christ)

They say that the following incident happened to the Italian Euthynoüs.[1] He was the son of Elysius of Terina,[2] a man foremost among the people there in virtue, wealth, and repute, and Euthynoüs came to his end suddenly from some unknown cause. Now it occurred to Elysius, as it might have occurred to anybody else, that his son had perhaps died of poisoning; for he was his only heir to a large property and estate. Being in perplexity as to how he might put his suspicions to the test, he visited a place where the spirits of the dead are conjured up, and having offered the preliminary sacrifice prescribed by custom, he lay down to sleep in the place, and had this vision. It seemed that his own father came to him, and that on seeing his father he related to him what had happened touching his son, and begged and besought his help to discover the man who was responsible for his son's death. And his father said,

> It is for this that I am come. Take from this person here what he brings for you, and from this you will learn about everything over which you are now grieving.

The person whom he indicated was a young man who followed him, resembling his son Euthynoüs and close to him in years and stature. So Elysius asked who he was; and he said,

> I am the ghost of your son,

and with these words he handed him a paper. This Elysius opened and saw written there these three lines:

> Verily somehow the minds of men in ignorance wander;
> Dead now Euthynoüs lies; destiny has so decreed.
> Not for himself was it good that he live, nor yet for his parents.[3]

Such, you observe, is the purport of the tales recorded in ancient writers.

15. If, however, death is really a complete destruction and dissolution of both body and soul (for this was the third of Socrates' conjectures), even so it is not an evil. For, according to him, there ensues a sort of insensibility and a liberation from all pain and anxiety. For just as no good can attach to us in such a state, so also can no evil; for just as the good, from its nature, can exist only in the case of that which is and has substantiality, so it is also with the evil. But in the case of that which is not, but has been removed from the sphere of being, neither of them can have any real existence. Now those who have died return to the same state in which they were before birth; therefore, as nothing was either good or evil for us before birth, even so will it be with us after death. And just as all events before our lifetime were nothing to us, even so will all events subsequent to our lifetime be nothing to us.

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[1] The story comes from Crantor's *Consolatio*, according to Cicero.

[2] [*Thayer's note:* Terina, an obscure little town of Magna Graecia, the location of which is still unknown, although often said to be near Sant' Eufemia Lamezia in Calabria. Plutarch mentions the place again, as the home town of one Lamachus, in *Moralia* 845c; the place is also mentioned in Livy, 8.24.4, Diodorus, 16.15.2, and Polyaenus, 2.10.1. Coins of the town are known.]

[3] Mullach, *Frag. Philos. Graec.* III *p.* 148; cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.48 (115)

For in reality

> No suffering affects the dead,[1]

since

> Not to be born I count the same as death.[2]

For the condition after the end of life is the same as that before birth. But do you imagine that there is a difference between not being born at all, and being born and then passing away? Surely not, unless you assume also that there is a difference in a house or a garment of ours after its destruction, as compared with the time when it had not yet been fashioned. If there is no difference in the case of death, either, as compared with the condition before birth. Arcesilaus puts the matter neatly:

> This that we call an evil, death, is the only one of the supposed evils which, when present, has never caused anybody any pain, but causes pain when it is not present but merely expected.

As a matter of fact, many people, because of their utter fatuity and their false opinion regarding death, die in their effort to keep from dying.[3] Excellently does Epicharmus[4] put it:

> To be and not to be hath been his fate;

once more

> Gone is he whence he came, earth back to earth,
> The soul on high. What here is evil? Naught.

Cresphontes in some play of Euripides,[5] speaking of Heracles, says:

> For if he dwells beneath the depths of earth
> ‘Mid lifeless shades, his vigour would be naught.

This you might rewrite and say,

> For if he dwells beneath the depths of earth
> ‘Mid lifeless shades, his dolour would be naught.

Noble also is the Spartan song:[6]

> Here now are we; before us others throve, and others still straightway,
> But we shall never live to see their day; →

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[1] From the *Philoctetes* of Aeschylus; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Aeschylus, No. 255

[2] Euripides, *Trojan Women*, 636

[3] Cf. 107a, *supra*

[4] Cf. Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, I *p.* 122

[5] The *Cresphontes*; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 450

[6] Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III *p.* 662

And again:

> Those who have died and who counted no honour the living or dying,
> Only to consummate both nobly were honour for them.[1]

Excellently does Euripides[2] say of those who patiently endure long illnesses:

> I hate the men who would prolong their lives
> By foods and drinks and charms of magic art,
> Perverting nature's course to keep off death;
> They ought, when they no longer serve the land,
> To quit this life, and clear the way for youth.

And Merope[3] stirs the theatres by expressing manly sentiments when she speaks the following words:

> Not mine the only children who have died,
> Nor I the only woman robbed of spouse;
> Others as well as I have drunk life's dregs.

With this the following might be appropriately combined:

> Where now are all those things magnificent —
> Great Crœsus, lord of Lydia? Xerxes, too,
> Who yoked the sullen neck of Hellespont?
> Gone all to Hades and Oblivion's house,[4]

and their wealth perished with their bodies.

16. "True," it may be said, "but an untimely death moves most people to mourning and lamentation." Yet, even for this, words of consolation are so readily found that they have been perceived by even uninspired poets, and comfort has been had from them. Observe what one of the Poets[5] says on this subject to a man who is grieving for an untimely death:

> Then if you knew that, had he lived this life,
> Which he did not live, Fate had favoured him,
> His death was not well timed; but, if again
> This life had brought some ill incurable,
> Then Death perhaps were kindlier than you.

Since, then, it is uncertain whether or not it was profitable for him that he rested from his labours, forsaking this life and released from greater ills, we ought not to bear it so grievously as though we had lost all that we thought we should gain from him. Not ill considered, evidently, is the comfort which Amphiaraus in the poem offers to the mother of Archemorus, who is greatly affected because her son came to his end in his infancy long before his time.

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[1] Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III *p.* 516; cf. Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas*, ch. i (*p.* 278a)

[2] *Suppliants*, 1109

[3] Referred to the *Cresphontes* of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 454

[4] Author unknown; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 372, and Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III *p.* 739

[5] Cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* III *p.* 429, Adespota, No. 116

For he says:

> There is no man that does not suffer ill;
> Man buries children, and begets yet more,
> And dies himself. Men are distressed at this,
> Committing earth to earth. But Fate decrees
> That life be garnered like the ripened grain,
> That one shall live and one shall pass from life.
> What need to grieve at this, which Nature says
> Must be the constant cycle of all life?
> In what must be there's naught that man need dread.[1]

17. In general everyone ought to hold the conviction, if he seriously reviews the facts both by himself and in the company of another, that not the longest life is the best, but the most efficient. For it is not the man who has played the lyre the most, or made the most speeches, or piloted the most ships, who is commended, but he who has done these things excellently. Excellence is not to be ascribed to length of time, but to worth and timely fitness. For these have come to be regarded as tokens of good fortune and of divine favour. It is for this reason, at any rate, that the poets have traditionally represented those of the heroes who were pre-eminent and sprung from the gods as quitting this life before old age, like him,

> Who to the heart of great Zeus and Apollo was held to be dearest,
> Loved with exceeding great love; but of eld he reached not the threshold.[2]

For we everywhere observe that it is a happy use of opportunity, rather than a happy old age, that wins the highest place.[3] For of trees and plants the best are those that in a brief time produce the most crops of fruit, and the best of animals are those from which in no long time we have the greatest service toward our livelihood. The terms "long" and "short" obviously appear to lose their difference if we fix our gaze on eternity. For a thousand or ten thousand years, according to Simonides, are but a vague second of time, or rather the smallest fraction of a second. Take the case of those creatures which they relate exist on the shores of the Black Sea,[4] and have an existence of only one day, being born in the morning, reaching the prime of life at mid-day, and toward evening growing old and ending their existence; would there not be in those creatures this same feeling which prevails in us, if each of them had within him a human soul and power to reason, and would not the same relative conditions obviously obtain there, so that those who departed this life before mid-day would cause lamentation and tears, while those who lived through the day would be accounted altogether happy? The measure of life is its excellence, not its length in years.

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[1] From the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 757

[2] Homer, *Odyssey*, XV.245

[3] Cf. Marcus Antoninus, 24.1, and Seneca, *Epist.* 93.2

[4] Aristotle, *Hist. animal.* v.19.3 f; (copied by Pliny, *Natural History*, XI.36 (43)). Cf. Aelian, *De nat. animal.* V.43; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.39 (94)

18. We must regard as vain and foolish such exclamations as these: “But he ought not to have been snatched away while young!” For who may say what ought to be? Many other things, of which one may say “they ought not to have been done,” have been done, and are done, and will be done over and over again. For we have come into this world, not to make laws for its governance, but to obey the commandments of the gods who preside over the universe, and the decrees of Fate or Providence.

19. But do those who mourn for the untimely dead, mourn on their own account or on account of the departed? If on their own account, because they have been cut off from some gratification or profit or comfort in old age, which they might have expected from the dead, then is their excuse for grieving wholly selfish; for it will be plain that they mourn, not for them, but for their services. But if they mourn on account of the dead, then if they will fix their attention on the fact that the dead are in no evil state, they will rid themselves of grief by following that wise and ancient admonition to magnify the good and to minimize and lessen the evil. If, then, mourning is a good, we ought to enlarge and magnify it in every way. But if, as the truth is, we admit it to be an evil, we ought to minimize and reduce it, and as far as possible to efface it.

That this is easy is plainly to be seen from the following sort of consolation. They say that one of the ancient philosophers visited Arsinoë, the queen, who was mourning for her son, and made use of this story,[1] saying that at the time Zeus was distributing to the deities their honours, Mourning did not happen to be present, but arrived after the distribution had been made. But when she said it was only right that some honour be given to her also, Zeus, being perplexed, since all the honours had been used up, finally gave her that honour which is paid in the case of those who have died — tears and griefs. Just as the other deities, therefore, are fond of those by whom they are honoured, so also is Mourning. “Therefore, Madame, if you treat her with disrespect, she will not come near you; but if she is strictly honoured by you with the honours which were conceded to her, namely griefs and lamentations, she will love you and affectionately will be ever with you, provided only she be constantly honoured by you.” Admirably, it appears, he succeeded, by this story, in convincing the woman and in alleviating her mourning and lamentations.

20. In general one might say to the man who mourns, “Shall you at some time cease to take this to heart, or shall you feel that you must grieve always every day of your life? For if you purpose to remain always in this extreme state of affliction, you will bring complete wretchedness and the most bitter misery upon yourself by the ignobleness and cowardice of your soul. But if you intend some time to change your attitude, why do you not change it at once and extricate yourself from this misfortune? Give attention now to those arguments by the use of which, as time goes on, your release shall be accomplished, and relieve yourself now of your sad condition. For in the case of bodily afflictions the quickest way of relief is the better. Therefore concede now to reason and education what you surely will later concede to time, and release yourself from your troubles.”

[1] Cf. *Moralia* 609f, where the idea is attributed to Aesop.

21. "But I cannot," he says, "for I never expected or looked for this experience." But you ought to have looked for it, and to have previously pronounced judgement on human affairs for their uncertainty and fatuity, and then you would not now have been taken off your guard as by enemies suddenly come upon you. Admirably does Theseus in Euripides[1] appear to have prepared himself for such crises, for they say:

> But I have learned this from a certain sage,
> And on these cares and troubles set my mind,
> And on myself laid exile from my land
> And early deaths and other forms of ills,
> That if I suffer aught my fancy saw,
> It should not, coming newly, hurt the more.

But the more ignoble and untutored sometimes cannot even recall themselves to the consideration of anything seemly and profitable, but go out of their way to find extremes of wretchedness, even to punishing their innocent body and to forcing the unafflicted, as Achaeus[2] says, to join in their grief.

22. Wherefore very excellently Plato[3] appears to advise us in such misfortunes,

> to maintain a calm demeanour, since neither the evil nor the good in them is at all plain, and since no advance is made by the man who takes things much to heart. For grief stands in the way of sane counsel about an event and prevents one from arranging his affairs with relation to what has befallen, as a player does at a throw of the dice, in whatever way reason may convince him would be best. We ought not, therefore, when we have fallen to act like children and hold on to the injured place and scream, but we should accustom our soul speedily to concern itself with curing the injury and raising up the fallen, and we should put away lamentation by remedial art.

They say that the lawgiver of the Lycians[4] ordered his citizens, whenever they mourned, to clothe themselves first in woman's garments and then to mourn, wishing to make it clear that mourning is womanish and unbecoming to decorous men who lay claim to the education of the free-born. Yes, mourning is verily feminine, and weak, and ignoble, since women are more given to it than men, and barbarians more than Greeks, and inferior men more than better men; and of the barbarians themselves, not the most noble, Celts and Galatians, and all who by nature are filled with a more manly spirit, but rather, if such there are, the Egyptians and Syrians and Lydians and all those who are like them. For it is recorded that some of these go down into pits and remain there for several days, not desiring even to behold the light of the sun since the deceased also is bereft of it. At any rate the tragic poet Ion,[5] who was not without knowledge of the foolishness of these peoples, has represented a woman as saying: →

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[1] In an unknown play; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 964d; cf. the translation by Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.14 (29)

[2] Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag. p.* 757, Achaeus, No. 45

[3] Adapted from the *Republic*, *p.* 604b

[4] Cf. Valerius Maximus, II.6.13

[5] Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, *p.* 743, Ion, No. 54

> The nurse of lusty children I have come,
> To supplicate you, from the mourning pits.

And some of the barbarians even cut off parts of their bodies, their noses and ears, and mutilate other portions of their bodies also, thinking to gratify the dead by abandoning that moderation of feeling which Nature enjoins in such cases.

23. But I dare say that, in answer to this, some may assert their belief that there need not be mourning for every death, but only for untimely deaths, because of the failure of the dead to gain what are commonly held to be the advantages of life, which as marriage, education, manhood, citizenship, or public affairs (for these are the considerations, they say, which most cause grief to those who suffer misfortune through untimely deaths, since they are robbed of their hope out of due time); but they do not realize that the untimely death shows no disparity if it be considered with reference to the common lot of man. For just as when it has been decided to migrate to a new fatherland, and the journey is compulsory for all, and none by entreaty can escape it, some go on ahead and others follow after, but all come to the same place; in the same manner, of all who are journeying toward Destiny those who come more tardily have no advantage over those who arrive earlier. If it be true that untimely death is an evil, the most untimely would be that of infants and children, and still more that of the newly born. But such deaths we bear easily and cheerfully, but the deaths of those who have already lived some time with distress and mourning because of our fanciful notion, born of vain hopes, since we have come to feel quite assured of the continued tarrying with us of persons who have lived so long. But if the years of man's life were but twenty, we should feel that he who passed away at fifteen had not died untimely, but that he had already attained an adequate measure of age, while the man who had completed the prescribed period of twenty years, or who had come close to the count of twenty years, we should assuredly deem happy as having lived through a most blessed and perfect life. But if the length of life were two hundred years, we should certainly feel that he who came to his end at one hundred was cut off untimely, and we should betake ourselves to wailing and lamentation.

24. It is evident, therefore, that even the death which we call untimely readily admits of consolation, both for these reasons and for those previously given. For in fact Troilus shed fewer tears than did Priam;[1] and if Priam had died earlier, while his kingdom and his great prosperity were at their height, he would not have used such sad words as he did in conversation with his own son Hector, when he advised him to withdraw from the battle with Achilles; he says:[2]

> Come then within the walled city, my son, so to save from destruction
> All of the men and the women of Troy, nor afford a great triumph
> Unto the offspring of Peleus, and forfeit the years of your lifetime.
> Also for me have compassion, ill-starred, while yet I have feeling;
> Hapless I am; on the threshold of eld will the Father, descended from Cronus,
> Make me to perish in pitiful doom, after visions of evils, →

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[1] A saying of Callimachus; cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.93 (39); Plutarch, *Moralia*, 211a

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, XXII.56

> Sons being slain and our daughters as well being dragged to be captives,
> Chambers of treasure all wantonly plundered and poor little children
> Dashed to the earth in the terrible strife by the merciless foeman,
> Wives of my sons being dragged by the ravishing hands of Achaeans.
> Me, last of all, at the very front doors shall the dogs tear to pieces,
> Ravening, eager for blood, when a foeman wielding his weapon,
> Keen-edged of bronze, by a stroke or a throw, takes the life from my body.
> Yet when the dogs bring defilement on hair and on beard that is hoary,
> And on the body as well of an old man slain by the foeman,
> This is the saddest of sights ever seen by us unhappy mortals.

> Thus did the old man speak, and his hoary locks plucked by the handful,
> Tearing his hair from his head, but he moved not the spirit of Hector.

Since you have, then, so very many examples regarding this matter, bear in mind the fact that death relieves not a few persons from great and grievous ills which, if they had lived on, they would surely have experienced. But, out of regard for the due proportions of my argument, I omit these, contenting myself with what has been said touching the wrongfulness of being carried away beyond natural and moderate bounds to futile mourning and ignoble lamentation.

25. Crantor[1] says that not being to blame for one's unhappy state is no small alleviation for misfortunes; but I should say that it surpasses all others as a remedy for the cure of grief. But affection and love for the departed does not consist in distressing ourselves, but in benefiting the beloved one; and a benefit for those who have been taken away is the honour paid to them through keeping their memory green. For no good man, after he is dead, is deserving of lamentations, but of hymns and songs of joy; not of mourning, but of an honourable memory; not of sorrowing tears, but of offerings of sacrifice, — if the departed one is now a partaker in some life more divine, relieved of servitude to the body, and of these everlasting cares and misfortunes which those who have received a mortal life as their portion are constrained to undergo until such time as they shall complete their allotted earthly existence, which Nature has not given us for eternity; but she has distributed to us severally the apportioned amount in accordance with the laws of fate.

26. Wherefore, over those who die men of good sense ought not to be carried away by sorrow beyond the natural and moderate limit of grief, which so affects the soul, into useless and barbarian mourning, and they ought not to wait for that outcome which has already been the lot of many in the past, the result of which is that they terminate their own lives in misery because they have put off their mourning, and gain nothing but a forlorn burial in their garments of sorrow, as their woes and the ills born of their unreasonableness follow them to the grave, so that one might utter over them the verse of Homer:[2]

> While they were weeping and wailing black darkness descended upon them.

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[1] Mullach, *Frag. Philos. Graec.* III *p.* 149

[2] Combined from *Iliad*, XXIII.109, and *Odyssey*, I.423 (= *Od.* XVIII.306)

We should therefore often hold converse with ourselves after this fashion and say: "What? Shall we someday cease grieving, or shall we consort with unceasing misery to the very end of our life?" For to regard our mourning as unending is the mark of the most extreme foolishness, especially when we observe how those who have been in the deepest grief and greatest mourning often become most cheerful under the influence of time, and at the very tombs where they gave violent expression to their grief by wailing and beating their breasts, they arrange most elaborate banquets with musicians and all the other forms of diversion. It is accordingly the mark of a madman thus to assume that he shall keep his mourning permanently. If, however, men should reason that mourning will come to an end after some particular event, they might go on and reason that it will come to an end when time, forsooth, has produced some effect; for not even God can undo what has been done. So, then, that which in the present instance has come to pass contrary to our expectation and contrary to our opinion has only demonstrated what is wont, through the very course of events, to happen in the case of many men. What then? Are we unable, through reason, to learn this fact and draw the conclusion, that

> Full is the earth now of evils, and full of them too is the ocean.[1]

And also this:

> Such woes of woes for mortal men,
> And round about the Fates throng close;
> There is no vacant pathway for the air?[2]

27. Not merely now, but long ago, as Crantor[3] says, the lot of man has been bewailed by many wise men, who have felt that life is a punishment and that for man to be born at all is the greatest calamity. Aristotle[4] says that Silenus, when he was captured, declared this to Midas. It is better to quote the very words of the philosopher. He says, in the work which is entitled *Eudemus*, or *Of the Soul*, the following:

> "Wherefore, O best and blessedest of all, in addition to believing that those who have ended this life are blessed and happy, we also think that to say anything false or slanderous against them is impious, from our feeling that it is directed against those who have already become our betters and superiors. And this is such an old and ancient belief with us that no one knows at all either the beginning of the time or the name of the person who first promulgated it, but it continues to be a fixed belief for all time.[5] And in addition to this you observe how the saying, which is on the lips of all men, has been passed from mouth to mouth for many years."
>
> "What is this?" said he.

And the other, again taking up the discourse, said: →

[1] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 101; cf. 105e, *supra*

[2] From an unknown lyric poet; cf. Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III *p.* 689

[3] Mullach, *Frag. Philos. Graec.* III *p.* 149

[4] Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.48 (114), and Aristotle, *Frag.* No. 44, Rose

[5] Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 466

> "That not to be born is the best of all, and that to be dead is better than to live. And the proof that this is so has been given to many men by the deity. So, for example, they say that Silenus, after the hunt in which Midas of yore had captured him, when Midas questioned and inquired of him what is the best thing for mankind and what is the most preferable of all things, was at first unwilling to tell, but maintained a stubborn silence. But when at last, by employing every device, Midas induced him to say something to him, Silenus, forced to speak, said:
>
> > Ephemeral offspring of a travailing genius and of harsh fortune, why do you force me to speak what it were better for you men not to know? For a life spent in ignorance of one's own woes is most free from grief. But for men it is utterly impossible that they should obtain the best thing of all, or even have any share in its nature (for the best thing for all men and women is not to be born); however, the next best thing to this, and the first of those to which man can attain, but nevertheless only the second best, is, after being born, to die as quickly as possible."[1]
>
> It is evident, therefore, that he made this declaration with the conviction that existence after death is better than that in life.

One might cite thousands and thousands of examples under this same head, but there is no need to be prolix.

28. We ought not, therefore, to lament those who die young on the ground that they have been deprived of those things which in a long life are accounted good; for this is uncertain, as we have often said — whether the things of which they have been deprived are good or evil; for the evils are much the more numerous. And whereas we acquire the good things only with difficulty and at the expense of many anxieties, the evils we acquire very easily. For they say that the latter are compact and conjoined, and are brought together by many influences, while the good things are disjoined, and hardly manage to unite towards the very end of life. We therefore resemble men who have forgotten, not merely, as Euripides[2] says, that

> Mortals are not the owners of their wealth,

but also that they do not own a single one of human possessions. Wherefore we must say in regard to all things that

> We keep and care for that which is the gods',
> And when they will they take it back again.[3]

We ought not, therefore, to bear it with bad grace if the gods make demand upon us for what they have loaned us for a short time.[4] For even the bankers, as we are in the habit of saying frequently, when demand is made upon them for the return of deposits, do not chafe at the repayment, if they be honourable men. To those who do not

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[1] Cf. Theognis, 425; Bacchylides, v.160; Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 1225; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.48 (115)

[2] Adapted from the *Phoenissae*, 555

[3] *ibid.*, 556

[4] Cf. Cebes, *Tabula*, xxxi, and Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I.39 (93)

make repayment with good grace one might fairly say, "Have you forgotten that you accepted this on condition that you should return it?" Quite parallel is the lot of all mortals. For we hold our life, as it were, on deposit from the gods, who have compelled us to accept the account, and there is no fixed time for its return, just as with the bankers and their deposits, but it is uncertain when the depositor will demand payment. If a man, therefore, is exceedingly indignant, either when he himself is about to die, or when his children have died, must he not manifestly have forgotten that he is but human and the father of children who are mortal? For it is not characteristic of a man of sense to be unaware of the fact that man is a mortal creature, and that he is born to die. At any rate, if Niobe of the fable had had this conception ready at hand, that even the woman who,

> Laden with the happy burden
> Of sweet life and growing children,
> Looks upon the pleasant sunlight,[1]

must die, she would not have been so resentful as to wish to abandon life on account of the magnitude of her misfortune, and to implore the gods that she herself might be hurried to the most awful perdition.

There are two of the inscriptions at Delphi[2] which are most indispensable to living. These are: "Know thyself" and "Avoid extremes," for on these two commandments hang all the rest. These two are in harmony and agreement with each other, and the one seems to be made as clear as possible through the other. For in self-knowledge is included the avoidance of extremes, and in the latter is included self-knowledge. Therefore Ion[3] speaks of the former as follows:

> Not much to say is "Know thyself"; to do
> This, Zeus alone of gods doth understand.

And, of the other, Pindar[4] says:

> The wise have lauded with exceeding praise the words "Avoid extremes."

29. If, then, one keeps these in mind as god-given injunctions, he will be able easily to adapt them to all the circumstances of life, and to bear with such circumstances intelligently, by being heedful of his own nature, and heedful, in whatever may befall him, not to go beyond the limit of propriety, either in being elated to boastfulness or in being humbled and cast down to wailings and lamentations, through weakness of the spirit and the fear of death which is implanted in us as a result of our ignorance of what is wont to happen in life in accordance with the decree of necessity or destiny. Excellent is the advice which the Pythagoreans[5] gave, saying: →

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[1] From an unknown poet; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Adespota, No. 373, and Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graec.* III *p.* 720

[2] Cf. Plato, *Protagoras*, *p.* 343b, and *Charmides*, *p.* 165a; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II.12, 14; Pausanias, X.24.1; Plutarch, *Moralia*, 164b, 385d, and 511b, and *De vita et poesi Homeri*, 151

[3] Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, *p.* 743, Ion, No. 55

[4] Frag. 216 (Christ)

[5] *Carmina Aurea*, 17

> Whatsoe'er woes by the gods' dispensation all mortals must suffer,
> What be the fate you must bear, you should bear it and not be indignant.

And the tragic poet Aeschylus[1] says:

> It is the mark of just and knowing men
> In woes to feel no anger at the gods;

and Euripides:[2]

> Of mortals he who yields to fate we think
> Is wise and knows the ways of Providence;

and in another place[3] he says:

> Of mortals he who bears his lot aright
> To me seems noblest and of soundest sense.

30. Most people grumble about everything, and have a feeling that everything which happens to them contrary to their expectations is brought about through the spite of Fortune and the divine powers. Therefore they wail at everything, and groan, and curse their luck. To them one might say in retort:

> God is no bane to you; 'tis you yourself,[4]

you and your foolish and distorted notions due to your lack of education. It is because of this fallacious and deluded notion that men cry out against any sort of death. If a man die while on a journey, they groan over him and say:

> Wretched his fate; not for him shall his father or much revered mother
> Close his dear eyelids in death.[5]

But if he die in his own land with his parents at his bedside, they deplore his being snatched from their arms and leaving them the memory of the painful sight. If he die in silence without uttering a word about anything, they say amid their tears:

> No, not a word did you say to me, which for the weight of its meaning
> Ever might dwell in my mind.[6]

But if he talked a little at the time of his death, they keep his words always before their mind as a sort of kindling for their grief. If he die suddenly, they deplore his death, saying, "He was snatched away"; but if he lingered long, they complain that he wasted away and suffered before he died. Any pretext is sufficient to arouse grief and lamentations. This movement the poets initiated, and especially the first of them, Homer,[7] who says: →

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[1] Attributed to Euripides by Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, CVIII.43; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 1078

[2] From an unknown play; cf. Nauck, *ibid.*, Euripides, No. 965

[3] From the *Melanippe*; cf. Nauck, *ibid.*, Euripides, No. 505

[4] Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 379

[5] Homer, *Iliad*, XI.452

[6] *ibid.*, XXIV.744

[7] *ibid.*, XXIII.222, and XVII.37

> E'en as a father laments as the pyre of his dead son he kindles,
> Wedded not long; by his death he brought woe to his unhappy parents.
> Not to be told is the mourning and grief that he caused for his parents.

And yet so far it is not evident that the father is justified in bewailing thus. But note this next line:

> Only and darlingest son, who is heir to his many possessions.[1]

31. For who knows but that God, having a fatherly care for the human race, and foreseeing future events, early removes some persons from life untimely? Wherefore we must believe that they undergo nothing that should be avoided. (For

> In what must be, there's naught that men need dread,[2]

nor in any of those events which come to pass in accordance with the postulates or the logical deductions of reason), both because the great majority of deaths forestall other and greater troubles and because it were better for some not to be born even, for others to die at the very moment of birth, for others after they have gone on in life a little way, and for still others while they are in their full vigour. Toward all such deaths we should maintain a cheerful frame of mind, since we know that we cannot escape destiny. It is the mark of educated men to take it for granted that those who seem to have been deprived of life untimely have but forestalled us for a brief time; for the longest life is short and momentary in comparison with eternity. And we know, too, that many who have protracted their period of mourning have, after no long time, followed their lamented friends, without having gained any advantage from their mourning, but only useless torment by their misery.

Since the time of sojourn in life is very brief, we ought not, in unkempt grief and utterly wretched mourning, to ruin our lives by racking ourselves with mental anguish and bodily torments, but to turn to the better and more human course, by striving earnestly to converse with men who will not, for flattery, grieve with us and arouse our sorrows, but will endeavour to dispel our griefs through noble and dignified consolation. We should hearken to Homer and keep in mind those lines of his[3] which Hector spoke to Andromache, endeavouring, in his turn, to comfort her:

> Dearest, you seem much excited; be not over troubled in spirit;
> No man beyond what is fated shall send me in death unto Hades.
> For not a man among mortals, I say, has escaped what is destined,
> Neither the base nor the noble, when once he has entered life's pathway.

Of this destiny the poet elsewhere[4] says:

> When from his mother he came, in the thread of his life Fate entwined it.

[1] Homer, *Iliad*, IX.482

[2] From the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides, quoted *supra*, 110f

[3] *Iliad*, VI.486

[4] *ibid.*, XX.128

32. Keeping these things before our mind, we shall rid ourselves of the useless and vain extremes of mourning, since the time remaining of our life is altogether short. We must therefore be chary of it, so that we may live it in cheerfulness of spirit and without the disturbance of mournful griefs, by giving up the outward signs of sorrow and by bethinking ourselves of the care of our bodies and the welfare of those who live with us. It is a good thing also to call to mind the arguments which most likely we have sometimes employed with relatives or friends[1] who found themselves in similar calamities, when we tried to comfort them and to persuade them to bear the usual happenings of life in the usual way and a man's lot like a man; and it is a good thing, too, not to put ourselves in the position of being able to help others to find relief from grief, but ourselves to have no profit in recalling the means through which we must cure the soul's distress — "by healing remedies of reason"[2] — since we should postpone anything else rather than the putting aside of grief. And yet one poet[3] says that the man who in any matter "puts off till to-morrow" is "wrestling with destruction" — a proverb which is repeated among all men. Much more, I think, is this true of the man who puts over to a future time the experiences which his soul finds so troublesome and so hard to face.

33. It is a good thing, too, to contemplate those men who nobly and high-mindedly and calmly have been resigned to the deaths which have befallen their sons — Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, Demosthenes of Athens, Dion of Syracuse, King Antigonus, and very many others among men both of earlier times and of our own day.

Of these, Anaxagoras,[4] according to the traditional story, was talking about natural philosophy in conversation with his friends, when he heard from one of the messengers, who were sent to bring him the news, of the end which had befallen his son. He stopped for a moment and then said to those present,

> I knew that I had begotten a son who was mortal.

Pericles,[5] who was called "the Olympian" because of his surpassing power of reasoning and of understanding, learned that both his sons, Paralus and Xanthippus, had passed from life. Protagoras describes his conduct in these words:

> His sons were comely youths, but though they died within seven days of each other, he bore their deaths without repining. For he continued to hold to that serenity from which day by day he added greatly to his credit of being blest by Fortune and untroubled by sorrow, and to his high repute with the people at large. For each and every man, as he beheld Pericles bearing his sorrows so stoutly, felt that he was high-minded and manful and his own superior, being only too well aware of what would be his own helplessness under such circumstances. For Pericles, immediately after the tidings about this two sons, none the less placed the garland upon his head, according to the time-honoured cus-

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[1] Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.29-30 (71-74)

[2] Cf. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 848

[3] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 414

[4] Cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, III.2; Galen, V *p.* 418 (ed. Kuhn); Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.14 (30) and 24 (58); Valerius Maximus, V.10, ext. 3

[5] Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, ch. xxxvi (*p.* 172c); Aelian, *Varia Historia*, IX.6; Valerius Maximus, V.10, ext. 1

> tom at Athens, and, clad in garb of white, harangued the people, "taking lead in good counsel,"[1] and inspiriting the Athenians to war.

Xenophon,[2] the follower of Socrates, was once offering sacrifice when he learned from the messengers who had come from the field of battle that his son Gryllus had met his death while fighting. He took the garland from his head and questioned them as to how he had died. When the messengers reported that he died nobly, displaying the greatest valour and after slaying many of the enemy, Xenophon was completely silent for a few moments while mastering his emotion by the power of reason, and then, replacing the garland, he completed the sacrifice, remarking to the messengers,

> I prayed to the gods, not that my son should be immortal or even long of life (for it is not clear whether it be of advantage so), but that he should be brave and patriotic; and so it has come to pass.

Dion[3] of Syracuse was sitting in consultation with his friends, when there arose in the house a commotion and a great screaming, and upon inquiring the cause and hearing what had happened — that his son had fallen from the roof and been killed — he was not at all disconcerted, but commanded the corpse to be given over to the women for the usual preparation for burial, and he himself did not leave off the discussion in which he was engaged.

His example, they say, Demosthenes[4] the orator emulated when he lost his only and much-loved daughter, of whom Aeschines,[5] thinking to reproach Demosthenes, speaks as follows:

> On the seventh day after his daughter's death, before he had mourned for her or performed the customary rites, putting on a garland and resuming his white apparel, he offered a sacrifice in public and violated all custom, when he had lost, poor wretch, his only daughter, who was the first child to address him as father.

So then Aeschines, purposing, after the manner of the political speaker, to reproach him, rehearsed these facts, being quite unaware that thereby he was really commending Demosthenes, who put aside his grief, and displayed his patriotism in preference to his feelings for his kindred.

Antigonus[6] the king, on learning of the death of his son Alcyoneus, which had occurred in the line of battle, gazed proudly upon the messengers who had brought news of the calamity, and after waiting for a moment, said, bowing his head,

> Not so very early, Alcyoneus, have you departed this life, since you always rushed so recklessly against the enemy without a thought either of your own safety or of my counsels.

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[1] Adapted from Homer, *Iliad*, II.273

[2] Cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, III.3; Diogenes Laertius, II.54; Valerius Maximus, V.10, ext. 2

[3] Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, ch. lv (*p.* 982c); Aelian, *Varia Historia*, III.4

[4] Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes*, ch. xxii (*p.* 855d), and Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.26 (63)

[5] Or. III (*Against Ctesiphon*) 77 (*p.* 64)

[6] Antigonus Gonatas; cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, III.5

The whole world wonders at these men and admires them for their nobility of mind, but others have not the ability to imitate them in practice because of that weakness of spirit which results from lack of education. But although there are so many examples, which have been handed down to us through both Greek and Roman history, of men who have behaved nobly and honourably at the deaths of their relatives, yet what has been said will suffice to induce you to put aside mourning, which is the most distressing of all things, and also the fruitless pain, which serves no purpose, involved in mourning.

34. The fact that those who excel in virtues pass on to their fate while young, as though beloved of the gods, I have already called to your attention in an earlier part[1] of my letter, and I shall endeavour at this time to touch upon it very briefly, merely adding my testimony to that which has been so well said by Menander:[2]

> Whom the gods love dies young.

But perhaps, my dearest Apollonius, you would say in retort that your young son had been placed under the special care of Apollo and the Fates, and that it should have been you who, on departing this life, received the last offices from him, after he had come to full manhood; for this, you say, is in accordance with nature. Yes, in accordance with your nature, no doubt, and mine, and that of mankind in general, but not in accordance with the Providence which presides over all or with the universal dispensation. But for that boy, now among the blessed, it was not in accordance with nature that he should tarry beyond the time allotted to him for life on this earth, but that, after fulfilling this term with due obedience, he should set forth to meet his fate, which was already (to use his own words)[3] summoning him to himself. "But he died untimely." Yes, but for this very reason his lot is happier, and he is spared many evils; for Euripides[4] says:

> Life bears the name of life, being but toil.

But he, in the most blooming period of his years, has departed early, a perfect youth, envied and admired by all who knew him. He was fond of his father and mother and his relatives and friends, or, to put it in a word, he loved his fellow men; he respected the elderly among his friends as fathers, he was affectionate towards his companions and familiar friends, he honoured his teachers, and was most kind toward strangers and citizens, gentle with all and beloved of all, both because of his charm of appearance and because of his affable kindliness.

Ah well, but he, bearing with him the fair and fitting fame of your righteousness and his own conjoined, has departed early to eternity from out this mortal life, as from an evening party, before falling into any such grossness of conduct as is wont to be the concomitant of a long old age. And if the account of the ancient poets and philoso-

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[1] 111b, *supra*

[2] From the *Double Deceiver*; cf. Kock, *Com. Att. Frag.* III *p.* 36, Menander, No. 125, and Allinson's *Menander* (*L.C.L.*), *p.* 345. The sentiment is found many times in other writers; cf. Plautus, *Bacch.* IV.7.18 "quem di diligunt adulescens moritur."

[3] *i.e.*, his dying words, "Fate summons me"; cf. the dying words of Alcestis, "Charon summons me," Euripides, *Alcestis*, 254, and Plato, *Phaedo*, 115a.

[4] In an unknown play; cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.*, Euripides, No. 966

phers is true, as it most likely is, and so there is for those of the departed who have been righteous a certain honour and preferment, as is said, and a place set apart in which their souls pass their existence, then you ought to be of good hope for your dear departed son that he will be reckoned among their number and will be with them.

35. These are the words of the melic poet Pindar[1] regarding the righteous in the other world:

> For them doth the strength of the sun shine below,
> While night all the earth doth overstrow.[2]
> In meadows of roses their suburbs lie,
> Roses all tinged with a crimson dye.
> They are shaded by trees that incense bear,
> And trees with golden fruit so far.
> Some with horses and sports of might,
> Others in music and draughts delight.
> Happiness there grows ever apace,
> Perfumes are wafted o'er the loved place,
> As the incense they strew where the gods' altars are
> And the fire that consumes it is seen from afar.

And a little farther on, in another lament for the dead, speaking of the soul, he says:[3]

> In happy fate they all[4]
> Were freed by death from labour's thrall,
> Man's body follows at the beck of death
> O'ermastering. Alive is left
> The image of the stature that he gained,
> Since this alone is from the gods obtained.
> It sleeps while limbs move to and fro,
> But, while we sleep, in dreams doth show
> The choice we cannot disregard
> Between the pleasant and the hard.

36. The divine Plato has said a good deal in his treatise *On the Soul* about its immortality, and not a little also in the *Republic* and *Meno* and *Gorgias*, and here and there in his other dialogues. What is said in the dialogue *On the Soul* I will copy, with comments, and send you separately, as you desired. But for the present occasion these words, which were spoken to Callicles the Athenian, the friend and discipline of Gorgias the orator, are timely and profitable.

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[1] Frag. 129 (ed. Christ); cf. also the two lines quoted in *Moralia*, 17c, and the amplification of these lines which Plutarch gives in *Moralia*, 1130c.

[2] [*i.e.*, spreads by scattering]

[3] Frag. 131 (ed. Christ); cf. also Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, xxviii (*p.* 35d)

[4] The line is incomplete, lacking a finite verb.

They say that Socrates, according to Plato's account,[1] says:

> Listen to a very beautiful story, which you, I imagine, will regard as a myth, but which I regard as a story; for what I am going to say I shall relate as true. As Homer[2] tells the tale, Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto divided the kingdom when they received it from their father. Now this was the custom regarding men even in the time of Cronus, and it has persisted among the gods to this day — that the man who has passed through life justly and in holiness shall, at his death, depart to the Islands of the Blest and dwell in all happiness beyond the reach of evil, while he who has lived an unjust and godless life shall go to the prison-house of justice and punishment, which they call Tartarus. The judges of these men, in the time of Cronus and in the early days of Zeus' dominion, were living, and judged the living, giving judgement on the day when the men were about to die. As time went on, for some reason the cases were not decided well. Accordingly Pluto and the supervisors in the Islands of the Blest went to Zeus and said to him that there kept coming to them at both places inadmissible persons. Said Zeus:
>
>> Very well, then I shall put a stop to this proceeding. The judgements are now rendered poorly; for those who are judged are judged with a covering on them, since they are judged while alive, and so, a good many perhaps who have base souls are clad with beautiful bodies and ancestry and riches, and, when the judgement takes place, many come to testify for them that they have lived righteously. So not only are the judges disconcerted by these things, but at the same time they themselves sit in judgement with a covering on them, having before their own souls, like a veil, their eyes and ears and their whole body. All these things come between, both their own covering and that of those who are being judged. In the first place, then, all their foreknowledge of death must be ended; for now they have foreknowledge of it. So Prometheus has been told to put an end to this. Secondly, they must be judged divested of all these things; for they must be judged after they have died. The judge also must be naked, and dead, that he may view with his very soul the very soul of every man instantly after he has died, and intimated from all his kin, having left behind on earth all earthly adornments, so that his judgement may be just. I, therefore, realizing this situation sooner than you, have made my own sons judges, two from Asia — Minos and Rhadamanthys — and one from Europe — Aeacus. These, then, as soon as they have died, shall sit in judgement in the meadow at the parting of the ways whence the two roads lead, the one to the Islands of the Blest and the other to Tartarus. The people of Asia shall Rhadamanthys judge, while Aeacus shall judge the people of Europe; and to Minos I shall give the prerogative of pronouncing final judgement in case the other two be in any doubt, in order that the decision in regard to the route which men must take shall be as just as possible.

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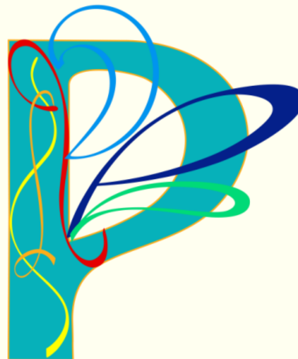
[1] *Gorgias*, *p.* 523a

[2] *Iliad*, XV.187

> This, Callicles, is what I have heard, and believe to be true; and from these words I draw the following inference — that death is, as it seems to me, nothing else than the severing of two things, soul and body, from each other.

37. Having collected and put together these extracts, my dearest Apollonius, with great diligence, I have completed this letter of condolence to you, which is most needful to enable you to put aside your present grief and to put an end to mourning, which is the most distressing of all things. In it is included also for your son, Apollonius, a youth so very dear to the gods, a fitting tribute, which is much coveted by the sanctified — a tribute due to his honourable memory and to his fair fame, which will endure for time eternal. You will do well, therefore, to be persuaded by reason, and, as a favour to your dear departed son, to turn from your unprofitable distress and desolation, which affect both body and soul, and to go back to your accustomed and natural course of life. Forasmuch as your son, while he was living among us, was sorry to see either you or his mother downcast, even so, now that he is with the gods and is feasting with them, he would not be well satisfied with your present course of life. Resume, therefore, the spirit of a brave-hearted and high-minded man who loves his offspring, and set free from all this wretchedness both yourself, the mother of the youth, and your relatives and friends, as you may do by pursuing a more tranquil form of life, which will be most gratifying both to your son and to all of us who are concerned for you, as we rightly should be.



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On the soul of the spiritual man lit by its own light.

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- CICERO'S DREAM OF SCIPIO AND MACROBIUS' COMMENT
- CLASSIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES IN MAN
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- DEVACHAN, DREAM REALM WHERE PURE SOULS ARE REWARDED
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