

MEDITATIONS

Marcus Aurelius



Old wisdom.
Plain words.

All 415 thoughts • Casaubon (1634) and plain English

Meditations

Marcus Aurelius

Every thought, with plain English

All 415 numbered thoughts of the Meditations, each starting on its own page: Meric Casaubon's 1634 English translation, with a plain modern English version beside it or just below it.

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Book I · I



Casaubon (1634)

Of my grandfather Verus I have learned to be gentle and meek, and to refrain from all anger and passion. From the fame and memory of him that begot me I have learned both shamefastness and manlike behaviour. Of my mother I have learned to be religious, and bountiful; and to forbear, not only to do, but to intend any evil; to content myself with a spare diet, and to fly all such excess as is incidental to great wealth. Of my great-grandfather, both to frequent public schools and auditories, and to get me good and able teachers at home; and that I ought not to think much, if upon such occasions, I were at excessive charges.

In today's English

From my grandfather Verus I learned to be gentle and mild, and to hold back from all anger and passion. From the reputation and memory of my father I learned modesty and a manly bear-

ing. From my mother I learned to be devout and generous, and to refrain not only from doing wrong but even from intending it. I learned from her to be content with simple food and to avoid the excesses that come with great wealth. From my great-grandfather I learned to attend public schools and lectures, to hire good, able teachers at home, and not to begrudge it if that cost me a great deal.

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Book I · II



Casaubon (1634)

Of him that brought me up, not to be fondly addicted to either of the two great factions of the coursers in the circus, called Prasini, and Veneti: nor in the amphitheatre partially to favour any of the gladiators, or fencers, as either the Parmularii, or the Secutores. Moreover, to endure labour; nor to need many things; when I have anything to do, to do it myself rather than by others; not to meddle with many businesses; and not easily to admit of any slander.

In today's English

From the man who raised me I learned not to be a fanatic for either of the two great chariot-racing teams in the circus, the Greens (Prasini) or the Blues (Veneti), and not to take sides in the amphitheater for one kind of gladiator over another, whether the Parmularii (light shield fighters) or the Secutores (the 'chasers'). I also learned from him to endure hard work, to need few things, to do my own work myself rather than through others, not to meddle in too many affairs, and not to be quick to listen to slander.



Casaubon (1634)

Of Diognetus, not to busy myself about vain things, and not easily to believe those things, which are commonly spoken, by such as take upon them to work wonders, and by sorcerers, or prestidigitators, and impostors; concerning the power of charms, and their driving out of demons, or evil spirits; and the like. Not to keep quails for the game; nor to be mad after such things. Not to be offended with other men's liberty of speech, and to apply myself unto philosophy. Him also I must thank, that ever I heard first Bacchius, then Tandasis and Marcianus, and that I did write dialogues in my youth; and that I took liking to the philosophers' little couch and skins, and such other things, which by the Grecian discipline are proper to those who profess philosophy.

In today's English

From Diognetus I learned not to waste my energy on trivial things, and not to believe what is commonly said by miracle workers, sorcerers, conjurers, and frauds about the power of charms, driving out demons or evil spirits, and the like. I learned not to keep quails for fighting, and not to be crazy about such hobbies. I learned not to be offended when others speak freely, and to devote myself to philosophy. I also have him to thank that I first heard Bacchius, then Tandasis and Marcianus; that I wrote dialogues when I was young; and that I came to love the philosopher's simple cot and animal skins and the other plain things that the Greek training considers proper for those who practice philosophy.

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Book I · IV



Casaubon (1634)

To Rusticus I am beholding, that I first entered into the conceit that my life wanted some redress and cure. And then, that I did not fall into the ambition of ordinary sophists, either to write tracts concerning the common theorems, or to exhort men unto virtue and the study of philosophy by public orations; as also that I never by way of ostentation did affect to show myself an active able man, for any kind of bodily exercises. And that I gave over the study of rhetoric and poetry, and of elegant neat language. That I did not use to walk about the house in my long robe, nor to do any such things. Moreover I learned of him to write letters without any affectation, or curiosity; such as that was, which by him was written to my mother from Sinuessas: and to be easy and ready to be reconciled, and well pleased again with them that had offended me, as soon as any of them would be content to seek unto me again. To read with diligence; not to rest satisfied with a light and superficial knowledge, nor quickly

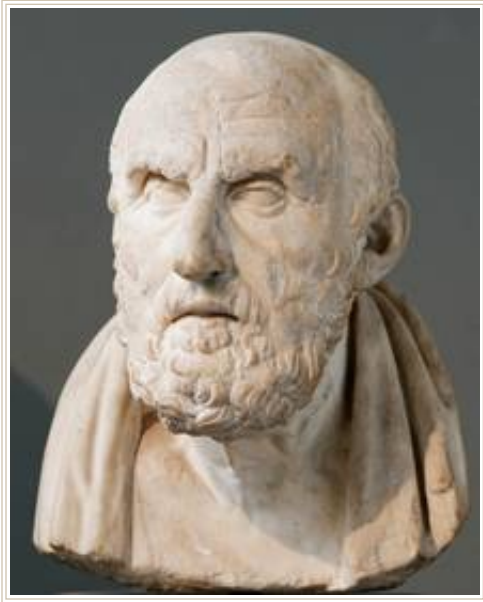
to assent to things commonly spoken of: whom also I must thank that ever I lighted upon Epictetus his Hypomnemata, or moral commentaries and common-factions: which also he gave me of his own.

In today's English

I owe it to Rusticus that I first got the idea that my character needed correcting and care. Through him I did not fall into the ambitions of ordinary sophists, writing treatises on standard theories or giving public speeches urging people toward virtue and philosophy. I never tried to show off as a man of energy or athletic skill. I gave up the study of rhetoric, poetry, and fancy, polished language. I did not walk around the house in formal dress or do anything like that. I learned from him to write letters simply, without affectation, like the one he wrote to my mother from Sinuessas. I learned to be easily reconciled and quickly friendly again with people who had offended me, as soon as they were willing to come back to me. I learned to read carefully, not to be satisfied with a quick, shallow understanding, and not to agree too quickly with what people commonly say. I also have him to thank for my first acquaintance with the Hypomnemata (notes or discourses) of Epictetus, his moral commentaries, which he gave me from his own library.

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Book I · V



Casaubon (1634)

From Apollonius, true liberty, and unvariable steadfastness, and not to regard anything at all, though never so little, but right and reason: and always, whether in the sharpest pains, or after the loss of a child, or in long diseases, to be still the same man; who also was a present and visible example unto me, that it was possible for the same man to be both vehement and remiss: a man not subject to be vexed, and offended with the incapacity of his scholars and auditors in his lectures and expositions; and a true pattern of a man who of all his good gifts and faculties, least esteemed in himself, that his excellent skill and ability to teach and persuade others the common theorems and maxims of the Stoic philosophy. Of him also I learned how to receive favours and kindnesses (as commonly they are accounted:) from friends, so that I might not become obnoxious unto them, for them, nor more yielding upon occasion, than in right I ought; and yet so that I should not pass them neither, as an unsensible

and unthankful man.

In today's English

From Apollonius I learned true freedom and unshakable steadiness, and to pay attention to nothing, however small, except what is right and reasonable. I learned to stay the same person always, whether in sharp pain, after losing a child, or through long illness. He was a living example to me that the same person can be both intense and relaxed. He was not irritated or offended when his students and listeners were slow to understand his lectures and explanations. He was a true model of a man who, of all his gifts, valued least his outstanding skill at teaching and persuading others of the core principles of Stoic philosophy. From him I also learned how to accept what people call favors and kindnesses from friends, without becoming indebted to them for it or giving in to them more than is right, and yet without brushing those favors aside like a cold, ungrateful person.

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Book I · VI



Casaubon (1634)

Of Sextus, mildness and the pattern of a family governed with paternal affection; and a purpose to live according to nature: to be grave without affectation: to observe carefully the several dispositions of my friends, not to be offended with idiots, nor unseasonably to set upon those that are carried with the vulgar opinions, with the theorems, and tenets of philosophers: his conversation being an example how a man might accommodate himself to all men and companies; so that though his company were sweeter and more pleasing than any flatterer's cogging and fawning; yet was it at the same time most respected and revered: who also had a proper happiness and faculty, rationally and methodically to find out, and set in order all necessary determinations and instructions for a man's life. A man without ever the least appearance of anger, or any other passion; able at the same time most exactly to observe the Stoic Apathia, or unpassionateness, and yet to be most tender-hearted: ever of good credit; and yet almost without any noise, or rumour: very learned, and yet making little show.

In today's English

From Sextus I learned gentleness, and saw the model of a household run with a father's affection. I learned to aim at living in agreement with nature, and to be serious without putting on airs. I learned to pay close attention to the different temperaments of my friends, not to be annoyed by ignorant people, and not to barge in at the wrong moment on those who hold common opinions with the theories and doctrines of philosophers. His way with people showed how a person can adapt to everyone and every company: his company was sweeter and more pleasant than any flatterer's fawning, and yet at the same time he was deeply respected and revered. He also had a special gift for working out, rationally and methodically, and putting in order all the necessary principles and guidance for a person's life. He never showed the slightest sign of anger or any other passion. He could practice the Stoic Apatheia (freedom from passion) perfectly, and yet be the most tender-hearted of men. He always had a good reputation, yet almost without any fuss or talk. He was very learned, yet made little show of it.

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Book I · VII



Casaubon (1634)

From Alexander the Grammarian, to be un-reprovable myself, and not reproachfully to reprehend any man for a barbarism, or a solecism, or any false pronunciation, but dextrously by way of answer, or testimony, or confirmation of the same matter (taking no notice of the word) to utter it as it should have been spoken; or by some other such close and indirect admonition, handsomely and civilly to tell him of it.

In today's English

From Alexander the Grammarian I learned to be beyond reproach myself, and not to scold anyone harshly for a crude expression, a grammatical mistake, or a mispronunciation. Instead, I learned to say the word correctly myself in my answer, or in agreeing with them, or in confirming the point

(without drawing attention to the word itself), or to let them know politely and gracefully by some other quiet, indirect hint.

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Book I · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

Of Fronto, to how much envy and fraud and hypocrisy the state of a tyrannous king is subject unto, and how they who are commonly called εὐπατρίδαι, i.e. nobly born, are in some sort incapable, or void of natural affection.

In today's English

From Fronto I learned how much envy, deceit, and hypocrisy surround the position of a tyrannical ruler, and how those commonly called εὐπατρίδαι (eupatridai, 'the nobly born') are in some ways incapable of, or lacking in, natural affection.

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Book I · IX



Casaubon (1634)

Of Alexander the Platonic, not often nor without great necessity to say, or to write to any man in a letter, 'I am not at leisure'; nor in this manner still to put off those duties, which we owe to our friends and acquaintances (to every one in his kind) under pretence of urgent affairs.

In today's English

From Alexander the Platonist I learned not to say or write to anyone, often or without real necessity, 'I am too busy.' I learned not to keep putting off, with the excuse of urgent business, the duties we owe to our friends and acquaintances, each in the way that suits them.

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Book I · X



Casaubon (1634)

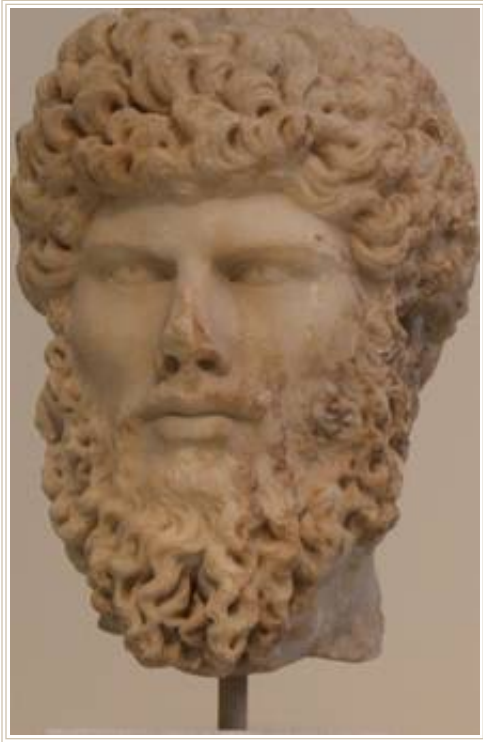
Of Catulus, not to condemn any friend's expostulation, though unjust, but to strive to reduce him to his former disposition: freely and heartily to speak well of all my masters upon any occasion, as it is reported of Domitius, and Athenodotus: and to love my children with true affection.

In today's English

From Catulus I learned not to dismiss a friend's complaint, even an unfair one, but to try to bring him back to his former good feeling. I learned to speak well of all my teachers, freely and warmly, whenever I had the chance, as is told of Domitius and Athenodotus. And I learned to love my children with real affection.

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Book I · XI



Casaubon (1634)

From my brother Severus, to be kind and loving to all them of my house and family; by whom also I came to the knowledge of Thrasea and Helvidius, and Cato, and Dio, and Brutus. He it was also that did put me in the first conceit and desire of an equal commonwealth, administered by justice and equality; and of a kingdom wherein should be regarded nothing more than the good and welfare of the subjects. Of him also, to observe a constant tenor, (not interrupted, with any other cares and distractions,) in the study and esteem of philosophy: to be bountiful and liberal in the largest measure; always to hope the best; and to be confident that my friends love me. In whom I moreover observed open dealing towards those whom he reprov'd at any time, and that his friends might without all doubt or much observation know what he would, or would not, so open and plain was he.

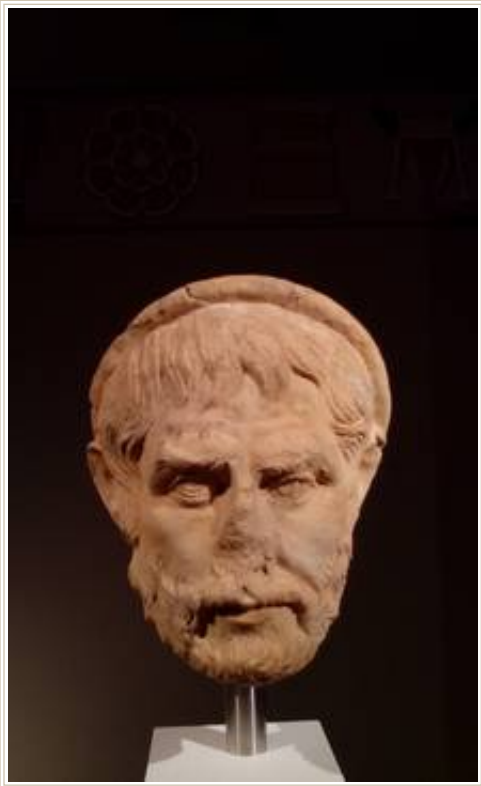
In today's English

From my brother Severus I learned to be kind and loving to everyone in my household and family. Through him I came to know

about Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dio, and Brutus. He first gave me the idea of, and the desire for, a commonwealth of equals governed by justice and equal rights, and a monarchy that cares about nothing more than the good and welfare of its subjects. From him too I learned to keep a steady devotion to the study and respect of philosophy, not interrupted by other cares and distractions; to be generous and giving in the fullest measure; always to hope for the best; and to trust that my friends love me. I also noticed how openly he dealt with anyone he had to criticize, and how his friends never needed to guess or watch him closely to know what he wanted or did not want, so open and straightforward he was.

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Book I · XII



Casaubon (1634)

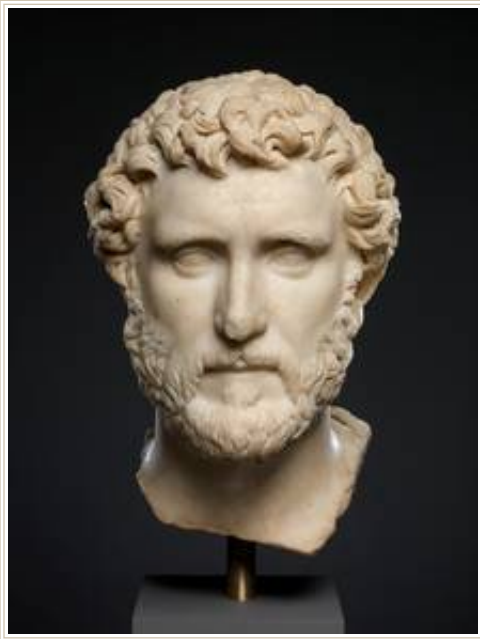
From Claudius Maximus, in all things to endeavour to have power of myself, and in nothing to be carried about; to be cheerful and courageous in all sudden chances and accidents, as in sicknesses: to love mildness, and moderation, and gravity: and to do my business, whatsoever it be, thoroughly, and without querulousness. Whatsoever he said, all men believed him that as he spake, so he thought, and whatsoever he did, that he did it with a good intent. His manner was, never to wonder at anything; never to be in haste, and yet never slow: nor to be perplexed, or dejected, or at any time unseemly, or excessively to laugh: nor to be angry, or suspicious, but ever ready to do good, and to forgive, and to speak truth; and all this, as one that seemed rather of himself to have been straight and right, than ever to have been rectified or redressed; neither was there any man that ever thought himself undervalued by him, or that could find in his heart, to think himself a better man than he. He would also be very pleasant and gracious.

In today's English

From Claudius Maximus I learned to try in everything to be master of myself and never to be pushed around; to be cheerful and brave in all sudden misfortunes, such as illness; to love gentleness, moderation, and seriousness; and to do my work, whatever it is, thoroughly and without complaining. Whatever he said, everyone believed that he meant it, and whatever he did, they believed he did it with good intentions. It was his way never to be amazed by anything, never to be in a hurry and yet never slow, never to be confused or downcast, never to behave improperly or laugh too much. He was never angry or suspicious, but always ready to do good, to forgive, and to tell the truth. And he did all this like someone who had always been naturally upright, not someone who had been straightened out or corrected. No one ever felt looked down on by him, and no one could bring himself to think he was a better man than Maximus. He was also very pleasant and gracious company.

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Book I · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

In my father, I observed his meekness; his constancy without wavering in those things, which after a due examination and deliberation, he had determined. How free from all vanity he carried himself in matter of honour and dignity, (as they are esteemed:) his laboriousness and assiduity, his readiness to hear any man, that had aught to say tending to any common good: how generally and impartially he would give every man his due; his skill and knowledge, when rigour or extremity, or when remissness or moderation was in season; how he did abstain from all unchaste love of youths; his moderate condescending to other men's occasions as an ordinary man, neither absolutely requiring of his friends, that they should wait upon him at his ordinary meals, nor that they should of necessity accompany him in his journeys; and that whensoever any business upon some necessary occasions was to be put off and omitted before it could be ended, he was ever found when he went about it again, the same man that he was before. His accurate examination of

things in consultations, and patient hearing of others. He would not hastily give over the search of the matter, as one easy to be satisfied with sudden notions and apprehensions. His care to preserve his friends; how neither at any time he would carry himself towards them with disdainful neglect, and grow weary of them; nor yet at any time be madly fond of them. His contented mind in all things, his cheerful countenance, his care to foresee things afar off, and to take order for the least, without any noise or clamour. Moreover how all acclamations and flattery were repressed by him: how carefully he observed all things necessary to the government, and kept an account of the common expenses, and how patiently he did abide that he was reprehended by some for this his strict and rigid kind of dealing. How he was neither a superstitious worshipper of the gods, nor an ambitious pleaser of men, or studious of popular applause; but sober in all things, and everywhere observant of that which was fitting; no affecter of novelties: in those things which conduced to his ease and convenience, (plenty whereof his fortune did afford him,) without pride and bragging, yet with all freedom and liberty: so that as he did freely enjoy them without any anxiety or affectation when they were present; so when absent, he found no want of them. Moreover, that he was never commended by any man, as either a learned acute man, or an obsequious officious man, or a fine orator; but as a ripe mature man, a perfect sound man; one that could not endure to be flattered; able to govern both himself and others. Moreover, how much he did honour all true philosophers, without upbraiding those that were not so; his sociableness, his gracious and delightful conversation, but never unto satiety; his care of his body within bounds and measure, not as one that desired to live long, or over-studious of neatness, and elegance; and yet not as one that did not regard it: so that through his own care and providence, he seldom needed any inward physic, or outward applications: but especially how ingeniously he would yield to any that had obtained any peculiar faculty, as either eloquence, or the knowledge of the laws, or of ancient customs, or the like; and how he concurred with them, in his best care and endeavour that every one of them might in his kind, for that wherein he excelled, be regarded and esteemed: and although he did all things carefully after the ancient customs of his forefathers, yet even of this was he not desirous that men should take notice, that he did imitate ancient customs. Again, how he was not easily moved and tossed up and down, but loved to be constant, both in the same places and businesses; and how after his great fits of headache he would return fresh and vigorous to his wonted affairs. Again, that secrets he neither had many, nor often, and such only as

Casaubon (1634) · continued

concerned public matters: his discretion and moderation, in exhibiting of the public sights and shows for the pleasure and pastime of the people: in public buildings. congiaries, and the like. In all these things, having a respect unto men only as men, and to the equity of the things themselves, and not unto the glory that might follow. Never went to use the baths at unseasonable hours; no builder; never curious, or solicitous, either about his meat, or about the workmanship, or colour of his clothes, or about anything that belonged to external beauty. In all his conversation, far from all inhumanity, all boldness, and incivility, all greediness and impetuosity; never doing anything with such earnestness, and intention, that a man could say of him, that he did sweat about it: but contrariwise, all things distinctly, as at leisure; without trouble; orderly, soundly, and agreeably. A man might have applied that to him, which is recorded of Socrates, that he knew how to want, and to enjoy those things, in the want whereof, most men show themselves weak; and in the fruition, intemperate: but to hold out firm and constant, and to keep within the compass of true moderation and sobriety in either estate, is proper to a man, who hath a perfect and invincible soul; such as he showed himself in the sickness of Maximus.

In today's English

In my father I saw gentleness, and unwavering firmness in decisions he had reached after careful examination and thought. I saw how free of vanity he was about what people call honors and rank; how hard and steadily he worked; how ready he was to listen to anyone who had something to offer for the common good; how fairly and impartially he gave everyone their due; and how well he knew when to be strict and severe and when to be relaxed and moderate. He kept away from all sexual relations with boys. He was considerate of other people's needs, like an ordinary man: he did not insist that his friends join him at his regular meals or come along on his travels, and whenever some business had to be postponed and left unfinished for a good reason, he came back to it exactly the same man he had been before.

I saw how carefully he examined things in council and how patiently he listened to others. He would not quit investigating a question early, like someone easily satisfied with first impressions. He took care to keep his friends: he never treated them with contempt or grew tired of them, nor was he ever wildly infatuated with them. He was content in everything and cheerful in his face. He planned far ahead and took care of even the smallest details, without fuss or noise. He put a stop to public cheering and flattery. He watched carefully over everything the government needed, kept account of public spending, and patiently put up with criticism from some for being so strict about it. He was not superstitious in worshiping the gods, nor did he try to win people over or chase popular applause. He was sober in everything, always attentive to what was proper, and no lover of novelty. As for the comforts of life, which his fortune supplied in plenty, he used them without pride or boasting, but also freely and naturally: when he had them, he enjoyed them without anxiety or show, and when he did not have them, he did not miss them.

No one ever praised him as a clever intellectual, or as an eager, obliging courtier, or as a fine speaker. They praised him as a mature, complete, sound man, someone who could not stand flattery and who was able to govern both himself and others. He greatly respected all true philosophers, without insulting those who were not. He was sociable, and his conversation was gracious and delightful, though never to the point of being tiresome. He took reasonable care of his body, not like someone desperate to live long or overly fussy about grooming and elegance, but not carelessly either, so that thanks to his own care he rarely needed medicine or treatments. Above all, he would generously defer to anyone with a special talent, whether in eloquence, law, ancient customs, or anything else, and he worked hard to make sure each of them was recognized and valued for what they did best. And although he did everything carefully in keeping with the customs of his ancestors, he did not want people to notice that he was following

In today's English · continued

ancient customs.

Again, he was not easily shaken or tossed around. He liked to stay steady, in the same places and the same work. After his severe headaches he would return fresh and vigorous to his usual tasks. He had few secrets, and rarely, and those only about public affairs. He used judgment and moderation in putting on public shows and entertainments for the people, in public building projects, in public gifts (congiaria, distributions of money or grain), and the like. In all of this he looked only at people as people and at the fairness of the thing itself, not at any glory that might follow. He did not bathe at odd hours. He was not obsessed with building. He was never fussy or anxious about his food, or the cut or color of his clothes, or anything to do with outward beauty. In all his dealings he was far from cruelty, rudeness, insolence, greed, or rashness. He never did anything so intensely that you could say he was sweating over it. On the contrary, he did everything deliberately, as if he had all the time in the world, calmly, in order, soundly, and pleasantly.

You could say of him what is told of Socrates: that he could go without, and also enjoy, the very things that most people are too weak to do without and too self-indulgent to enjoy in moderation. To stay firm and steady, and to keep within the bounds of true moderation and sobriety in either situation, is the mark of a man with a complete and unconquerable soul, which is what he showed himself to be during the illness of Maximus.



Casaubon (1634)

From the gods I received that I had good grandfathers, and parents, a good sister, good masters, good domestics, loving kinsmen, almost all that I have; and that I never through haste and rashness transgressed against any of them, notwithstanding that my disposition was such, as that such a thing (if occasion had been) might very well have been committed by me, but that It was the mercy of the gods, to prevent such a concurring of matters and occasions, as might make me to incur this blame. That I was not long brought up by the concubine of my father; that I preserved the flower of my youth. That I took not upon me to be a man before my time, but rather put it off longer than I needed. That I lived under the government of my lord and father, who would take away from me all pride and vainglory, and reduce me to that conceit and opinion that it was not impossible for a prince to live in the court without a troop of guards and followers, extraordinary apparel, such and such torches and statues, and other like particulars of state and magnificence; but

that a man may reduce and contract himself almost to the state of a private man, and yet for all that not to become the more base and remiss in those public matters and affairs, wherein power and authority is requisite. That I have had such a brother, who by his own example might stir me up to think of myself; and by his respect and love, delight and please me. That I have got ingenuous children, and that they were not born distorted, nor with any other natural deformity. That I was no great proficient in the study of rhetoric and poetry, and of other faculties, which perchance I might have dwelt upon, if I had found myself to go on in them with success. That I did by times prefer those, by whom I was brought up, to such places and dignities, which they seemed unto me most to desire; and that I did not put them off with hope and expectation, that (since that they were yet but young) I would do the same hereafter. That I ever knew Apollonius and Rusticus, and Maximus. That I have had occasion often and effectually to consider and meditate with myself, concerning that life which is according to nature, what the nature and manner of it is: so that as for the gods and such suggestions, helps and inspirations, as might be expected from them, nothing did hinder, but that I might have begun long before to live according to nature; or that even now that I was not yet partaker and in present possession of that life, that I myself (in that I did not observe those inward motions, and suggestions, yea and almost plain and apparent instructions and admonitions of the gods,) was the only cause of it. That my body in such a life, hath been able to hold out so long. That I never had to do with Benedicta and Theodotus, yea and afterwards when I fell into some fits of love, I was soon cured. That having been often displeased with Rusticus, I never did him anything for which afterwards I had occasion to repent. That it being so that my mother was to die young, yet she lived with me all her latter years. That as often as I had a purpose to help and succour any that either were poor, or fallen into some present necessity, I never was answered by my officers that there was not ready money enough to do it; and that I myself never had occasion to require the like succour from any other. That I have such a wife, so obedient, so loving, so ingenuous. That I had choice of fit and able men, to whom I might commit the bringing up of my children. That by dreams I have received help, as for other things, so in particular, how I might stay my casting of blood, and cure my dizziness, as that also that happened to thee in Cajeta, as unto Chryses when he prayed by the seashore. And when I did first apply myself to philosophy, that I did not fall into the hands of some sophists, or spent my time either in reading the manifold volumes of ordinary philosophers, nor in prac-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

tising myself in the solution of arguments and fallacies, nor dwelt upon the studies of the meteors, and other natural curiosities. All these things without the assistance of the gods, and fortune, could not have been.

In today's English

From the gods I received good grandfathers and parents, a good sister, good teachers, good servants, loving relatives, almost everything I have. I received the fact that I never, through haste or rashness, wronged any of them, even though my temperament was such that I might well have done so if the occasion had come up. It was the mercy of the gods that prevented the kind of circumstances that would have led me into that fault. I was not raised for long by my father's mistress. I kept the innocence of my youth. I did not try to act like a man before my time, but rather put it off longer than I needed to.

I lived under the rule of my lord and father, who stripped away all my pride and vanity and brought me to understand that a prince can live at court without a troop of bodyguards, fancy clothes, torches and statues, and other such displays of pomp. A ruler can bring himself down almost to the level of a private citizen, and yet not be any less dignified or less effective in the public affairs that require power and authority. I had a brother whose example stirred me to look after my own character, and whose respect and love delighted me. My children have good natures, and they were not born deformed or with any other physical defect. I did not make much progress in rhetoric, poetry, and other such studies, which I might have gotten absorbed in if I had seen myself succeeding. I promptly gave those who raised me the positions and honors they seemed to want most, and did not put them off with the hope that, since they were still young, I would do it later. I came to know Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus.

I have often had the chance to think clearly and seriously about what the life according to nature is, and what it is like. So, as far as the gods and their suggestions, help, and inspiration are concerned, nothing stopped me from beginning long ago to live according to nature. If I have still not fully reached that life, I myself am the only cause, because I did not heed the inner promptings and hints of the gods, which were almost plain, open instructions and warnings. My body has held out so long in this kind of life. I never touched Benedicta or Theodotus, and later, when I did fall into passionate attachments, I was quickly cured. Though I was often annoyed with Rusticus, I never did anything to him that I later had reason to regret. Although my mother was fated to die young, she spent her last years with me. Whenever I wanted to help someone who was poor or in sudden need, my officials never told me there was not enough money on hand to do it, and I myself never had to ask anyone else for such help. I have such a wife: so obedient, so loving, so genuine. I had a good choice of capable men to whom I could entrust the upbringing of my children.

Through dreams I received help, among other things in how to stop my spitting of blood and cure my dizziness, as also happened to you at Caieta, like Chryses praying by the seashore. And when I first turned to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of some sophist, or spend my time reading the endless books of ordinary philosophers, or practicing how to solve logical puzzles and fallacies, or poring over the study of the heavens and other curiosities of nature. None of these things could have happened without the help of the gods and good fortune.



Casaubon (1634)

In the country of the Quadi at Granua, these. Be-times in the morning say to thyself, This day I shalt have to do with an idle curious man, with an unthankful man, a railer, a crafty, false, or an envious man; an unsociable uncharitable man. All these ill qualities have happened unto them, through ignorance of that which is truly good and truly bad. But I that understand the nature of that which is good, that it only is to be desired, and of that which is bad, that it only is truly odious and shameful: who know moreover, that this transgressor, whosoever he be, is my kinsman, not by the same blood and seed, but by participation of the same reason, and of the same divine particle; How can I either be hurt by any of those, since it is not in their power to make me incur anything that is truly reproachful? or angry, and ill affected towards him, who by nature is so near unto me? for we are all born to be fellow-workers, as the

In today's English

Written in the country of the Quadi, at the Granua. Early in the morning, say to yourself: today I will have to deal with a meddling busybody, an ungrateful man, an abusive one, a cunning, dishonest, or envious one, an unsociable and uncharitable one. All these faults have come to them through ignorance of what is truly good and truly bad. But I understand the nature of the good, that it alone is worth desiring, and the nature of the bad, that it alone is truly hateful and shameful. I also know that this wrongdoer, whoever he is, is my kin, not by the same blood and seed, but by sharing the same reason and the same divine spark. So how can any of them hurt me, since none of them has the power to make me do anything truly shameful? And how can I be angry and hostile toward someone so closely related to me by nature? We are all born to work together, like the feet, the hands, and the eyelids, like the rows

Casaubon (1634) · continued

feet, the hands, and the eyelids; as the rows of the upper and under teeth: for such therefore to be in opposition, is against nature; and what is it to chafe at, and to be averse from, but to be in opposition?

In today's English · continued

of upper and lower teeth. For such partners to work against each other is against nature, and what is resentment and turning away from someone, if not working against them?

16/415

Book I · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever I am, is either flesh, or life, or that which we commonly call the mistress and overruling part of man; reason. Away with thy books, suffer not thy mind any more to be distracted, and carried to and fro; for it will not be; but as even now ready to die, think little of thy flesh: blood, bones, and a skin; a pretty piece of knit and twisted work, consisting of nerves, veins and arteries; think no more of it, than so. And as for thy life, consider what it is; a wind; not one constant wind neither, but every moment of an hour let out, and sucked in again. The third, is thy ruling part; and here consider; Thou art an old man; suffer not that excellent part to be brought in subjection, and to become slavish: suffer it not to be drawn up and down with unreasonable and unsociable lusts and motions, as it were with wires and nerves; suffer it not any more, either to repine at anything now present, or to fear and fly anything to come, which the destiny hath appointed thee.

In today's English

Whatever I am is made of flesh, breath (life), and what we commonly call the master and ruling part of a person: reason. Put away your books. Do not let your mind be distracted and pulled

back and forth any longer, because that is not allowed. Instead, as if you were about to die right now, think little of your flesh: blood, bones, and skin, a neat little piece of knitted and woven work, made of nerves, veins, and arteries. Think no more of it than that. As for your breath, consider what it is: air, and not even the same air, but let out and sucked back in every moment. The third part is your ruling part, and here think carefully. You are an old man. Do not let this excellent part be enslaved any longer. Do not let it be jerked around by irrational, selfish urges, like a puppet on strings. Do not let it any longer complain about what is happening now, or fear and run from what is coming, which fate has assigned to you.

17/415

Book I · XVII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever proceeds from the gods immediately, that any man will grant totally depends from their divine providence. As for those things that are commonly said to happen by fortune, even those must be conceived to have dependence from nature, or from that first and general connection, and concatenation of all those things, which more apparently by the divine providence are administered and brought to pass. All things flow from thence: and whatsoever it is that is, is both necessary, and conducing to the whole (part of which thou art), and whatsoever it is that is requisite and necessary for the preservation of the general, must of necessity for every particular nature, be good and behoveful. And as for the whole, it is preserved, as by the perpetual mutation and conversion of the simple elements one into another, so also by the mutation, and alteration of things mixed and compounded. Let these things suffice thee; let them be always unto thee, as thy general rules and precepts. As for thy thirst after books, away with it with all speed, that thou die not murmuring and complaining, but truly meek and well satisfied, and from thy heart thankful unto the gods.

In today's English

Everyone will agree that whatever comes directly from the gods depends entirely on their divine providence. As for the things that are said to happen by chance, even those must be understood as depending on nature, that is, on the original, universal web and chain linking all the things that are more obviously governed and brought about by divine providence. Everything flows from there. Whatever exists is both necessary and useful to the whole, of which you are a part. And whatever is needed to preserve the whole must also be good and beneficial for each individual nature within it. The whole is preserved by the constant changing of the simple elements into one another, and also by the changing and transformation of the things made from them. Let this be enough for you. Keep these always as your general rules and principles. As for your thirst for books, get rid of it as fast as you can, so that you do not die grumbling and complaining, but truly gentle and content, and grateful to the gods from your heart.

18/415

Book II · I



Casaubon (1634)

Remember how long thou hast already put off these things, and how often a certain day and hour as it were, having been set unto thee by the gods, thou hast neglected it. It is high time for thee to understand the true nature both of the world, whereof thou art a part; and of that Lord and Governor of the world, from whom, as a channel from the spring, thou thyself didst flow: and that there is but a certain limit of time appointed unto thee, which if thou shalt not make use of to calm and allay the many distempers of thy soul, it will pass away and thou with it, and never after return.

In today's English

Remember how long you have been putting these things off, and how many times the gods have given you a set day and hour, so to speak, and you let it pass. It is high time you understood the true nature of the world, of which you are a part, and of the Lord and Governor of the world, from whom you yourself flowed like a channel from a spring. Understand that you have been given only a fixed amount of time. If you do not use it to calm and heal the many disorders of your soul, it will pass away, and you with it, and it will never come back.

19/415

Book II · II



Casaubon (1634)

Let it be thy earnest and incessant care as a Roman and a man to perform whatsoever it is that thou art about, with true and unfeigned gravity, natural affection, freedom and justice: and as for all other cares, and imaginations, how thou mayest ease thy mind of them. Which thou shalt do; if thou shalt go about every action as thy last action, free from all vanity, all passionate and wilful aberration from reason, and from all hypocrisy, and self-love, and dislike of those things, which by the fates or appointment of God have happened unto thee. Thou seest that those things, which for a man to hold on in a prosperous course, and to live a divine life, are requisite and necessary, are not many, for the gods will require no more of any man, that shall but keep and observe these things.

In today's English

As a Roman and as a human being, make it your serious, constant concern to do whatever you are doing with real, unpretended seriousness, warmth toward others, freedom, and justice, and to clear your mind of every other worry and fantasy. You will manage this if you do each action as though it were your last: free of all vanity, free of every emotional, willful turning away from reason, free of hypocrisy, self-love, and resentment of what fate, or God's arrangement, has brought you. You see how few things a person needs in order to live a smooth, flourishing, godlike life. The gods will ask nothing more of anyone who simply keeps to these.

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Book II · III



Casaubon (1634)

Do, soul, do; abuse and contemn thyself; yet a while and the time for thee to respect thyself, will be at an end. Every man's happiness depends from himself, but behold thy life is almost at an end, whiles affording thyself no respect, thou dost make thy happiness to consist in the souls, and conceits of other men.

In today's English

Go on, soul, keep going: mistreat yourself and look down on yourself. Soon your chance to respect yourself will be gone. Each person's happiness depends on themselves, and yet look, your life is nearly over, and instead of respecting yourself you have placed your happiness in the minds and opinions of other people.



Casaubon (1634)

Why should any of these things that happen externally, so much distract thee? Give thyself leisure to learn some good thing, and cease roving and wandering to and fro. Thou must also take heed of another kind of wandering, for they are idle in their actions, who toil and labour in this life, and have no certain scope to which to direct all their motions, and desires. V. For not observing the state of another man's soul, scarce was ever any man known to be unhappy. Tell whosoever they be that intend not, and guide not by reason and discretion the motions of their own souls, they must of necessity be unhappy.

In today's English

Why do outside events distract you so much? Give yourself time to learn something good, and stop wandering around aimlessly. But watch out for another kind of wandering too: people who wear themselves out with work all their lives, but have no clear goal to aim all their efforts and desires at, are really idle in what they do. [V.] Hardly anyone has ever been made unhappy by failing to notice what is going on in someone else's soul. But those who do not pay attention to the movements of their own souls, and do not guide them with reason and good judgment, are bound to be unhappy.



Casaubon (1634)

These things thou must always have in mind: What is the nature of the universe, and what is mine, in particular: This unto that what relation it hath: what kind of part, of what kind of universe it is: And that there is nobody that can hinder thee, but that thou mayest always both do and speak those things which are agreeable to that nature, whereof thou art a part.

In today's English

Always keep these things in mind: what the nature of the universe is, and what my own nature is; how the one is related to the other; what kind of part I am, and of what kind of whole. And remember that no one can stop you from always doing and saying what is in harmony with the nature of which you are a part.



Casaubon (1634)

Theophrastus, where he compares sin with sin (as after a vulgar sense such things I grant may be compared:) says well and like a philosopher, that those sins are greater which are committed through lust, than those which are committed through anger. For he that is angry seems with a kind of grief and close contraction of himself, to turn away from reason; but he that sins through lust, being overcome by pleasure, doth in his very sin bewray a more impotent, and unmanlike disposition. Well then and like a philosopher doth he say, that he of the two is the more to be condemned, that sins with pleasure, than he that sins with grief. For indeed this latter may seem first to have been wronged, and so in some manner through grief thereof to have been forced to be angry, whereas he who through lust doth commit anything, did of himself merely resolve upon that action.

In today's English

Theophrastus, comparing one wrongdoing with another (as, in the ordinary sense, I grant they can be compared), says well and like a true philosopher that wrongs committed out of desire are worse than wrongs committed out of anger. The angry person seems to turn away from reason with a kind of pain and inner tightening. But the person who does wrong out of desire, overcome by pleasure, shows in that very act a weaker, less manly character. So he is right, and speaks as a philosopher, in saying that someone who does wrong with pleasure deserves more blame than someone who does wrong with pain. The second person was probably wronged first and so was, in a way, pushed into anger by the hurt, while the one who acts out of desire chose the deed entirely on his own.

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Book II · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever thou dost affect, whatsoever thou dost project, so do, and so project all, as one who, for aught thou knowest, may at this very present depart out of this life. And as for death, if there be any gods, it is no grievous thing to leave the society of men. The gods will do thee no hurt, thou mayest be sure. But if it be so that there be no gods, or that they take no care of the world, why should I desire to live in a world void of gods, and of all divine providence? But gods there be certainly, and they take care for the world; and as for those things which be truly evil, as vice and wickedness, such things they have put in a man's own power, that he might avoid them if he would: and had there been anything besides that had been truly bad and evil, they would have had a care of that also, that a man might have avoided it. But why should that be thought to hurt and prejudice a man's life in this world, which cannot any ways make man himself the better, or the worse in his own person? Neither must we think that the nature of the universe did either through ignorance pass these things, or if not as ignorant of them, yet as unable either to prevent, or better to order and dispose them. It cannot be that she through want either of power or skill, should have committed such a thing, so as to suffer all things both good and bad, equally and promiscuously, to

In today's English

Whatever you want and whatever you plan, want it and plan it as someone who, for all you know, may leave this life right now. As for death: if there are gods, there is nothing terrible about leaving human company, because you can be sure the gods will not harm you. But if there are no gods, or if they do not care about the world, why would I want to live in a world without gods and without providence? But there certainly are gods, and they do care about the world. As for what is truly evil, namely vice and wickedness, they have put it in each person's own power to avoid it if they want to. And if anything else had been truly bad, they would have made sure people could avoid that too. Besides, how can something harm a person's life if it cannot make the person himself any better or worse? Nor should we think that the nature of the universe overlooked these things out of ignorance, or that, knowing about them, it was unable to prevent them or arrange them better. It cannot be that nature, through lack of power or skill, made such a mistake as to let good and bad things happen equally and indiscriminately to good and bad people. Life and death, honor and dishonor, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty: these do happen equally to good and bad people, but they are in themselves neither good nor bad, since in themselves they are neither shameful nor

Casaubon (1634) · continued

happen unto all both good and bad. As for life therefore, and death, honour and dishonour, labour and pleasure, riches and poverty, all these things happen unto men indeed, both good and bad, equally; but as things which of themselves are neither good nor bad; because of themselves, neither shameful nor praiseworthy.

In today's English · continued

praiseworthy.

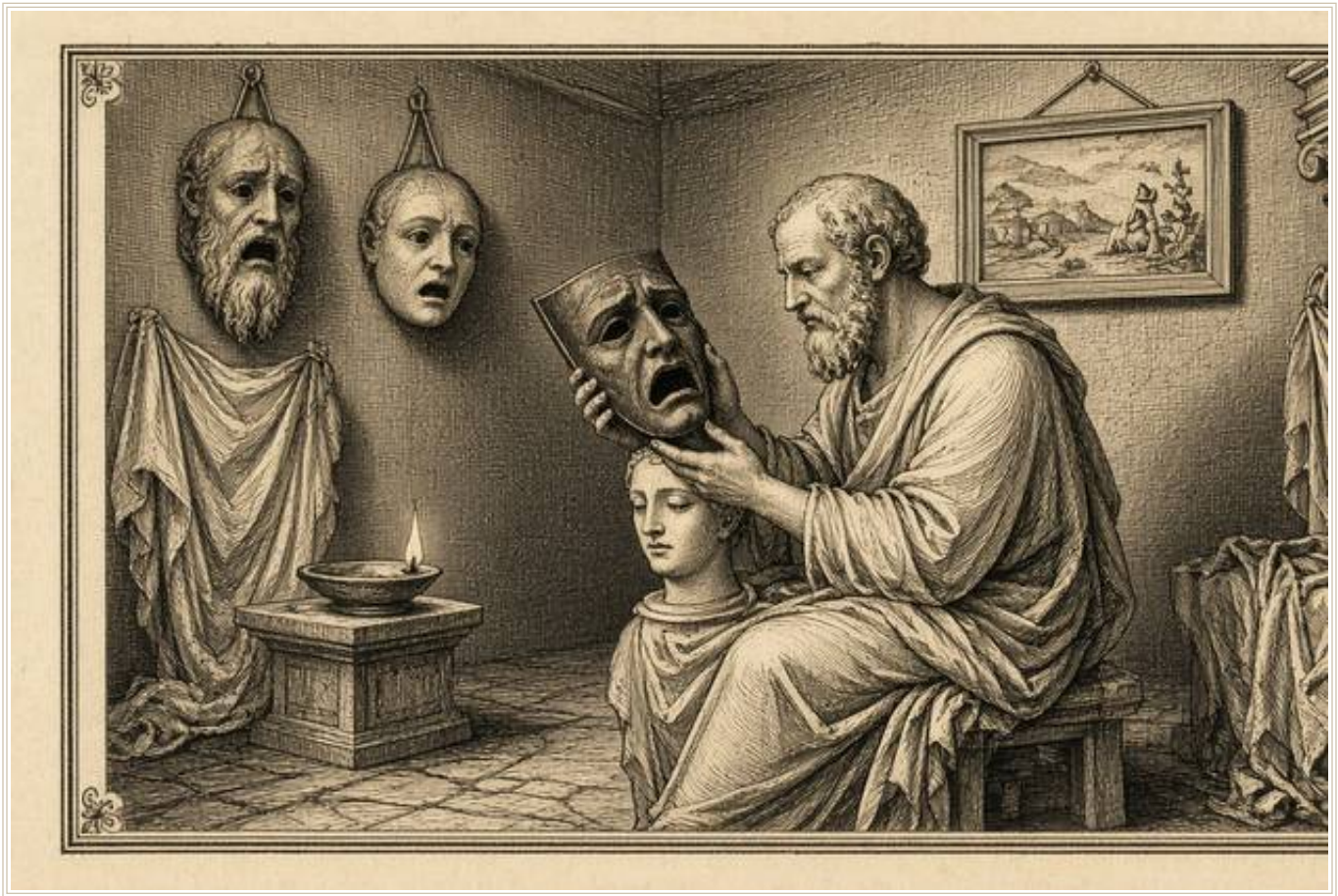


Casaubon (1634)

Consider how quickly all things are dissolved and resolved: the bodies and substances themselves, into the matter and substance of the world: and their memories into the general age and time of the world. Consider the nature of all worldly sensible things; of those especially, which either ensnare by pleasure, or for their irksomeness are dreadful, or for their outward lustre and show are in great esteem and request, how vile and contemptible, how base and corruptible, how destitute of all true life and being they are.

In today's English

Consider how quickly everything dissolves and vanishes: bodies and substances themselves, into the matter of the world, and the memory of them into the vast age and time of the world. Consider the nature of all the things we perceive with our senses, especially those that lure us with pleasure, or frighten us because they are painful, or are prized for their outward glitter and show. See how cheap and contemptible they are, how low and perishable, how empty of any true life and being.



Casaubon (1634)

It is the part of a man endowed with a good understanding faculty, to consider what they themselves are in very deed, from whose bare conceits and voices, honour and credit do proceed: as also what it is to die, and how if a man shall consider this by itself alone, to die, and separate from it in his mind all those things which with it usually represent themselves unto us, he can conceive of it no otherwise, than as of a work of nature, and he that fears any work of nature, is a very child. Now death, it is not only a work of nature, but also con-
 ducing to nature.

In today's English

A person with good understanding should consider what the people really are whose mere opinions and words produce honor and reputation. He should also consider what dying is. If someone looks at death on its own, just as dying, and mentally strips away all the images that usually come along with it, he can see it as nothing but a work of nature, and anyone who is afraid of a work of nature is a child. And death is not only a work of nature but also something that serves nature.

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Book II · XI



Casaubon (1634)

Consider with thyself how man, and by what part of his, is joined unto God, and how that part of man is affected, when it is said to be diffused. There is nothing more wretched than that soul, which in a kind of circuit compasseth all things, searching (as he saith) even the very depths of the earth; and by all signs and conjectures prying into the very thoughts of other men's souls; and yet of this, is not sensible, that it is sufficient for a man to apply himself wholly, and to confine all his thoughts and cares to the tendance of that spirit which is within him, and truly and really to serve him. His service doth consist in this, that a man keep himself pure from all violent passion and evil affection, from all rashness and vanity, and from all manner of discontent, either in regard of the gods or men. For indeed whatsoever proceeds from the gods, deserves respect for their worth and excellency; and whatsoever proceeds from men, as they are our kinsmen, should by us be entertained, with love, always; sometimes, as proceeding from their ignorance, of that which is truly good and bad, (a blindness no less, than that by which we are not able to discern between white and black:) with a kind of pity and compassion also.

In today's English

Think about how a human being is connected to God, and by which part of himself, and what condition that part is in when it is said to be 'spread out.' Nothing is more miserable than a soul that runs around in circles over everything, 'searching even the depths of the earth,' as the poet says, and trying to guess from every clue what is in other people's minds, and yet never realizes that it is enough to devote yourself completely, and to limit all your thoughts and cares, to looking after the spirit within you, and to serving it truly. Serving it means keeping yourself clean of violent passion and bad feeling, of rashness and vanity, and of every kind of discontent with gods or with people. Whatever comes from the gods deserves respect for their worth and excellence. Whatever comes from people, since they are our kin, we should always receive with love, and sometimes also with pity and compassion, because it comes from their ignorance of what is truly good and bad, a blindness no less real than being unable to tell white from black.



Casaubon (1634)

If thou shouldst live three thousand, or as many as ten thousands of years, yet remember this, that man can part with no life properly, save with that little part of life, which he now lives: and that which he lives, is no other, than that which at every instant he parts with. That then which is longest of duration, and that which is shortest, come both to one effect. For although in regard of that which is already past there may be some inequality, yet that time which is now present and in being, is equal unto all men. And that being it which we part with whensoever we die, it doth manifestly appear, that it can be but a moment of time, that we then part with. For as for that which is either past or to come, a man cannot be said properly to part with it. For how should a man part with that which he hath not? These two things therefore thou must remember. First, that all things in the world from all eternity, by a perpetual revolution of the same times and things ever continued and renewed, are of one kind and nature; so that whether for a hundred or two hundred years only, or for an infinite space of time, a man see those things which are still the same, it can be no matter of great moment. And secondly, that that life which any the longest liver, or the shortest liver parts with, is for length and duration the very same, for that only which is present,

In today's English

Even if you were going to live three thousand years, or ten thousand, remember that no one loses any life other than the one he is living now, and no one lives any life other than the one he is losing. So the longest life and the shortest come to the same thing. Though the past may be unequal, the present moment is the same for everyone. And since that present is what we lose when we die, clearly what we lose is only a moment. No one can lose the past or the future, because how could anyone be robbed of what he does not have? So remember these two things. First, everything in the world has always been of the same kind, coming around again and again in an endless cycle of the same times and events, so it makes no real difference whether you watch the same things for a hundred years, or two hundred, or for an infinite stretch of time. Second, the person who lives longest and the person who dies soonest lose exactly the same amount. The present is the only thing either of them can lose, because it is the only thing they have, and no one can truly be said to lose what he does not have.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

is that, which either of them can lose, as being
that only which they have; for that which he hath
not, no man can truly be said to lose.

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Book II · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

Remember that all is but opinion and conceit, for those things are plain and apparent, which were spoken unto Monimus the Cynic; and as plain and apparent is the use that may be made of those things, if that which is true and serious in them, be received as well as that which is sweet and pleasing.

In today's English

Remember that everything is opinion. What was said to Monimus the Cynic is plain enough, and so is the use you can make of the saying, if you take in the truth and substance of it along with the part that is pleasant to hear.



Casaubon (1634)

A man's soul doth wrong and disrespect itself first and especially, when as much as in itself lies it becomes an aposteme, and as it were an excrescency of the world, for to be grieved and displeased with anything that happens in the world, is direct apostacy from the nature of the universe; part of which, all particular natures of the world, are. Secondly, when she either is averse from any man, or led by contrary desires or affections, tending to his hurt and prejudice; such as are the souls of them that are angry. Thirdly, when she is overcome by any pleasure or pain. Fourthly, when she doth dissemble, and covertly and falsely either doth or saith anything. Fifthly, when she doth either affect or endeavour anything to no certain end, but rashly and without due ratiocination and consideration, how consequent or inconsequent it is to the common end. For even the least things ought not to be done, without relation unto the end; and the end of the reasonable creatures is, to follow and obey him, who is the reason as it were, and the law of this great city, and ancient commonwealth.

In today's English

The human soul does harm and dishonor to itself, first and above all, when it does all it can to become an abscess, a kind of tumor on the world. To be upset and resentful about anything that happens in the world is to rebel directly against the nature of the universe, of which every individual nature is a part. Second, when it turns away from another person, or is driven by feelings against him that aim to hurt him, as the souls of angry people are. Third, when it is overcome by pleasure or pain. Fourth, when it pretends, and does or says something in a sly, false way. Fifth, when it wants or attempts something with no clear aim, rashly and without properly thinking through whether it fits the common purpose. Even the smallest actions should be done with reference to that purpose, and the purpose of rational creatures is to follow and obey the one who is, so to speak, the reason and the law of this great city and ancient commonwealth.



Casaubon (1634)

The time of a man's life is as a point; the substance of it ever flowing, the sense obscure; and the whole composition of the body tending to corruption. His soul is restless, fortune uncertain, and fame doubtful; to be brief, as a stream so are all things belonging to the body; as a dream, or as a smoke, so are all that belong unto the soul. Our life is a warfare, and a mere pilgrimage. Fame after life is no better than oblivion. What is it then that will adhere and follow? Only one thing, philosophy. And philosophy doth consist in this, for a man to preserve that spirit which is within him, from all manner of contumelies and injuries, and above all pains or pleasures; never to do anything either rashly, or feignedly, or hypocritically: wholly to depend from himself and his own proper actions: all things that happen unto him to embrace contentedly, as coming from Him from whom he himself also came; and above all things, with all

In today's English

The span of a human life is a point. Its substance is always flowing away, its perception dim, and the whole structure of the body heading toward decay. The soul is restless, fortune unpredictable, and fame uncertain. In short, everything belonging to the body is a river, and everything belonging to the soul is a dream and smoke. Life is a war and a journey through foreign lands. Fame after death is no better than being forgotten. So what can stay with us and guide us? Only one thing: philosophy. And philosophy means keeping the spirit within you safe from insult and harm, stronger than pain or pleasure. It means never doing anything rashly, falsely, or hypocritically; depending entirely on yourself and your own actions; accepting gladly everything that happens to you, as coming from the same source you came from; and above all waiting for death with gentleness and calm good cheer, since it is nothing but

Casaubon (1634) · continued

meekness and a calm cheerfulness, to expect death, as being nothing else but the resolution of those elements, of which every creature is composed. And if the elements themselves suffer nothing by this their perpetual conversion of one into another, that dissolution, and alteration, which is so common unto all, why should it be feared by any? Is not this according to nature? But nothing that is according to nature can be evil.

Whilst I was at Carnuntum.

In today's English · continued

the breaking up of the elements every living thing is made of. If the elements themselves suffer nothing by constantly changing into one another, why should anyone fear this breakup and change, which happens to everything? It is in keeping with nature, and nothing in keeping with nature can be evil.

Written at Carnuntum.

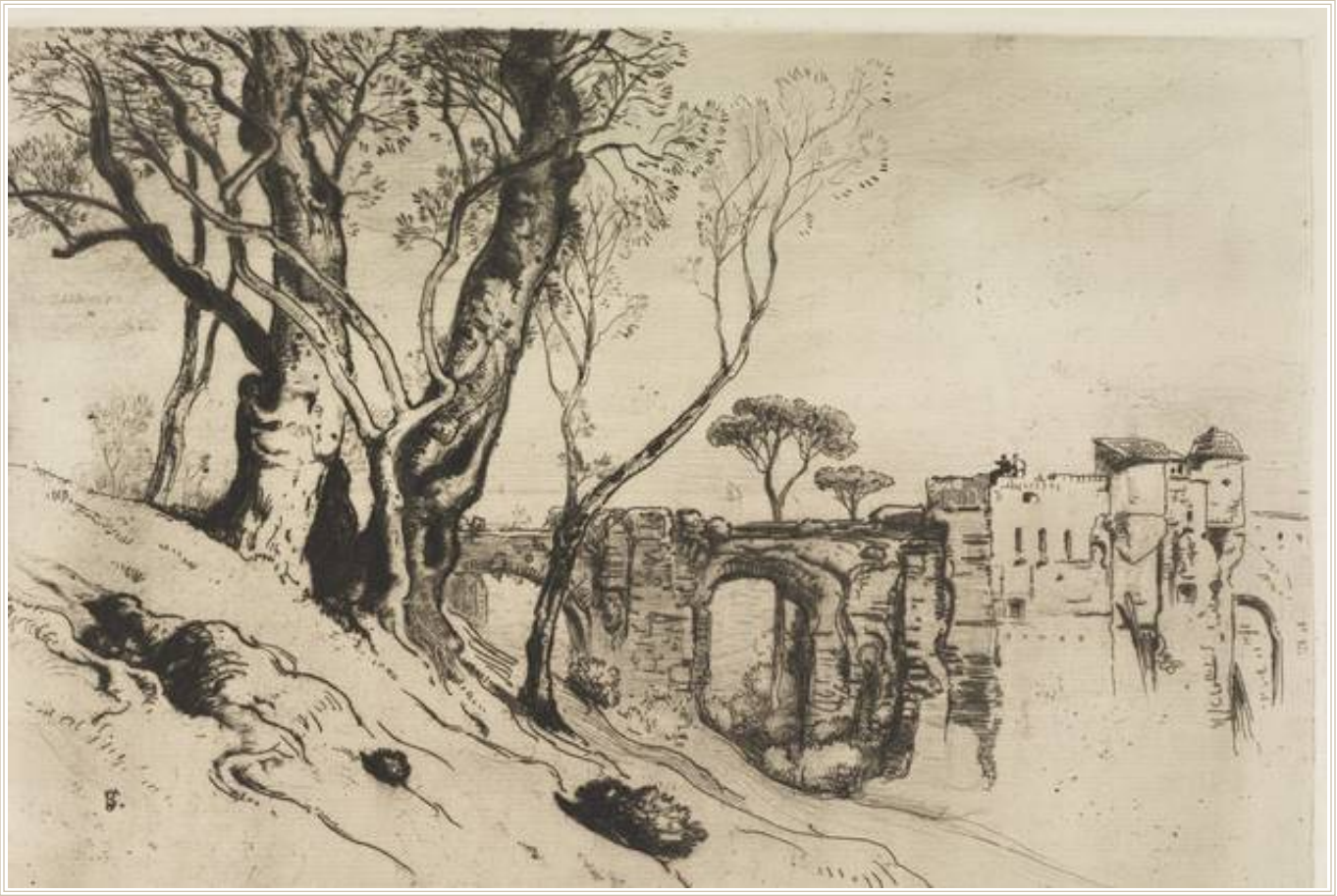


Casaubon (1634)

A man must not only consider how daily his life wasteth and decreaseth, but this also, that if he live long, he cannot be certain, whether his understanding shall continue so able and sufficient, for either discreet consideration, in matter of businesses; or for contemplation: it being the thing, whereon true knowledge of things both divine and human, doth depend. For if once he shall begin to dote, his respiration, nutrition, his imaginative, and appetitive, and other natural faculties, may still continue the same: he shall find no want of them. But how to make that right use of himself that he should, how to observe exactly in all things that which is right and just, how to redress and rectify all wrong, or sudden apprehensions and imaginations, and even of this particular, whether he should live any longer or no, to consider duly; for all such things, wherein the best strength and vigour of the mind is most requisite; his power and ability will be past and gone. Thou must hasten therefore; not only because thou art every day nearer unto death than other, but also because that intellective faculty in thee, whereby thou art enabled to know the true nature of things, and to order all thy actions by that knowledge, doth daily waste and decay: or, may fail thee before thou die.

In today's English

We should consider not only that our life is wasting away and getting shorter every day, but also that if we do live longer, we cannot be sure our mind will stay capable enough for sound judgment in practical affairs, or for contemplation, which is what real knowledge of divine and human things depends on. If a person begins to lose his mind, his breathing, digestion, imagination, appetite, and other natural functions may continue just as before, and he will not miss any of them. But the ability to use himself properly, to see exactly what is right and just in everything, to correct his mistaken first impressions and imaginings, and even to judge properly whether it is time to depart this life, all the things that most need a strong, vigorous mind, will already be gone. So you must hurry, not only because every day you are closer to death, but also because the understanding that lets you grasp the true nature of things and order all your actions by that knowledge is wasting away day by day, and may fail you before you die.



Casaubon (1634)

This also thou must observe, that whatsoever it is that naturally doth happen to things natural, hath somewhat in itself that is pleasing and delightful: as a great loaf when it is baked, some parts of it cleave as it were, and part asunder, and make the crust of it rugged and unequal, and yet those parts of it, though in some sort it be against the art and intention of baking itself, that they are thus cleft and parted, which should have been and were first made all even and uniform, they become it well nevertheless, and have a certain peculiar property, to stir the appetite. So figs are accounted fairest and ripest then, when they begin to shrink, and wither as it were. So ripe olives, when they are next to putrefaction, then are they in their proper beauty. The hanging down of grapes, the brow of a lion, the froth of a foaming wild boar, and many other like things, though by themselves considered, they are far from any

In today's English

Notice this too: whatever happens naturally to natural things has something pleasing and attractive about it. When a big loaf of bread bakes, some parts split and crack open, making the crust rough and uneven. Those cracks, in a way, go against the baker's art and intention, since the loaf was meant to be smooth and even, and yet they look good and have a special way of making us hungry. In the same way, figs are thought finest and ripest just when they begin to shrivel. Ripe olives, when they are closest to rotting, are at their peak of beauty. The drooping of grape clusters, a lion's brow, the foam dripping from a wild boar's mouth, and many other things like them are far from beautiful if you look at them by themselves, but because they come about naturally, they are attractive and delightful. So if a person thinks deeply and perceptively about everything in the world, he will find hardly anything,

Casaubon (1634) · continued

beauty, yet because they happen naturally, they both are comely, and delightful; so that if a man shall with a profound mind and apprehension, consider all things in the world, even among all those things which are but mere accessories and natural appendices as it were, there will scarce appear anything unto him, wherein he will not find matter of pleasure and delight. So will he behold with as much pleasure the true rictus of wild beasts, as those which by skilful painters and other artificers are imitated. So will he be able to perceive the proper ripeness and beauty of old age, whether in man or woman: and whatsoever else it is that is beautiful and alluring in whatsoever is, with chaste and continent eyes he will soon find out and discern. Those and many other things will he discern, not credible unto every one, but unto them only who are truly and familiarly acquainted, both with nature itself, and all natural things.

In today's English · continued

even among the side effects and byproducts of nature, that does not give him some pleasure. He will look at the actual gaping jaws (rictus) of wild animals with as much pleasure as at the copies made by skilled painters and sculptors. He will be able to see the particular ripeness and beauty of old age in a man or woman, and with pure, self-controlled eyes he will quickly recognize whatever is lovely and attractive in anything. He will notice many such things, which not everyone will believe, but only those who are truly at home with nature and natural things.



Casaubon (1634)

Hippocrates having cured many sicknesses, fell sick himself and died. The Chaldeans and Astrologians having foretold the deaths of divers, were afterwards themselves surprised by the fates. Alexander and Pompeius, and Caius Cæsar, having destroyed so many towns, and cut off in the field so many thousands both of horse and foot, yet they themselves at last were fain to part with their own lives. Heraclitus having written so many natural tracts concerning the last and general conflagration of the world, died afterwards all filled with water within, and all bedaubed with dirt and dung without. Lice killed Democritus; and Socrates, another sort of vermin, wicked ungodly men. How then stands the case? Thou hast taken ship, thou hast sailed, thou art come to

In today's English

Hippocrates cured many illnesses, then fell ill himself and died. The Chaldeans and astrologers predicted the deaths of many people, and then fate caught up with them too. Alexander, Pompey, and Julius Caesar destroyed so many cities and cut down so many thousands of cavalry and infantry in battle, and yet in the end they too had to give up their own lives. Heraclitus wrote so many treatises on nature about the final burning up of the world, and then died full of water inside and smeared with dung outside. Lice killed Democritus, and another kind of vermin, wicked and godless men, killed Socrates. So what does this mean? You have come aboard, you have made the voyage, you have reached the shore. Get off. If it is to another life, there are gods there too, for

Casaubon (1634) · continued

land, go out, if to another life, there also shalt thou find gods, who are everywhere. If all life and sense shall cease, then shalt thou cease also to be subject to either pains or pleasures; and to serve and tend this vile cottage; so much the viler, by how much that which ministers unto it doth excel; the one being a rational substance, and a spirit, the other nothing but earth and blood.

In today's English · continued

they are everywhere. If it is to a state without sensation, you will no longer be subject to pain and pleasure, or have to serve this miserable shell, which is as much lower than its servant as the servant is higher: one is mind and spirit, the other just earth and blood.



Casaubon (1634)

Spend not the remnant of thy days in thoughts and fancies concerning other men, when it is not in relation to some common good, when by it thou art hindered from some other better work. That is, spend not thy time in thinking, what such a man doth, and to what end: what he saith, and what he thinks, and what he is about, and such other things or curiosities, which make a man to rove and wander from the care and observation of that part of himself, which is rational, and overruling. See therefore in the whole series and connection of thy thoughts, that thou be careful to prevent whatsoever is idle and impertinent: but especially, whatsoever is curious and malicious: and thou must use thyself to think only of such things, of which if a man upon a sudden should ask thee, what it is that thou art now thinking, thou mayest answer This, and That, freely and boldly, that so by thy thoughts it may presently

In today's English

Do not spend what is left of your life thinking about other people, unless it serves some common good, since it keeps you from better work. That is, do not waste your time thinking about what so-and-so is doing and why, what he is saying, what he is thinking, what he is up to, and other such idle curiosities, which make you drift away from caring for and watching over your own rational, ruling part. So in the whole chain of your thoughts, take care to avoid whatever is pointless and irrelevant, and above all whatever is nosy or malicious. Train yourself to think only the kind of thoughts that, if someone suddenly asked you, 'What are you thinking about right now?', you could answer freely and confidently, 'This and that.' Then your thoughts would show at once that everything in you is sincere and peaceful, as befits someone made for community, someone who does not care about pleasures or indulge in sensu-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

appear that in all thee is sincere, and peaceable; as becometh one that is made for society, and regards not pleasures, nor gives way to any voluptuous imaginations at all: free from all contentiousness, envy, and suspicion, and from whatsoever else thou wouldest blush to confess thy thoughts were set upon. He that is such, is he surely that doth not put off to lay hold on that which is best indeed, a very priest and minister of the gods, well acquainted and in good correspondence with him especially that is seated and placed within himself, as in a temple and sacrary: to whom also he keeps and preserves himself unspotted by pleasure, undaunted by pain; free from any manner of wrong, or contumely, by himself offered unto himself: not capable of any evil from others: a wrestler of the best sort, and for the highest prize, that he may not be cast down by any passion or affection of his own; deeply dyed and drenched in righteousness, embracing and accepting with his whole heart whatsoever either happeneth or is allotted unto him. One who not often, nor without some great necessity tending to some public good, mindeth what any other, either speaks, or doth, or purposeth: for those things only that are in his own power, or that are truly his own, are the objects of his employments, and his thoughts are ever taken up with those things, which of the whole universe are by the fates or Providence destined and appropriated unto himself. Those things that are his own, and in his own power, he himself takes order, for that they be good: and as for those that happen unto him, he believes them to be so. For that lot and portion which is assigned to every one, as it is unavoidable and necessary, so is it always profitable. He remembers besides that whatsoever partakes of reason, is akin unto him, and that to care for all men generally, is agreeing to the nature of a man: but as for honour and praise, that they ought not generally to be admitted and accepted of from all, but from such only, who live according to nature. As for them that do not, what manner of men they be at home, or abroad; day or night, how conditioned themselves with what manner of conditions, or with men of what conditions they moil and pass away the time together, he knoweth, and remembers right well, he therefore regards not

In today's English · continued

al fantasies at all, and who is free of quarrelsomeness, envy, suspicion, and anything else you would blush to admit you were thinking about.

Such a person, who does not put off reaching for what is truly best, is a real priest and servant of the gods. He is on close and good terms with the god seated within him, as in a temple and sanctuary, and for that god he keeps himself unstained by pleasure, unafraid of pain, untouched by any wrong or insult he might do to himself, and incapable of being harmed by others. He is a wrestler of the finest kind, competing for the highest prize: not to be thrown by any passion of his own. He is soaked through and dyed deep in justice, and he welcomes with his whole heart whatever happens to him or is assigned to him. He rarely pays attention to what anyone else says, does, or intends, and only when some great public need requires it. The only things he works on are the things in his own power, the things truly his own, and his thoughts are always occupied with the part of the whole universe that fate, or providence, has assigned to him. The things that are his own, and in his power, he makes sure are good. As for what happens to him, he believes it is good, because the lot assigned to each of us is not only unavoidable but always beneficial. He also remembers that everything rational is related to him, and that caring for all people is in keeping with human nature. But he does not think he should accept honor and praise from everyone, only from those who live according to nature. As for those who do not, he knows and remembers very well what kind of people they are at home and in public, by day and by night, and what kind of people they spend their time with. So he does not value praise from people who cannot even approve of themselves.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

such praise and approbation, as proceeding from
them, who cannot like and approve themselves.



Casaubon (1634)

Do nothing against thy will, nor contrary to the community, nor without due examination, nor with reluctance. Affect not to set out thy thoughts with curious neat language. Be neither a great talker, nor a great undertaker. Moreover, let thy God that is in thee to rule over thee, find by thee, that he hath to do with a man; an aged man; a sociable man; a Roman; a prince; one that hath ordered his life, as one that expecteth, as it were, nothing but the sound of the trumpet, sounding a retreat to depart out of this life with all expedition. One who for his word or actions neither needs an oath, nor any man to be a witness.

In today's English

Do nothing unwillingly, nothing against the common good, nothing without proper examination, nothing with reluctance. Do not try to dress up your thoughts in elaborate, polished language. Do not be a big talker or someone who takes on too many things. And let the god within you, your ruler, find that he is dealing with a man: a mature man, a sociable man, a Roman, a ruler, someone who has arranged his life like a soldier waiting only for the trumpet to sound the retreat, ready to leave this life promptly. Be someone whose word and actions need no oath and no witness.

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Book III · VI



Casaubon (1634)

To be cheerful, and to stand in no need, either of other men's help or attendance, or of that rest and tranquillity, which thou must be beholding to others for. Rather like one that is straight of himself, or hath ever been straight, than one that hath been rectified.

In today's English

Be cheerful, and do not need help or attention from other people, or a peace and quiet that you have to get from others. Be upright on your own, or rather, have always been upright, not someone who had to be set straight.



Casaubon (1634)

If thou shalt find anything in this mortal life better than righteousness, than truth, temperance, fortitude, and in general better than a mind contented both with those things which according to right and reason she doth, and in those, which without her will and knowledge happen unto thee by the providence; if I say, thou canst find out anything better than this, apply thyself unto it with thy whole heart, and that which is best wheresoever thou dost find it, enjoy freely. But if nothing thou shalt find worthy to be preferred to that spirit which is within thee; if nothing better than to subject unto thee thine own lusts and desires, and not to give way to any fancies or imaginations before thou hast duly considered of them, nothing better than to withdraw thyself (to use Socrates his words) from all sensuality, and submit thyself unto the gods, and to have care of all men in general: if thou shalt find that all other things in com-

In today's English

If you find anything in this mortal life better than justice, truth, self-control, and courage, better, in short, than a mind content with what it does according to right reason, and content with what happens to it by providence without its choice or knowledge; if, I say, you can find anything better than this, turn to it with your whole heart and enjoy freely the best thing you have found. But if you find nothing worth putting ahead of the spirit within you, nothing better than mastering your own urges and desires, and not giving in to any impression before you have properly examined it, nothing better than to withdraw yourself (in Socrates' words) from the pull of the senses, to submit yourself to the gods, and to care for all people; if you find that everything else is cheap and unimportant compared with this, then make no room for anything else. Once you lean toward something else, even a little, you will no longer be

Casaubon (1634) · continued

parison of this, are but vile, and of little moment; then give not way to any other thing, which being once though but affected and inclined unto, it will no more be in thy power without all distraction as thou oughtest to prefer and to pursue after that good, which is thine own and thy proper good. For it is not lawful, that anything that is of another and inferior kind and nature, be it what it will, as either popular applause, or honour, or riches, or pleasures; should be suffered to confront and contest as it were, with that which is rational, and operatively good. For all these things, if once though but for a while, they begin to please, they presently prevail, and pervert a man's mind, or turn a man from the right way. Do thou therefore I say absolutely and freely make choice of that which is best, and stick unto it. Now, that they say is best, which is most profitable. If they mean profitable to man as he is a rational man, stand thou to it, and maintain it; but if they mean profitable, as he is a creature, only reject it; and from this thy tenet and conclusion keep off carefully all plausible shows and colours of external appearance, that thou mayest be able to discern things rightly.

In today's English · continued

able to put first, without distraction, the good that is truly your own. It is not right for anything of a different and lower kind, whether popular applause, power, wealth, or pleasure, to stand up as a rival to what is rational and actively good. All these things, once they start to please us even for a short while, quickly take over and twist our minds, or turn us off the right path. So I say: choose the best, simply and freely, and hold on to it. 'But the best is what is useful,' they say. If they mean useful to you as a rational being, hold on to that. But if they mean useful to you as a mere animal, reject it. And guard this judgment carefully against plausible appearances and outward show, so that you can see things clearly.



Casaubon (1634)

Never esteem of anything as profitable, which shall ever constrain thee either to break thy faith, or to lose thy modesty; to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to dissemble, to lust after anything, that requireth the secret of walls or veils. But he that preferreth before all things his rational part and spirit, and the sacred mysteries of virtue which issueth from it, he shall never lament and exclaim, never sigh; he shall never want either solitude or company: and which is chiefest of all, he shall live without either desire or fear. And as for life, whether for a long or short time he shall enjoy his soul thus compassed about with a body, he is altogether indifferent. For if even now he were to depart, he is as ready for it, as for any other action, which may be performed with modesty and decency. For all his life long, this is his only care, that his mind may always be occupied in such intentions and objects, as are proper to a rational sociable creature.

In today's English

Never count anything as good for you if it would ever force you to break your word, lose your self-respect, hate anyone, suspect, curse, or pretend, or to want something that needs walls and curtains to hide it. Whoever puts his own rational spirit, and the sacred practice of virtue that comes from it, ahead of everything else will never wail or cry out or sigh. He will never need either solitude or company. Most important of all, he will live without desire and without fear. As for his life, he does not care at all whether he gets a long or a short time with his soul wrapped in a body. If he had to leave right now, he would be as ready for it as for any other task that can be done with dignity and decency. All his life long, his only concern is that his mind always be occupied with the aims and things proper to a rational, social being.

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Book III · IX



Casaubon (1634)

In the mind that is once truly disciplined and purged, thou canst not find anything, either foul or impure, or as it were festered: nothing that is either servile, or affected: no partial tie; no malicious averseness; nothing obnoxious; nothing concealed. The life of such an one, death can never surprise as imperfect; as of an actor, that should die before he had ended, or the play itself were at an end, a man might speak.

In today's English

In a mind that has been truly disciplined and cleansed, you will not find anything foul or impure, or festering under the surface. Nothing slavish or fake, no favoritism, no spiteful aversion, nothing guilty, nothing hidden. Death can never catch such a person's life unfinished, the way you might say of an actor that he left the stage before finishing his part or before the play was over.



Casaubon (1634)

Use thine opinative faculty with all honour and respect, for in her indeed is all: that thy opinion do not beget in thy understanding anything contrary to either nature, or the proper constitution of a rational creature. The end and object of a rational constitution is, to do nothing rashly, to be kindly affected towards men, and in all things willingly to submit unto the gods. Casting therefore all other things aside, keep thyself to these few, and remember withal that no man properly can be said to live more than that which is now present, which is but a moment of time. Whatsoever is besides either is already past, or uncertain. The time therefore that any man doth live, is but a little, and the place where he liveth, is but a very little corner of the earth, and the greatest fame that can remain of a man after his death, even that is but little, and

that too, such as it is whilst it is, is by the succession of silly mortal men preserved, who likewise shall shortly die, and even whiles they live know not what in very deed they themselves are: and much less can know one, who long before is dead and gone.

In today's English

Treat your power of forming judgments with great honor and respect, because everything depends on it. It decides whether your mind contains any opinion that goes against nature or against the proper makeup of a rational being. And the aim of a rational makeup is to do nothing rashly, to be kind toward people, and willingly to accept the will of the gods in everything. So throw everything else aside and hold on to these few things. Remember too that no one really lives anything but the present, which is only a moment. All the rest is either already past or uncertain. So the time anyone lives is small, and the place where he lives is a tiny corner of the earth, and even the greatest fame anyone leaves behind after death is small. And what fame there is, while it lasts, is passed along by a series of foolish mortals who will soon die themselves, who do not even really know themselves while they live, much less someone who died long before.



Casaubon (1634)

To these ever-present helps and mementoes, let one more be added, ever to make a particular description and delineation as it were of every object that presents itself to thy mind, that thou mayest wholly and thoroughly contemplate it, in its own proper nature, bare and naked; wholly, and severally; divided into its several parts and quarters: and then by thyself in thy mind, to call both it, and those things of which it doth consist, and in which it shall be resolved, by their own proper true names, and appellations. For there is nothing so effectual to beget true magnanimity, as to be able truly and methodically to examine and consider all things that happen in this life, and so to penetrate into their natures, that at the same time, this also may concur in our apprehensions:

In today's English

To these ever-present aids and reminders, add one more: always make a precise definition and outline, so to speak, of whatever comes into your mind, so that you can see it fully and thoroughly as it really is, stripped bare, as a whole and in its parts, broken down into all its pieces. Then say to yourself its true name, and the names of the things it is made of and will break down into. Nothing produces true greatness of mind as well as being able to examine everything that happens in life truly and methodically, and to see so deeply into its nature that you grasp at the same time what use it really serves, what the true nature of the universe it serves is, how much it is worth to the universe, and how much it is worth to a human being, a citizen of that highest city, of which

Casaubon (1634) · continued

what is the true use of it? and what is the true nature of this universe, to which it is useful? how much in regard of the universe may it be esteemed? how much in regard of man, a citizen of the supreme city, of which all other cities in the world are as it were but houses and families?

In today's English · continued

all other cities in the world are like single houses.



Casaubon (1634)

What is this, that now my fancy is set upon? of what things doth it consist? how long can it last? which of all the virtues is the proper virtue for this present use? as whether meekness, fortitude, truth, faith, sincerity, contentation, or any of the rest? Of everything therefore thou must use thyself to say, This immediately comes from God, this by that fatal connection, and concatenation of things, or (which almost comes to one) by some coincidental casualty. And as for this, it proceeds from my neighbour, my kinsman, my fellow: through his ignorance indeed, because he knows not what is truly natural unto him: but I know it, and therefore carry myself towards him according to the natural law of fellowship; that is kindly, and justly. As for those things that of themselves are

In today's English

What is this thing that has caught my imagination right now? What is it made of? How long can it last? Which virtue does it call for: gentleness, courage, truthfulness, trustworthiness, sincerity, contentment, or one of the others? So you must get used to saying about each thing: this comes straight from God; this comes from the fated web and chain of events, or (which is almost the same thing) from some coincidence of chance; and this comes from my neighbor, my relative, my fellow human being. He does it out of ignorance, since he does not know what is truly natural for him. But I do know, and so I treat him according to the natural law of fellowship, that is, kindly and fairly. As for things that are in themselves neither good nor bad (indifferent), I give each one exactly as

Casaubon (1634) · continued

altogether indifferent, as in my best judgment I conceive everything to deserve more or less, so I carry myself towards it.

In today's English · continued

much regard as, in my best judgment, it deserves.



Casaubon (1634)

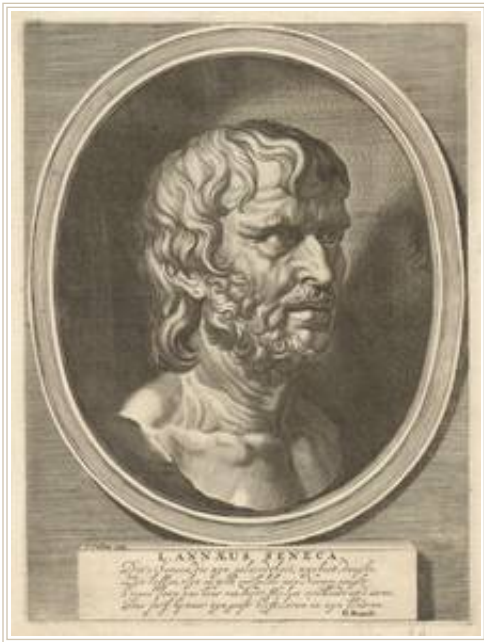
If thou shalt intend that which is present, following the rule of right and reason carefully, solidly, meekly, and shalt not intermix any other businesses, but shall study this only to preserve thy spirit unpolluted, and pure, and shall cleave unto him without either hope or fear of anything, in all things that thou shalt either do or speak, contenting thyself with heroical truth, thou shalt live happily; and from this, there is no man that can hinder thee.

In today's English

If you attend to the task in front of you, following right reason carefully, steadily, and calmly, without mixing in anything else, and concern yourself only with keeping your spirit clean and pure; if you hold to it, hoping for nothing and fearing nothing, content in everything you do and say with heroic truthfulness, you will live happily. And no one can stop you from doing that.

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Book III · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

As physicians and chirurgeons have always their instruments ready at hand for all sudden cures; so have thou always thy dogmata in a readiness for the knowledge of things, both divine and human: and whatsoever thou dost, even in the smallest things that thou dost, thou must ever remember that mutual relation, and connection that is between these two things divine, and things human. For without relation unto God, thou shalt never speed in any worldly actions; nor on the other side in any divine, without some respect had to things human.

In today's English

Just as doctors and surgeons always keep their instruments ready for emergencies, keep your dogmata (core principles) ready for understanding things divine and human. In everything you do, even the smallest things, remember the bond and connection between the divine and the human. You will never do

anything well in human affairs without reference to God, nor in divine matters without some regard for human things.



Casaubon (1634)

Be not deceived; for thou shalt never live to read thy moral commentaries, nor the acts of the famous Romans and Grecians; nor those excerpts from several books; all which thou hadst provided and laid up for thyself against thine old age. Hasten therefore to an end, and giving over all vain hopes, help thyself in time if thou carest for thyself, as thou oughtest to do.

In today's English

Do not fool yourself. You will never live to read your own notebooks, or the deeds of the famous Romans and Greeks, or the excerpts from various books that you saved up for your old age. So hurry toward the finish. Give up empty hopes and come to your own rescue while you still can, if you care about yourself at all, as you should.



Casaubon (1634)

To steal, to sow, to buy, to be at rest, to see what is to be done (which is not seen by the eyes, but by another kind of sight:) what these words mean, and how many ways to be understood, they do not understand. The body, the soul, the understanding. As the senses naturally belong to the body, and the desires and affections to the soul, so do the dogmata to the understanding.

In today's English

People do not understand how many meanings there are in words like stealing, sowing, buying, being at rest, and seeing what needs to be done (which is not seen with the eyes but with another kind of sight). Body, soul, understanding: just as the senses belong naturally to the body, and desires and impulses to the soul, so principles (dogmata) belong to the understanding.



Casaubon (1634)

To be capable of fancies and imaginations, is common to man and beast. To be violently drawn and moved by the lusts and desires of the soul, is proper to wild beasts and monsters, such as Phalaris and Nero were. To follow reason for ordinary duties and actions is common to them also, who believe not that there be any gods, and for their advantage would make no conscience to betray their own country; and who when once the doors be shut upon them, dare do anything. If therefore all things else be common to these likewise, it follows, that for a man to like and embrace all things that happen and are destined unto him, and not to trouble and molest that spirit which is seated in the temple of his own breast, with a multitude of vain fancies and imaginations, but to keep him propitious and to obey him as a god, never either speaking anything contrary to truth, or doing anything contrary to justice, is the

In today's English

Receiving impressions is something humans share with animals. Being yanked around by the urges and desires of the soul is typical of wild beasts and monsters like Phalaris and Nero. Using reason to perform ordinary duties is something even atheists can do, people who would betray their own country without a second thought if it helped them, and who will do anything once the doors are shut. If everything else is shared even with people like these, then what is truly unique to a good person is this: to welcome and embrace everything that happens and is destined for him; not to disturb the spirit seated in the temple of his own heart with a crowd of empty impressions, but to keep it well disposed and obey it as a god; never to say anything untrue or do anything unjust. And even if no one believes that he lives this way, sincerely and conscientiously, cheerfully and contentedly, he is not angry with anyone because of

Casaubon (1634) · continued

only true property of a good man. And such a one, though no man should believe that he liveth as he doth, either sincerely and conscionably, or cheerful and contentedly; yet is he neither with any man at all angry for it, nor diverted by it from the way that leadeth to the end of his life, through which a man must pass pure, ever ready to depart, and willing of himself without any compulsion to fit and accommodate himself to his proper lot and portion.

In today's English · continued

it, nor is he turned aside from the road that leads to the end of his life, which a person must reach pure, always ready to go, and willing, without being forced, to fit himself to his own lot.



Casaubon (1634)

That inward mistress part of man if it be in its own true natural temper, is towards all worldly chances and events ever so disposed and affected, that it will easily turn and apply itself to that which may be, and is within its own power to compass, when that cannot be which at first it intended. For it never doth absolutely addict and apply itself to any one object, but whatsoever it is that it doth now intend and prosecute, it doth prosecute it with exception and reservation; so that whatsoever it is that falls out contrary to its first intentions, even that afterwards it makes its proper object. Even as the fire when it prevails upon those things that are in his way; by which things indeed a little fire would have been quenched, but a great fire doth soon turn to its own nature, and so

In today's English

When the inner ruling part of a person is in its true natural condition, it meets all the events of the world in such a way that, if what it first intended turns out to be impossible, it easily turns and applies itself to whatever is possible and within its power. It never commits itself absolutely to any one object. Whatever it is now aiming at and pursuing, it pursues with a reservation, so that whatever happens contrary to its first intention, it makes that its new material. It is like a fire taking hold of whatever is thrown on it. Those things would put out a small flame, but a big fire quickly makes them part of itself, burns up whatever is put in its way, and grows bigger and bigger from the very things that were thrown on it.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

consume whatsoever comes in his way: yea by
those very things it is made greater and greater.

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Book IV · II



Casaubon (1634)

Let nothing be done rashly, and at random, but all things according to the most exact and perfect rules of art.

In today's English

Do nothing rashly or at random. Do everything according to the most careful and complete rules of the craft.



Casaubon (1634)

They seek for themselves private retiring places, as country villages, the sea-shore, mountains; yea thou thyself art wont to long much after such places. But all this thou must know proceeds from simplicity in the highest degree. At what time soever thou wilt, it is in thy power to retire into thyself, and to be at rest, and free from all businesses. A man cannot any whither retire better than to his own soul; he especially who is beforehand provided of such things within, which whensoever he doth withdraw himself to look in, may presently afford unto him perfect ease and tranquillity. By tranquillity I understand a decent orderly disposition and carriage, free from all confusion and tumultuousness. Afford then thyself this retiring continually, and thereby refresh and renew thyself. Let these precepts be brief and fundamental, which as soon as thou dost call them to mind, may suffice thee to purge thy soul throughly, and to send thee away well pleased with those things whatsoever they be, which now again after this short withdrawing of thy soul into herself thou dost return unto. For what is it that thou art offended at? Can it be at the wickedness of men, when thou dost call to mind this conclusion, that all reasonable creatures are made one for another? and that it is part of justice to bear with them? and

that it is against their wills that they offend? and how many already, who once likewise prosecuted their enmities, suspected, hated, and fiercely contended, are now long ago stretched out, and reduced unto ashes? It is time for thee to make an end. As for those things which among the common chances of the world happen unto thee as thy particular lot and portion, canst thou be displeased with any of them, when thou dost call that our ordinary dilemma to mind, either a providence, or Democritus his atoms; and with it, whatsoever we brought to prove that the whole world is as it were one city? And as for thy body, what canst thou fear, if thou dost consider that thy mind and understanding, when once it hath recollected itself, and knows its own power, hath in this life and breath (whether it run smoothly and gently, or whether harshly and rudely), no interest at all, but is altogether indifferent: and whatsoever else thou hast heard and assented unto concerning either pain or pleasure? But the care of thine honour and reputation will perchance distract thee? How can that be, if thou dost look back, and consider both how quickly all things that are, are forgotten, and what an immense chaos of eternity was before, and will follow after all things: and the vanity of praise, and the inconstancy and variableness of human judgments and opinions, and the narrowness of the place, wherein it is limited and circumscribed? For the whole earth is but as one point; and of it, this inhabited part of it, is but a very little part; and of this part, how many in number, and what manner of men are they, that will commend thee? What remains then, but that thou often put in practice this kind of retiring of thyself, to this little part of thyself; and above all things, keep thyself from distraction, and intend not anything vehemently, but be free and consider all things, as a man whose proper object is Virtue, as a man whose true nature is to be kind and sociable, as a citizen, as a mortal creature. Among other things, which to consider, and look into thou must use to withdraw thyself, let those two be among the most obvious and at hand. One, that the things or objects themselves reach not unto the soul, but stand without still and quiet, and that it is from the opinion only which is within, that all the tumult and all the trouble doth proceed. The next, that all these things, which now thou seest, shall within a very little while be changed, and be no more: and ever call

Casaubon (1634) · continued

to mind, how many changes and alterations in the world thou thyself hast already been an eyewitness of in thy time. This world is mere change, and this life, opinion.

In today's English

People look for places to get away to: country houses, the seashore, the mountains. You yourself often long for such places. But this is all very naive, because whenever you want, you can retreat into yourself and be at rest, free of all business. There is no place a person can retreat to that is quieter or more free of trouble than his own soul, especially someone who already has within himself things that bring perfect ease and calm the moment he looks at them. By calm I mean a well-ordered, orderly state of mind, free of confusion and turmoil. So give yourself this retreat constantly, and refresh and renew yourself with it. Keep your principles short and basic, so that as soon as you call them to mind they are enough to cleanse your soul completely and send you back content with whatever you are returning to after this brief retreat into yourself.

After all, what are you upset about? People's wickedness? Remember this conclusion: rational beings are made for one another; putting up with them is part of justice; they do wrong against their will; and how many people who once pursued feuds, suspected, hated, and fought fiercely are now long since laid out and turned to ashes. Time to stop. Or are you unhappy with what the general course of the world has assigned to you as your own lot? Remember our usual alternative: either providence or Democritus's atoms, and all the arguments showing that the whole world is like one city. Or is it your body that worries you? Consider that your mind, once it has collected itself and knows its own power, has no stake at all in whether your breath runs smoothly or roughly, but is entirely indifferent to it. And remember everything else you have heard and agreed to about pain and pleasure.

Or will concern for your reputation distract you? How can it, if you look back and see how quickly everything is forgotten, what an immense chaos of eternity came before and will come after everything, how empty praise is, how changeable and unreliable people's judgments are, and how narrow the space is in which fame is confined? The whole earth is just a point, and the inhabited part of it is a tiny fraction of that, and in that fraction, how many people will praise you, and what kind of people are they? So what is left, except to make frequent use of this retreat into this little part of yourself? Above all, avoid distraction. Do not strain after anything. Stay free, and look at everything as a man whose proper object is virtue, as a human being whose true nature is to be kind and sociable, as a citizen, as a mortal creature.

Among the thoughts you keep at hand for these retreats, let these two be the most ready. First, things themselves do not touch the soul. They stand outside it, still and quiet, and all the turmoil and trouble come only from the opinion inside. Second, everything you see will very soon change and be no more. Keep in mind how many changes you yourself have already witnessed in your lifetime. The world is change, and life is opinion.

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Book IV · IV

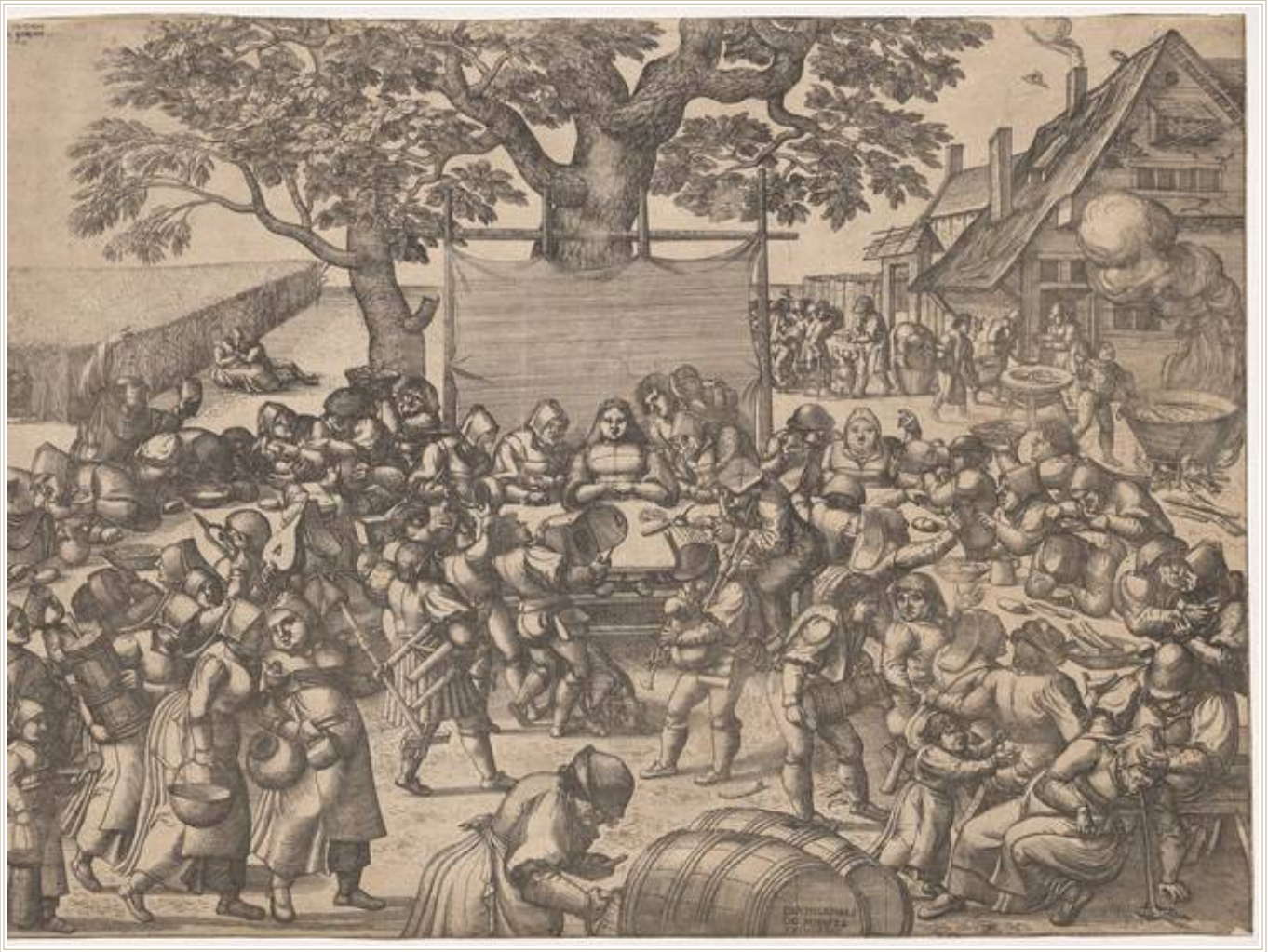


Casaubon (1634)

If to understand and to be reasonable be common unto all men, then is that reason, for which we are termed reasonable, common unto all. If reason is general, then is that reason also, which prescribeth what is to be done and what not, common unto all. If that, then law. If law, then are we fellow-citizens. If so, then are we partners in some one commonweal. If so, then the world is as it were a city. For which other commonweal is it, that all men can be said to be members of? From this common city it is, that understanding, reason, and law is derived unto us, for from whence else? For as that which in me is earthly I have from some common earth; and that which is moist from some other element is imparted; as my breath and life hath its proper fountain; and that likewise which is dry and fiery in me: (for there is nothing which doth not proceed from something; as also there is nothing that can be reduced unto mere nothing:) so also is there some common beginning from whence my understanding hath proceeded.

In today's English

If understanding and reason are common to all people, then the reason that makes us rational is common to all. If reason is common, then the reason that tells us what to do and what not to do is also common to all. If so, then law is common. If law, then we are fellow citizens. If so, then we are members of one shared state. If so, then the world is a kind of city. What other community could all humanity be said to belong to? It is from this common city that we get our understanding, reason, and law. Where else would they come from? The earthy part of me comes from the common earth, the watery part from another element, my breath and life from their own source, and the dry and fiery part from yet another (for nothing comes from nothing, just as nothing can turn into nothing). In the same way, my understanding must come from some common source.



Casaubon (1634)

As generation is, so also death, a secret of nature's wisdom: a mixture of elements, resolved into the same elements again, a thing surely which no man ought to be ashamed of: in a series of other fatal events and consequences, which a rational creature is subject unto, not improper or incongruous, nor contrary to the natural and proper constitution of man himself.

In today's English

Death, like birth, is one of nature's mysteries: a combining of elements, and then a breaking up into those same elements again. It is certainly nothing anyone should be ashamed of. Among all the other fated events a rational being goes through, it is not out of place or inconsistent, and not contrary to the natural design of a human being.

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Book IV · VI



Casaubon (1634)

Such and such things, from such and such causes, must of necessity proceed. He that would not have such things to happen, is as he that would have the fig-tree grow without any sap or moisture. In sum, remember this, that within a very little while, both thou and he shall both be dead, and after a little while more, not so much as your names and memories shall be remaining.

In today's English

Such things, from such causes, are bound to happen. Wanting them not to happen is like wanting a fig tree to grow without sap. In short, remember that very soon both you and he will be dead, and a little after that, not even your names will be left.

55/415
Book IV · VII



Casaubon (1634)

Let opinion be taken away, and no man will think himself wronged. If no man shall think himself wronged, then is there no more any such thing as wrong. That which makes not man himself the worse, cannot make his life the worse, neither can it hurt him either inwardly or outwardly. It was expedient in nature that it should be so, and therefore necessary.

In today's English

Take away the opinion, and no one will think, 'I have been wronged.' Take away 'I have been wronged,' and the wrong itself is gone. What does not make a person worse in himself cannot make his life worse, and cannot harm him inside or out. Nature found this useful, and so it was necessary.

56/415

Book IV · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever doth happen in the world, doth happen justly, and so if thou dost well take heed, thou shalt find it. I say not only in right order by a series of inevitable consequences, but according to justice and as it were by way of equal distribution, according to the true worth of everything. Continue then to take notice of it, as thou hast begun, and whatsoever thou dost, do it not without this proviso, that it be a thing of that nature that a good man (as the word good is properly taken) may do it. This observe carefully in every action.

In today's English

Everything that happens in the world happens justly, and if you watch carefully you will see it. I mean not only that it happens in proper order, as part of a chain of unavoidable consequences, but that it happens fairly, as if someone were handing out to

each thing what it truly deserves. So keep paying attention to this, as you have begun to do. And whatever you do, do it on this condition: that it is the kind of thing a good person (in the true sense of good) would do. Keep to this carefully in every action.

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Book IV · IX



Casaubon (1634)

Conceit no such things, as he that wrongeth thee conceiveth, or would have thee to conceive, but look into the matter itself, and see what it is in very truth.

In today's English

Do not see things the way the person who wrongs you sees them, or the way he wants you to see them. Look at the matter itself and see what it really is.



Casaubon (1634)

These two rules, thou must have always in a readiness. First, do nothing at all, but what reason proceeding from that regal and supreme part, shall for the good and benefit of men, suggest unto thee. And secondly, if any man that is present shall be able to rectify thee or to turn thee from some erroneous persuasion, that thou be always ready to change thy mind, and this change to proceed, not from any respect of any pleasure or credit thereon depending, but always from some probable apparent ground of justice, or of some public good thereby to be furthered; or from some other such inducement.

In today's English

Always keep these two rules ready. First, do only what reason, speaking from your royal, ruling

part, suggests for the good of people. Second, if someone present can correct you or talk you out of a mistaken belief, always be ready to change your mind. But let the change come not because it is pleasant or will earn you credit, but always because of some convincing reason: that it is just, or serves the public good, or something of that kind.

59/415

Book IV · XI



Casaubon (1634)

Hast thou reason? I have. Why then makest thou not use of it? For if thy reason do her part, what more canst thou require?

In today's English

Do you have reason? 'I do.' Then why not use it? If your reason is doing its job, what more do you want?



Casaubon (1634)

As a part hitherto thou hast had a particular subsistence: and now shalt thou vanish away into the common substance of Him, who first begot thee, or rather thou shalt be resumed again into that original rational substance, out of which all others have issued, and are propagated. Many small pieces of frankincense are set upon the same altar, one drops first and is consumed, another after; and it comes all to one.

In today's English

You have existed as a part. Now you will vanish into the whole that produced you, or rather, you will be taken back by change into the original rational substance from which everything else has come and is reproduced. Many grains of incense are placed on the same altar. One falls into the fire first, another later, and it makes no difference.

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Book IV · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

Within ten days, if so happen, thou shalt be esteemed a god of them, who now if thou shalt return to the dogmata and to the honouring of reason, will esteem of thee no better than of a mere brute, and of an ape.

In today's English

Within ten days, if it turns out that way, the very people who now think you a beast or an ape will think you a god, if you go back to your principles (dogmata) and to honoring reason.



Casaubon (1634)

Not as though thou hadst thousands of years to live. Death hangs over thee: whilst yet thou livest, whilst thou mayest, be good.

In today's English

Do not act as if you had thousands of years to live. Death hangs over you. While you are alive, while you still can, be good.

63/415
Book IV · XV



Casaubon (1634)

Now much time and leisure doth he gain, who is not curious to know what his neighbour hath said, or hath done, or hath attempted, but only what he doth himself, that it may be just and holy? or to express it in Agathos' words, Not to look about upon the evil conditions of others, but to run on straight in the line, without any loose and extravagant agitation.

In today's English

How much time and peace a person gains by not caring what his neighbor has said, done, or tried, but only what he himself is doing, so that it may be just and holy. Or, in Agathos's words: do not look around at other people's bad characters, but run straight down the line, without veering or flailing about.



Casaubon (1634)

He who is greedy of credit and reputation after his death, doth not consider, that they themselves by whom he is remembered, shall soon after every one of them be dead; and they likewise that succeed those; until at last all memory, which hitherto by the succession of men admiring and soon after dying hath had its course, be quite extinct. But suppose that both they that shall remember thee, and thy memory with them should be immortal, what is that to thee? I will not say to thee after thou art dead; but even to thee living, what is thy praise? But only for a secret and politic consideration, which we call οἰκονομία, or dispensation. For as for that, that it is the gift of nature, whatsoever is commended in thee, what might be objected from thence, let that now that we are upon another consideration be omitted as unseasonable. That which is fair and goodly, whatsoever it be, and in what respect soever it be, that it is fair and goodly, it is so of itself, and terminates in itself, not admitting praise as a part or member: that therefore which is praised, is not thereby made either better or worse. This I understand even of those things, that are commonly called fair and good, as those which are commended either for the matter itself, or for curious work-

manship. As for that which is truly good, what can it stand in need of more than either justice or truth; or more than either kindness and modesty? Which of all those, either becomes good or fair, because commended; or dispraised suffers any damage? Doth the emerald become worse in itself, or more vile if it be not commended? Doth gold, or ivory, or purple? Is there anything that doth though never so common, as a knife, a flower, or a tree?

In today's English

Someone who craves fame after death does not realize that each of the people who remember him will soon be dead too, and so will the ones after them, until finally the whole memory of him, passed along by people who admire him and then die, goes out completely. But suppose the people who will remember you, and your memory along with them, were immortal. What is that to you? I do not mean to you once you are dead, but even to you while you are alive: what is praise worth? Only as a matter of practical management, what we call οἰκονομία (oikonomia, practical arrangement or tactful management). As for the point that whatever you are praised for is a gift of nature, let us set that aside for now as off topic. Whatever is beautiful or good, in whatever way it is so, is so in itself and complete in itself. Praise is not part of it. So whatever is praised is made neither better nor worse by being praised. I say this even about things commonly called beautiful, whether for their material or for their fine workmanship. As for what is truly good, what more does it need than justice or truth, or kindness and modesty? Which of these becomes good because it is praised, or is damaged by being criticized? Is an emerald any worse if no one praises it? Or gold, ivory, or purple? Or anything at all, however ordinary, like a knife, a flower, or a tree?



Casaubon (1634)

If so be that the souls remain after death (say they that will not believe it); how is the air from all eternity able to contain them? How is the earth (say I) ever from that time able to Contain the bodies of them that are buried? For as here the change and resolution of dead bodies into another kind of subsistence (whatsoever it be;) makes place for other dead bodies: so the souls after death transferred into the air, after they have conversed there a while, are either by way of transmutation, or transfusion, or conflagration, received again into that original rational substance, from which all others do proceed: and so give way to those souls, who before coupled and associated unto bodies, now begin to subsist single. This, upon a supposition that the souls after death do for a while subsist single, may be answered. And here, (besides the number of bodies, so buried and contained by the earth), we may further con-

In today's English

Those who do not believe that souls survive death ask: if souls live on, how has the air held them all from the beginning of time? And I ask: how has the earth held the bodies of all those buried in it since the beginning of time? Here on earth, dead bodies change and break down into some other form, and this makes room for other dead bodies. In the same way, souls that pass into the air after death stay there for a while, and then are changed, spread out, or burned up, and taken back into the original rational substance that everything comes from. This makes room for new souls that were joined to bodies and now begin to exist on their own. That is one possible answer, assuming souls do exist on their own for a while after death. And besides the number of bodies buried in the earth, think of the number of animals eaten every day by us and by other creatures. Though so many are consumed and, in a

Casaubon (1634) · continued

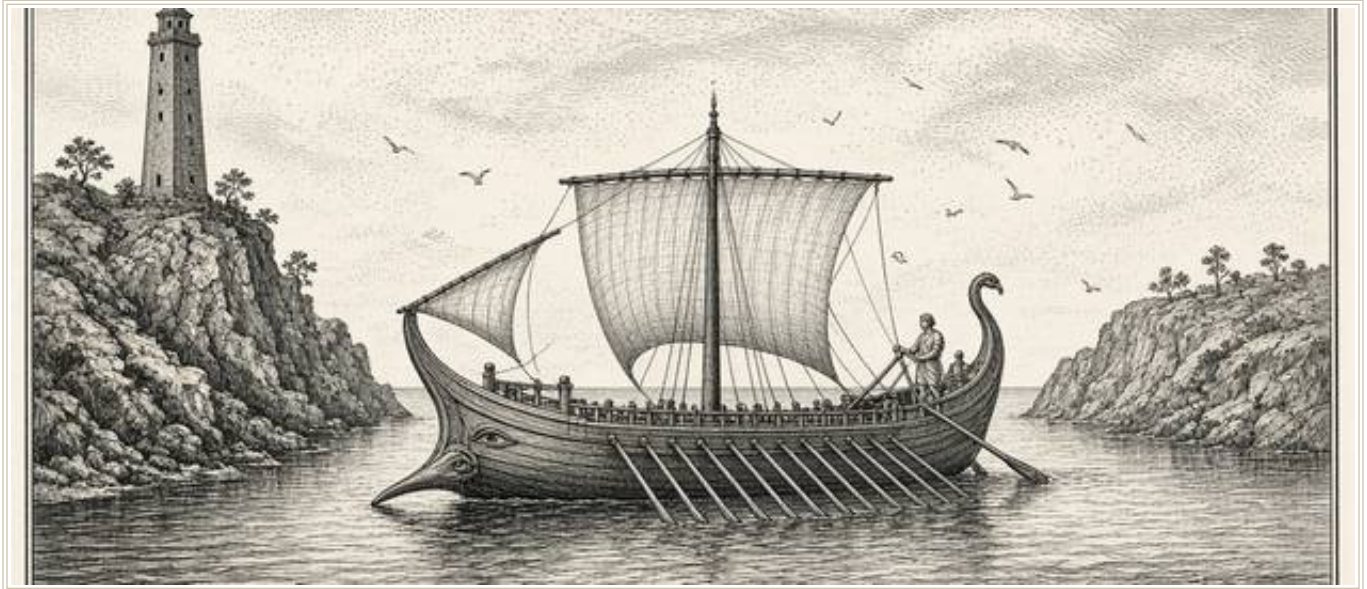
sider the number of several beasts, eaten by us men, and by other creatures. For notwithstanding that such a multitude of them is daily consumed, and as it were buried in the bodies of the eaters, yet is the same place and body able to contain them, by reason of their conversion, partly into blood, partly into air and fire. What in these things is the speculation of truth? to divide things into that which is passive and material; and that which is active and formal.

In today's English · continued

sense, buried in the bodies of those who eat them, the same space still holds them, because they are changed partly into blood and partly into air and fire. What is the way to investigate the truth about such things? Divide everything into the passive, material part and the active, causal part.

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Book IV · XVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Not to wander out of the way, but upon every motion and desire, to perform that which is just: and ever to be careful to attain to the true natural apprehension of every fancy, that presents itself.

In today's English

Do not wander off course. With every impulse and desire, do what is just, and with every impression that comes to you, make sure you understand it correctly and as it naturally is.



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever is expedient unto thee, O World, is expedient unto me; nothing can either be 'unseasonable unto me, or out of date, which unto thee is seasonable. Whatsoever thy seasons bear, shall ever by me be esteemed as happy fruit, and increase. O Nature! from thee are all things, in thee all things subsist, and to thee all tend. Could he say of Athens, Thou lovely city of Cecrops; and shalt not thou say of the world, Thou lovely city of God?

In today's English

Whatever suits you, O World, suits me. Nothing that is timely for you is too early or too late for me. Whatever your seasons bring, Nature, I will always count as good fruit. From you are all things, in you all things exist, and to you all things return. The poet says of Athens, 'Dear city of Cecrops.' Will you not say of the world, 'Dear city of God'?

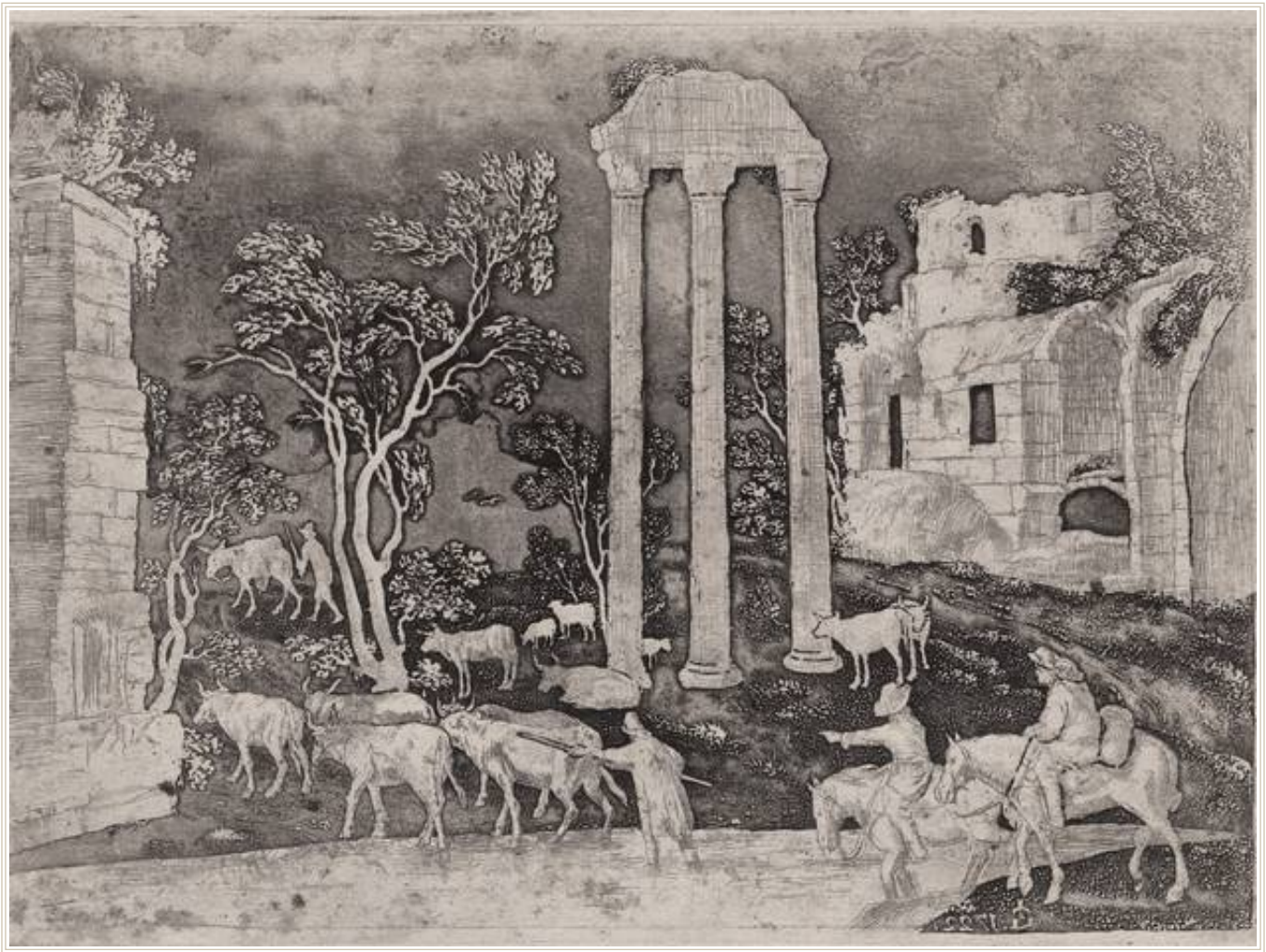


Casaubon (1634)

They will say commonly, Meddle not with many things, if thou wilt live cheerfully. Certainly there is nothing better, than for a man to confine himself to necessary actions; to such and so many only, as reason in a creature that knows itself born for society, will command and enjoin. This will not only procure that cheerfulness, which from the goodness, but that also, which from the paucity of actions doth usually proceed. For since it is so, that most of those things, which we either speak or do, are unnecessary; if a man shall cut them off, it must needs follow that he shall thereby gain much leisure, and save much trouble, and therefore at every action a man must privately by way of admonition suggest unto himself, What? may not this that now I go about, be of the number of unnecessary actions? Neither must he use himself to cut off actions only, but thoughts and imaginations also, that are unnecessary for so will unnecessary consequent actions the better be prevented and cut off.

 In today's English

People often say, 'Do not take on too much if you want to live cheerfully.' Surely nothing is better than limiting yourself to necessary actions, to only those, and only as many, as reason requires in a creature that knows it was born for community. This brings not only the cheerfulness that comes from doing things well, but also the cheerfulness that comes from doing fewer things. Since most of what we say and do is unnecessary, if you cut it out you will gain a great deal of free time and spare yourself a lot of trouble. So with every action, quietly remind yourself to ask: 'Is this one of the unnecessary things?' And you should get used to cutting out not only unnecessary actions but also unnecessary thoughts, because then the unnecessary actions that follow from them will be prevented more easily.



Casaubon (1634)

Try also how a good man's life; (of one, who is well pleased with those things whatsoever, which among the common changes and chances of this world fall to his own lot and share; and can live well contented and fully satisfied in the justice of his own proper present action, and in the goodness of his disposition for the future:) will agree with thee. Thou hast had experience of that other kind of life: make now trial of this also. Trouble not thyself any more henceforth, reduce thyself unto perfect simplicity. Doth any man offend? It is against himself that he doth offend: why should it trouble thee? Hath anything happened unto thee? It is well, whatsoever it be, it is that which of all the common chances of the world from the very beginning in the series of all other things that

In today's English

Try out the life of a good person and see how it suits you: someone who is happy with whatever share of the common changes and chances of the world falls to him, who is fully content with the justice of what he is doing now and with the goodness of his intentions for the future. You have tried the other kind of life. Now try this one. From now on, stop troubling yourself. Make yourself perfectly simple. Has someone done wrong? He has wronged himself. Why should it bother you? Has something happened to you? Good. Whatever it is, it was assigned and appointed to you from the beginning, out of all the common events of the world, in the chain of everything that has happened and will happen. To sum it up in a few words: life is short. We must make the most of the

Casaubon (1634) · continued

have, or shall happen, was destined and appointed unto thee. To comprehend all in a few words, our life is short; we must endeavour to gain the present time with best discretion and justice. Use recreation with sobriety.

In today's English · continued

present with good judgment and justice. Relax, but with moderation.



Casaubon (1634)

Either this world is a κόσμος or comely piece, because all disposed and governed by certain order: or if it be a mixture, though confused, yet still it is a comely piece. For is it possible that in thee there should be any beauty at all, and that in the whole world there should be nothing but disorder and confusion? and all things in it too, by natural different properties one from another differenced and distinguished; and yet all through diffused, and by natural sympathy, one to another united, as they are?

In today's English

Either this world is a κόσμος (kosmos, an ordered and beautiful whole) because everything in it is arranged and governed by order, or, if it is a mixture, it is still a confused jumble that is beautiful. Can there be beauty and order in you, and nothing but disorder and confusion in the whole world? Especially when all things in it, though distinct and separated from each other by their different natural properties, are still spread throughout and bound to one another by natural sympathy, as they are?

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Book IV · XXIII



Casaubon (1634)

A black or malign disposition, an effeminate disposition; an hard inexorable disposition, a wild inhuman disposition, a sheepish disposition, a childish disposition; a blockish, a false, a scurril, a fraudulent, a tyrannical: what then? If he be a stranger in the world, that knows not the things that are in it; why not be a stranger as well, that wonders at the things that are done in it?

In today's English

A dark, malicious character; a soft, self-indulgent character; a hard, unforgiving one; a wild, inhuman one; a sheepish one; a childish one; a dull, a false, a crude, a dishonest, a tyrannical one. So what? If someone who does not know what is in the world is a stranger in it, then someone who is amazed by what happens in it is just as much a stranger.



Temple, Acropolis

*Acropolis from Stadium Bridge,
River Ilissos*

Casaubon (1634)

He is a true fugitive, that flies from reason, by which men are sociable. He blind, who cannot see with the eyes of his understanding. He poor, that stands in need of another, and hath not in himself all things needful for this life. He an aposteme of the world, who by being discontented with those things that happen unto him in the world, doth as it were apostatise, and separate himself from common nature's rational administration. For the same nature it is that brings this unto thee, whatsoever it be, that first brought thee into the world. He raises sedition in the city, who by irrational actions withdraws his own soul from that one and common soul of all rational creatures.

In today's English

A true runaway is someone who runs from reason, the thing that makes people sociable. A blind man is someone who cannot see with the eyes of the mind. A poor man is someone who depends on another and does not have within himself everything he needs for life. A tumor on the world is someone who, by resenting what happens to him, rebels, so to speak, and cuts himself off from the rational order of our common nature. For the same nature that brought you into the world brings you whatever happens. A rebel against the city is someone who, by irrational actions, tears his own soul away from the one shared soul of all rational beings.



Casaubon (1634)

There is, who without so much as a coat; and there is, who without so much as a book, doth put philosophy in practice. I am half naked, neither have I bread to eat, and yet I depart not from reason, saith one. But I say; I want the food of good teaching, and instructions, and yet I depart not from reason.

In today's English

One man practices philosophy without even a coat, another without even a book. 'I am half naked and have no bread,' says one, 'and yet I stay true to reason.' And I say: I lack the food of good teaching and instruction, and yet I stay true to reason.

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Book IV · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

What art and profession soever thou hast learned, endeavour to affect it, and comfort thyself in it; and pass the remainder of thy life as one who from his whole heart commits himself and whatsoever belongs unto him, unto the gods: and as for men, carry not thyself either tyrannically or servilely towards any.

In today's English

Whatever craft or profession you have learned, love it and take comfort in it. Spend the rest of your life as someone who has entrusted himself and everything he has to the gods with his whole heart, and who, toward other people, is neither a tyrant nor a slave.

75/415

Book IV · XXVII



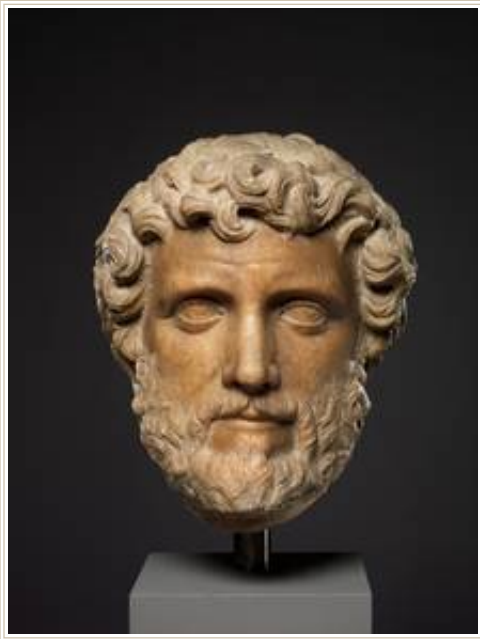
Casaubon (1634)

Consider in my mind, for example's sake, the times of Vespasian: thou shalt see but the same things: some marrying, some bringing up children, some sick, some dying, some fighting, some feasting, some merchandising, some tilling, some flattering, some boasting, some suspecting, some undermining, some wishing to die, some fretting and murmuring at their present estate, some wooing, some hoarding, some seeking after magistracies, and some after kingdoms. And is not that their age quite over, and ended? Again, consider now the times of Trajan. There likewise thou seest the very self-same things, and that age also is now over and ended. In the like manner consider other periods, both of times and of whole nations, and see how many men, after they had with all their might and main intended and prosecuted some one

worldly thing or other did soon after drop away, and were resolved into the elements. But especially thou must call to mind them, whom thou thyself in thy lifetime hast known much distracted about vain things, and in the meantime neglecting to do that, and closely and unseparably (as fully satisfied with it) to adhere unto it, which their own proper constitution did require. And here thou must remember, that thy carriage in every business must be according to the worth and due proportion of it, for so shalt thou not easily be tired out and vexed, if thou shalt not dwell upon small matters longer than is fitting.

In today's English

Think, for example, of the time of Vespasian. You will see the same things: people marrying, raising children, getting sick, dying, fighting wars, feasting, trading, farming, flattering, boasting, suspecting, plotting, wishing to die, grumbling about their lot, falling in love, hoarding, running for office, and grasping for kingdoms. And that whole life of theirs is over and gone. Then think of the time of Trajan. Again, all the same things, and that life too is over and gone. Look at other eras, and at whole nations, in the same way, and see how many people, after straining with all their might after one worldly thing or another, soon fell and were broken down into the elements. Above all, call to mind those you yourself have known, who were absorbed in empty things and meanwhile neglected to do what their own nature required, and to hold tight to it and be satisfied with it. And remember here that the attention you give to each thing should match its true worth and proportion. That way you will not get worn out and frustrated, because you will not spend longer on small matters than they deserve.



Casaubon (1634)

Those words which once were common and ordinary, are now become obscure and obsolete; and so the names of men once commonly known and famous, are now become in a manner obscure and obsolete names. Camillus, Cæso, Volesius, Leonnatus; not long after, Scipio, Cato, then Augustus, then Adrianus, then Antoninus Pius: all these in a short time will be out of date, and, as things of another world as it were, become fabulous. And this I say of them, who once shined as the wonders of their ages, for as for the rest, no sooner are they expired, than with them all their fame and memory. And what is it then that shall always be remembered? all is vanity. What is it that we must bestow our care and diligence upon? even upon this only: that our minds and wills be just; that our actions be charitable; that our speech be never deceitful, or that our understanding be not subject to error; that our inclination be always set to embrace whatsoever shall happen unto us, as necessary, as usual, as ordinary, as flowing from such a beginning, and such a fountain, from which

both thou thyself and all things are. Willingly therefore, and wholly surrender up thyself unto that fatal concatenation, yielding up thyself unto the fates, to be disposed of at their pleasure.

In today's English

Words that were once common and everyday are now obscure and outdated. In the same way, the names of people once famous and well known are now, in a sense, obscure and outdated: Camillus, Cæso, Volesius, Leonnatus; a little later Scipio and Cato; then Augustus, then Hadrian, then Antoninus Pius. All of them will soon be out of date and, like things from another world, become legends. And I am talking about people who once shone as the wonders of their time. As for the rest, as soon as they breathe their last, their fame and memory go with them. So what is it that will be remembered forever? It is all empty. What, then, should we put our care and effort into? Only this: that our minds and intentions be just, our actions generous, our speech never deceitful, our understanding free from error, and our disposition always ready to welcome whatever happens, as necessary, as familiar, as flowing from the same source and spring from which you and everything else come. So hand yourself over to the chain of fate willingly and completely, giving yourself up to the Fates to dispose of as they please.



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever is now present, and from day to day hath its existence; all objects of memories, and the minds and memories themselves, incessantly consider, all things that are, have their being by change and alteration. Use thyself therefore often to meditate upon this, that the nature of the universe delights in nothing more, than in altering those things that are, and in making others like unto them. So that we may say, that whatsoever is, is but as it were the seed of that which shall be. For if thou think that that only is seed, which either the earth or the womb receiveth, thou art very simple.

In today's English

Constantly consider everything that exists now and comes into being day by day, all the things we remember, and minds and memories themselves: everything that exists comes about through change. Get into the habit of reflecting that the nature of the universe loves nothing so much as changing the things that exist and making new things like them. So you could say that everything that exists is, in a sense, the seed of what will come from it. If you think the only seeds are those planted in the earth or the womb, you are being very simple-minded.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou art now ready to die, and yet hast thou not attained to that perfect simplicity: thou art yet subject to many troubles and perturbations; not yet free from all fear and suspicion of external accidents; nor yet either so meekly disposed towards all men, as thou shouldest; or so affected as one, whose only study and only wisdom is, to be just in all his actions.

In today's English

You are about to die, and still you have not become simple. You are still prone to many troubles and disturbances, still not free of all fear and suspicion of what might happen from outside, still not gentle toward everyone as you ought to be, and still not like someone whose only study and only wisdom is to act justly in everything.

79/415

Book IV · XXXI



Casaubon (1634)

Behold and observe, what is the state of their rational part; and those that the world doth account wise, see what things they fly and are afraid of; and what things they hunt after.

In today's English

Look closely at the state of people's ruling minds. Look at those the world calls wise: see what they run away from and fear, and what they chase after.



Casaubon (1634)

In another man's mind and understanding thy evil Cannot subsist, nor in any proper temper or distemper of the natural constitution of thy body, which is but as it were the coat or cottage of thy soul. Wherein then, but in that part of thee, wherein the conceit, and apprehension of any misery can subsist? Let not that part therefore admit any such conceit, and then all is well. Though thy body which is so near it should either be cut or burnt, or suffer any corruption or putrefaction, yet let that part to which it belongs to judge of these, be still at rest; that is, let her judge this, that whatsoever it is, that equally may happen to a wicked man, and to a good man, is neither good nor evil. For that which happens equally to him that lives according to nature, and to him that

In today's English

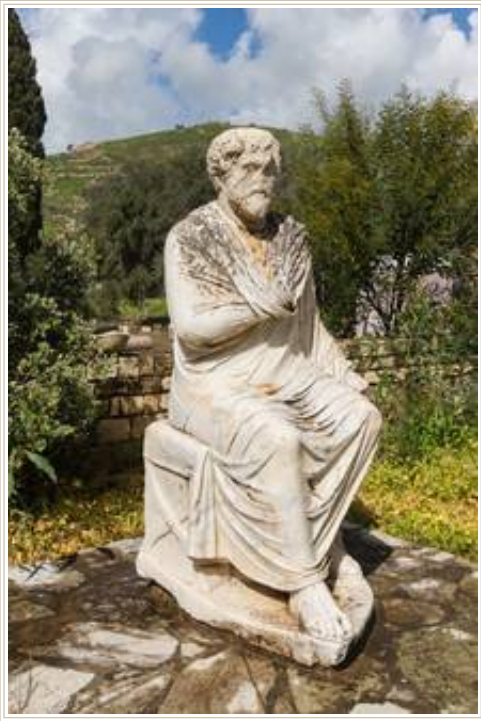
Your harm cannot exist in someone else's mind, nor in any condition, healthy or unhealthy, of your body, which is only the coat or shell of your soul. Where, then? In the part of you that forms opinions about what is bad. So do not let that part form such an opinion, and all is well. Even if your body, so close to it, is cut or burned, or festers and rots, let the part that judges these things stay calm. That is, let it judge that whatever can happen equally to a bad person and a good one is neither good nor bad. For what happens equally to someone who lives according to nature and someone who does not is neither in keeping with nature nor against it, and so it is neither good nor bad.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

doth not, is neither according to nature, nor
against it; and by consequent, neither good nor
bad.

81/415

Book IV · XXXIII



Casaubon (1634)

Ever consider and think upon the world as being but one living substance, and having but one soul, and how all things in the world, are terminated into one sensitive power; and are done by one general motion as it were, and deliberation of that one soul; and how all things that are, concur in the cause of one another's being, and by what manner of connection and concatenation all things happen.

In today's English

Always think of the world as one living being, with one substance and one soul. Think how everything in it comes together into one power of perception, how everything happens by one movement, so to speak, the one deliberate act of that one soul, how all things work together as causes of each other's existence, and how closely they are woven and linked together.

82/415

Book IV · XXXIV



Casaubon (1634)

What art thou, that better and divine part excepted, but as Epictetus said well, a wretched soul, appointed to carry a carcass up and down?

In today's English

Apart from that better, divine part of you, what are you? As Epictetus put it well, 'a little soul carrying a corpse around.'

83/415

Book IV · XXXV



Casaubon (1634)

To suffer change can be no hurt; as no benefit it is, by change to attain to being. The age and time of the world is as it were a flood and swift current, consisting of the things that are brought to pass in the world. For as soon as anything hath appeared, and is passed away, another succeeds, and that also will presently out of sight.

In today's English

There is no harm in undergoing change, just as there is no benefit in coming into being through change. Time is a kind of river, a rushing torrent of things that happen. As soon as something appears, it is swept away, and another takes its place, and that too will soon be carried off out of sight.



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever doth happen in the world, is, in the course of nature, as usual and ordinary as a rose in the spring, and fruit in summer. Of the same nature is sickness and death; slander, and lying in wait, and whatsoever else ordinarily doth unto fools use to be occasion either of joy or sorrow. That, whatsoever it is, that comes after, doth always very naturally, and as it were familiarly, follow upon that which was before. For thou must consider the things of the world, not as a loose independent number, consisting merely of necessary events; but as a discreet connection of things orderly and harmoniously disposed. There is then to be seen in the things of the world, not a bare succession, but an admirable correspondence and affinity.

In today's English

Everything that happens in the world is as normal and familiar, in the course of nature, as a rose in spring or fruit in summer. The same goes for illness and death, slander and plots, and everything else that gives fools joy or sorrow. What comes next always follows naturally and comfortably from what came before. You should see the things of the world not as a loose collection of unrelated items, merely following one another by necessity, but as a reasoned connection of things arranged in order and harmony. In the world you see not just one thing after another, but a wonderful kinship and fit.

85/415

Book IV · XXXVII



Casaubon (1634)

Let that of Heraclitus never be out of thy mind, that the death of earth, is water, and the death of water, is air; and the death of air, is fire; and so on the contrary. Remember him also who was ignorant whither the way did lead, and how that reason being the thing by which all things in the world are administered, and which men are continually and most inwardly conversant with: yet is the thing, which ordinarily they are most in opposition with, and how those things which daily happen among them, cease not daily to be strange unto them, and that we should not either speak, or do anything as men in their sleep, by opinion and bare imagination: for then we think we speak and do, and that we must not be as children, who follow their father's example; for best reason alleging their bare καθότι παρειλήφαμεν; or, as by successive tradition from our forefathers we have received it.

In today's English

Always remember Heraclitus's saying that the death of earth is the birth of water, the death of water is the birth of air, the death of air is the birth of fire, and back again. Remember also the man who forgot where the road leads. Remember that reason, which governs everything in the world and which people deal with constantly and most intimately, is the very thing they most often fight against, and that the things they meet every day still seem strange to them. Remember that we should not speak or act like people asleep, going by opinion and mere imagination, since in sleep too we think we are speaking and acting. And we must not be like children who copy their parents, giving as their only reason καθότι παρειλήφαμεν (kathoti pareilēphamen, 'because that is how we received it'), that is, simply because it was handed down to us by our ancestors.

86/415

Book IV · XXXVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Even as if any of the gods should tell thee, Thou shalt certainly die to-morrow, or next day, thou wouldst not, except thou wert extremely base and pusillanimous, take it for a great benefit, rather to die the next day after, than to-morrow; (for alas, what is the difference!) so, for the same reason, think it no great matter to die rather many years after, than the very next day.

In today's English

If one of the gods told you that you would certainly die tomorrow, or at the latest the day after, you would not think it made much difference whether it was the day after or tomorrow, unless you were extremely small-minded and cowardly. After all, what is the difference? In the same way, do not think it makes much difference whether you die many years from now or tomorrow.



Casaubon (1634)

Let it be thy perpetual meditation, how many physicians who once looked so grim, and so theatrically shrunk their brows upon their patients, are dead and gone themselves. How many astrologers, after that in great ostentation they had foretold the death of some others, how many philosophers after so many elaborate tracts and volumes concerning either mortality or immortality; how many brave captains and commanders, after the death and slaughter of so many; how many kings and tyrants, after they had with such horror and insolency abused their power upon men's lives, as though themselves had been immortal; how many, that I may so speak, whole cities both men and towns: Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and others innumerable are dead and gone. Run

In today's English

Think constantly of how many doctors, who frowned so grimly and so theatrically over their patients, have died themselves. How many astrologers, after grandly predicting other people's deaths. How many philosophers, after writing so many elaborate treatises on death and immortality. How many brave generals, after killing so many. How many kings and tyrants, after abusing their power over people's lives with such terror and arrogance, as if they themselves were immortal. How many whole cities, if I can put it that way, people and buildings together, have died: Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and countless others. Go over, one after another, all the people you yourself have known who have dropped away. One buried another and was soon buried himself,

Casaubon (1634) · continued

them over also, whom thou thyself, one after another, hast known in thy time to drop away. Such and such a one took care of such and such a one's burial, and soon after was buried himself. So one, so another: and all things in a short time. For herein lieth all indeed, ever to look upon all worldly things, as things for their continuance, that are but for a day: and for their worth, most vile, and contemptible, as for example, What is man? That which but the other day when he was conceived was vile snivel; and within few days shall be either an embalmed carcass, or mere ashes. Thus must thou according to truth and nature, throughly consider how man's life is but for a very moment of time, and so depart meek and contented: even as if a ripe olive falling should praise the ground that bare her, and give thanks to the tree that begat her.

In today's English · continued

then another, and so on, all in a short time. Here is the whole point: always look at earthly things as lasting only a day, and as cheap and worthless. For example, what is a human being? Yesterday a bit of slime, when he was conceived, and in a few days a mummy or a pile of ashes. So, in keeping with truth and nature, think through how brief a moment a human life is, and leave it gently and contentedly, the way a ripe olive might fall, praising the earth that bore it and thanking the tree that grew it.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou must be like a promontory of the sea,
against which though the waves beat continually,
yet it both itself stands, and about it are those
swelling waves stilled and quieted.

In today's English

Be like a headland by the sea. The waves beat
against it constantly, but it stands firm, and the
swelling water around it grows calm.

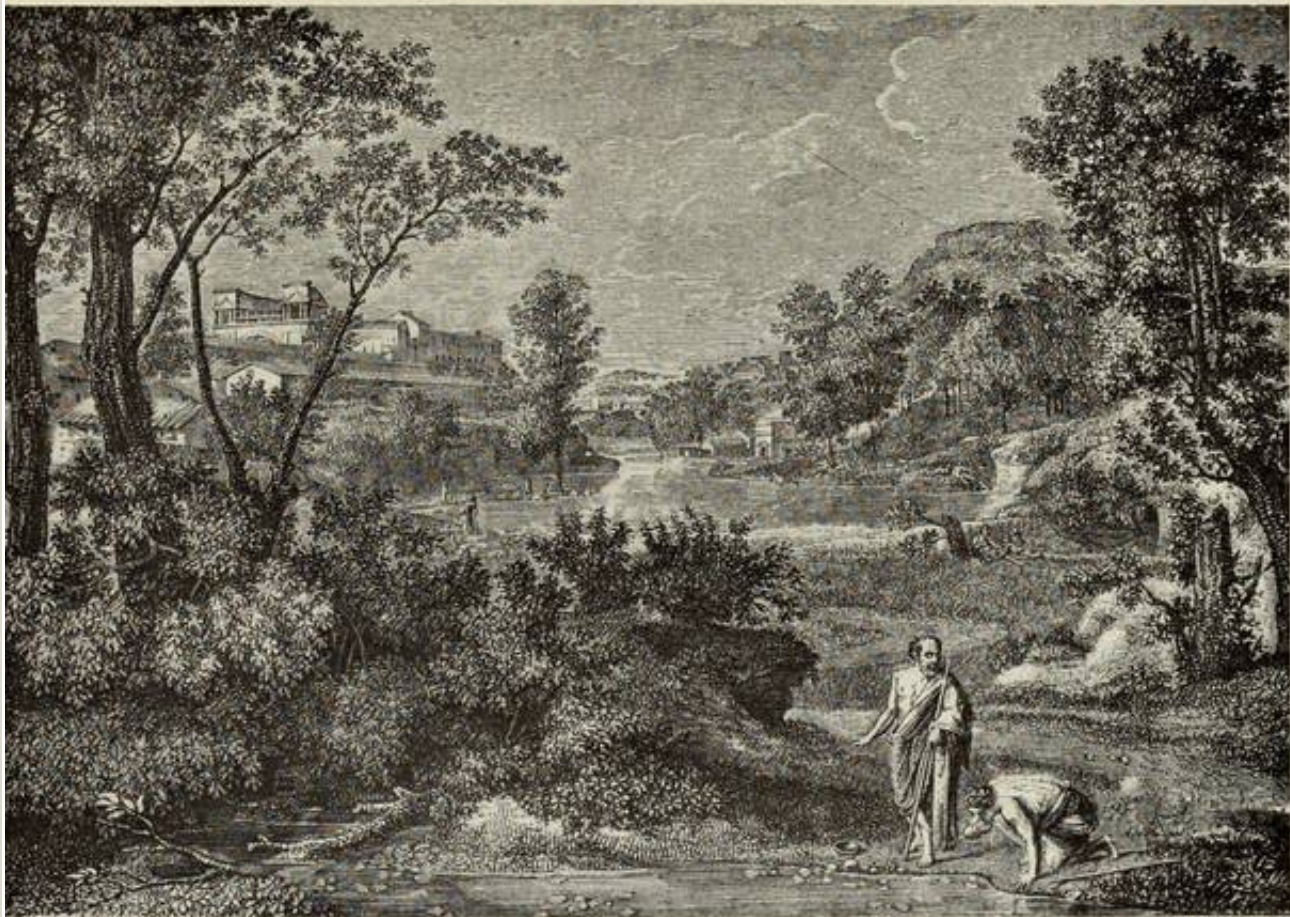


PLATE VII. — Diogenes Throwing Away his Shell. *Nicolas Poussin.*

Casaubon (1634)

Oh, wretched I, to whom this mischance is happened! nay, happy I, to whom this thing being happened, I can continue without grief; neither wounded by that which is present, nor in fear of that which is to come. For as for this, it might have happened unto any man, but any man having such a thing befallen him, could not have continued without grief. Why then should that rather be an unhappiness, than this a happiness? But however, canst thou, O man! term that unhappiness, which is no mischance to the nature of man I Canst thou think that a mischance to the nature of man, which is not contrary to the end and will of his nature? What then hast thou learned is the will of man's nature? Doth that then which hath happened unto thee, hinder thee from being just?

In today's English

'How unlucky I am that this happened to me!' No. Say instead: 'How lucky I am that, though this happened to me, I can go on without pain, neither crushed by the present nor afraid of the future.' This could have happened to anyone, but not everyone could have gone on without pain after it. So why call the one a misfortune rather than the other a stroke of luck? And in any case, can you call something a misfortune for a human being if it is not a failure of human nature? Can you think something a failure of human nature if it does not go against the purpose and will of that nature? Well, you have learned what that will is. Does what has happened stop you from being just, generous, self-controlled, wise, careful, truthful, modest, free, or anything else whose presence fully

Casaubon (1634) · continued

or magnanimous? or temperate? or wise? or circumspect? or true? or modest? or free? or from anything else of all those things in the present enjoying and possession whereof the nature of man, (as then enjoying all that is proper unto her,) is fully satisfied? Now to conclude; upon all occasion of sorrow remember henceforth to make use of this dogma, that whatsoever it is that hath happened unto thee, is in very deed no such thing of itself, as a misfortune; but that to bear it generously, is certainly great happiness.

In today's English · continued

satisfies human nature, since then it has everything that belongs to it? So, to conclude: from now on, whenever something threatens to make you sad, use this principle (dogma): this is not a misfortune, but bearing it nobly is a real piece of good fortune.



Casaubon (1634)

It is but an ordinary coarse one, yet it is a good effectual remedy against the fear of death, for a man to consider in his mind the examples of such, who greedily and covetously (as it were) did for a long time enjoy their lives. What have they got more, than they whose deaths have been untimely? Are not they themselves dead at the last? as Cadicianus, Fabius, Julianus Lepidus, and others like them, who buried many and were finally buried themselves. The whole span of a life is small, and even that small span is lived with so much trouble, among such people, and in such a miserable body. So treat it as something indifferent. Look behind you: what an endless gulf of time. And look ahead: another endless gulf. In that infinity, what difference is there between someone who lives three days and someone who lives three lifetimes?

In today's English

It is a crude remedy, but an effective one against the fear of death, to think of people who clung greedily to life for a long time. What did they gain over those who died young? Are they not dead in the end too? Cadicianus, Fabius, Julianus, Lepidus, and others like them, who buried many and were finally buried themselves. The whole span of a life is small, and even that small span is lived with so much trouble, among such people, and in such a miserable body. So treat it as something indifferent. Look behind you: what an endless gulf of time. And look ahead: another endless gulf. In that infinity, what difference is there between someone who lives three days and someone who lives three lifetimes?

Casaubon (1634) · continued

chaos of time doth present itself unto thee; and as infinite a chaos, if thou shalt look forward. In that which is so infinite, what difference can there be between that which liveth but three days, and that which liveth three ages?



Casaubon (1634)

Let thy course ever be the most compendious way. The most compendious, is that which is according to nature: that is, in all both words and deeds, ever to follow that which is most sound and perfect. For such a resolution will free a man from all trouble, strife, dissembling, and ostentation.

In today's English

Always take the shortest road. The shortest road is the one according to nature: in everything you say and do, follow what is soundest and most complete. Such a resolve frees a person from all trouble and conflict, and from all pretending and showing off.



Casaubon (1634)

In the morning when thou findest thyself unwilling to rise, consider with thyself presently, it is to go about a man's work that I am stirred up. Am I then yet unwilling to go about that, for which I myself was born and brought forth into this world? Or was I made for this, to lay me down, and make much of myself in a warm bed? 'O but this is pleasing.' And was it then for this that thou wert born, that thou mightest enjoy pleasure? Was it not in very truth for this, that thou mightest always be busy and in action? Seest thou not how all things in the world besides, how every tree and plant, how sparrows and ants, spiders and bees: how all in their kind are intent as it were orderly to perform whatsoever (towards the preservation of this orderly universe) naturally doth become and belong unto thee? And wilt not thou do that, which belongs unto a man to do? Wilt not thou run to do that, which thy nature doth require? 'But thou must have some rest.' Yes, thou must. Nature hath of that also, as well as of eat-

ing and drinking, allowed thee a certain stint. But thou guest beyond thy stint, and beyond that which would suffice, and in matter of action, there thou comest short of that which thou mayest. It must needs be therefore, that thou dost not love thyself, for if thou didst, thou wouldst also love thy nature, and that which thy nature doth propose unto herself as her end. Others, as many as take pleasure in their trade and profession, can even pine themselves at their works, and neglect their bodies and their food for it; and doest thou less honour thy nature, than an ordinary mechanic his trade; or a good dancer his art? than a covetous man his silver, and vainglorious man applause? These to whatsoever they take an affection, can be content to want their meat and sleep, to further that every one which he affects: and shall actions tending to the common good of human society, seem more vile unto thee, or worthy of less respect and intention?

In today's English

In the morning, when you find yourself unwilling to get up, tell yourself right away: 'I am getting up to do the work of a human being.' Am I still unwilling to do what I was born for, what I was brought into the world to do? Or was I made for this, to lie under the blankets and keep myself warm? 'But this is pleasant.' So were you born for pleasure? Were you not born to be busy and active? Do you not see how everything else, every tree and plant, the sparrows and ants, the spiders and bees, all work in their own way to do their part in keeping this ordered universe going? And you will not do the work of a human being? You will not hurry to do what your nature requires? 'But I need some rest.' Yes, you do. But nature has set a limit on rest, as it has on eating and drinking, and you go beyond the limit, beyond what is enough. Yet when it comes to action, you fall short of what you could do. So you must not love yourself, because if you did, you would love your nature and what it wants for you. Others who love their trade wear themselves out at their work, forgetting to wash or eat. Do you respect your nature less than a craftsman respects his trade, or a dancer his dancing, a greedy man his money, or a vain man his applause? When these people are passionate about something, they are willing to go without food and sleep to advance it. Do actions that serve the common good of human society seem less worthy to you, less deserving of your effort?

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Book V · II



Casaubon (1634)

How easy a thing is it for a man to put off from him all turbulent adventitious imaginations, and presently to be in perfect rest and tranquillity!

In today's English

How easy it is to push away every disturbing or foreign impression and wipe it out, and immediately be at complete rest and calm.



Casaubon (1634)

Think thyself fit and worthy to speak, or to do anything that is according to nature, and let not the reproach, or report of some that may ensue upon it, ever deter thee. If it be right and honest to be spoken or done, undervalue not thyself so much, as to be discouraged from it. As for them, they have their own rational over-ruling part, and their own proper inclination: which thou must not stand and look about to take notice of, but go on straight, whither both thine own particular, and the common nature do lead thee; and the way of both these, is but one.

In today's English

Consider yourself fit and worthy to say or do anything that is in keeping with nature, and do not let the criticism or talk of others that may follow ever put you off. If it is right and honorable to say or do it, do not sell yourself so short as to be discouraged. Those people have their own ruling reason and their own impulses. Do not stand around watching them. Go straight ahead where your own nature and the common nature lead you, and the road of both is one and the same.

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Book V · IV



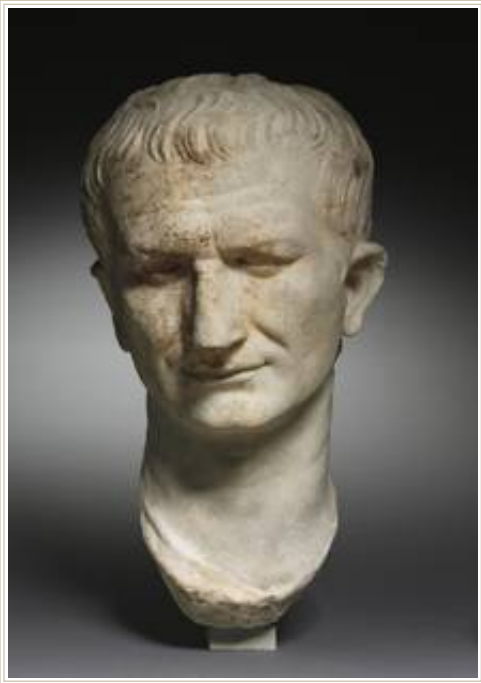
Casaubon (1634)

I continue my course by actions according to nature, until I fall and cease, breathing out my last breath into that air, by which continually breathed in I did live; and falling upon that earth, out of whose gifts and fruits my father gathered his seed, my mother her blood, and my nurse her milk, out of which for so many years I have been provided, both of meat and drink. And lastly, which beareth me that tread upon it, and beareth with me that so many ways do abuse it, or so freely make use of it, so many ways to so many ends.

In today's English

I go on through actions in keeping with nature until I fall and rest, breathing my last into the air I have breathed in every day of my life, and falling onto the earth from whose gifts my father gathered his seed, my mother her blood, and my nurse her milk; the earth that has given me food and drink day after day for so

many years, that carries me as I walk on it, and that puts up with me though I abuse it in so many ways, or use it so freely for so many purposes.



Casaubon (1634)

No man can admire thee for thy sharp acute language, such is thy natural disability that way. Be it so: yet there be many other good things, for the want of which thou canst not plead the want or natural ability. Let them be seen in thee, which depend wholly from thee; sincerity, gravity, laboriousness, contempt of pleasures; be not querulous, be Content with little, be kind, be free; avoid all superfluity, all vain prattling; be magnanimous. Doest not thou perceive, how many things there be, which notwithstanding any pretence of natural indisposition and unfitness, thou mightest have performed and exhibited, and yet still thou doest voluntarily continue drooping downwards? Or wilt thou say that it is through defect of thy natural constitution, that thou art constrained to murmur, to be base and wretched to flatter; now to accuse, and now to please, and pacify thy body: to be vainglorious, to be so giddy-headed., and unsettled in thy thoughts? nay (witnesses be the Gods) of all these thou mightest have been rid long ago: only, this thou must have been contented with, to have borne the blame of one that is somewhat slow

and dull, wherein thou must so exercise thyself, as one who neither doth much take to heart this his natural defect, nor yet pleaseth himself in it.

In today's English

No one can admire you for sharp wit, since you are naturally not gifted that way. Fine. But there are many other good qualities, and you cannot claim you lack the natural ability for them. Show the ones that depend entirely on you: sincerity, seriousness, hard work, indifference to pleasure. Do not complain. Be content with little. Be kind. Be free. Avoid excess and empty chatter. Be large-minded. Do you not see how many qualities you could already be showing, with no excuse of natural inability or unfitness, and yet you willingly keep sinking lower? Or will you say that some defect in your nature forces you to grumble, to be mean and pathetic, to flatter, to blame your body one moment and pamper it the next, to show off, and to let your mind be so scattered and restless? No, by the gods. You could have been rid of all these long ago. The only thing you would have had to accept is a reputation for being somewhat slow and dull, and even that you must work on, neither taking your natural slowness too much to heart nor taking pleasure in it.



Casaubon (1634)

Such there be, who when they have done a good turn to any, are ready to set them on the score for it, and to require retaliation. Others there be, who though they stand not upon retaliation, to require any, yet they think with themselves nevertheless, that such a one is their debtor, and they know as their word is what they have done. Others again there be, who when they have done any such thing, do not so much as know what they have done; but are like unto the vine, which beareth her grapes, and when once she hath borne her own proper fruit, is contented and seeks for no further recompense. As a horse after a race, and a hunting dog when he hath hunted, and a bee when she hath made her honey, look not for applause and commendation; so neither doth that man that rightly doth understand his own nature when he hath done a good turn: but from one doth proceed to do another, even as the vine after she hath once borne fruit in her own proper season, is ready for another time. Thou therefore must be one of them, who what they do, barely do it without any further thought, and are in a manner insensible of what they do. 'Nay but,' will some reply perchance, 'this very thing a rational man is bound unto, to understand what it is, that he doeth.' For it is the property, say they, of one that is naturally

sociable, to be sensible, that he doth operate sociably: nay, and to desire, that the party him self that is sociably dealt with, should be sensible of it too. I answer, That which thou sayest is true indeed, but the true meaning of that which is said, thou dost not understand. And therefore art thou one of those first, whom I mentioned. For they also are led by a probable appearance of reason. But if thou dost desire to understand truly what it is that is said, fear not that thou shalt therefore give over any sociable action.

In today's English

Some people, when they do someone a favor, are quick to chalk it up and expect something in return. Others do not ask for a return, but still think privately of the person as their debtor and keep track of what they did. Others do not even seem to know what they have done. They are like a vine that produces grapes and, having produced its own fruit, is content and looks for nothing more. A horse after a race, a hound after the hunt, a bee after making honey do not look for applause or praise. Neither does a person who truly understands his own nature, once he has done a good deed. He simply goes on to the next, as a vine goes on to bear grapes again in their season. So you must be one of those who do good without thinking about it further, almost without noticing what they do. 'But,' someone may say, 'a rational person is obliged to understand what he is doing. It is the mark of a naturally social being to be aware that he is acting socially, and even to want the person he helps to be aware of it.' I answer: what you say is true, but you misunderstand what I mean. And so you are one of the first kind I mentioned, for they too are misled by something that looks like reason. But if you really want to understand what I am saying, do not worry that it will make you give up any social action.

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Book V · VII



Casaubon (1634)

The form of the Athenians' prayer did run thus: 'O rain, rain, good Jupiter, upon all the grounds and fields that belong to the Athenians.' Either we should not pray at all, or thus absolutely and freely; and not every one for himself in particular alone.

In today's English

The Athenians used to pray like this: 'Rain, rain, dear Zeus, on the fields and plains of the Athenians.' Either we should not pray at all, or we should pray simply and openly like this, and not each of us for himself alone.



Casaubon (1634)

As we say commonly, The physician hath prescribed unto this man, riding; unto another, cold baths; unto a third, to go barefoot: so it is alike to say, The nature of the universe hath prescribed unto this man sickness, or blindness, or some loss, or damage or some such thing. For as there, when we say of a physician, that he hath prescribed anything, our meaning is, that he hath appointed this for that, as subordinate and conducing to health: so here, whatsoever doth happen unto any, is ordained unto him as a thing subordinate unto the fates, and therefore do we say of such things, that they do συμβαίνειν, that is, happen, or fall together; as of square stones, when either in walls, or pyramids in a certain position they fit one another, and agree as it were in an

In today's English

We commonly say, 'The doctor has prescribed horseback riding for this man, cold baths for another, walking barefoot for a third.' In the same way we can say, 'The nature of the universe has prescribed illness for this man, or blindness, or some loss or damage, or something of that kind.' When we say a doctor prescribed something, we mean he ordered it as a means toward health. Here too, whatever happens to someone is ordered for him as a means toward his fate. That is why we say such things συμβαίνειν (symbainein, 'happen,' literally 'go together'), just as builders say squared stones in walls or pyramids συμβαίνειν, meaning they fit together, when they are set in a certain position and agree with one another in a kind of harmony. In general, there is

Casaubon (1634) · continued

harmony, the masons say, that they do συμβαίνειν; as if thou shouldst say, fall together: so that in the general, though the things be divers that make it, yet the consent or harmony itself is but one. And as the whole world is made up of all the particular bodies of the world, one perfect and complete body, of the same nature that particular bodies; so is the destiny of particular causes and events one general one, of the same nature that particular causes are. What I now say, even they that are mere idiots are not ignorant of: for they say commonly τοῦτο ἔφερεν αὐτῷ, that is, This his destiny hath brought upon him. This therefore is by the fates properly and particularly brought upon this, as that unto this in particular is by the physician prescribed. These therefore let us accept of in like manner, as we do those that are prescribed unto us our physicians. For them also in themselves shall We find to contain many harsh things, but we nevertheless, in hope of health, and recovery, accept of them. Let the fulfilling and accomplishment of those things which the common nature hath determined, be unto thee as thy health. Accept then, and be pleased with whatsoever doth happen, though otherwise harsh and un-pleasing, as tending to that end, to the health and welfare of the universe, and to Jove's happiness and prosperity. For this whatsoever it be, should not have been produced, had it not conduced to the good of the universe. For neither doth any ordinary particular nature bring anything to pass, that is not to whatsoever is within the sphere of its own proper administration and government agreeable and subordinate. For these two considerations then thou must be well pleased with anything that doth happen unto thee. First, because that for thee properly it was brought to pass, and unto thee it was prescribed; and that from the very beginning by the series and connection of the first causes, it hath ever had a reference unto thee. And secondly, because the good success and perfect welfare, and indeed the very continuance of Him, that is the Administrator of the whole, doth in a manner depend on it. For the whole (because whole, therefore entire and perfect) is maimed, and mutilated, if thou shalt cut off anything at all, whereby the coherence, and contiguity as of parts, so of causes, is

In today's English · continued

one harmony, though many things make it up. And just as the whole world is made from all individual bodies into one complete body of the same kind, so fate is made from all individual causes into one overall cause of the same kind. Even completely uneducated people understand what I mean, since they say τοῦτο ἔφερεν αὐτῷ (touto epheren autō), 'this was brought upon him,' that is, by his destiny. So this was brought upon this man, or prescribed for him, in particular. Let us accept these things the way we accept what our doctors prescribe. Many of their prescriptions are harsh too, but we welcome them in the hope of getting well. Let the carrying out and completion of what the common nature has decided be to you like your health. So accept and welcome everything that happens, even if it seems harsh and unpleasant, because it leads to the health and well-being of the universe, and to the prosperity and happiness of Zeus. It would not have been brought about if it did not serve the good of the whole. Not even an ordinary individual nature produces anything that does not suit and serve what is under its own management. So there are two reasons why you should welcome whatever happens to you. First, it happened for you, was prescribed for you, and was connected to you from the very beginning by the chain of the first causes. Second, the success, well-being, and indeed the very continuation of the one who governs the whole depends, in a sense, on it. For the whole, being whole and therefore complete, is maimed and mutilated if you cut away anything at all from the unbroken connection of its parts, or of its causes. And you do cut something away, as far as you can, and in a sense destroy it, every time you are unhappy with something that happens.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

maintained and preserved. Of which certain it is,
that thou doest (as much as lieth in thee) cut off,
and in some sort violently take somewhat away,
as often as thou art displeased with anything that
happeneth.



Casaubon (1634)

Be not discontented, be not disheartened, be not out of hope, if often it succeed not so well with thee punctually and precisely to do all things according to the right dogmata, but being once cast off, return unto them again: and as for those many and more frequent occurrences, either of worldly distractions, or human infirmities, which as a man thou canst not but in some measure be subject unto, be not thou discontented with them; but however, love and affect that only which thou dust return unto: a philosopher's life, and proper occupation after the most exact manner. And when thou dust return to thy philosophy, return not unto it as the manner of some is, after play and liberty as it were, to their schoolmasters and pedagogues; but as they that have sore eyes to

In today's English

Do not be disgusted, discouraged, or give up hope if you often fail to do everything exactly according to the right principles (dogmata). When you have been knocked off course, come back to them again. As for the many frequent distractions of the world and human weaknesses that, being human, you cannot entirely escape, do not be upset by them. Just love the thing you return to: the philosopher's life and its proper work, practiced as carefully as possible. And when you return to philosophy, do not go back to it like a schoolboy returning to his teacher after playtime, but like someone with sore eyes going back to his sponge and egg, or another to his poultice, or another to his warm compress. That way you will not make a show of obeying reason, but will find rest and

Casaubon (1634) · continued

their sponge and egg: or as another to his cataplasm; or as others to their fomentations: so shalt not thou make it a matter of ostentation at all to obey reason but of ease and comfort. And remember that philosophy requireth nothing of thee, but what thy nature requireth, and wouldest thou thyself desire anything that is not according to nature? for which of these sayest thou; that which is according to nature or against it, is of itself more kind and pleasing? Is it not for that respect especially, that pleasure itself is to so many men's hurt and overthrow, most prevalent, because esteemed commonly most kind, and natural? But consider well whether magnanimity rather, and true liberty, and true simplicity, and equanimity, and holiness; whether these be not most kind and natural? And prudence itself, what more kind and amiable than it, when thou shalt truly consider with thyself, what it is through all the proper objects of thy rational intellectual faculty currently to go on without any fall or stumble? As for the things of the world, their true nature is in a manner so involved with obscurity, that unto many philosophers, and those no mean ones, they seemed altogether incomprehensible, and the Stoics themselves, though they judge them not altogether incomprehensible, yet scarce and not without much difficulty, comprehensible, so that all assent of ours is fallible, for who is he that is infallible in his conclusions? From the nature of things, pass now unto their subjects and matter: how temporary, how vile are they I such as may be in the power and possession of some abominable loose liver, of some common strumpet, of some notorious oppressor and extortioner. Pass from thence to the dispositions of them that thou doest ordinarily converse with, how hardly do we bear, even with the most loving and amiable! that I may not say, how hard it is for us to bear even with our own selves, in such obscurity, and impurity of things: in such and so continual a flux both of the substances and time; both of the motions themselves, and things moved; what it is that we can fasten upon; either to honour, and respect especially; or seriously, and studiously to seek after; I cannot so much as conceive For indeed they are things contrary.

In today's English · continued

comfort in it. Remember that philosophy asks nothing of you except what your nature asks, and would you want something your nature does not? Which do you think is more pleasant in itself, what is in keeping with nature or what goes against it? Is it not exactly because pleasure is thought to be the most agreeable and natural that it trips up and ruins so many people? But consider whether large-mindedness, true freedom, simplicity, calm, and holiness are not more agreeable and natural. And what is more agreeable than practical wisdom itself, when you think what it means to move steadily through everything your rational mind deals with, without falling or stumbling?

As for the things of the world, their true nature is so wrapped in obscurity that to many philosophers, and not minor ones, they seemed completely beyond understanding. Even the Stoics, who do not think them entirely beyond understanding, think them hard to grasp, and only with great difficulty, so that every judgment we make can be mistaken. For who never makes mistakes in his conclusions? Next, turn from the nature of things to their substance and the things themselves: how short-lived and cheap they are, the kind of things that can be owned by some disgusting libertine, a common prostitute, or a notorious crook and extortioner. Then turn to the characters of the people you spend time with, and see how hard it is to put up with even the most pleasant of them, not to mention how hard it is to put up with ourselves. In such darkness and filth, in such a constant flow of substance and time, of movements and things moved, I cannot even imagine what there is that we could hold on to, either to honor and value highly, or to pursue seriously and eagerly. In fact, it is quite the opposite.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou must comfort thyself in the expectation of thy natural dissolution, and in the meantime not grieve at the delay; but rest contented in those two things. First, that nothing shall happen unto thee, which is not according to the nature of the universe. Secondly, that it is in thy power, to do nothing against thine own proper God, and inward spirit. For it is not in any man's power to constrain thee to transgress against him.

In today's English

You must comfort yourself with the prospect of your natural dissolution, and meanwhile not be impatient at the delay, but rest content in these two thoughts. First, nothing will happen to you that is not in keeping with the nature of the universe. Second, it is in your power to do nothing against your own god and the spirit within you, because no one can force you to go against it.

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Book V · XI



Casaubon (1634)

What is the use that now at this present I make of my soul? Thus from time to time and upon all occasions thou must put this question to thyself; what is now that part of mine which they call the rational mistress part, employed about? Whose soul do I now properly possess? a child's? or a youth's? a woman's? or a tyrant's? some brute, or some wild beast's soul?

In today's English

What am I using my soul for right now? Ask yourself this regularly, on every occasion: what is going on in the part of me they call the ruling reason? Whose soul do I have right now? A child's, a teenager's, a woman's, a tyrant's? A farm animal's, or a wild beast's?



Casaubon (1634)

What those things are in themselves, which by the greatest part are esteemed good, thou mayest gather even from this. For if a man shall hear things mentioned as good, which are really good indeed, such as are prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, after so much heard and conceived, he cannot endure to hear of any more, for the word good is properly spoken of them. But as for those which by the vulgar are esteemed good, if he shall hear them mentioned as good, he doth hearken for more. He is well contented to hear, that what is spoken by the comedian, is but familiarly and popularly spoken, so that even the vulgar apprehend the difference. For why is it else, that this offends not and needs not to be excused, when virtues are styled good: but that which is spoken in commendation of wealth, pleasure, or

honour, we entertain it only as merrily and pleasantly spoken? Proceed therefore, and inquire further, whether it may not be that those things also which being mentioned upon the stage were merrily, and with great applause of the multitude, scoffed at with this jest, that they that possessed them had not in all the world of their own, (such was their affluence and plenty) so much as a place where to avoid their excrements. Whether, I say, those ought not also in very deed to be much respected, and esteemed of, as the only things that are truly good.

In today's English

You can get a sense of what most people consider good from this. If someone hears things called good that really are good, like practical wisdom, self-control, justice, and courage, then after hearing that, he cannot stand to hear any joke at their expense, because the word good fits them perfectly. But when he hears things called good that ordinary people think are good, he will listen to a comedian's joke about them and take it as fitting, just a familiar, popular way of speaking. So even ordinary people sense the difference. Otherwise, why would a joke about the virtues offend us and seem to need an excuse, while a joke about wealth, pleasure, or fame strikes us as funny and apt? So go further and ask whether we really should value and respect as the only true goods those things that were mocked on stage, to the great applause of the crowd, with the joke that their owners were so rich that they had nowhere of their own to relieve themselves.



Casaubon (1634)

All that I consist of, is either form or matter. No corruption can reduce either of these unto nothing: for neither did I of nothing become a subsistent creature. Every part of mine then will by mutation be disposed into a certain part of the whole world, and that in time into another part; and so in infinitum; by which kind of mutation, I also became what I am, and so did they that begot me, and they before them, and so upwards in infinitum. For so we may be allowed to speak, though the age and government of the world, be to some certain periods of time limited, and confined.

In today's English

Everything I am made of is either form (the causal part) or matter. Neither can be destroyed into nothing, just as I did not come into being out of nothing. So every part of me will be changed and placed somewhere else in the world, and that part will in time be changed into yet another part, and so on forever (in infinitum). It was by this same kind of change that I came to be what I am, and so did my parents, and theirs before them, and so on back forever. We can speak this way even if the world is governed in fixed cycles of time.



Casaubon (1634)

Reason, and rational power, are faculties which content themselves with themselves, and their own proper operations. And as for their first inclination and motion, that they take from themselves. But their progress is right to the end and object, which is in their way, as it were, and lieth just before them: that is, which is feasible and possible, whether it be that which at the first they proposed to themselves, or no. For which reason also such actions are termed *κατορθώσεις*, to intimate the directness of the way, by which they are achieved. Nothing must be thought to belong to a man, which doth not belong unto him as he is a man. These, the event of purposes, are not things required in a man. The nature of man doth not profess any such things. The final ends and consummations of actions are nothing at all to a man's nature. The end therefore of a man, or the summum bon-

um whereby that end is fulfilled, cannot consist in the consummation of actions purposed and intended. Again, concerning these outward worldly things, were it so that any of them did properly belong unto man, then would it not belong unto man, to condemn them and to stand in opposition with them. Neither would he be praiseworthy that can live without them; or he good, (if these were good indeed) who of his own accord doth deprive himself of any of them. But we see contrariwise, that the more a man doth withdraw himself from these wherein external pomp and greatness doth consist, or any other like these; or the better he doth bear with the loss of these, the better he is accounted.

In today's English

Reason and the rational power are self-sufficient, content with themselves and their own activity. They take their first impulse from themselves, and they move straight toward the goal that lies in their path, that is, toward what is possible and achievable, whether or not it is what they first set out to do. That is why such actions are called *κατορθώσεις* (*katorthōseis*, 'right actions,' literally 'straight-throughs'), to show the straightness of the path by which they are done. Nothing should be considered part of a human being that does not belong to him as a human being. The outcomes of our plans are not things required of a person. Human nature does not promise them. The final results and completions of actions are no part of human nature. So the goal of a human being, or the highest good (*summum bonum*) that fulfills that goal, cannot lie in the completion of the actions he planned. Again, if any of these external things really belonged to a person, it would not be right for him to look down on them and resist them. Nor would anyone deserve praise for doing without them, or be good for willingly giving any of them up, if they really were goods. But we see the opposite: the more a person withdraws from outward pomp and greatness and other such things, or the better he bears losing them, the better he is considered to be.



Casaubon (1634)

Such as thy thoughts and ordinary cogitations are, such will thy mind be in time. For the soul doth as it were receive its tincture from the fancies, and imaginations. Dye it therefore and thoroughly soak it with the assiduity of these cogitations. As for example. Wheresoever thou mayest live, there it is in thy power to live well and happy. But thou mayest live at the Court, there then also mayest thou live well and happy. Again, that which everything is made for, he is also made unto that, and cannot but naturally incline unto it. That which anything doth naturally incline unto, therein is his end. Wherein the end of everything doth consist, therein also doth his good and benefit consist. Society therefore is the proper good of a rational creature. For that we are made for society, it hath long since been demonstrated. Or can any man make any question of this, that whatsoever is naturally worse and inferior, is ordinarily

In today's English

Your mind will become like the thoughts you think most often, because the soul takes on the color of its impressions. So dye it, soak it thoroughly, in a steady stream of thoughts like these. For example: wherever you can live, you can live well. You may have to live at court. Then at court too you can live well. Again: each thing is made for a purpose and naturally inclines toward that purpose. What a thing naturally inclines toward is its goal. Where a thing's goal is, there its good and benefit are too. So community is the proper good of a rational creature, since it was shown long ago that we are made for community. Or can anyone doubt that lower things exist for the sake of higher ones, and that the highest exist for the sake of one another? And living things are higher than lifeless ones, and among living things, rational ones are the highest.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

subordinated to that which is better? and that those things that are best, are made one for another? And those things that have souls, are better than those that have none? and of those that have, those best that have rational souls?

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Book V · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

To desire things impossible is the part of a mad man. But it is a thing impossible, that wicked man should not commit some such things. Neither doth anything happen to any man, which in the ordinary course of nature as natural unto him doth not happen. Again, the same things happen unto others also. And truly, if either he that is ignorant that such a thing hath happened unto him, or he that is ambitious to be commended for his magnanimity, can be patient, and is not grieved: is it not a grievous thing, that either ignorance, or a vain desire to please and to be commended, should be more powerful and effectual than true prudence? As for the things themselves, they touch not the soul, neither can they have any access unto it: neither can they of themselves any ways either affect it, or move it. For she herself alone can affect and

move herself, and according as the dogmata and opinions are, which she doth vouchsafe herself; so are those things which, as accessories, have any co-existence with her.

In today's English

Wanting the impossible is madness. And it is impossible for bad people not to do things like this. Nothing happens to anyone that is not, in the ordinary course of nature, natural to him. And the same things happen to others too. Indeed, if someone who does not even realize what has happened to him, or someone who wants to be praised for his strength of mind, can stay patient and untroubled, is it not shameful that ignorance, or a vain wish to please and be praised, should be stronger than true wisdom? As for things themselves, they do not touch the soul at all. They have no way into it, and cannot affect or move it by themselves. Only the soul can affect and move itself, and whatever things come along with it take on the character of the judgments (dogmata) it chooses to make about them.



Casaubon (1634)

After one consideration, man is nearest unto us; as we are bound to do them good, and to bear with them. But as he may oppose any of our true proper actions, so man is unto me but as a thing indifferent: even as the sun, or the wind, or some wild beast. By some of these it may be, that some operation or other of mine, may be hindered; however, of my mind and resolution itself, there can be no let or impediment, by reason of that ordinary constant both exception (or reservation wherewith it inclineth) and ready conversion of objects; from that which may not be, to that which may be, which in the prosecution of its inclinations, as occasion serves, it doth observe. For by these the mind doth turn and convert any impediment whatsoever, to be her aim and purpose. So that what before was the impediment, is now the principal object of her working; and that which before was in her way, is now her readiest way.

In today's English

In one sense, human beings are the closest thing to us, because we must do them good and put up with them. But insofar as some of them stand in the way of what I properly have to do, a human being becomes something indifferent to me, no different from the sun, the wind, or a wild animal. These may block some activity of mine, but they cannot block my intentions or my attitude, because the mind always acts with a reservation and can switch its aim. When something cannot be done, it turns to what can, as the situation allows. In this way the mind turns any obstacle into material for its own purpose. What blocked the action becomes the action, and what stood in the way becomes the way.



Casaubon (1634)

Honour that which is chiefest and most powerful in the world, and that is it, which makes use of all things, and governs all things. So also in thyself; honour that which is chiefest, and most powerful; and is of one kind and nature with that which we now spake of. For it is the very same, which being in thee, turneth all other things to its own use, and by whom also thy life is governed.

In today's English

Honor the best and most powerful thing in the universe, the one that uses everything and governs everything. In the same way, honor the best and most powerful thing in yourself, which is of the same kind as that. It is the part of you that uses everything else and by which your life is governed.



Casaubon (1634)

That which doth not hurt the city itself; cannot hurt any citizen. This rule thou must remember to apply and make use of upon every conceit and apprehension of wrong. If the whole city be not hurt by this, neither am I certainly. And if the whole be not, why should I make it my private grievance? consider rather what it is wherein he is overseen that is thought to have done the wrong. Again, often meditate how swiftly all things that subsist, and all things that are done in the world, are carried away, and as it were conveyed out of sight: for both the substance themselves, we see as a flood, are in a continual flux; and all actions in a perpetual change; and the causes themselves, subject to a thousand alterations, neither is there anything almost, that may ever be said to be now

In today's English

What does not harm the city does not harm the citizen. Apply this rule every time you think you have been wronged. If the city is not harmed by this, then neither am I. And if the whole is not harmed, why should I make it my private grievance? Instead, consider what mistake the person who seems to have done wrong has made. Again, think often about how quickly everything that exists and everything that happens is swept past and carried out of sight. Substance is like a river in constant flow, actions are always changing, causes undergo endless variations, and almost nothing stands still. Next to this, and following from it, consider the endless gulf of past time and the immense stretch of time to come, into which everything vanishes. So are you not a fool to be

Casaubon (1634) · continued

settled and constant. Next unto this, and which follows upon it, consider both the infiniteness of the time already past, and the immense vastness of that which is to come, wherein all things are to be resolved and annihilated. Art not thou then a very fool, who for these things, art either puffed up with pride, or distracted with cares, or canst find in thy heart to make such moans as for a thing that would trouble thee for a very long time? Consider the whole universe whereof thou art but a very little part, and the whole age of the world together, whereof but a short and very momentary portion is allotted unto thee, and all the fates and destinies together, of which how much is it that comes to thy part and share! Again: another doth trespass against me. Let him look to that. He is master of his own disposition, and of his own operation. I for my part am in the meantime in possession of as much, as the common nature would have me to possess: and that which mine own nature would have me do, I do.

In today's English · continued

puffed up by these things, or torn apart by worry over them, or to complain as if they could trouble you for long? Consider the whole of existence, of which you are a tiny part, and the whole of time, of which a brief, fleeting moment has been given to you, and all of fate, and how small your share of it is. Again: someone wrongs me. That is his business. He has his own disposition and his own activity. Meanwhile I have what the common nature wants me to have now, and I do what my own nature wants me to do now.



Casaubon (1634)

Let not that chief commanding part of thy soul be ever subject to any variation through any corporal either pain or pleasure, neither suffer it to be mixed with these, but let it both circumscribe itself, and confine those affections to their own proper parts and members. But if at any time they do reflect and rebound upon the mind and understanding (as in an united and compacted body it must needs;) then must thou not go about to resist sense and feeling, it being natural. However let not thy understanding to this natural sense and feeling, which whether unto our flesh pleasant or painful, is unto us nothing properly, add an opinion of either good or bad and all is well.

In today's English

Never let the ruling, sovereign part of your soul be shaken by any movement of the flesh, painful or pleasant. Do not let it mix with them. Let it keep to its own boundaries and keep those feelings confined to the parts of the body where they belong. When they do spread up into the mind, as they must in a body that is all one unit, do not try to fight the sensation, since it is natural. But do not let your ruling part add to that natural sensation, whether pleasant or painful to the flesh, which is really nothing to us, any opinion that it is good or bad, and all is well.



Casaubon (1634)

To live with the Gods. He liveth with the Gods, who at all times affords unto them the spectacle of a soul, both contented and well pleased with whatsoever is afforded, or allotted unto her; and performing whatsoever is pleasing to that Spirit, whom (being part of himself) Jove hath appointed to every man as his overseer and governor.

In today's English

'Live with the gods.' A person lives with the gods when he constantly shows them a soul that is content and pleased with whatever it has been given or assigned, and that does whatever pleases the spirit that Zeus has given to every person as his overseer and governor, a spirit that is part of himself.



Casaubon (1634)

Be not angry neither with him whose breath, neither with him whose arm holes, are offensive. What can he do? such is his breath naturally, and such are his arm holes; and from such, such an effect, and such a smell must of necessity proceed. 'O, but the man (sayest thou) hath understanding in him, and might of himself know, that he by standing near, cannot choose but offend.' And thou also (God bless thee!) hast understanding. Let thy reasonable faculty, work upon his reasonable faculty; show him his fault, admonish him. If he hearken unto thee, thou hast cured him, and there will be no more occasion of anger.

In today's English

Do not get angry with someone who has bad breath or smelly armpits. What can he do about it? His breath is like that, his armpits are like that, and such smells are bound to come from such sources. 'But he has reason,' you say, 'and could figure out, if he thought about it, that he offends people by standing close.' Well, bless you, you have reason too. Use your reason to move him. Point it out to him, remind him. If he listens, you will have cured him, and there will be no need for anger.



Casaubon (1634)

'Where there shall neither roarer be, nor harlot.' Why so? As thou dost purpose to live, when thou hast retired thyself to some such place, where neither roarer nor harlot is: so mayest thou here. And if they will not suffer thee, then mayest thou leave thy life rather than thy calling, but so as one that doth not think himself anyways wronged. Only as one would say, Here is a smoke; I will out of it. And what a great matter is this! Now till some such thing force me out, I will continue free; neither shall any man hinder me to do what I will, and my will shall ever be by the proper nature of a reasonable and sociable creature, regulated and directed.

In today's English

'Where there will be no brawler and no prostitute.' Why? You can live here the way you plan to live once you have retreated to some place without brawlers or prostitutes. And if they will not let you, then leave life itself rather than your proper calling, but leave as someone who does not think he has been wronged in any way, as if to say, 'There is smoke here, so I will go.' Why make a big deal of it? But as long as nothing like that drives me out, I remain free, and no one will stop me from doing what I want, and what I want will always be guided by the nature of a rational and social being.

115/415

Book V · XXIV



Casaubon (1634)

That rational essence by which the universe is governed, is for community and society; and therefore hath it both made the things that are worse, for the best, and hath allied and knit together those which are best, as it were in an harmony. Seest thou not how it hath sub-ordinated, and co-ordinated? and how it hath distributed unto everything according to its worth? and those which have the pre-eminency and superiority above all, hath it united together, into a mutual consent and agreement.

In today's English

The rational mind that governs the universe is social. So it has made lower things for the sake of higher ones, and has joined the higher ones together in harmony with one another. Do you see how it has arranged things, some under others and some alongside each other, and given each its share according to its worth, and brought the best of all into mutual agreement?

116/415

Book V · XXV



Casaubon (1634)

How hast thou carried thyself hitherto towards the Gods? towards thy parents? towards thy brethren? towards thy wife? towards thy children? towards thy masters? thy foster-fathers? thy friends? thy domestics? thy servants? Is it so with thee, that hitherto thou hast neither by word or deed wronged any of them? Remember withal through how many things thou hast already passed, and how many thou hast been able to endure; so that now the legend of thy life is full, and thy charge is accomplished. Again, how many truly good things have certainly by thee been discerned? how many pleasures, how many pains hast thou passed over with contempt? how many things eternally glorious hast thou despised? towards how many perverse unreasonable men hast thou carried thyself kindly, and discreetly?

In today's English

How have you behaved so far toward the gods, your parents, your brother, your wife, your children, your teachers, your guardians, your friends, your household, your servants? Have

you, up to now, never wronged any of them in word or deed? Remember also how much you have already been through and how much you have been able to bear, so that the story of your life is now complete and your service is done. And how many truly good things have you recognized? How many pleasures and pains have you looked past with indifference? How many so-called glories have you turned down? How many unreasonable, difficult people have you treated with kindness and good sense?

117/415

Book V · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

Why should imprudent unlearned souls trouble that which is both learned, and prudent? And which is that that is so? she that understandeth the beginning and the end, and hath the true knowledge of that rational essence, that passeth through all things subsisting, and through all ages being ever the same, disposing and dispensing as it were this universe by certain periods of time.

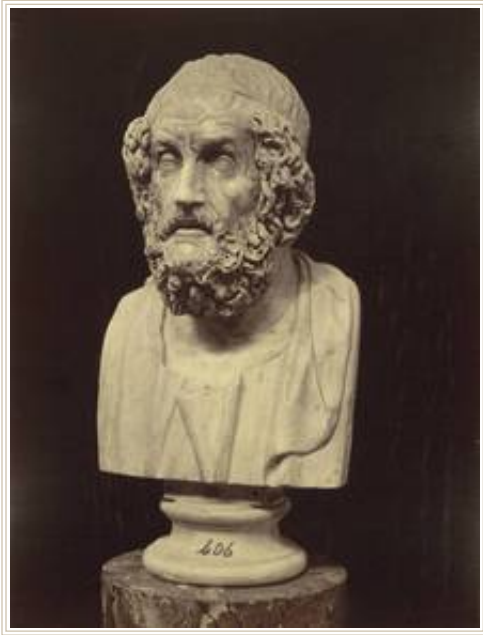
In today's English

Why should unskilled, ignorant souls throw into confusion a soul that is skilled and wise? And which soul is skilled and wise? The one that knows the beginning and the end, and truly understands the rational mind that runs through all that exists and, unchanged through all time, governs the universe in fixed cy-

cles.

118/415

Book V · XXVII



Casaubon (1634)

Within a very little while, thou wilt be either ashes, or a scel-tum; and a name perchance; and perchance, not so much as a name. And what is that but an empty sound, and a rebounding echo? Those things which in this life are dearest unto us, and of most account, they are in themselves but vain, putrid, contemptible. The most weighty and serious, if rightly esteemed, but as puppies, biting one another: or untoward children, now laughing and then crying. As for faith, and modesty, and justice, and truth, they long since, as one of the poets hath it, have abandoned this spacious earth, and retired themselves unto heaven. What is it then that doth keep thee here, if things sensible be so mutable and unsettled? and the senses so obscure, and so fallible? and our souls nothing but an exhalation of blood? and to be in credit among such, be but vanity? What is it that thou dost stay for? an extinction, or a translation; either of them with a propitious and contented mind. But still that time come, what will content thee? what else, but to worship and praise the

Gods; and to do good unto men. To bear with them, and to forbear to do them any wrong. And for all external things belonging either to this thy wretched body, or life, to remember that they are neither thine, nor in thy power.

In today's English

Very soon you will be ashes or a skeleton, and maybe a name, and maybe not even a name. And a name is just a noise and an echo. The things we value most in life are empty, rotten, and trivial: puppies snapping at each other, or squabbling children who laugh and then burst into tears a moment later. As for trustworthiness, modesty, justice, and truth, they long ago, as the poet says, 'left the wide-wayed earth for Olympus.' So what keeps you here, if the things we perceive are so changeable and unstable, our senses so dim and unreliable, our soul itself just a vapor rising from the blood, and a good reputation among such people meaningless? What are you waiting for? Either extinction or a move elsewhere, and either one with a calm and gracious mind. And until that time comes, what is enough? What else but to worship and praise the gods, and to do good to people: to put up with them and to hold back from wronging them. And as for everything outside the limits of your poor body and your breath, remember that none of it is yours or in your power.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou mayest always speed, if thou wilt but make choice of the right way; if in the course both of thine opinions and actions, thou wilt observe a true method. These two things be common to the souls, as of God, so of men, and of every reasonable creature, first that in their own proper work they cannot be hindered by anything; and secondly, that their happiness doth consist in a disposition to, and in the practice of righteousness; and that in these their desire is terminated.

In today's English

You can always have a good flow to your life if you take the right road, if you follow the right method in your thinking and acting. These two things are common to the souls of God, of human beings, and of every rational creature: first, nothing outside can block them in their own proper work; and second, their good lies in a disposition toward justice and in practicing it, and there their desire comes to rest.



Casaubon (1634)

If this neither be my wicked act, nor an act anyways depending from any wickedness of mine, and that by it the public is not hurt; what doth it concern me? And wherein can the public be hurt? For thou must not altogether be carried by conceit and common opinion: as for help thou must afford that unto them after thy best ability, and as occasion shall require, though they sustain damage, but in these middle or worldly things; but however do not thou conceive that they are truly hurt thereby: for that is not right. But as that old foster-father in the comedy, being now to take his leave doth with a great deal of ceremony, require his foster-child's rhombus, or rattle-top, remembering nevertheless that it is but a rhombus; so here also do thou likewise. For indeed what is all this pleading and public bawling for at the courts? O man, hast thou forgotten what those things are! yea but they are things that others much care for, and highly esteem of. Wilt thou therefore be a fool too? Once I was; let that suffice.

In today's English

If this is not my own wrongdoing, and does not result from any wrongdoing of mine, and the community is not harmed by it, why should it concern me? And how could the community be harmed? Do not let yourself be carried away entirely by impressions and common opinion. Help people as best you can and as the situation calls for, even if what they have lost is only one of these in-between, worldly things. But do not imagine that they have really been harmed, because that is not a good way to think. Be like the old foster father in the comedy who, as he was leaving, made a great show of asking for his foster child's spinning top, while remembering all along that it was only a top. Do the same here. What is all this pleading and shouting in the courts for? Man, have you forgotten what these things are? 'Yes, but other people care about them and value them highly.' So should you be a fool too? I was once. That is enough.

121/415

Book V · XXX



Casaubon (1634)

Let death surprise me when it will, and where it will, I may be εὖμοιρος, or a happy man, nevertheless.

For he is a happy man, who in his lifetime dealeth unto himself a happy lot and portion. A happy lot and portion is, good inclinations of the soul, good desires, good actions.

In today's English

Let death come for me whenever and wherever it likes, I can still be εὖμοιρος (eumoiros, 'one who has a good lot,' a happy man).

For a happy man is one who gives himself a good lot in life, and a good lot is good habits of soul, good impulses, and good actions.



Casaubon (1634)

The matter itself, of which the universe doth consist, is of itself very tractable and pliable. That rational essence that doth govern it, hath in itself no cause to do evil. It hath no evil in itself; neither can it do anything that is evil: neither can anything be hurt by it. And all things are done and determined according to its will and prescript.

In today's English

The matter that the universe is made of is obedient and easy to shape. The reason that governs it has no motive in itself for doing wrong. It has no evil in it, does nothing evil, and nothing is harmed by it. Everything comes into being and is completed according to it.

123/415

Book VI · II



Casaubon (1634)

Be it all one unto thee, whether half frozen or well warm; whether only slumbering, or after a full sleep; whether discommended or commended thou do thy duty: or whether dying or doing somewhat else; for that also 'to die,' must among the rest be reckoned as one of the duties and actions of our lives.

In today's English

Let it make no difference to you whether you are half frozen or warm when you do your duty, whether only half awake or after a full night's sleep, whether criticized or praised, whether dying or doing something else. For dying too must be counted among the duties and actions of our life.

124/415

Book VI · III



Casaubon (1634)

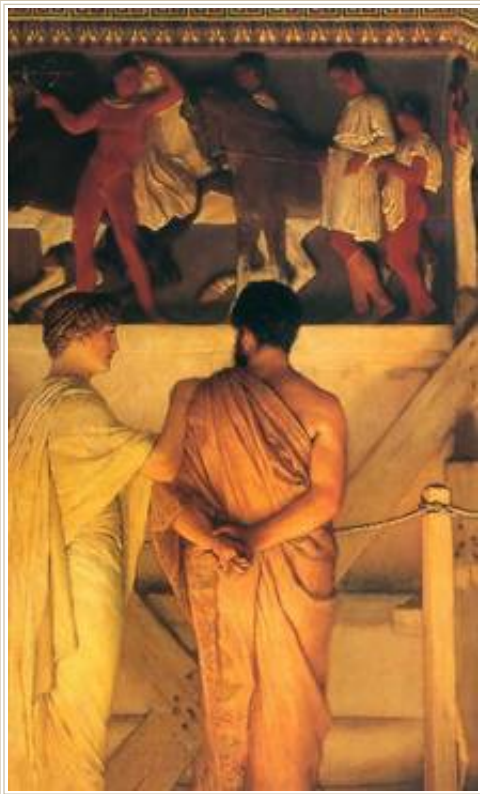
Look in, let not either the proper quality, or the true worth of anything pass thee, before thou hast fully apprehended it.

In today's English

Look inside. Do not let the particular quality or true worth of anything escape you before you have fully grasped it.

125/415

Book VI · IV



Casaubon (1634)

All substances come soon to their change, and either they shall be resolved by way of exhalation (if so be that all things shall be reunited into one substance), or as others maintain, they shall be scattered and dispersed. As for that Rational Essence by which all things are governed, as it best understandeth itself, both its own disposition, and what it doth, and what matter it hath to do with and accordingly doth all things; so we that do not, no wonder, if we wonder at many things, the reasons whereof we cannot comprehend.

In today's English

All substances quickly change. Either they will turn to vapor, if all substance is one, or, as others hold, they will be scattered. The rational mind that governs all things understands its own condition perfectly, what it does, and what material it works on, and acts accordingly. We do not, so it is no wonder that we are amazed by many things whose reasons we cannot grasp.

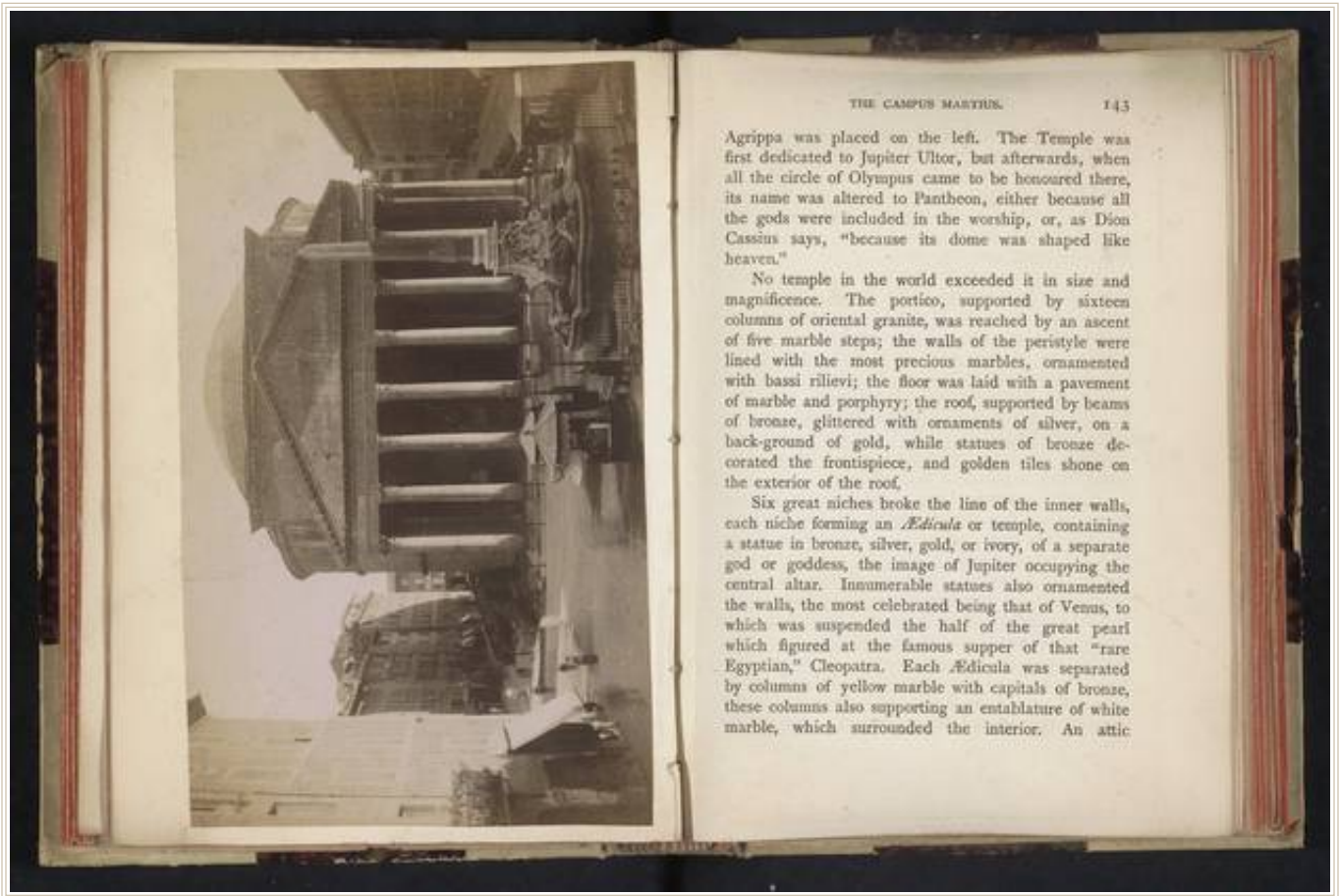


Casaubon (1634)

The best kind of revenge is, not to become like unto them.

In today's English

The best revenge is not to become like them.



Casaubon (1634)

Let this be thy only joy, and thy only comfort,
from one sociable kind action without intermis-
sion to pass unto another, God being ever in thy
mind.

In today's English

Let this be your one joy and your one comfort: to
move from one kind, social action to the next
without a break, always keeping God in mind.

128/415

Book VI · VII

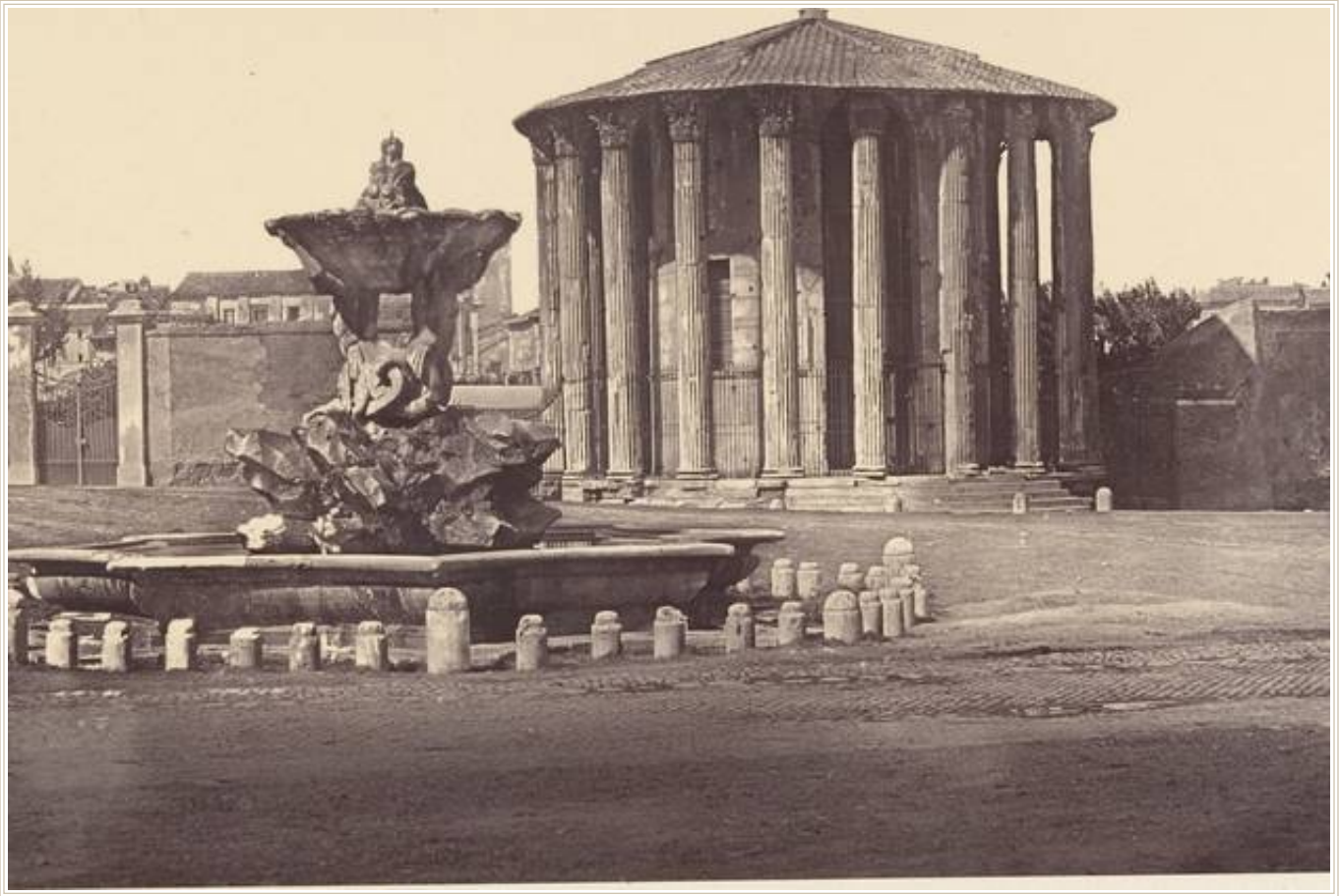


Casaubon (1634)

The rational commanding part, as it alone can stir up and turn itself; so it maketh both itself to be, and everything that happeneth, to appear unto itself, as it will itself.

In today's English

The ruling reason is what wakes itself up and turns itself around. It makes itself whatever it wants to be, and makes everything that happens appear to it the way it wants.



Casaubon (1634)

According to the nature of the universe all things particular are determined, not according to any other nature, either about compassing and containing; or within, dispersed and contained; or without, depending. Either this universe is a mere confused mass, and an intricate context of things, which shall in time be scattered and dispersed again: or it is an union consisting of order, and administered by Providence. If the first, why should I desire to continue any longer in this fortuit confusion and commixtion? or why should I take care for anything else, but that as soon as may be I may be earth again? And why should I trouble myself any more whilst I seek to please the Gods? Whatsoever I do, dispersion is my end, and will come upon me whether I will or no. But if the latter be, then am not I religious in vain; then will I be quiet and patient, and put my trust in Him, who is the Governor of all.

In today's English

Each individual thing is brought to completion according to the nature of the universe, and not according to any other nature, whether one that surrounds it from outside, or one contained within it, or one that exists apart from it. Either the universe is a random jumble, a tangle of things that will be scattered again in time, or it is a unity, ordered and governed by providence. If the first, why would I want to stay any longer in this accidental muddle? Why should I care about anything except how soon I can turn back into earth? And why should I trouble myself trying to please the gods? Whatever I do, scattering will be my end, and it will come whether I like it or not. But if the second is true, then my reverence is not in vain. Then I will be calm and steady, and put my trust in the one who governs all.



Casaubon (1634)

Whensoever by some present hard occurrences thou art constrained to be in some sort troubled and vexed, return unto thyself as soon as may be, and be not out of tune longer than thou must needs. For so shalt thou be the better able to keep thy part another time, and to maintain the harmony, if thou dost use thyself to this continually; once out, presently to have recourse unto it, and to begin again.

In today's English

Whenever circumstances force you to be somewhat upset and thrown off balance, come back to yourself as quickly as you can, and do not stay out of rhythm longer than you must. You will keep the harmony better next time if you make a habit of always returning to it at once, and starting again.

131/415

Book VI · X



Casaubon (1634)

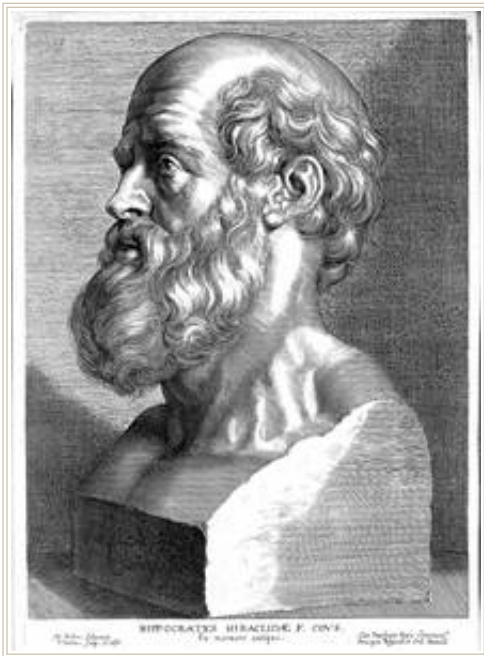
If it were that thou hadst at one time both a stepmother, and a natural mother living, thou wouldst honour and respect her also; nevertheless to thine own natural mother would thy refuge, and recourse be continually. So let the court and thy philosophy be unto thee. Have recourse unto it often, and comfort thyself in her, by whom it is that those other things are made tolerable unto thee, and thou also in those things not intolerable unto others.

In today's English

If you had a stepmother and a mother at the same time, you would treat your stepmother with respect, but you would keep going back to your mother. So let it be with the court and philosophy. Return to philosophy often and rest in her. She is what makes court life bearable for you, and makes you bearable at court.

132/415

Book VI · XI



Casaubon (1634)

How marvellous useful it is for a man to represent unto himself meats, and all such things that are for the mouth, under a right apprehension and imagination! as for example: This is the carcass of a fish; this of a bird; and this of a hog. And again more generally; This phalernum, this excellent highly commended wine, is but the bare juice of an ordinary grape. This purple robe, but sheep's hairs, dyed with the blood of a shellfish. So for coitus, it is but the attrition of an ordinary base entrail, and the excretion of a little vile snivel, with a certain kind of convulsion: according to Hippocrates his opinion. How excellent useful are these lively fancies and representations of things, thus penetrating and passing through the objects, to make their true nature known and apparent! This must thou use all thy life long, and upon all occasions: and then especially, when matters are apprehended as of great worth and respect, thy art and care must be to uncover them, and to behold their vileness, and to take away from them all those serious circumstances and expres-

sions, under which they made so grave a show. For outward pomp and appearance is a great juggler; and then especially art thou most in danger to be beguiled by it, when (to a man's thinking) thou most seemest to be employed about matters of moment.

In today's English

How useful it is, with meat and other fine foods in front of you, to picture them as they really are: this is the dead body of a fish, this the dead body of a bird or a pig. And more generally: this Falernian, this famous fine wine, is just the juice of an ordinary grape. This purple robe is sheep's wool dyed with the blood of a shellfish. And sex is just the rubbing together of body parts and the discharge of a little mucus, with a kind of spasm, as Hippocrates put it. How useful these vivid pictures are, going right to the heart of things and cutting through them, so that we see what they really are. You should do this all your life, on every occasion. Especially when things seem to deserve great respect, strip them bare, look at how cheap they really are, and peel away all the impressive language and trappings that made them look so important. Outward show is a great trickster, and you are most in danger of being fooled by it exactly when you think you are busy with things that really matter.



Casaubon (1634)

See what Crates pronounceth concerning
Xenocrates himself.

In today's English

Look at what Crates says about Xenocrates him-
self.



Casaubon (1634)

Those things which the common sort of people do admire, are most of them such things as are very general, and may be comprehended under things merely natural, or naturally affected and qualified: as stones, wood, figs, vines, olives. Those that be admired by them that are more moderate and restrained, are comprehended under things animated: as flocks and herds. Those that are yet more gentle and curious, their admiration is commonly confined to reasonable creatures only; not in general as they are reasonable, but as they are capable of art, or of some craft and subtile invention: or perchance barely to reasonable creatures; as they that delight in the possession of many slaves. But he that honours a reasonable soul in general, as it is reasonable and naturally sociable, doth little regard anything else: and above all things is careful to preserve his own, in the continual habit and exercise both of reason and socia-

In today's English

Most of the things ordinary people admire fall into broad, basic categories: things held together by mere physical structure or by natural growth, like stones, timber, figs, vines, and olives. People of a bit more refinement admire living things, like flocks and herds. People more refined still admire rational beings, though not as rational beings in general, but as people who are skilled at some craft or clever at something, or simply because they own a lot of them, like those who take pride in having many slaves. But someone who honors the rational soul in general, as rational and naturally social, cares little for anything else. Above all, he takes care to keep his own soul acting rationally and socially, and so works together with the one whose nature he shares: God.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

bleness: and thereby doth co-operate with him, of
whose nature he doth also participate; God.

135/415

Book VI · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

Some things hasten to be, and others to be no more. And even whatsoever now is, some part thereof hath already perished. Perpetual fluxes and alterations renew the world, as the perpetual course of time doth make the age of the world (of itself infinite) to appear always fresh and new. In such a flux and course of all things, what of these things that hasten so fast away should any man regard, since among all there is not any that a man may fasten and fix upon? as if a man would settle his affection upon some ordinary sparrow living by him, who is no sooner seen, than out of sight. For we must not think otherwise of our lives, than as a mere exhalation of blood, or of an ordinary respiration of air. For what in our common apprehension is, to breathe in the air and to breathe it out again, which we do daily: so much is it and no more, at once to breathe out all thy respirative faculty into that common air from whence but lately (as being but from yesterday, and to-day), thou didst first breathe it in, and with it, life.

In today's English

Some things are rushing to come into being, others to be gone, and even what is coming into being has already partly died. Constant flows and changes keep renewing the world, just as the unbroken passage of time keeps making the endless age of the world look always new. In such a river of things rushing past, which of them should anyone value, since there is nothing to hold on to? It would be like falling in love with one of the sparrows flying by: no sooner seen than gone. Our lives themselves are no different: a vapor rising from the blood, a breath of air. Breathing in the air and breathing it out again, which we do every moment, is no different from breathing out all your breath at once and giving it back to the common air you first drew it from, only yesterday or the day before, when you were born, and with it your life.



Casaubon (1634)

Not vegetative spiration, it is not surely (which plants have) that in this life should be so dear unto us; nor sensitive respiration, the proper life of beasts, both tame and wild; nor this our imaginative faculty; nor that we are subject to be led and carried up and down by the strength of our sensual appetites; or that we can gather, and live together; or that we can feed: for that in effect is no better, than that we can void the excrements of our food. What is it then that should be dear unto us? to hear a clattering noise? if not that, then neither to be applauded by the tongues of men. For the praises of many tongues, is in effect no better than the clattering of so many tongues. If then neither applause, what is there remaining that should be dear unto thee? This I think: that in all thy motions and actions thou be moved, and restrained according to thine own true natural constitution and Construction only. And to this even ordinary arts and professions do lead us. For it is that which every art doth aim at, that whatsoever it is, that is by art effected and prepared, may be fit for that work that it is prepared for. This is the end that he that dresseth the vine, and he that takes upon him either to tame colts, or to train up dogs, doth aim at. What else doth the

education of children, and all learned professions tend unto? Certainly then it is that, which should be dear unto us also. If in this particular it go well with thee, care not for the obtaining of other things. But is it so, that thou canst not but respect other things also? Then canst not thou truly be free? then canst thou not have self-content: then wilt thou ever be subject to passions. For it is not possible, but that thou must be envious, and jealous, and suspicious of them whom thou knowest can bereave thee of such things; and again, a secret underminer of them, whom thou seest in present possession of that which is dear unto thee. To be short, he must of necessity be full of confusion within himself, and often accuse the Gods, whosoever stands in need of these things. But if thou shalt honour and respect thy mind only, that will make thee acceptable towards thyself, towards thy friends very tractable; and conformable and concordant with the Gods; that is, accepting with praises whatsoever they shall think good to appoint and allot unto thee.

In today's English

What is worth valuing in life? Not breathing the way plants take in air, nor breathing the way animals do, wild and tame. Not our power of imagination, nor being pulled back and forth by the strength of our appetites. Not living in groups, nor eating, which in effect is no better than getting rid of what we have eaten. So what is worth valuing? Hearing a clattering noise? If not that, then not being applauded by people's tongues either, because the praise of many tongues is in effect just the clattering of many tongues. So if not applause, what is left that is worth valuing? This, I think: that in everything you do you move and hold back only according to your own true nature and design. Even ordinary crafts and professions point us toward this. Every craft aims at making what it produces fit for the work it was made for. That is what the vine-dresser aims at, and the horse trainer, and the dog trainer. What else are the education of children and all learned professions for? So this is what is worth valuing. If this goes well with you, do not care about getting anything else. But can you not help valuing other things too? Then you can never truly be free, never be content in yourself, never be free of passion. You will in-

In today's English · continued

evitably be envious, jealous, and suspicious of people who could take those things away, and you will secretly scheme against those who have what you value. In short, anyone who needs those things is bound to be in turmoil inside and often to blame the gods. But if you respect and honor only your own mind, you will be at peace with yourself, easy to get along with for your friends, and in harmony with the gods, that is, praising whatever they think good to assign and allot to you.

137/415

Book VI · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

Under, above, and about, are the motions of the elements; but the motion of virtue, is none of those motions, but is somewhat more excellent and divine. Whose way (to speed and prosper in it) must be through a way, that is not easily comprehended.

In today's English

The elements move down, up, and in circles, but the movement of virtue is none of these. It is something more divine, and it travels by a path hard to grasp, and goes on its way well.



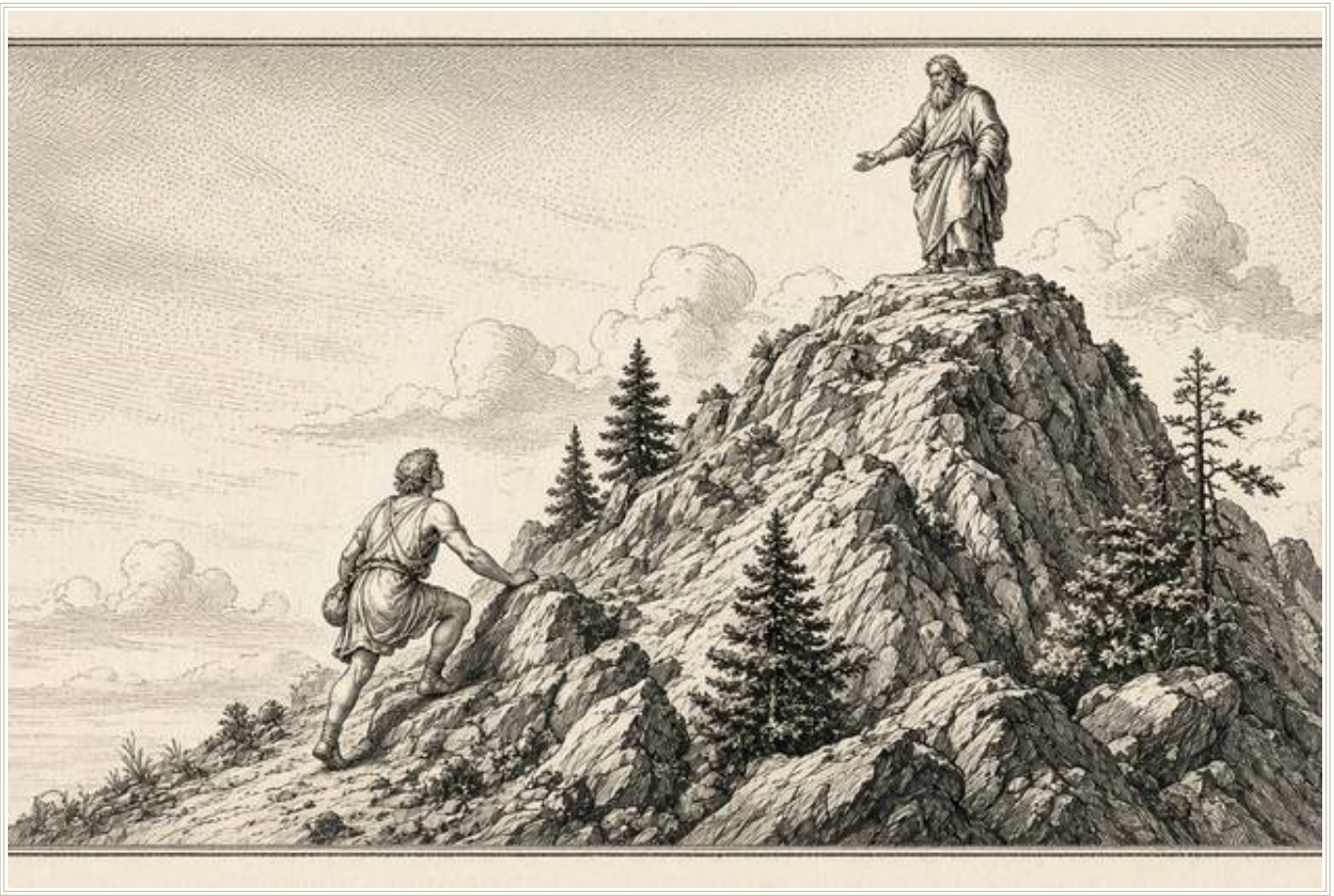
Casaubon (1634)

Who can choose but wonder at them? They will not speak well of them that are at the same time with them, and live with them; yet they themselves are very ambitious, that they that shall follow, whom they have never seen, nor shall ever see, should speak well of them. As if a man should grieve that he hath not been commended by them, that lived before him.

In today's English

What a thing people do! They refuse to praise the people living at the same time and alongside them, and yet they very much want to be praised by future generations, whom they have never seen and never will. It is almost like being upset that people who lived before you did not praise you.

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Book VI · XVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Do not ever conceive anything impossible to man, which by thee cannot, or not without much difficulty be effected; but whatsoever in general thou canst Conceive possible and proper unto any man, think that very possible unto thee also.

In today's English

Do not assume that if something is hard for you, it is impossible for a human being. Rather, if something is possible and proper for a human being, consider it possible for you as well.

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Book VI · XIX



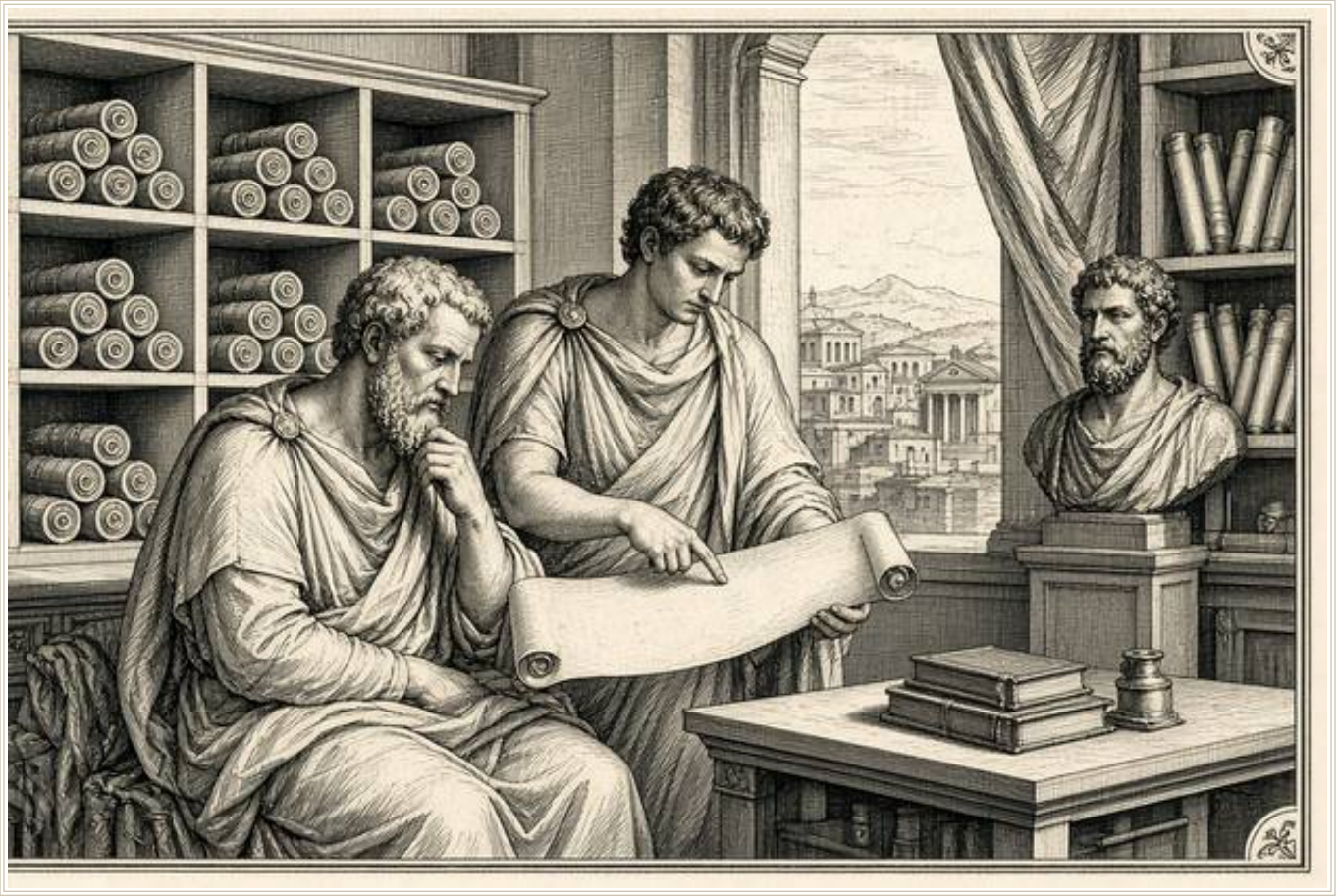
Casaubon (1634)

Suppose that at the palestra somebody hath all to-torn thee with his nails, and hath broken thy head. Well, thou art wounded. Yet thou dost not exclaim; thou art not offended with him. Thou dost not suspect him for it afterwards, as one that watcheth to do thee a mischief. Yea even then, though thou dost thy best to save thyself from him, yet not from him as an enemy. It is not by way of any suspicious indignation, but by way of gentle and friendly declination. Keep the same mind and disposition in other parts of thy life also. For many things there be, which we must conceit and apprehend, as though we had had to do with an antagonist at the palestra. For as I said, it is very possible for us to avoid and decline, though we neither suspect, nor hate.

In today's English

Suppose someone in the gym scratches you with his nails or head-butts you and gives you a bruise. We do not make a fuss,

we are not offended, and we do not suspect him afterward of plotting against us. We do keep an eye on him, but not as an enemy and not with suspicion. We just steer clear of him in a friendly way. Have the same attitude in the rest of your life. Let us overlook many things in those who are, so to speak, our sparring partners. As I said, it is possible to stay out of someone's way without suspecting or hating him.



Casaubon (1634)

If anybody shall reprove me, and shall make it apparent unto me, that in any either opinion or action of mine I do err, I will most gladly retract. For it is the truth that I seek after, by which I am sure that never any man was hurt; and as sure, that he is hurt that continueth in any error, or ignorance whatsoever.

In today's English

If anyone can show me and prove to me that I am wrong in some opinion or action, I will gladly change. I am looking for the truth, and no one was ever harmed by the truth. The one who is harmed is the person who persists in his own mistakes and ignorance.



Casaubon (1634)

I for my part will do what belongs unto me; as for other things, whether things unsensible or things irrational; or if rational, yet deceived and ignorant of the true way, they shall not trouble or distract me. For as for those creatures which are not endued with reason and all other things and-matters of the world whatsoever I freely, and generously, as one endued with reason, of things that have none, make use of them. And as for men, towards them as naturally partakers of the same reason, my care is to carry myself sociably. But whatsoever it is that thou art about, remember to call upon the Gods. And as for the time how long thou shalt live to do these things, let it be altogether indifferent unto thee, for even three such hours are sufficient.

In today's English

I do my own duty. Other things do not distract me, because they are either lifeless, or irrational, or rational but led astray and ignorant of the way. As for animals without reason and all other things and objects, I use them generously and freely, as a being with reason using things without it. As for people, since they share reason with me, I treat them as fellow members of a community. In everything, call on the gods for help. And do not care at all how long you will live to do these things, for even three hours spent this way are enough.



Casaubon (1634)

Alexander of Macedon, and he that dressed his mules, when once dead both came to one. For either they were both resumed into those original rational essences from whence all things in the world are propagated; or both after one fashion were scattered into atoms.

In today's English

Alexander the Great and his mule driver were brought to the same state by death. Either they were both taken back into the same original rational source from which everything in the world is produced, or they were both scattered alike into atoms.

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Book VI · XXIII



Casaubon (1634)

Consider how many different things, whether they concern our bodies, or our souls, in a moment of time come to pass in every one of us, and so thou wilt not wonder if many more things or rather all things that are done, can at one time subsist, and coexist in that both one and general, which we call the world.

In today's English

Think how many things are happening in each of us at the same moment, in body and in soul. Then you will not be surprised that many more things, or rather everything that happens, can exist at once in the one great whole we call the world.

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Book VI · XXIV



Casaubon (1634)

if any should put this question unto thee, how this word Antoninus is written, wouldst thou not presently fix thine intention upon it, and utter out in order every letter of it? And if any shall begin to gainsay thee, and quarrel with thee about it; wilt thou quarrel with him again, or rather go on meekly as thou hast begun, until thou hast numbered out every letter? Here then likewise remember, that every duty that belongs unto a man doth consist of some certain letters or numbers as it were, to which without any noise or tumult keeping thyself thou must orderly proceed to thy proposed end, forbearing to quarrel with him that would quarrel and fall out with thee.

In today's English

If someone asked you how to spell the name 'Antoninus,' would you not focus on it and say each letter in order? And if people started arguing with you about it, would you argue back, or would you calmly go on as you began, spelling out each letter? So here too, remember that every duty is made up of certain

parts, like letters. You must keep to these and go through them in order toward your goal, without getting flustered, and without picking a fight with those who want to fight with you.



Casaubon (1634)

Is it not a cruel thing to forbid men to affect those things, which they conceive to agree best with their own natures, and to tend most to their own proper good and behoof? But thou after a sort deniest them this liberty, as often as thou art angry with them for their sins. For surely they are led unto those sins whatsoever they be, as to their proper good and commodity. But it is not so (thou wilt object perchance). Thou therefore teach them better, and make it appear unto them: but be not thou angry with them.

In today's English

Is it not cruel to forbid people to go after what they think suits their nature and is good for them? Yet in a way you deny them that freedom whenever you get angry at them for doing wrong. They are drawn to whatever they do as if it were their own good and advantage. 'But it is not,' you may object. Then teach them and show them, without getting angry.

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Book VI · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

Death is a cessation from the impression of the senses, the tyranny of the passions, the errors of the mind, and the servitude of the body.

In today's English

Death is rest from the pull of the senses, from being jerked around by the passions, from the wanderings of the mind, and from service to the body.



Casaubon (1634)

If in this kind of life thy body be able to hold out, it is a shame that thy soul should faint first, and give over, take heed, lest of a philosopher thou become a mere Cæsar in time, and receive a new tincture from the court. For it may happen if thou dost not take heed. Keep thyself therefore, truly simple, good, sincere, grave, free from all ostentation, a lover of that which is just, religious, kind, tender-hearted, strong and vigorous to undergo anything that becomes thee. Endeavour to continue such, as philosophy (hadst thou wholly and constantly applied thyself unto it) would have made, and secured thee. Worship the Gods, procure the welfare of men, this life is short. Charitable actions, and a holy disposition, is the only fruit of this earthly life.

In today's English

It is shameful, in a life where your body has not given out, for your soul to give out first. Take care that you do not, in time, turn from a philosopher into a mere Caesar, and take on a new color from the court, for it can happen if you are not careful. Keep yourself simple, good, sincere, serious, free of showing off, a friend of justice, reverent toward the gods, kind, affectionate, and strong for the work that is yours to do. Try to remain the kind of person philosophy wanted to make you, and would have made you if you had given yourself to it fully and steadily. Revere the gods, look after people. Life is short. Generous actions and a reverent disposition are the only harvest of this earthly life.



Casaubon (1634)

Do all things as becometh the disciple of Antoninus Pius. Remember his resolute constancy in things that were done by him according to reason, his equability in all things, his sanctity; the cheerfulness of his countenance, his sweetness, and how free he was from all vainglory; how careful to come to the true and exact knowledge of matters in hand, and how he would by no means give over till he did fully, and plainly understand the whole state of the business; and how patiently, and without any contestation he would bear with them, that did unjustly condemn him: how he would never be over-hasty in anything, nor give ear to slanders and false accusations, but examine and observe with best diligence the several actions and dispositions of men. Again, how he was no backbiter, nor easily frightened, nor suspicious, and in his language free from all affectation and curiosity: and how easily he would content himself with few things, as lodging, bedding, clothing, and ordinary nourishment, and attendance. How able to endure labour, how patient; able through

his spare diet to continue from morning to evening without any necessity of withdrawing before his accustomed hours to the necessities of nature: his uniformity and constancy in matter of friendship. How he would bear with them that with all boldness and liberty opposed his opinions; and even rejoice if any man could better advise him: and lastly, how religious he was without superstition. All these things of him remember, that whensoever thy last hour shall come upon thee, it may find thee, as it did him, ready for it in the possession of a good conscience.

In today's English

Do everything as a student of Antoninus Pius. Remember his steady firmness in whatever he did according to reason, his evenness in everything, his holiness, the calm cheerfulness of his face, his sweetness, and how free he was of vanity. Remember how careful he was to understand the matter in front of him truly and exactly, and how he would not let it go until he fully and clearly understood the whole situation. Remember how patiently, without arguing, he put up with people who criticized him unfairly; how he was never in a hurry about anything; how he did not listen to slander and false accusations, but carefully examined people's actions and characters. He was no gossip, not easily frightened, not suspicious, and his speech had no affectation or fussiness. He was easily satisfied with little in lodging, bedding, clothing, food, and service. He could work hard and was patient. Because of his simple diet he could go from morning to evening without needing to relieve himself before his usual hour. He was consistent and steady in his friendships. He put up with people who openly and boldly disagreed with him, and was even glad when someone could give him better advice. And he was reverent toward the gods without being superstitious. Remember all this about him, so that when your last hour comes it may find you, as it found him, ready, with a clear conscience.

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Book VI · XXIX

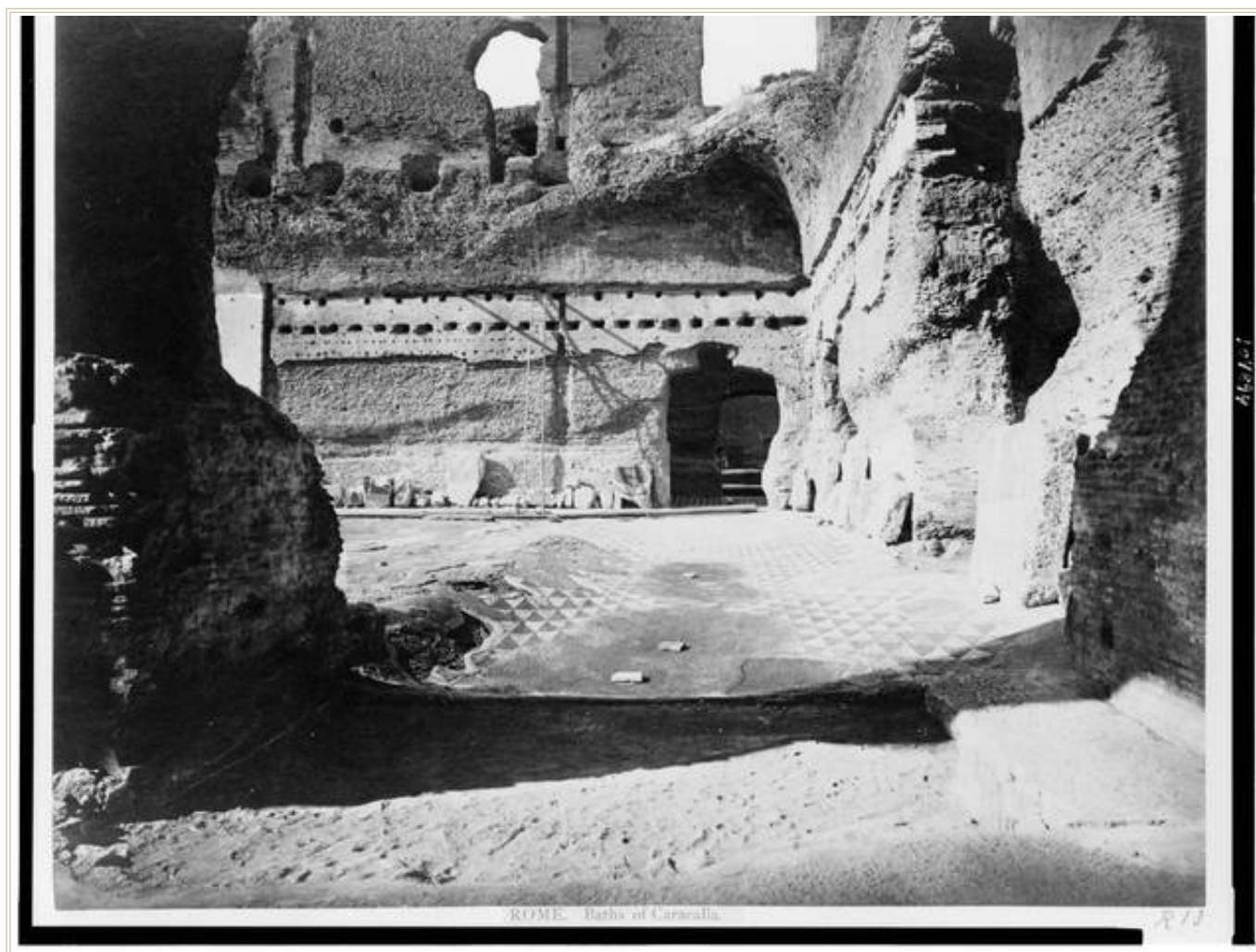


Casaubon (1634)

Stir up thy mind, and recall thy wits again from thy natural dreams, and visions, and when thou art perfectly awoken, and canst perceive that they were but dreams that troubled thee, as one newly awakened out of another kind of sleep look upon these worldly things with the same mind as thou didst upon those, that thou sawest in thy sleep.

In today's English

Wake up, and come back to your senses. Shake off your dreams. When you are fully awake and see that it was only dreams that troubled you, look at these worldly things, as someone newly awake, the same way you looked at the things in your dreams.

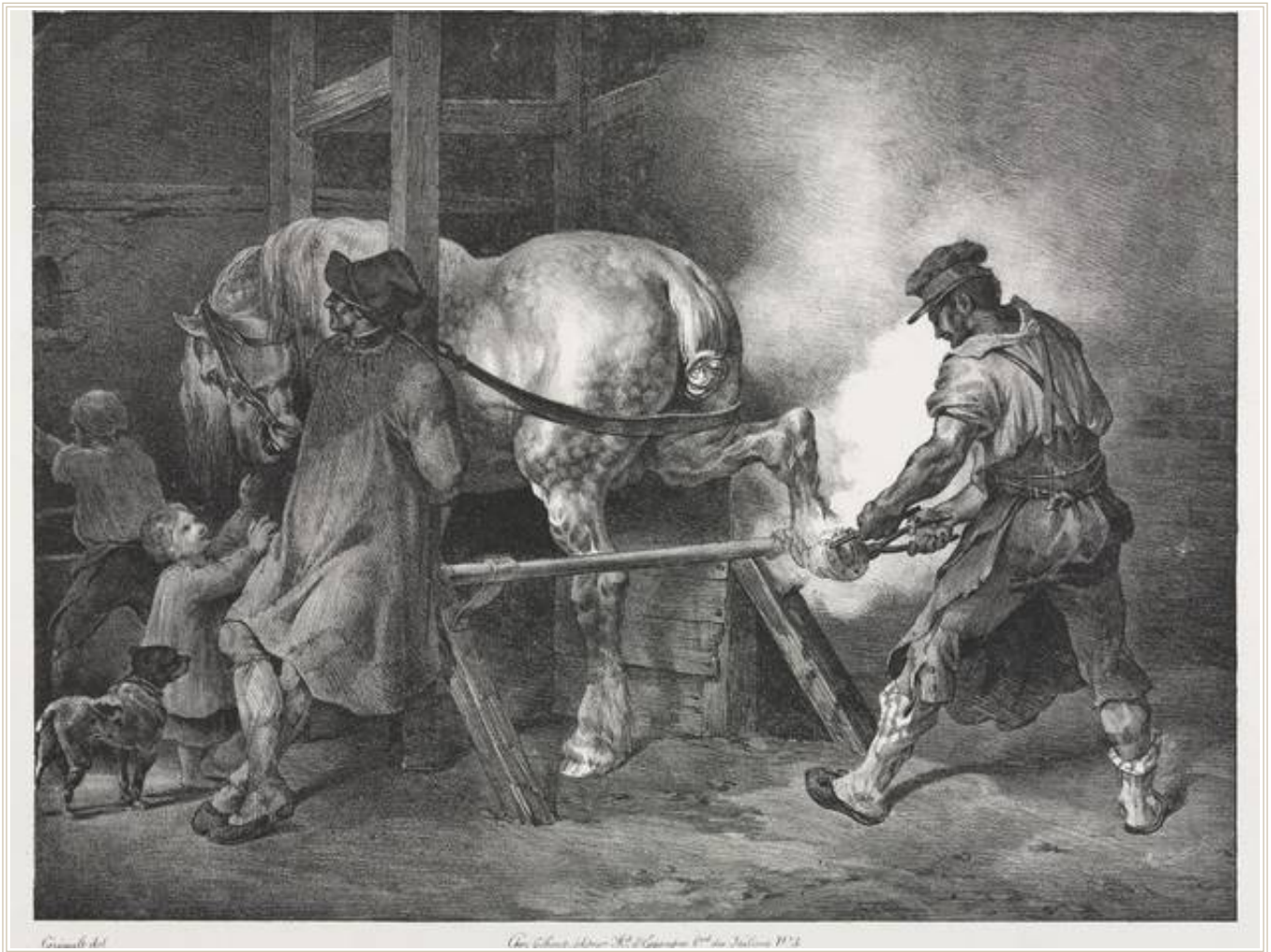


Casaubon (1634)

I consist of body and soul. Unto my body all things are indifferent, for of itself it cannot affect one thing more than another with apprehension of any difference; as for my mind, all things which are not within the verge of her own operation, are indifferent unto her, and for her own operations, those altogether depend of her; neither does she busy herself about any, but those that are present; for as for future and past operations, those also are now at this present indifferent unto her.

In today's English

I am made of body and soul. To the body, everything is indifferent, because it cannot tell one thing from another. To the mind, everything that is not its own activity is indifferent, and its own activities are all in its own power. Even of these, it is concerned only with the present ones, since its past and future activities are, right now, indifferent too.



Casaubon (1634)

As long as the foot doth that which belongeth unto it to do, and the hand that which belongs unto it, their labour, whatsoever it be, is not unnatural. So a man as long as he doth that which is proper unto a man, his labour cannot be against nature; and if it be not against nature, then neither is it hurtful unto him. But if it were so that happiness did consist in pleasure: how came notorious robbers, impure abominable livers, parricides, and tyrants, in so large a measure to have their part of pleasures?

In today's English

As long as the foot does the foot's work and the hand does the hand's, their labor, whatever it is, is not against nature. In the same way, as long as a person does what is proper to a human being, his labor cannot be against nature, and if it is not against nature, it cannot harm him. And if happiness consisted in pleasure, how is it that notorious robbers, perverts, parricides, and tyrants have had such a large share of pleasures?



Casaubon (1634)

Dost thou not see, how even those that profess mechanic arts, though in some respect they be no better than mere idiots, yet they stick close to the course of their trade, neither can they find in their heart to decline from it: and is it not a grievous thing that an architect, or a physician shall respect the course and mysteries of their profession, more than a man the proper course and condition of his own nature, reason, which is common to him and to the Gods?

In today's English

Do you not see how craftsmen, though in other ways no better than ignorant amateurs, stick to the principles of their trade and cannot bring themselves to depart from them? Is it not shameful that a builder or a doctor should respect the principles of his profession more than a human being respects the principles of his own nature, reason, which he shares with the gods?



Casaubon (1634)

Asia, Europe; what are they, but as corners of the whole world; of which the whole sea, is but as one drop; and the great Mount Athos, but as a clod, as all present time is but as one point of eternity. All, petty things; all things that are soon altered, soon perished. And all things come from one beginning; either all severally and particularly deliberated and resolved upon, by the general ruler and governor of all; or all by necessary consequence. So that the dreadful hiatus of a gaping lion, and all poison, and all hurtful things, are but (as the thorn and the mire) the necessary consequences of goodly fair things. Think not of these therefore, as things contrary to those which thou dost much honour, and respect; but consider in thy mind the true fountain of all.

In today's English

Asia and Europe are corners of the universe. The whole sea is a drop in it, Mount Athos a clod of earth, and all of present time a point in eternity. Everything is small, easily changed, quickly vanishing. Everything comes from one source: either directly from the ruling mind of the universe, deliberately and in each case, or as a necessary consequence of it. So the gaping jaws of a lion, poison, and every harmful thing, like thorns and mud, are byproducts of things that are good and beautiful. So do not think of them as foreign to what you revere. Think instead about the true source of everything.



Casaubon (1634)

He that seeth the things that are now, hath Seen all that either was ever, or ever shall be, for all things are of one kind; and all like one unto another. Meditate often upon the connection of all things in the world; and upon the mutual relation that they have one unto another. For all things are after a sort folded and involved one within another, and by these means all agree well together. For one thing is consequent unto another, by local motion, by natural conspiracy and agreement, and by substantial union, or, reduction of all substances into one.

In today's English

Whoever has seen the present has seen everything that ever was and ever will be, because everything is of one kind and alike. Think often about how all things in the world are connected and related to each other. In a way, they are all woven together, and so they are in sympathy with one another. One thing follows another in order, because of movement through space, natural sympathy, and the unity of all substance.

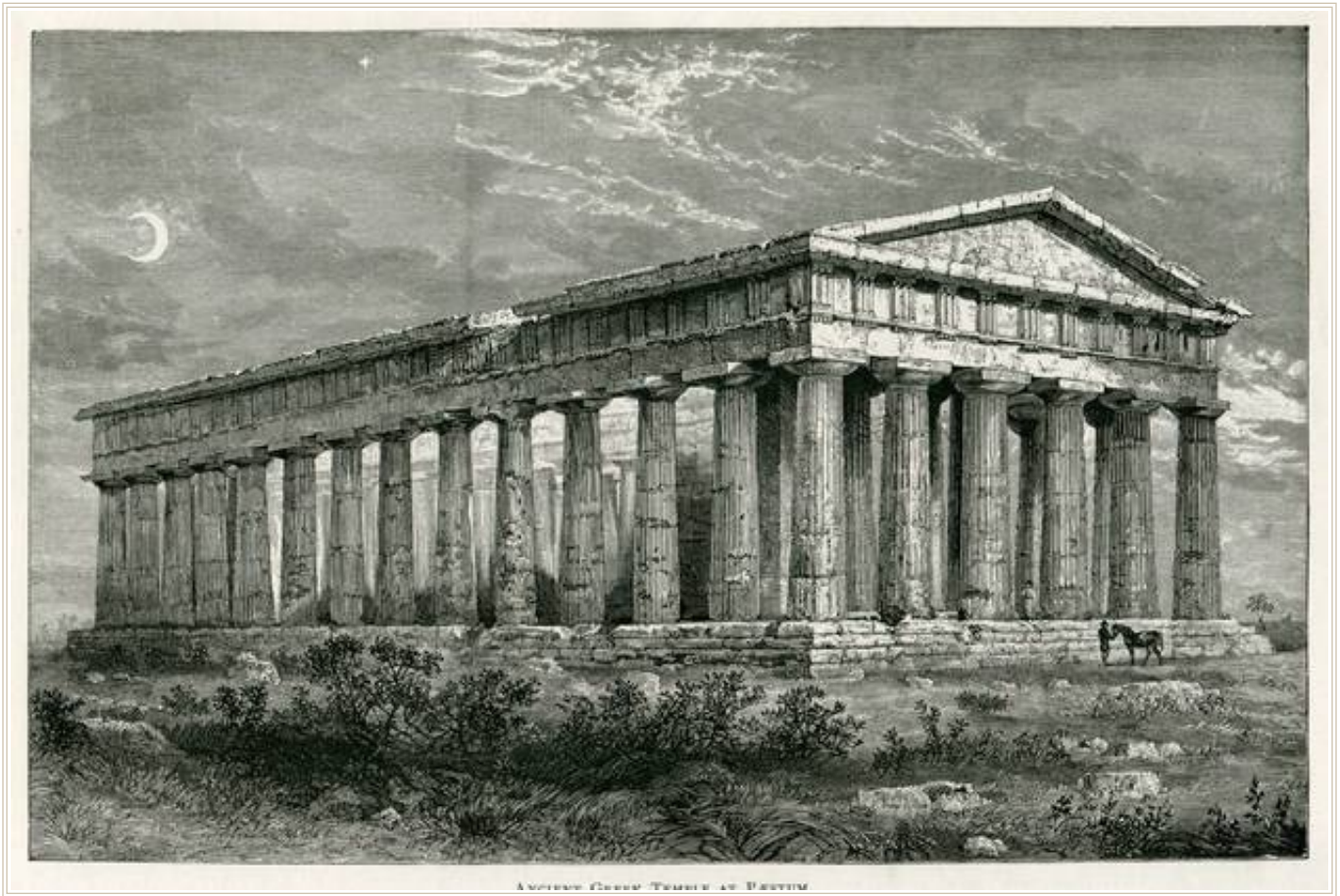


Casaubon (1634)

Fit and accommodate thyself to that estate and to those occurrences, which by the destinies have been annexed unto thee; and love those men whom thy fate it is to live with; but love them truly. An instrument, a tool, an utensil, whatsoever it be, if it be fit for the purpose it was made for, it is as it should be though he perchance that made and fitted it, be out of sight and gone. But in things natural, that power which hath framed and fitted them, is and abideth within them still: for which reason she ought also the more to be respected, and we are the more obliged (if we may live and pass our time according to her purpose and intention) to think that all is well with us, and according to our own minds. After this manner also, and in this respect it is, that he that is all in all doth enjoy his happiness.

In today's English

Adapt yourself to the circumstances fate has given you, and love the people fate has put you among, but love them truly. A tool or utensil of any kind is as it should be if it is good for the job it was made for, even though the person who made it may be gone. But in natural things, the power that made them is still in them and stays with them. So we should respect it all the more, and believe that if we live and act according to its intention, everything is as we would wish. That is the way, too, that the universe as a whole has what it wants.



Casaubon (1634)

What things soever are not within the proper power and jurisdiction of thine own will either to compass or avoid, if thou shalt propose unto thyself any of those things as either good, or evil; it must needs be that according as thou shalt either fall into that which thou dost think evil, or miss of that which thou dost think good, so wilt thou be ready both to complain of the Gods, and to hate those men, who either shall be so indeed, or shall by thee be suspected as the cause either of thy missing of the one, or falling into the other. And indeed we must needs commit many evils, if we incline to any of these things, more or less, with an opinion of any difference. But if we mind and fancy those things only, as good and bad, which wholly depend of our own wills, there is no more occasion why we should either murmur against the Gods, or be at enmity with any man.

In today's English

If you count as good or bad anything that is not in your own power to get or avoid, then whenever you meet with what you think is bad, or miss what you think is good, you will inevitably blame the gods and hate the people who are, or whom you suspect of being, the cause of your failure or misfortune. In fact we do much wrong because we care whether or not we get these things. But if we count as good and bad only what is in our own power, there is no reason left to complain about the gods or to be at war with anyone.



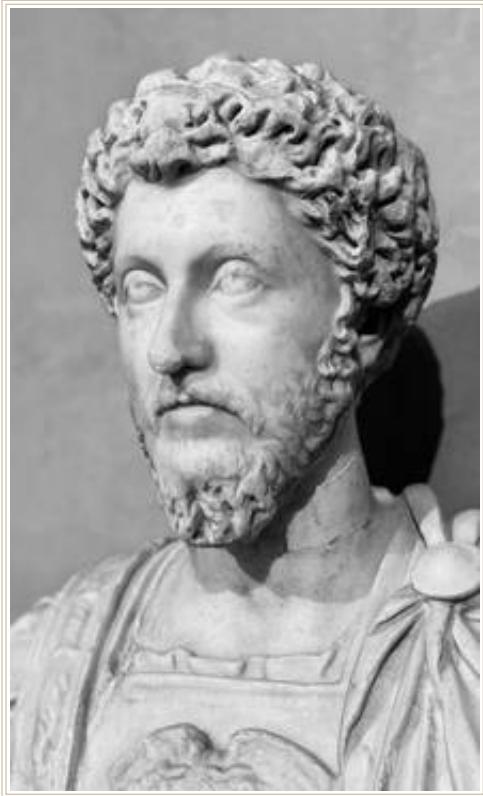
Casaubon (1634)

We all work to one effect, some willingly, and with a rational apprehension of what we do: others without any such knowledge. As I think Heraclitus in a place speaketh of them that sleep, that even they do work in their kind, and do confer to the general operations of the world. One man therefore doth co-operate after one sort, and another after another sort; but even he that doth murmur, and to his power doth resist and hinder; even he as much as any doth co-operate. For of such also did the world stand in need. Now do thou consider among which of these thou wilt rank thyself. For as for him who is the Administrator of all, he will make good use of thee whether thou wilt or no, and make thee (as a part and member of the whole) so to co-operate with him, that whatsoever thou doest, shall turn to the furtherance of his

own counsels, and resolutions. But be not thou for shame such a part of the whole, as that vile and ridiculous verse (which Chrysippus in a place doth mention) is a part of the comedy. XXXVIII. Doth either the sun take upon him to do that which belongs to the rain? or his son Aesculapius that, which unto the earth doth properly belong? How is it with every one of the stars in particular? Though they all differ one from another, and have their several charges and functions by themselves, do they not all nevertheless concur and co-operate to one end?

In today's English

We are all working together toward one result, some knowingly and with understanding, others without realizing it. As I think Heraclitus says, even people who are asleep are workers and contributors to what happens in the world. One person contributes in one way, another in another. Even the person who complains and does all he can to resist and obstruct what is happening contributes as much as anyone, because the world needs such people too. So think about which group you will place yourself in. The one who governs everything will make good use of you either way, and will put you to work as a part and member of the whole, so that whatever you do will serve his plans. But do not, for shame, be the kind of part that the cheap, ridiculous line in the play is, which Chrysippus mentions. [XXXVIII.] Does the sun try to do the rain's job? Or Asclepius, the sun's son, the earth's job? What about each of the stars? Though they are all different and each has its own duties, do they not all work together toward one end?



Casaubon (1634)

If so be that the Gods have deliberated in particular of those things that should happen unto me, I must stand to their deliberation, as discrete and wise. For that a God should be an imprudent God, is a thing hard even to conceive: and why should they resolve to do me hurt? for what profit either unto them or the universe (which they specially take care for) could arise from it? But if so be that they have not deliberated of me in particular, certainly they have of the whole in general, and those things which in consequence and coherence of this general deliberation happen unto me in particular, I am bound to embrace and accept of. But if so be that they have not deliberated at all (which indeed is very irreligious for any man to believe: for then let us neither sacrifice, nor pray, nor respect our oaths, neither let us any more use any of those things, which we persuaded of the presence and secret conversation of the Gods among us, daily use and practise:) but, I say, if so be that they have not indeed either in general, or particular deliberated of any of those things, that happen unto us in this world; yet God be thanked, that of those things that concern myself, it is lawful for me to deliberate myself, and all my deliberation is but concerning that which may be to me most profitable. Now that unto every one is

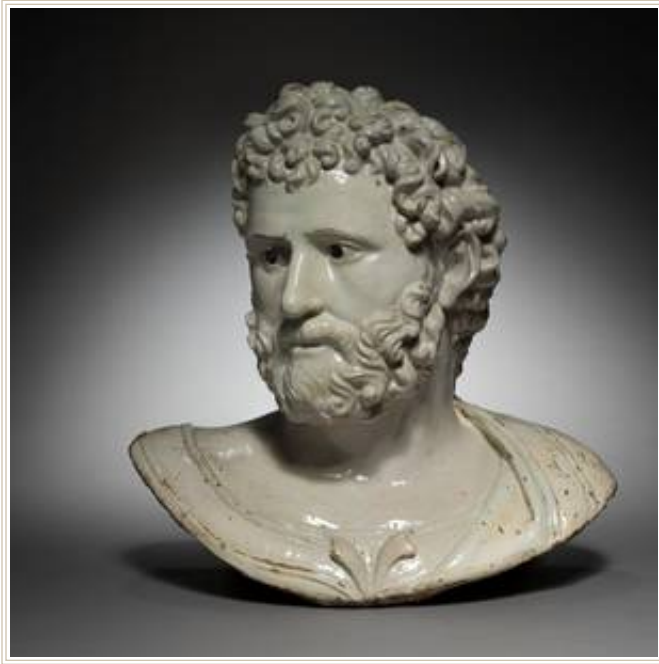
most profitable, which is according to his own constitution and nature. And my nature is, to be rational in all my actions and as a good, and natural member of a city and commonwealth, towards my fellow members ever to be sociably and kindly disposed and affected. My city and country as I am Antoninus, is Rome; as a man, the whole world. Those things therefore that are expedient and profitable to those cities, are the only things that are good and expedient for me.

In today's English

If the gods made decisions about me and what would happen to me, they decided well, because it is hard even to imagine a god without wisdom. And why would they want to harm me? What good would that do them, or the universe, which is their special concern? If they did not make decisions about me in particular, they certainly did about the universe as a whole, and I should welcome and accept whatever happens to me as a consequence of that. But if they make no decisions about anything at all (which is an irreverent thing to believe, for then let us stop sacrificing, praying, and swearing by them, and doing all the other things we do every day on the assumption that the gods are present and living among us), if, I say, they make no decisions about anything that happens to us, then thank God I can make decisions about myself, and all my deliberation concerns what is best for me. What is best for each person is what fits his own makeup and nature. And my nature is rational and social. As Antoninus, my city and country is Rome. As a human being, it is the world. So only what benefits these cities is good for me.

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Book VI · XL



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever in any kind doth happen to any one, is expedient to the whole. And thus much to content us might suffice, that it is expedient for the whole in general. But yet this also shalt thou generally perceive, if thou dost diligently take heed, that whatsoever doth happen to any one man or men.... And now I am content that the word expedient, should more generally be understood of those things which we otherwise call middle things, or things indifferent; as health, wealth, and the like.

In today's English

Whatever happens to each individual is good for the whole. That alone should be enough. But if you look carefully, you will also see in general that whatever benefits one person benefits others too. Here, though, I take the word 'benefit' in its more

ordinary sense, as applied to the in-between, indifferent things, like health and wealth.



Casaubon (1634)

As the ordinary shows of the theatre and of other such places, when thou art presented with them, affect thee; as the same things still seen, and in the same fashion, make the sight ingrateful and tedious; so must all the things that we see all our life long affect us. For all things, above and below, are still the same, and from the same causes. When then will there be an end?

In today's English

Just as the shows in the arena and similar places annoy you, because the same things are always seen in the same way and the sameness makes the spectacle tiresome, so it is with the whole of life. Everything, above and below, is always the same and comes from the same causes. How long, then?



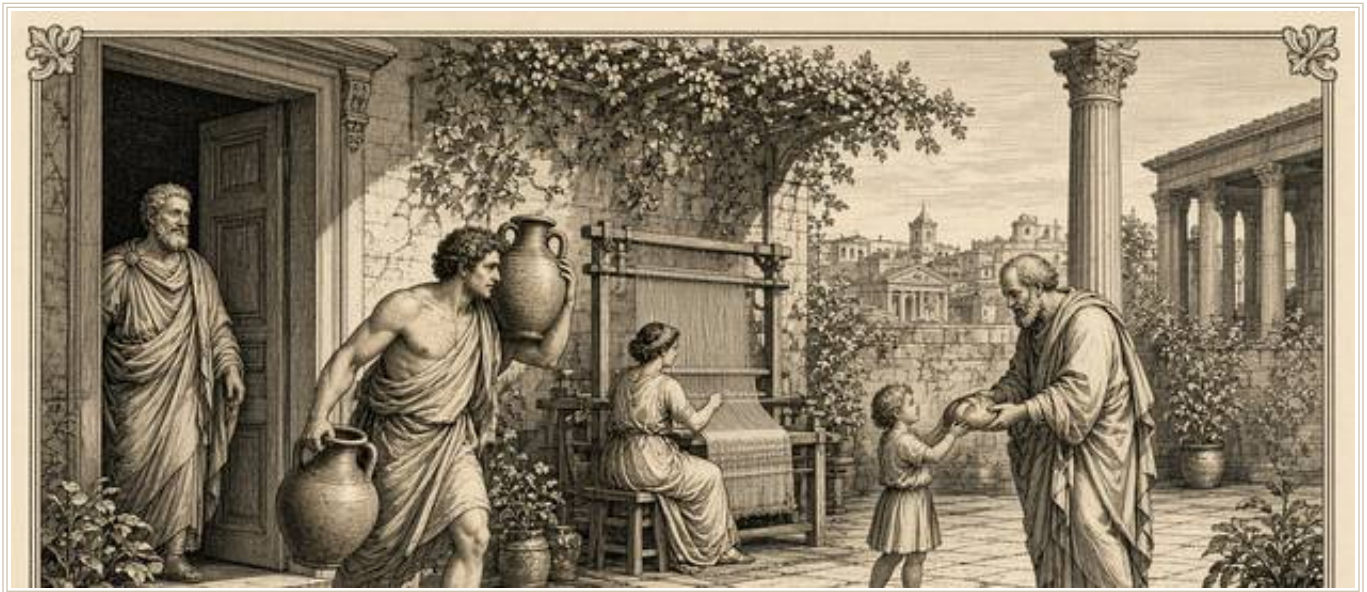
Casaubon (1634)

Let the several deaths of men of all sorts, and of all sorts of professions, and of all sort of nations, be a perpetual object of thy thoughts,... so that thou mayst even come down to Philistio, Phœbus, and Origanion. Pass now to other generations. Thither shall we after many changes, where so many brave orators are; where so many grave philosophers; Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Socrates. Where so many heroes of the old times; and then so many brave captains of the latter times; and so many kings. After all these, where Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes; where so many other sharp, generous, industrious, subtile, peremptory dispositions; and among others, even they, that have been the greatest scoffers and deriders of the frailty and brevity of this our human life; as Menippus, and others, as many as there have been such as he. Of all these consider, that they long since are all dead, and gone. And what do they suffer by it! Nay they that have not so much as a name remaining, what are they the worse for it? One thing there is, and that only, which is worth our while in this world, and ought by us much to be esteemed; and that is, according to truth and righteousness, meekly and loving-

ly to converse with false, and unrighteous men.

In today's English

Think constantly about all the people who have died: people of every kind, every profession, every nation, until you come down even to Philistion, Phoebus, and Origanion. Now move on to other generations. We must go where so many great orators have gone, so many serious philosophers, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Socrates; so many heroes of old, and then so many great generals and kings of later times. And besides them, Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes, and so many other brilliant, noble, hard-working, clever, and self-confident people, including those who mocked the fragile, short-lived life of human beings, like Menippus and others like him. Think of all of them: they have all been dead a long time. And what harm is that to them? And what harm is it to those whose names are not even remembered? Only one thing in this world is worth much: to live out your life in truth and justice, and to be gentle and kind toward liars and wrongdoers.



Casaubon (1634)

When thou wilt comfort and cheer thyself, call to mind the several gifts and virtues of them, whom thou dost daily converse with; as for example, the industry of the one; the modesty of another; the liberality of a third; of another some other thing. For nothing can so much rejoice thee, as the resemblances and parallels of several virtues, visible and eminent in the dispositions of those who live with thee; especially when, all at once, as near as may be, they represent themselves unto thee. And therefore thou must have them always in a readiness.

In today's English

When you want to cheer yourself up, think of the good qualities of the people around you: one person's energy, another's modesty, another's generosity, and some other quality in someone else. Nothing is as delightful as seeing examples of the virtues show up in the characters of the people you live with, especially when they crowd together as much as possible. So keep them always at hand.

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Book VI · XLIV



Casaubon (1634)

Dost thou grieve that thou dost weigh but so many pounds, and not three hundred rather? Just as much reason hast thou to grieve that thou must live but so many years, and not longer. For as for bulk and substance thou dost content thyself with that proportion of it that is allotted unto thee, so shouldst thou for time.

In today's English

Are you upset that you weigh only so many pounds and not three hundred? Then you have just as much reason to be upset that you will live only so many years and not more. Just as you are content with the amount of body you have been given, be content with the amount of time.



Casaubon (1634)

Let us do our best endeavours to persuade them; but however, if reason and justice lead thee to it, do it, though they be never so much against it. But if any shall by force withstand thee, and hinder thee in it, convert thy virtuous inclination from one object unto another, from justice to contented equanimity, and cheerful patience: so that what in the one is thy hindrance, thou mayst make use of it for the exercise of another virtue: and remember that it was with due exception, and reservation, that thou didst at first incline and desire. For thou didst not set thy mind upon things impossible. Upon what then? that all thy desires might ever be moderated with this due kind of reservation. And this thou hast, and mayst always obtain, whether the thing desired be in thy power

In today's English

Do your best to persuade them. But if reason and justice lead you to act, act, however much they are against it. If someone uses force to stand in your way and stop you, turn your good intention from one virtue to another, from justice to calm acceptance and cheerful patience, so that what blocks you in one direction becomes a chance to practice a different virtue. And remember that your first desire was always held with a proper reservation, since you were not setting your mind on the impossible. On what, then? On having all your desires always tempered by that proper reservation. That you have, and can always have, whether or not the thing you wanted is in your power. And what more do I want, if I can do what I was born and brought into the world for, to gov-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

or no. And what do I care for more, if that for which I was born and brought forth into the world (to rule all my desires with reason and discretion) may be?

In today's English · continued

ern all my desires with reason and good judgment?

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Book VI · XLVI



Casaubon (1634)

The ambitious supposeth another man's act, praise and applause, to be his own happiness; the voluptuous his own sense and feeling; but he that is wise, his own action.

In today's English

The ambitious person thinks his own good lies in what other people do, in their praise and applause. The pleasure lover thinks it lies in his own sensations. But the person with understanding thinks it lies in his own actions.



Casaubon (1634)

It is in thy power absolutely to exclude all manner of conceit and opinion, as concerning this matter; and by the same means, to exclude all grief and sorrow from thy soul. For as for the things and objects themselves, they of themselves have no such power, whereby to beget and force upon us any opinion at all.

In today's English

You have the power to have no opinion at all about this matter, and so to keep all distress out of your soul. Things themselves have no power by their own nature to create opinions in us or force them on us.

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Book VI · XLVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Use thyself when any man speaks unto thee, so to hearken unto him, as that in the interim thou give not way to any other thoughts; that so thou mayst (as far as is possible) seem fixed and fastened to his very soul, whosoever he be that speaks unto thee.

In today's English

Train yourself to listen carefully to whatever anyone says to you, without letting other thoughts in, so that, as far as possible, you seem to be inside the mind of the person speaking, whoever he is.

169/415
Book VI · XLIX



Casaubon (1634)

That which is not good for the bee-hive, cannot be good for the bee.

In today's English

What is not good for the hive is not good for the bee.

170/415

Book VI · L



Casaubon (1634)

Will either passengers, or patients, find fault and complain, either the one if they be well carried, or the others if well cured? Do they take care for any more than this; the one, that their shipmaster may bring them safe to land, and the other, that their physician may effect their recovery?

In today's English

Do passengers complain if they are carried safely, or patients if they are cured? Do they care about anything more than this: passengers, that their captain brings them safely to land, and patients, that their doctor makes them well?

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Book VI · LI



Casaubon (1634)

How many of them who came into the world at the same time when I did, are already gone out of it?

In today's English

How many of those who came into the world with me have already left it?

172/415

Book VI · LII



Casaubon (1634)

To them that are sick of the jaundice, honey seems bitter; and to them that are bitten by a mad dog, the water terrible; and to children, a little ball seems a fine thing. And why then should I be angry? or do I think that error and false opinion is less powerful to make men transgress, than either choler, being immoderate and excessive, to cause the jaundice; or poison, to cause rage?

In today's English

To people with jaundice, honey tastes bitter. To people bitten by a rabid dog, water is terrifying. To little children, a ball is a wonderful thing. So why should I be angry? Do I think that a mistaken belief has less power to make people do wrong than too much bile has to cause jaundice, or poison to cause rabies?



Casaubon (1634)

No man can hinder thee to live as thy nature doth require. Nothing can happen unto thee, but what the common good of nature doth require.

In today's English

No one can stop you from living according to the reason of your own nature. Nothing will happen to you that goes against the reason of the common nature.



Casaubon (1634)

What manner of men they be whom they seek to please, and what to get, and by what actions: how soon time will cover and bury all things, and how many it hath already buried!

In today's English

Think what kind of people they are whom others try to please, what they hope to gain, and by what actions. And think how quickly time will cover everything, and how much it has already buried.

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Book VII · I



Casaubon (1634)

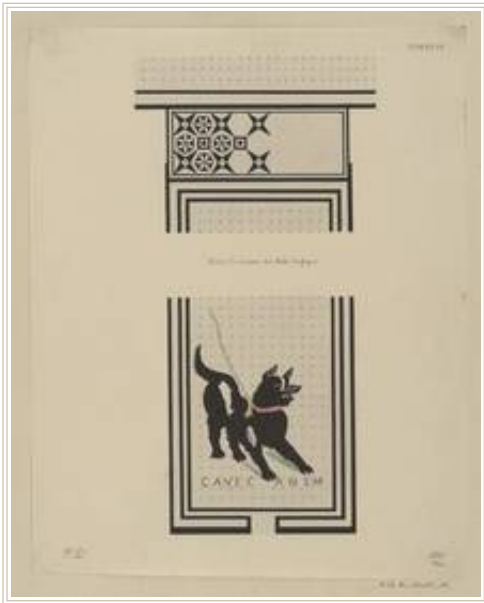
What is wickedness? It is that which many time and often thou hast already seen and known in the world. And so oft as anything doth happen that might otherwise trouble thee, let this memento presently come to thy mind, that it is that which thou hast already often Seen and known. Generally, above and below, thou shalt find but the same things. The very same things whereof ancient stories, middle age stories, and fresh stories are full whereof towns are full, and houses full. There is nothing that is new. All things that are, are both usual and of little continuance.

In today's English

What is wickedness? Something you have seen many times. And whenever anything happens that might upset you, remember right away: this is something I have often seen. Everywhere, above and below, you will find the same things, the same things that fill the histories of ancient times, of the middle ages, and of recent times, and that fill our cities and houses today. Nothing is new. Everything is both familiar and short-lived.

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Book VII · II



Casaubon (1634)

What fear is there that thy dogmata, or philosophical resolutions and conclusions, should become dead in thee, and lose their proper power and efficacy to make thee live happy, as long as those proper and correlative fancies, and representations of things on which they mutually depend (which continually to stir up and revive is in thy power,) are still kept fresh and alive? It is in my power concerning this thing that is happened, what soever it be, to conceit that which is right and true. If it be, why then am I troubled? Those things that are without my understanding, are nothing to it at all: and that is it only, which doth properly concern me. Be always in this mind, and thou wilt be right.

In today's English

How can your principles (dogmata) die out and lose their power to make you live well, unless the impressions and ideas they de-

pend on are snuffed out? And it is in your power to keep fanning those back into flame. I am able to form the right opinion about whatever has happened. If so, why am I upset? Things outside my mind are nothing to my mind at all, and my mind is the only thing that really concerns me. Keep to this, and you are on your feet.

177/415

Book VII · III



Casaubon (1634)

That which most men would think themselves most happy for, and would prefer before all things, if the Gods would grant it unto them after their deaths, thou mayst whilst thou livest grant unto thyself; to live again. See the things of the world again, as thou hast already seen them. For what is it else to live again? Public shows and solemnities with much pomp and vanity, stage plays, flocks and herds; conflicts and contentions: a bone thrown to a company of hungry curs; a bait for greedy fishes; the painfulness, and continual burden-bearing of wretched ants, the running to and fro of terrified mice: little puppets drawn up and down with wires and nerves: these be the objects of the world among all these thou must stand steadfast, meekly affected, and free from all manner of indignation; with this right ratiocination and apprehension; that as the worth is of those things which a man doth affect, so is in very deed every man's worth more or less.

In today's English

You can grant yourself, while you are alive, the thing most people would consider the greatest happiness and want above everything, if the gods gave it to them after death: to live again. Look at things again as you have seen them before, for that is what living again means. Public shows and ceremonies full of pomp and vanity, plays on the stage, flocks and herds, quarrels and fights; a bone thrown to a pack of hungry dogs; bait tossed to greedy fish; poor ants toiling and hauling their loads; frightened mice scurrying back and forth; puppets jerked around on strings. These are the things of the world. In the middle of all this you must stand firm, kindly and without contempt, understanding this: each person is worth exactly as much as the things he cares about.



Casaubon (1634)

Word after word, every one by itself, must the things that are spoken be conceived and understood; and so the things that are done, purpose after purpose, every one by itself likewise. And as in matter of purposes and actions, we must presently see what is the proper use and relation of every one; so of words must we be as ready, to consider of every one what is the true meaning, and signification of it according to truth and nature, however it be taken in common use.

In today's English

Follow what is said word by word, each word on its own, and follow what is done one aim at a time, each on its own. With aims and actions, we should see right away what each is directed at and how it fits. With words, we should be just as ready to consider what each one truly means, according to truth and nature, whatever it means in common usage.

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Book VII · V



Casaubon (1634)

Is my reason, and understanding sufficient for this, or no? If it be sufficient, without any private applause, or public ostentation as of an instrument, which by nature I am provided of, I will make use of it for the work in hand, as of an instrument, which by nature I am provided of. if it be not, and that otherwise it belong not unto me particularly as a private duty, I will either give it over, and leave it to some other that can better effect it: or I will endeavour it; but with the help of some other, who with the joint help of my reason, is able to bring somewhat to pass, that will now be seasonable and useful for the common good. For whatsoever I do either by myself, or with some other, the only thing that I must intend, is, that it be good and expedient for the public. For as for praise, consider how many who once were much commended, are now already quite forgotten, yea they that commended them, how even they themselves are long since dead and gone. Be not therefore ashamed, whensoever thou

must use the help of others. For whatsoever it be that lieth upon thee to effect, thou must propose it unto thyself, as the scaling of walls is unto a soldier. And what if thou through either lameness or some other impediment art not able to reach unto the top of the battlements alone, which with the help of another thou mayst; wilt thou therefore give it over, or go about it with less courage and alacrity, because thou canst not effect it all alone?

In today's English

Is my mind up to this task, or not? If it is, I use it for the job as a tool nature has given me, without seeking private applause or public show. If it is not, and the job is not specifically my duty, I either step aside and leave it to someone who can do it better, or I do it as well as I can with the help of someone who, working with my mind, can accomplish what is timely and useful for the common good. Whatever I do, alone or with someone else, I must aim only at what benefits and suits the community. As for praise, think how many people who were once highly praised are now completely forgotten, and how those who praised them are long dead too. So do not be ashamed to accept help. Whatever falls to you to do, approach it the way a soldier approaches storming a wall. What if you are lame, or have some other handicap, and cannot climb the battlements alone, but can with someone's help? Will you give up, or go about it with less courage and energy, because you cannot do it all by yourself?

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Book VII · VI



Casaubon (1634)

Let not things future trouble thee. For if necessity so require that they come to pass, thou shalt (whensoever that is) be provided for them with the same reason, by which whatsoever is now present, is made both tolerable and acceptable unto thee. All things are linked and knitted together, and the knot is sacred, neither is there anything in the world, that is not kind and natural in regard of any other thing, or, that hath not some kind of reference and natural correspondence with whatsoever is in the world besides. For all things are ranked together, and by that decency of its due place and order that each particular doth observe, they all concur together to the making of one and the same κόσμος or world: as if you said, a comely piece, or an orderly composition. For all things throughout, there is but one and the same order; and through all things, one and the same God, the same substance and the same law. There is one common reason, and one common truth, that belongs unto all reasonable creatures, for neither is there save one perfection of all creatures that are of the same kind, and partakers of the same reason.

In today's English

Do not let the future trouble you. If it must come, you will meet it, whenever that is, with the same reason you now use for the present, which makes the present bearable and even welcome. All things are woven together, and the bond is sacred. Hardly anything is foreign to anything else. Everything is related and corresponds naturally with everything else in the world. All things are arranged together and, each keeping its proper place and order, they work together to make one and the same κόσμος (kosmos, an ordered and beautiful world). Through all things there is one order, through all things one God, one substance, one law. There is one common reason and one truth for all rational beings, since there is one perfection for all creatures of the same kind who share the same reason.

181/415

Book VII · VII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever is material, doth soon vanish away into the common substance of the whole; and whatsoever is formal, or, whatsoever doth animate that which is material, is soon resumed into the common reason of the whole; and the fame and memory of anything, is soon swallowed up by the general age and duration of the whole.

In today's English

Everything material very quickly disappears into the substance of the whole. Everything causal, the part that animates matter, is very quickly taken back into the reason of the whole. And the memory of everything is very quickly buried in the vast span of time.

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Book VII · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

To a reasonable creature, the same action is both according to nature, and according to reason.

In today's English

For a rational being, the same action is both in keeping with nature and in keeping with reason.

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Book VII · IX



Casaubon (1634)

Straight of itself, not made straight.

In today's English

Upright on its own, not set upright by others.

184/415

Book VII · X



Casaubon (1634)

As several members in one body united, so are reasonable creatures in a body divided and dispersed, all made and prepared for one common operation. And this thou shalt apprehend the better, if thou shalt use thyself often to say to thyself, I am μέλος, or a member of the mass and body of reasonable substances. But if thou shalt say I am μέρος, or a part, thou dost not yet love men from thy heart. The joy that thou takest in the exercise of bounty, is not yet grounded upon a due ratiocination and right apprehension of the nature of things. Thou dost exercise it as yet upon this ground barely, as a thing convenient and fitting; not, as doing good to thyself, when thou dost good unto others.

In today's English

Just as the limbs of a body are united, so rational beings, though separated in different bodies, are made to work together for one common purpose. You will grasp this better if you often say to yourself, 'I am a μέλος (melos, a limb) of the body of rational beings.' If you say instead, 'I am a μέρος (meros, a part),' just a de-

tached piece, you do not yet love people from the heart. You do not yet take joy in doing good because you understand the nature of things. You still do it only because it is the proper thing to do, not because, when you do good to others, you are doing good to yourself.

185/415

Book VII · XI



Casaubon (1634)

Of things that are external, happen what will to that which can suffer by external accidents. Those things that suffer let them complain themselves, if they will; as for me, as long as I conceive no such thing, that that which is happened is evil, I have no hurt; and it is in my power not to conceive any such thing.

In today's English

As for external things, let whatever wants to happen to the parts of me that can be affected by them happen. Those parts can complain if they like. As for me, as long as I do not judge that what has happened is bad, I am not harmed. And it is in my power not to judge it so.

186/415

Book VII · XII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever any man either doth or saith, thou must be good; not for any man's sake, but for thine own nature's sake; as if either gold, or the emerald, or purple, should ever be saying to themselves, Whatsoever any man either doth or saith, I must still be an emerald, and I must keep my colour.

In today's English

Whatever anyone does or says, I must be good. It is as if gold, or an emerald, or purple were always saying, 'Whatever anyone does or says, I must be an emerald and keep my color.'



Casaubon (1634)

This may ever be my comfort and security: my understanding, that ruleth over all, will not of itself bring trouble and vexation upon itself. This I say; it will not put itself in any fear, it will not lead itself into any concupiscence. If it be in the power of any other to compel it to fear, or to grieve, it is free for him to use his power. But sure if itself do not of itself, through some false opinion or supposition incline itself to any such disposition; there is no fear. For as for the body, why should I make the grief of my body, to be the grief of my mind? If that itself can either fear or complain, let it. But as for the soul, which indeed, can only be truly sensible of either fear or grief; to which only it belongs according to its different imaginations and opinions, to admit of either of these, or of their

In today's English

This can always be my comfort and safety: my ruling mind does not disturb itself. I mean, it does not frighten itself or lead itself into craving. If someone else can frighten it or cause it pain, let him do so. It will not, of its own accord, through some false opinion or assumption, turn itself in that direction, and so there is nothing to fear. As for the body, why should I make my body's pain my mind's pain? Let the body take care, if it can, not to suffer, and let it say so if it does. But the soul is the only part that can truly feel fear or distress, and it alone, depending on its impressions and opinions, decides whether to accept these feelings or their opposites. You can make sure it suffers nothing. Do not lead it into any such opinion. The ruling mind is self-sufficient and needs

Casaubon (1634) · continued

contraries; thou mayst look to that thyself, that it suffer nothing. Induce her not to any such opinion or persuasion. The understanding is of itself sufficient unto itself, and needs not (if itself doth not bring itself to need) any other thing besides itself, and by consequent as it needs nothing, so neither can it be troubled or hindered by anything, if it-self doth not trouble and hinder itself.

In today's English · continued

nothing else, unless it creates a need for itself. And so, needing nothing, it cannot be disturbed or blocked by anything, unless it disturbs and blocks itself.



Casaubon (1634)

What is εὐδαιμονία, or happiness: but ἀγαθὸς δαίμων, or, a good dæmon, or spirit? What then dost thou do here, O opinion? By the Gods I adjure thee, that thou get thee gone, as thou earnest: for I need thee not. Thou earnest indeed unto me according to thy ancient wonted manner. It is that, that all men have ever been subject unto. That thou camest therefore I am not angry with thee, only begone, now that I have found thee what thou art.

In today's English

What is εὐδαιμονία (eudaimonia, happiness)? It is having an ἀγαθὸς δαίμων (agathos daimōn), a good guiding spirit, that is, a good ruling mind. So what are you doing here, imagination? Go away, by the gods, the way you came. I do not need you. You came in your old familiar way, the way you come to everyone. I am not angry with you for coming. Just go, now that I see what you are.



Casaubon (1634)

Is any man so foolish as to fear change, to which all things that once were not owe their being? And what is it, that is more pleasing and more familiar to the nature of the universe? How couldst thou thyself use thy ordinary hot baths, should not the wood that heateth them first be changed? How couldst thou receive any nourishment from those things that thou hast eaten, if they should not be changed? Can anything else almost (that is useful and profitable) be brought to pass without change? How then dost not thou perceive, that for thee also, by death, to come to change, is a thing of the very same nature, and as necessary for the nature of the universe?

In today's English

Is anyone afraid of change? But what can come into being without change? What is more pleasing and more natural to the nature of the universe? Could you take your hot bath unless the wood for the fire were changed? Could you be nourished unless your food were changed? Can anything useful be done without change? So do you not see that your own change, through death, is just the same, and just as necessary to the nature of the universe?

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Book VII · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

Through the substance of the universe, as through a torrent pass all particular bodies, being all of the same nature, and all joint workers with the universe itself as in one of our bodies so many members among themselves. How many such as Chrysippus, how many such as Socrates, how many such as Epictetus, hath the age of the world long since swallowed up and devoured? Let this, be it either men or businesses, that thou hast occasion to think of, to the end that thy thoughts be not distracted and thy mind too earnestly set upon anything, upon every such occasion presently come to thy mind. Of all my thoughts and cares, one only thing shall be the object, that I myself do nothing which to the proper constitution of man, (either in regard of the thing itself, or in regard of the manner, or of the time of doing,) is contrary. The time when thou shalt have forgotten all things, is at hand. And that time also is at hand, when

thou thyself shalt be forgotten by all. Whilst thou art, apply thyself to that especially which unto man as he is a mart, is most proper and agreeable, and that is, for a man even to love them that transgress against him. This shall be, if at the same time that any such thing doth happen, thou call to mind, that they are thy kinsmen; that it is through ignorance and against their wills that they sin; and that within a very short while after, both thou and he shall be no more. But above all things, that he hath not done thee any hurt; for that by him thy mind and understanding is not made worse or more vile than it was before.

In today's English

All individual bodies are carried through the substance of the universe as if through a rushing river. They are all of the same nature as the universe and work together with it, as the limbs of our body work together. How many like Chrysippus, how many like Socrates, how many like Epictetus has time already swallowed up? Whenever you think about any person or any matter, let this thought come to you at once, so that your mind is not distracted or too intent on anything. One thing is my only concern: that I do nothing contrary to the nature of a human being, whether in what I do, or how, or when. Soon you will have forgotten everything, and soon everything will have forgotten you. While you are here, devote yourself especially to what is most proper to a human being, and that is to love even those who do us wrong. You will manage this if, when they do it, you remember that they are your kin; that they do wrong out of ignorance and against their will; that very soon both of you will be dead; and above all, that he has done you no harm, because he has not made your ruling mind any worse than it was before.



Casaubon (1634)

The nature of the universe, of the common substance of all things as it were of so much wax hath now perchance formed a horse; and then, destroying that figure, hath new tempered and fashioned the matter of it into the form and substance of a tree: then that again into the form and substance of a man: and then that again into some other. Now every one of these doth subsist but for a very little while. As for dissolution, if it be no grievous thing to the chest or trunk, to be joined together; why should it be more grievous to be put asunder?

In today's English

The nature of the universe takes the common substance of all things as if it were wax, and molds a horse out of it. Then it melts that down and uses the material to make a tree, then a person, then something else. Each of these lasts only a very short time. And if there is nothing terrible about a box being put together, why should there be anything terrible about its being taken apart?



Casaubon (1634)

An angry countenance is much against nature, and it is oftentimes the proper countenance of them that are at the point of death. But were it so, that all anger and passion were so thoroughly quenched in thee, that it were altogether impossible to kindle it any more, yet herein must not thou rest satisfied, but further endeavour by good consequence of true ratiocination, perfectly to conceive and understand, that all anger and passion is against reason. For if thou shalt not be sensible of thine innocence; if that also shall be gone from thee, the comfort of a good conscience, that thou doest all things according to reason: what shouldst thou live any longer for? All things that now thou seest, are but for a moment. That nature, by which all things in the world are administered, will soon bring change and alteration upon

them, and then of their substances make other things like unto them: and then soon after others again of the matter and substance of these: that so by these means, the world may still appear fresh and new.

In today's English

An angry face is very unnatural, and it is often the face of people who are about to die. But even if all anger and passion were so completely put out in you that they could never be rekindled, do not be satisfied with that. Go further, and try to understand fully, by sound reasoning, that all anger and passion are against reason. If you lose the awareness of your own innocence, the comfort of a good conscience that you do everything according to reason, what would you live any longer for? Everything you see now lasts only a moment. The nature that governs the world will soon change it all, and make other things like them out of their substance, and then soon after others again out of theirs, so that the world always looks fresh and new.



Casaubon (1634)

Whensoever any man doth trespass against other, presently consider with thyself what it was that he did suppose to be good, what to be evil, when he did trespass. For this when thou knowest, thou wilt pity him thou wilt have no occasion either to wonder, or to be angry. For either thou thyself dust yet live in that error and ignorance, as that thou dust suppose either that very thing that he doth, or some other like worldly thing, to be good; and so thou art bound to pardon him if he have done that which thou in the like case wouldst have done thyself. Or if so be that thou dost not any more suppose the same things to be good or evil, that he doth; how canst thou but be gentle unto him that is in an error?

In today's English

Whenever someone wrongs another, think at once about what he believed was good or bad when he did it. When you see that, you will pity him, and you will not be surprised or angry. Either you yourself still believe that the same thing he did, or something like it, is good, in which case you must forgive him, since he did what you would have done in his place. Or you no longer think such things are good or bad, in which case how can you fail to be gentle with someone who is mistaken?



Casaubon (1634)

Fancy not to thyself things future, as though they were present but of those that are present, take some aside, that thou takest most benefit of, and consider of them particularly, how wonderfully thou wouldst want them, if they were not present. But take heed withal, lest that whilst thou dost settle thy contentment in things present, thou grow in time so to overprize them, as that the want of them (whensoever it shall so fall out) should be a trouble and a vexation unto thee. Wind up thyself into thyself. Such is the nature of thy reasonable commanding part, as that if it exercise justice, and have by that means tranquillity within itself, it doth rest fully satisfied with itself without any other thing.

In today's English

Do not dream about things you do not have as if they were already yours. Instead, pick out the best of the things you do have, and think how much you would miss them if you did not have them. But be careful at the same time not to get so used to enjoying them that you overvalue them, so that losing them, if it ever happens, would upset you. Draw yourself into yourself. Your rational, ruling part, by its nature, is content with itself when it acts justly and so has inner calm.

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Book VII · XXI



Casaubon (1634)

Wipe off all opinion stay the force and violence of unreasonable lusts and affections: circumscribe the present time examine whatsoever it be that is happened, either to thyself or to another: divide all present objects, either in that which is formal or material think of the last hour. That which thy neighbour hath committed, where the guilt of it lieth, there let it rest. Examine in order whatsoever is spoken. Let thy mind penetrate both into the effects, and into the causes. Rejoice thyself with true simplicity, and modesty; and that all middle things between virtue and vice are indifferent unto thee. Finally, love mankind; obey God.

In today's English

Wipe out the impression. Stop the pull of the irrational urges. Draw a line around the present moment. Understand what is happening, whether to you or to someone else. Divide each

thing into its causal part and its material part. Think about your last hour. Leave the wrong someone has done where the wrong began, with him. Pay attention to what is being said, point by point. Let your mind go into what is happening and what is causing it. Find your joy in simplicity, in modesty, and in treating everything between virtue and vice as indifferent. Love humanity. Follow God.

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Book VII · XXII



Casaubon (1634)

All things (saith he) are by certain order and appointment. And what if the elements only.

It will suffice to remember, that all things in general are by certain order and appointment: or if it be but few. And as concerning death, that either dispersion, or the atoms, or annihilation, or extinction, or translation will ensue. And as concerning pain, that that which is intolerable is soon ended by death; and that which holds long must needs be tolerable; and that the mind in the meantime (which is all in all) may by way of interclusion, or interception, by stopping all manner of commerce and sympathy with the body, still retain its own tranquillity. Thy understanding is not made worse by it. As for those parts that suffer, let them, if they can, declare their grief themselves. As for praise and commendation, view their mind and understanding, what estate they are in; what kind of things they fly, and what things they

seek after: and that as in the seaside, whatsoever was before to be seen, is by the continual succession of new heaps of sand cast up one upon another, soon hid and covered; so in this life, all former things by those which immediately succeed.

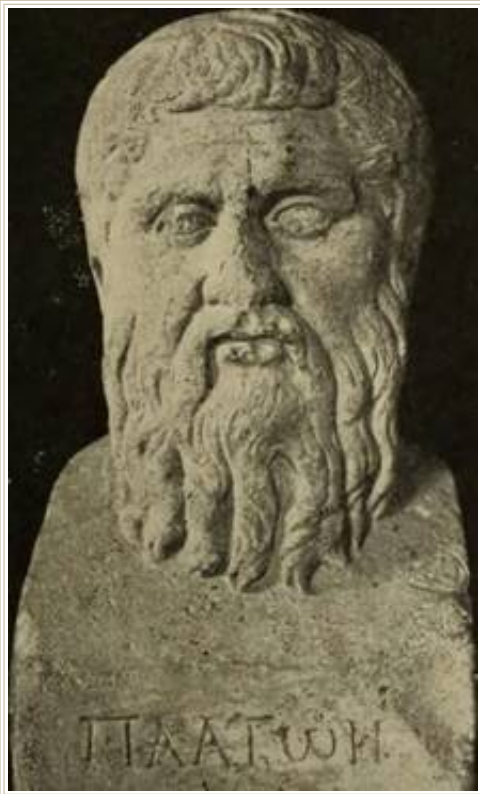
In today's English

'Everything happens by order and arrangement,' the poet says. And what if it is only the elements?

It is enough to remember that everything in general happens by order and arrangement, or even if only a few things do. As for death, it will mean either scattering, or atoms, or annihilation, or going out, or moving elsewhere. As for pain, what is unbearable soon ends in death, and what lasts must be bearable. Meanwhile, the mind, which is everything, can keep its calm by withdrawing, cutting off its connection with the body. Your ruling mind is not made worse by pain. As for the parts that suffer, let them speak up about it if they can. As for praise, look at the minds of those who give it, what condition they are in, what they run from and what they chase. And just as on the seashore one heap of sand is thrown up on another and quickly covers what was there before, so in life what comes first is quickly covered by what comes after.

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Book VII · XXIII

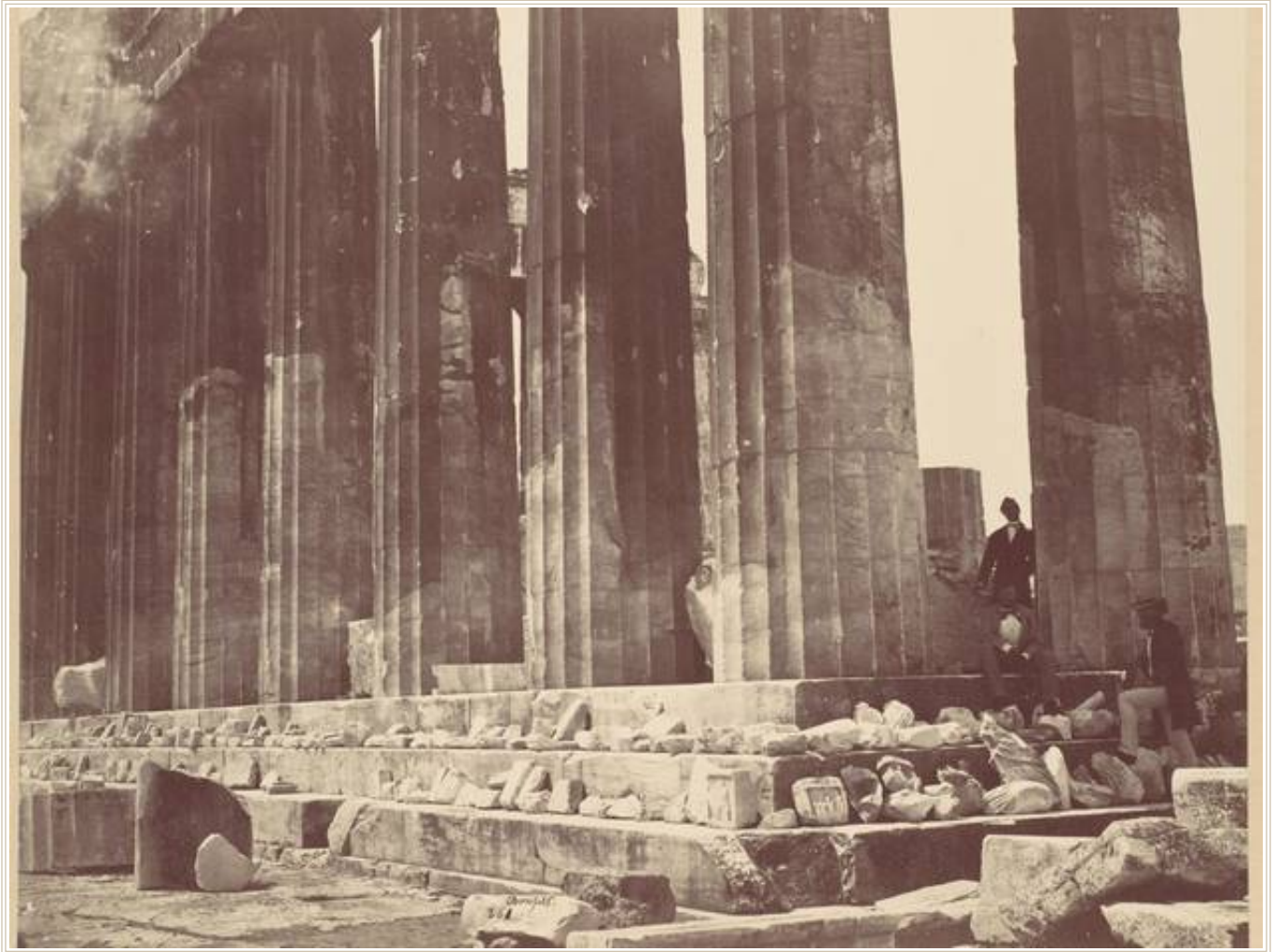


Casaubon (1634)

Out of Plato. 'He then whose mind is endowed with true magnanimity, who hath accustomed himself to the contemplation both of all times, and of all things in general; can this mortal life (thinkest thou) seem any great matter unto him? It is not possible, answered he. Then neither will such a one account death a grievous thing? By no means.'

In today's English

From Plato: 'Do you think that a person with a truly great mind, who is used to contemplating all of time and all of existence, can think this human life is anything great?' 'Impossible,' he said. 'Then such a person will not think death is anything terrible either?' 'Not at all.'



Casaubon (1634)

Out of Antisthenes. 'It is a princely thing to do well, and to be ill-spoken of. It is a shameful thing that the face should be subject unto the mind, to be put into what shape it will, and to be dressed by it as it will; and that the mind should not bestow so much care upon herself, as to fashion herself, and to dress herself as best becometh her.'

In today's English

From Antisthenes: 'It is royal to do good and be spoken badly of.' It is shameful that the face obeys the mind, shaping and arranging itself as the mind tells it, while the mind does not shape and arrange itself as it should.

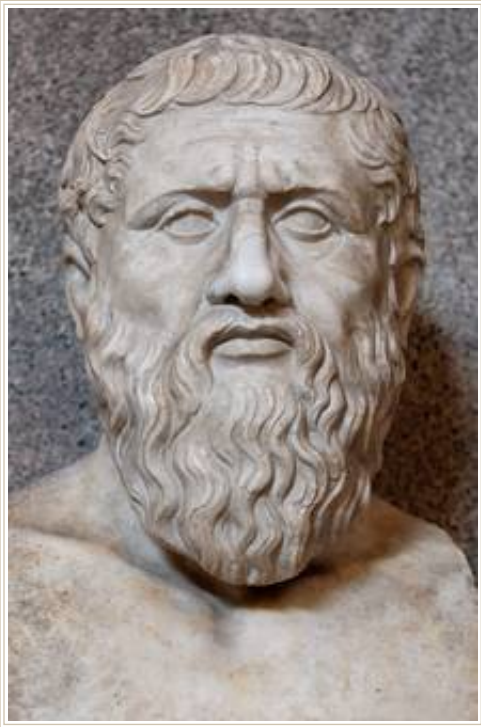


Casaubon (1634)

Out of several poets and comics. 'It will but little avail thee, to turn thine anger and indignation upon the things themselves that have fallen across unto thee. For as for them, they are not sensible of it, &c. Thou shalt but make thyself a laughing-stock; both unto the Gods and men, &c. Our life is reaped like a ripe ear of corn; one is yet standing and another is down, &c. But if so be that I and my children be neglected by the gods, there is some reason even for that, &c. As long as right and equity is of my side, &c. Not to lament with them, not to tremble, &c.'

In today's English

From various poets and comic writers: 'It does you no good to be angry with things themselves, for they do not care,' and so on. 'You will only make yourself a laughingstock to gods and men,' and so on. 'Life is harvested like ripe grain: one stalk still stands, another falls,' and so on. 'But if the gods neglect me and my children, even that has a reason,' and so on. 'For justice and the right are on my side,' and so on. 'Do not join their wailing, do not tremble,' and so on.



Casaubon (1634)

Out of Plato. 'My answer, full of justice and equity, should be this: Thy speech is not right, O man! if thou supposest that he that is of any worth at all, should apprehend either life or death, as a matter of great hazard and danger; and should not make this rather his only care, to examine his own actions, whether just or unjust: whether actions of a good, or of a wicked man, &c. For thus in very truth stands the case, O ye men of Athens. What place or station soever a man either hath chosen to himself, judging it best for himself; or is by lawful authority put and settled in, therein do I think (all appearance of danger notwithstanding) that he should continue, as one who feareth neither death, nor anything else, so much as he feareth to commit anything that is vicious and shameful, &c. But, O noble sir, consider I pray, whether true generosity and true happiness, do not consist in somewhat else rather, than in the preservation either of our, or other men's lives. For it is not the part of a man that is a man indeed, to desire to live long or to make much of his life whilst he liveth: but rather (he that is such) will in these things wholly refer himself unto the Gods, and believing that which ev-

ery woman can tell him, that no man can escape death; the only thing that he takes thought and care for is this, that what time he liveth, he may live as well and as virtuously as he can possibly, &c. To look about, and with the eyes to follow the course of the stars and planets as though thou wouldst run with them; and to mind perpetually the several changes of the elements one into another. For such fancies and imaginations, help much to purge away the dross and filth of this our earthly life,' &c. That also is a fine passage of Plato's, where he speaketh of worldly things in these words: 'Thou must also as from some higher place look down, as it were, upon the things of this world, as flocks, armies, husbandmen's labours, marriages, divorces, generations, deaths: the tumults of courts and places of judicatures; desert places; the several nations of barbarians, public festivals, mournings, fairs, markets.' How all things upon earth are pell-mell; and how miraculously things contrary one to another, concur to the beauty and perfection of this universe.

In today's English

From Plato: 'I would give him this fair answer: You are wrong, sir, if you think that anyone worth anything should weigh the risk of living or dying, instead of considering only one thing when he acts: whether what he does is just or unjust, the act of a good man or a bad one,' and so on. 'For this, men of Athens, is the truth of the matter. Wherever a person has taken his stand, thinking it best, or has been placed by his commander, there, I believe, he must stay and face the danger, fearing neither death nor anything else as much as doing something shameful,' and so on. 'But, my good friend, consider whether nobility and goodness are not something other than saving lives, our own or others'. A true man should not want to live any particular length of time, or cling to life. He should leave these matters to God, believing, as the women say, that no one can escape his fate, and should think only about how to live the time he has as well and as virtuously as possible,' and so on. 'Look up at the course of the stars as if you were running with them, and think constantly about how the elements change into one another, for such thoughts wash away the grime of life on earth,' and so on. Plato also has a fine passage about human af-

In today's English · continued

fairs: 'You should look down on earthly things as if from some high place: herds, armies, farmers at work, marriages, divorces, births, deaths, the uproar of the law courts, deserted places, foreign peoples of every kind, festivals, funerals, fairs, markets.' See how everything on earth is jumbled together, and how wonderfully opposites combine to make the universe beautiful and complete.



Casaubon (1634)

To look back upon things of former ages, as upon the manifold changes and conversions of several monarchies and commonwealths. We may also foresee things future, for they shall all be of the same kind; neither is it possible that they should leave the tune, or break the concert that is now begun, as it were, by these things that are now done and brought to pass in the world. It comes all to one therefore, whether a man be a spectator of the things of this life but forty years, or whether he see them ten thousand years together: for what shall he see more? 'And as for those parts that came from the earth, they shall return unto the earth again; and those that came from heaven, they also shall return unto those heavenly places.' Whether it be a mere dissolution and un-

In today's English

Look back at the past, at the many changes of empires and governments. You can foresee the future too, because it will be exactly the same. It cannot break out of the rhythm of what is happening now, or spoil the concert, so to speak, that present events have begun. So it makes no difference whether you watch human life for forty years or for ten thousand. What more will you see? 'What came from earth returns to earth, and what came from heaven returns to heaven.' Either it is a breaking apart of the tangled atoms, or some such scattering of the simple, imperishable elements. 'With food and drink and magic spells they try to divert the stream and escape death.' 'But we must endure the wind the gods send down, toiling without complaint.'

Casaubon (1634) · continued

binding of the manifold intricacies and entanglements of the confused atoms; or some such dispersion of the simple and incorruptible elements... 'With meats and drinks and divers charms, they seek to divert the channel, that they might not die. Yet must we needs endure that blast of wind that cometh from above, though we toil and labour never so much.'



Casaubon (1634)

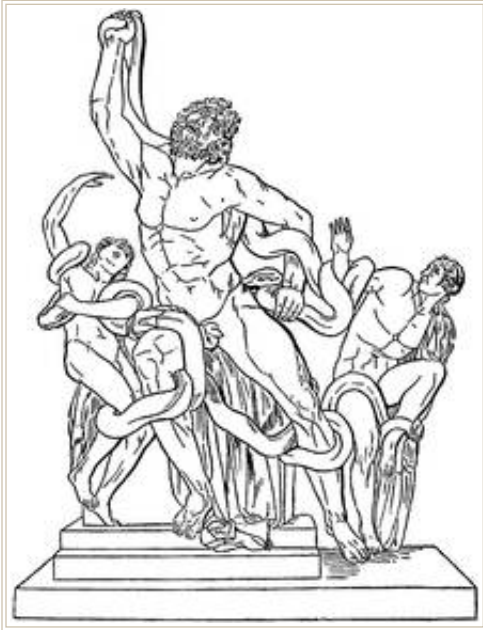
He hath a stronger body, and is a better wrestler than I. What then? Is he more bountiful? is he more modest? Doth he bear all adverse chances with more equanimity: or with his neighbour's offences with more meekness and gentleness than I?

In today's English

He is stronger than me and a better wrestler. So what? Is he more generous? More modest? Does he handle whatever happens with more calm, or bear his neighbors' faults with more gentleness and kindness than I do?

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Book VII · XXIX



Casaubon (1634)

Where the matter may be effected agreeably to that reason, which both unto the Gods and men is common, there can be no just cause of grief or sorrow. For where the fruit and benefit of an action well begun and prosecuted according to the proper constitution of man may be reaped and obtained, or is sure and certain, it is against reason that any damage should there be suspected. In all places, and at all times, it is in thy power religiously to embrace whatsoever by God's appointment is happened unto thee, and justly to converse with those men, whom thou hast to do with, and accurately to examine every fancy that presents itself, that nothing may slip and steal in, before thou hast rightly apprehended the true nature of it.

In today's English

Where a thing can be done in keeping with the reason shared by gods and humans, there is nothing to be afraid of or sad about.

Where you can get the benefit of an action that goes smoothly and follows our human makeup, there is no harm to fear. Everywhere and at all times it is in your power to accept reverently what God has brought you, to deal justly with the people you have to deal with, and to examine carefully every impression that comes to you, so that nothing slips in before you have properly understood what it really is.



Casaubon (1634)

Look not about upon other men's minds and understandings; but look right on forwards whither nature, both that of the universe, in those things that happen unto thee; and thine in particular, in those things that are done by thee: doth lead, and direct thee. Now every one is bound to do that, which is consequent and agreeable to that end which by his true natural constitution he was ordained unto. As for all other things, they are ordained for the use of reasonable creatures: as in all things we see that that which is worse and inferior, is made for that which is better. Reasonable creatures, they are ordained one for another. That therefore which is chief in every man's constitution, is, that he intend the common good. The second is, that he yield not to any lusts and motions of the flesh. For it is the part and privilege of the reasonable and intellective faculty, that she can so bound herself, as that neither the sensitive,

In today's English

Do not look around at what is going on in other people's minds. Look straight ahead to where nature is leading you: the nature of the universe, through what happens to you, and your own nature, through what you must do. Everyone must do what fits the purpose his nature gave him. Everything else exists for the sake of rational beings, just as in everything the lower exists for the sake of the higher, and rational beings exist for one another. So the first thing in a human being's makeup is concern for the common good. The second is not giving in to the urges of the body. It is the special privilege of rational, thinking activity to set its own limits and never be overpowered by the senses or the appetites, since both of these are animal. The thinking part claims mastery over them and, when it is in its right state, refuses to be ruled by either, and rightly so, since by nature it was made to use and govern everything in the

Casaubon (1634) · continued

nor the appetitive faculties, may not anyways prevail upon her. For both these are brutish. And therefore over both she challengeth mastery, and cannot anyways endure, if in her right temper, to be subject unto either. And this indeed most justly. For by nature she was ordained to command all in the body. The third thing proper to man by his constitution, is, to avoid all rashness and precipitancy; and not to be subject to error. To these things then, let the mind apply herself and go straight on, without any distraction about other things, and she hath her end, and by consequent her happiness.

In today's English · continued

body. The third thing in our makeup is to avoid rashness and not be deceived. Let the ruling mind hold on to these things and go straight ahead without distraction, and it has what is its own, and with it, its happiness.



Casaubon (1634)

As one who had lived, and were now to die by right, whatsoever is yet remaining, bestow that wholly as a gracious overplus upon a virtuous life. Love and affect that only, whatsoever it be that happeneth, and is by the fates appointed unto thee. For what can be more reasonable? And as anything doth happen unto thee by way of cross, or calamity, call to mind presently and set before thine eyes, the examples of some other men, to whom the self-same thing did once happen likewise. Well, what did they? They grieved; they wondered; they complained. And where are they now? All dead and gone. Wilt thou also be like one of them? Or rather leaving to men of the world (whose life both in regard of themselves, and them that they converse with, is nothing but mere mutability; or men of as fickle minds, as fickle bodies; ever changing and soon changed themselves) let it be thine only care and study, how to make a right use of all such accidents. For there is good use to be made of them, and they will prove fit matter for thee to work upon, if it shall be both thy care and thy desire, that whatsoever thou doest, thou thyself mayst like and approve thyself for it. And both these, see, that thou remember well, according as the diversity of the matter of the action that thou art about shall require. Look within; within is the fountain of all

In today's English

As if you had already died and your life had properly ended, live the rest of your days as a bonus, in keeping with nature. Love only what happens to you, what fate assigns you. What could be more fitting? And when something difficult or painful happens, immediately call to mind the people the same thing happened to. What did they do? They were upset, they could not believe it, they complained. And where are they now? Dead and gone. Do you want to be like them? Leave those reactions to people of the world, whose lives, toward themselves and others, are nothing but constant change, people as unstable in mind as in body, always changing and soon changed. Make it your only care and study to learn how to use such events well. There is good use to be made of them, and they will be good material for you to work on, if only you take care and want to be able to approve of yourself in everything you do. And remember both of these points, as the particular situation requires. Look within. Within is the spring of the good, and it can always keep bubbling up, if you keep digging.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

good. Such a fountain, where springing waters
can never fail, so thou dig still deeper and deeper.

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Book VII · XXXII



Casaubon (1634)

Thou must use thyself also to keep thy body fixed and steady; free from all loose fluctuant either motion, or posture. And as upon thy face and looks, thy mind hath easily power over them to keep them to that which is grave and decent; so let it challenge the same power over the whole body also. But so observe all things in this kind, as that it be without any manner of affectation.

In today's English

Train yourself also to keep your body steady and still, free of loose, restless movements or postures. Just as your mind easily controls your face and expression and keeps them serious and dignified, let it claim the same control over your whole body. But do all this without any affectation.



Casaubon (1634)

The art of true living in this world is more like a wrestler's, than a dancer's practice. For in this they both agree, to teach a man whatsoever falls upon him, that he may be ready for it, and that nothing may cast him down.

In today's English

The art of living well is more like wrestling than dancing. Both have this in common: they teach you to be ready for whatever comes at you, so that nothing can throw you down.

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Book VII · XXXIV



Casaubon (1634)

Thou must continually ponder and consider with thyself, what manner of men they be, and for their minds and understandings what is their present estate, whose good word and testimony thou dost desire. For then neither wilt thou see cause to complain of them that offend against their wills; or find any want of their applause, if once thou dost but penetrate into the true force and ground both of their opinions, and of their desires. 'No soul (saith he) is willingly bereft of the truth,' and by consequent, neither of justice, or temperance, or kindness, and mildness; nor of anything that is of the same kind. It is most needful that thou shouldst always remember this. For so shalt thou be far more gentle and moderate towards all men.

In today's English

Keep thinking about what kind of people they are whose good opinion you want, and what condition their minds are in. Then you will not find reason to complain about those who do wrong against their will, nor will you miss their applause, once you see clearly what lies behind their opinions and desires. 'No soul,' he says, 'is willingly robbed of the truth,' and so not of justice,

self-control, kindness, gentleness, or anything of that kind either. It is essential to remember this always, because it will make you much gentler and more moderate toward everyone.

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Book VII · XXXV



Casaubon (1634)

What pain soever thou art in, let this presently come to thy mind, that it is not a thing whereof thou needest to be ashamed, neither is it a thing whereby thy understanding, that hath the government of all, can be made worse. For neither in regard of the substance of it, nor in regard of the end of it (which is, to intend the common good) can it alter and corrupt it. This also of Epicurus mayst thou in most pains find some help of, that it is 'neither intolerable, nor eternal;' so thou keep thyself to the true bounds and limits of reason and give not way to opinion. This also thou must consider, that many things there be, which oftentimes unsensibly trouble and vex thee, as not armed against them with patience, because they go not ordinarily under the name of pains, which in very deed are of the same nature as pain; as to slumber unquietly, to suffer heat, to want appetite: when therefore any of these things make thee discontented, check thyself with these words: Now hath pain given thee the foil; thy courage hath failed thee.

In today's English

Whatever pain you are in, remember at once that it is nothing to be ashamed of, and that it cannot make your governing mind

any worse. It cannot damage or corrupt the mind, either in its substance or in its purpose, which is to serve the common good. In most pains you can also find help in Epicurus's saying that pain is 'neither unbearable nor endless,' as long as you keep within the limits of reason and do not add opinion to it. Consider this too: many things quietly irritate and upset you, because you are not armed with patience against them, since they are not usually called pains, though in fact they are the same kind of thing: sleeping badly, suffering from heat, losing your appetite. So when any of these makes you discontented, check yourself with these words: 'Pain has beaten you. Your courage has failed.'

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Book VII · XXXVI



Casaubon (1634)

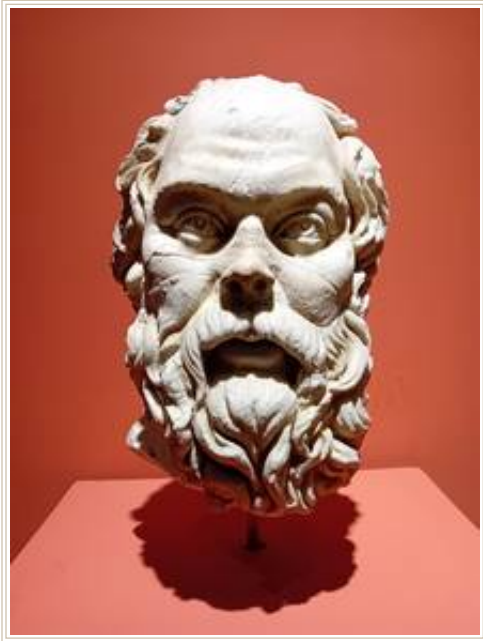
Take heed lest at any time thou stand so affected, though towards unnatural evil men, as ordinary men are commonly one towards another.

In today's English

Be careful never to feel toward people, even inhuman and wicked people, the way ordinary people commonly feel toward one another.

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Book VII · XXXVII



Casaubon (1634)

How know we whether Socrates were so eminent indeed, and of so extraordinary a disposition? For that he died more gloriously, that he disputed with the Sophists more subtilty; that he watched in the frost more assiduously; that being commanded to fetch innocent Salaminus, he refused to do it more generously; all this will not serve. Nor that he walked in the streets, with much gravity and majesty, as was objected unto him by his adversaries: which nevertheless a man may well doubt of, whether it were so or no, or, which above all the rest, if so be that it were true, a man would well consider of, whether commendable, or dis-commendable. The thing therefore that we must inquire into, is this; what manner of soul Socrates had: whether his disposition was such; as that all that he stood upon, and sought after in this world, was barely this, that he might ever carry himself justly towards men, and holily towards the Gods. Neither vexing himself to no purpose at the wickedness of others, nor yet ever condescending to any man's evil fact, or evil intentions,

through either fear, or engagement of friendship. Whether of those things that happened unto him by God's appointment, he neither did wonder at any when it did happen, or thought it intolerable in the trial of it. And lastly, whether he never did suffer his mind to sympathise with the senses, and affections of the body. For we must not think that Nature hath so mixed and tempered it with the body, as that she hath not power to circumscribe herself, and by herself to intend her own ends and occasions.

In today's English

How do we know whether Socrates really was so outstanding, of such extraordinary character? It is not enough that he died more nobly, argued with the Sophists more cleverly, kept watch in the frost with more endurance, or more bravely refused when ordered to arrest the innocent man from Salamis. Nor that he walked through the streets with great dignity and swagger, as his enemies charged against him, though one may well doubt whether that was true, and even more, if it was true, whether it deserves praise or blame. What we need to find out is this: what kind of soul did Socrates have? Was he the kind of person whose only concern and aim in this world was to act justly toward people and reverently toward the gods? Did he neither torment himself pointlessly over other people's wickedness, nor ever go along with anyone's bad deeds or bad intentions out of fear or loyalty to a friend? When things happened to him by God's arrangement, did he neither find them strange when they came nor think them unbearable when he went through them? And finally, did he never let his mind share in the feelings and impulses of the body? For we must not think that nature has mixed the mind so thoroughly with the body that it cannot draw its own boundaries and look after its own concerns by itself.

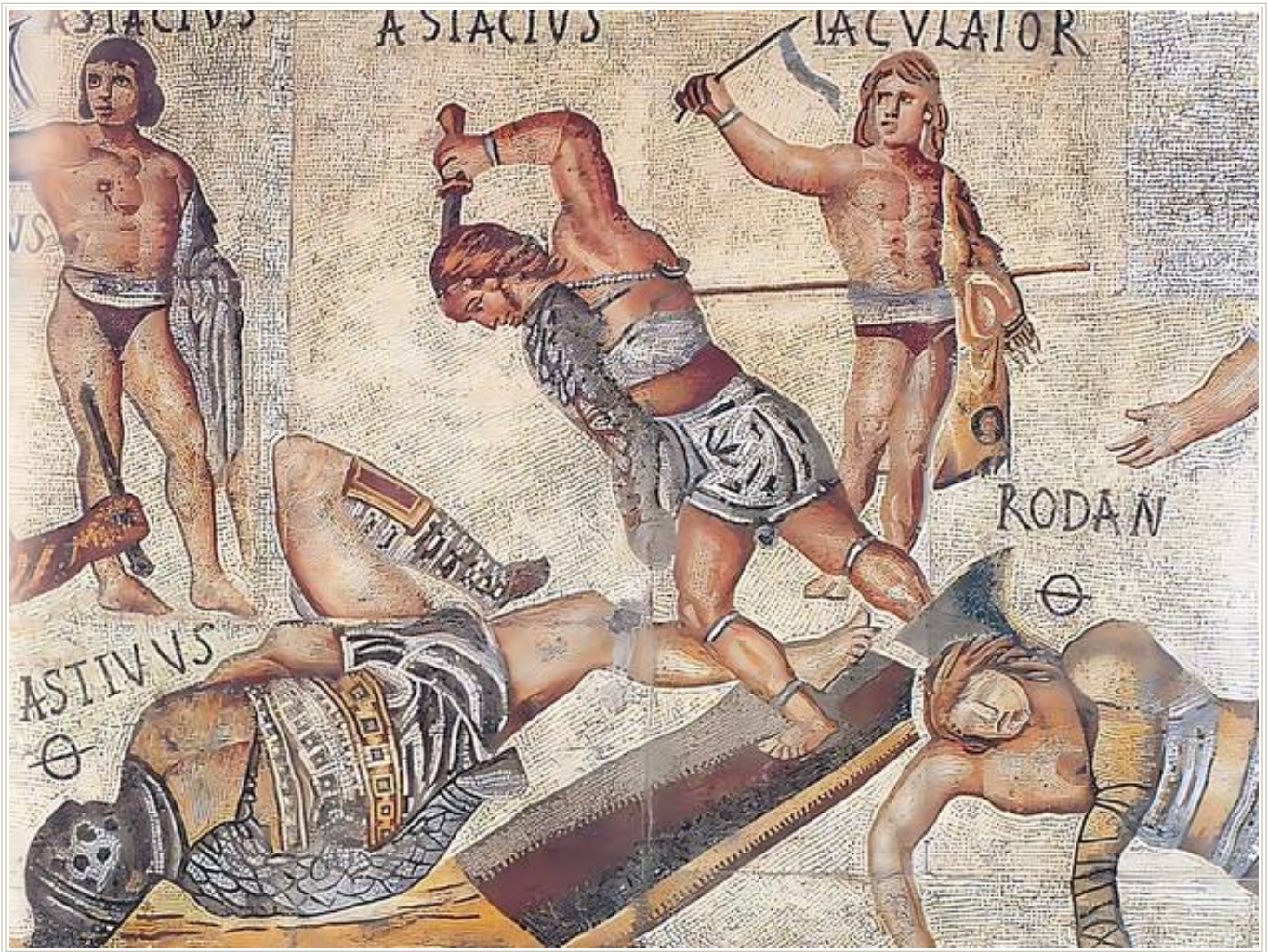


Casaubon (1634)

For it is a thing very possible, that a man should be a very divine man, and yet be altogether unknown. This thou must ever be mindful of, as of this also, that a man's true happiness doth consist in very few things. And that although thou dost despair, that thou shalt ever be a good either logician, or naturalist, yet thou art never the further off by it from being either liberal, or modest, or charitable, or obedient unto God.

In today's English

It is entirely possible to be a truly godlike person and yet be completely unknown. Always remember this, and also that a happy life depends on very few things. And even if you have given up hope of ever being good at logic or the study of nature, that does not keep you any further from being generous, modest, kind, and obedient to God.



Casaubon (1634)

Free from all compulsion in all cheerfulness and alacrity thou mayst run out thy time, though men should exclaim against thee never so much, and the wild beasts should pull in sunder the poor members of thy pampered mass of flesh. For what in either of these or the like cases should hinder the mind to retain her own rest and tranquillity, consisting both in the right judgment of those things that happen unto her, and in the ready use of all present matters and occasions? So that her judgment may say, to that which is befallen her by way of cross: this thou art in very deed, and according to thy true nature: notwithstanding that in the judgment of opinion thou dost appear otherwise: and her discretion to the present object; thou art that, which I sought for. For whatsoever

In today's English

You can live out your time free from all compulsion, cheerfully and eagerly, even if everyone cries out against you as loudly as they like, and wild beasts tear apart the poor limbs of this fattened lump of flesh. In any of these cases, what stops the mind from keeping its calm, which lies in judging correctly what happens to it and in making ready use of whatever is at hand? So its judgment can say to the misfortune that has come: 'This is what you really are, by your true nature, even though opinion makes you look like something else.' And its practical sense can say to the thing at hand: 'You are just what I was looking for.' For whatever is present I will always welcome as fitting and timely material for my reason and for my social, kindly impulse to work on. And

Casaubon (1634) · continued

it be, that is now present, shall ever be embraced by me as a fit and seasonable object, both for my reasonable faculty, and for my sociable, or charitable inclination to work upon. And that which is principal in this matter, is that it may be referred either unto the praise of God, or to the good of men. For either unto God or man, whatsoever it is that doth happen in the world hath in the ordinary course of nature its proper reference; neither is there anything, that in regard of nature is either new, or reluctant and intractable, but all things both usual and easy.

In today's English · continued

the main point here is that it can be referred either to the praise of God or to the good of people. Everything that happens in the world is naturally related either to God or to people. Nothing, as far as nature is concerned, is new or hard to handle. Everything is familiar and easy.

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Book VII · XL



Casaubon (1634)

Then hath a man attained to the estate of perfection in his life and conversation, when he so spends every day, as if it were his last day: never hot and vehement in his affections, nor yet so cold and stupid as one that had no sense; and free from all manner of dissimulation.

In today's English

A person has reached perfection of character when he spends each day as if it were his last, never feverish in his feelings, never cold and numb as if he had no feeling at all, and free of all pretense.

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Book VII · XLI



Casaubon (1634)

Can the Gods, who are immortal, for the continuance of so many ages bear without indignation with such and so many sinners, as have ever been, yea not only so, but also take such care for them, that they want nothing; and dost thou so grievously take on, as one that could bear with them no longer; thou that art but for a moment of time? yea thou that art one of those sinners thyself? A very ridiculous thing it is, that any man should dispense with vice and wickedness in himself, which is in his power to restrain; and should go about to suppress it in others, which is altogether impossible.

In today's English

The gods are immortal, and yet through all these ages they put up without resentment with so many sinners, of such a kind, as there have always been. More than that, they take such care of them that they lack nothing. And you, who are here for only a moment, make such a fuss, as though you could not bear them any longer, and you are one of the sinners yourself! It is absurd for someone to excuse wickedness in himself, which he has the

power to restrain, and to try to stamp it out in others, which is completely impossible.

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Book VII · XLII



Casaubon (1634)

What object soever, our reasonable and sociable faculty doth meet with, that affords nothing either for the satisfaction of reason, or for the practice of charity, she worthily doth think unworthy of herself.

In today's English

Whatever our rational, social faculty comes across that gives it nothing to understand and no chance to do good, it rightly considers beneath it.



Casaubon (1634)

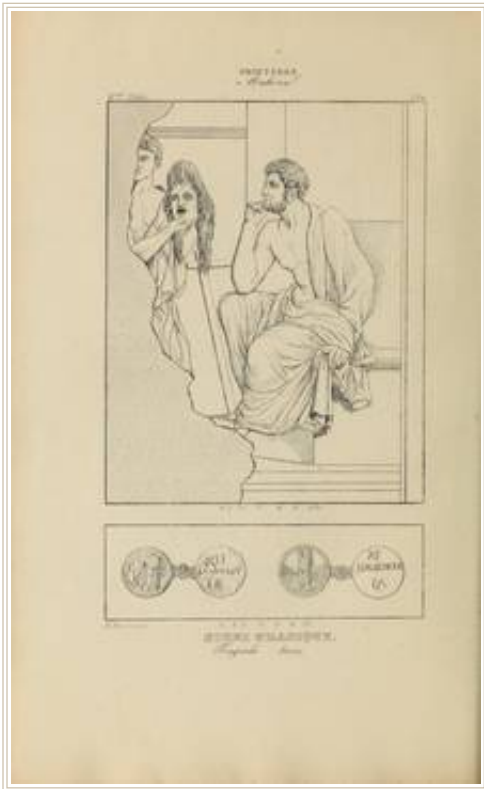
When thou hast done well, and another is benefited by thy action, must thou like a very fool look for a third thing besides, as that it may appear unto others also that thou hast done well, or that thou mayest in time, receive one good turn for another? No man useth to be weary of that which is beneficial unto him. But every action according to nature, is beneficial. Be not weary then of doing that which is beneficial unto thee, whilst it is so unto others.

In today's English

When you have done good and someone has benefited from it, why look, like a fool, for a third thing besides, such as being seen to have done good, or getting a favor back someday? No one gets tired of what benefits him. And every action according to nature is beneficial. So do not get tired of doing what benefits you, while it benefits others too.

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Book VII · XLIV



Casaubon (1634)

The nature of the universe did once certainly before it was created, whatsoever it hath done since, deliberate and so resolve upon the creation of the world. Now since that time, whatsoever it is, that is and happens in the world, is either but a consequent of that one and first deliberation: or if so be that this ruling rational part of the world, takes any thought and care of things particular, they are surely his reasonable and principal creatures, that are the proper object of his particular care and providence. This often thought upon, will much conduce to thy tranquillity.

In today's English

Before the world was made, the nature of the universe certainly deliberated and decided on its creation, and everything it has done since. Since then, whatever exists and happens in the world is either a consequence of that one first decision, or, if the ruling reason of the world takes thought for particular things, then surely its rational beings, its chief creatures, are the special objects of its particular care and providence. Thinking about this often will do much for your peace of mind.



Casaubon (1634)

This also, among other things, may serve to keep thee from vain-glory; if thou shalt consider, that thou art now altogether incapable of the commendation of one, who all his life long, or from his youth at least, hath lived a philosopher's life. For both unto others, and to thyself especially, it is well known, that thou hast done many things contrary to that perfection of life. Thou hast therefore been confounded in thy course, and henceforth it will be hard for thee to recover the title and credit of a philosopher. And to it also is thy calling and profession repugnant. If therefore thou dost truly understand, what it is that is of moment indeed; as for thy fame and credit, take no thought or care for that: let it suffice thee if all the rest of thy life, be it more or less, thou shalt live as thy nature requireth, or according to the true and natural end of thy making. Take pains therefore to know what it is that thy nature requireth, and let nothing else distract thee. Thou hast already had sufficient experience, that of those

many things that hitherto thou hast erred and wandered about, thou couldst not find happiness in any of them. Not in syllogisms, and logical subtilties, not in wealth, not in honour and reputation, not in pleasure. In none of all these. Wherein then is it to be found? In the practice of those things, which the nature of man, as he is a man, doth require. How then shall he do those things? if his dogmata, or moral tenets and opinions (from which all motions and actions do proceed), be right and true. Which be those dogmata? Those that concern that which is good or evil, as that there is nothing truly good and beneficial unto man, but that which makes him just, temperate, courageous, liberal; and that there is nothing truly evil and hurtful unto man, but that which causeth the contrary effects.

In today's English

This too can help keep you from vanity: you can no longer claim the credit of someone who has lived as a philosopher all his life, or at least since his youth. Both others and you yourself know very well that you have done many things far from that ideal. So you have been thrown off course, and from now on it will be hard for you to win back the name and reputation of a philosopher. Your position in life works against it too. So if you truly understand what really matters, stop thinking and worrying about your reputation. Let it be enough to live the rest of your life, however long or short, as your nature requires, according to the true and natural purpose for which you were made. Work, then, to understand what your nature requires, and let nothing else distract you. You already have plenty of experience that in all your wandering you never found happiness in any of the things you tried: not in logic and clever reasoning, not in wealth, not in fame and reputation, not in pleasure. In none of them. Where, then, is it found? In doing what human nature, as human, requires. How will a person do that? By having right and true dogmata (principles), from which all impulses and actions come. Which principles? Those about good and bad: that nothing is truly good and beneficial for a human being except what makes him just, self-controlled, brave, and generous, and nothing is truly bad and harmful except what has the opposite effect.

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Book VIII · II



Casaubon (1634)

Upon every action that thou art about, put this question to thyself; How will this when it is done agree with me? Shall I have no occasion to repent of it? Yet a very little while and I am dead and gone; and all things are at end. What then do I care for more than this, that my present action whatsoever it be, may be the proper action of one that is reasonable; whose end is, the common good; who in all things is ruled and governed by the same law of right and reason, by which God Himself is.

In today's English

For every action you are about to take, ask yourself: How will this sit with me once it is done? Will I have reason to regret it? Soon I will be dead and gone, and everything will be over. So what more

do I want than this: that what I am doing now, whatever it is, be the proper action of a rational being, whose aim is the common good, and who in everything is governed by the same law of right and reason that governs God himself?

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Book VIII · III



Casaubon (1634)

Alexander, Caius, Pompeius; what are these to Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates? These penetrated into the true nature of things; into all causes, and all subjects: and upon these did they exercise their power and authority. But as for those, as the extent of their error was, so far did their slavery extend.

In today's English

Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Pompey, what are they compared with Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates? These men saw into the true nature of things, into all causes and all materials, and over these they exercised their power and authority. As for the others, their slavery reached as far as their errors did.

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Book VIII · IV



Casaubon (1634)

What they have done, they will still do, although thou shouldst hang thyself. First; let it not trouble thee. For all things both good and evil: come to pass according to the nature and general condition of the universe, and within a very little while, all things will be at an end; no man will be remembered: as now of Africanus (for example) and Augustus it is already come to pass. Then secondly; fix thy mind upon the thing itself; look into it, and remembering thyself, that thou art bound nevertheless to be a good man, and what it is that thy nature requireth of thee as thou art a man, be not diverted from what thou art about, and speak that which seemeth unto thee most just: only speak it kindly, modestly, and without hypocrisy.

In today's English

They will go on doing the same things even if you burst with rage. First, do not let it upset you. Everything, good and bad, happens according to the nature and general order of the universe, and in a very little while everything will be over and no one will be remembered, as is already true of Africanus and Au-

gustus, for example. Second, focus on the thing itself and look into it. Remember that you are still obliged to be a good person, and what your nature requires of you as a human being. Do not be turned aside from what you are doing, and say what seems to you most just, only say it kindly, modestly, and without hypocrisy.



Casaubon (1634)

That which the nature of the universe doth busy herself about, is; that which is here, to transfer it thither, to change it, and thence again to take it away, and to carry it to another place. So that thou needest not fear any new thing. For all things are usual and ordinary; and all things are disposed by equality.

In today's English

What the nature of the universe busies itself with is this: moving what is here over there, changing it, picking it up from there, and carrying it somewhere else. So you need not fear anything new. Everything is familiar and ordinary, and everything is handed out fairly.



Casaubon (1634)

Every particular nature hath content, when in its own proper course it speeds. A reasonable nature doth then speed, when first in matter of fancies and imaginations, it gives no consent to that which is either false uncertain. Secondly, when in all its motions and resolutions it takes its level at the common good only, and that it desireth nothing, and flieth from nothing, bet what is in its own power to compass or avoid. And lastly, when it willingly and gladly embraceth, whatsoever is dealt and appointed unto it by the common nature. For it is part of it; even as the nature of any one leaf, is part of the common nature of all plants and trees. But that the nature of a leaf, is part of a nature both unreasonable and unsensible, and which in its proper end may be hindered; or, which is servile and slavish: whereas the nature of man is part of a common nature which cannot be hindered, and which is both reasonable and just. From whence also it is, that according to the worth of everything, she doth make such equal distribution of all things, as of duration, substance form, operation, and of events and accidents. But herein consider not

whether thou shalt find this equality in everything absolutely and by itself; but whether in all the particulars of some one thing taken together, and compared with all the particulars of some other thing, and them together likewise.

In today's English

Every nature is content when it is going well on its proper course. A rational nature is going well when, first, it gives no consent to any impression that is false or uncertain; second, when it aims all its impulses and decisions only at the common good, and desires nothing and avoids nothing except what is in its own power to get or avoid; and finally, when it gladly and willingly embraces whatever is given and assigned to it by the common nature. For it is part of that nature, as the nature of a single leaf is part of the nature of all plants and trees. The difference is that the nature of a leaf is part of a nature without reason or sensation, one that can be blocked in its purpose and is servile, while the nature of a human being is part of a nature that cannot be blocked, and is rational and just. That is also why it gives everything a fair share according to its worth: of time, substance, form, activity, and events. But do not look for this fairness by comparing one single thing with another single thing. Look for it by comparing all the features of one thing taken together with all the features of another taken together.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou hast no time nor opportunity to read. What then? Hast thou not time and opportunity to exercise thyself, not to wrong thyself; to strive against all carnal pleasures and pains, and to get the upper hand of them; to contemn honour and vainglory; and not only, not to be angry with them, whom towards thee thou doest find unsensible and unthankful; but also to have a care of them still, and of their welfare?

In today's English

You have no time or chance to read. So what? You still have time and chance to train yourself: not to wrong yourself, to fight against the pleasures and pains of the body and get the upper hand over them, to look down on fame and vanity, and not only not to be angry with people who are callous and ungrateful toward you, but even to go on caring for them and their welfare.

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Book VIII · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

Forbear henceforth to complain of the trouble of a courtly life,
either in public before others, or in private by thyself.

In today's English

From now on, stop complaining about the burdens of life at
court, whether in public in front of others or in private to your-
self.



Casaubon (1634)

Repentance is an inward and self-reprehension for the neglect or omission of somewhat that was profitable. Now whatsoever is good, is also profitable, and it is the part of an honest virtuous man to set by it, and to make reckoning of it accordingly. But never did any honest virtuous man repent of the neglect or omission of any carnal pleasure: no carnal pleasure then is either good or profitable.

In today's English

Regret is a kind of self-reproach for having neglected or missed something useful. Whatever is good is also useful, and a good and decent person should care about it and value it accordingly. But no good and decent person ever regretted missing out on a bodily pleasure. So no bodily pleasure is either good or useful.



Casaubon (1634)

This, what is it in itself, and by itself, according to its proper constitution? What is the substance of it? What is the matter, or proper use? What is the form or efficient cause? What is it for in this world, and how long will it abide? Thus must thou examine all things, that present themselves unto thee.

In today's English

What is this thing in itself, by itself, by its own makeup? What is its substance? What is its material, or its proper use? What is its form, or the cause that makes it? What is it doing in the world, and how long will it last? Examine everything that comes before you this way.



Casaubon (1634)

When thou art hard to be stirred up and awaked out of thy sleep, admonish thyself and call to mind, that, to perform actions tending to the common good is that which thine own proper constitution, and that which the nature of man do require. But to sleep, is common to unreasonable creatures also. And what more proper and natural, yea what more kind and pleasing, than that which is according to nature?

In today's English

When you find it hard to wake up and get out of bed, remind yourself that doing actions for the common good is what your own makeup and human nature require, while sleeping is something you share with animals that have no reason. And what is more fitting and natural, indeed more agreeable and pleasant, than what is in keeping with nature?

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Book VIII · XII



Casaubon (1634)

As every fancy and imagination presents itself unto thee, consider (if it be possible) the true nature, and the proper qualities of it, and reason with thyself about it.

In today's English

With every impression that comes to you, try, if you can, to understand its true nature and qualities, and reason it through with yourself.

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Book VIII · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

At thy first encounter with any one, say presently to thyself: This man, what are his opinions concerning that which is good or evil? as concerning pain, pleasure, and the causes of both; concerning honour, and dishonour, concerning life and death? thus and thus. Now if it be no wonder that a man should have such and such opinions, how can it be a wonder that he should do such and such things? I will remember then, that he cannot but do as he doth, holding those opinions that he doth. Remember, that as it is a shame for any man to wonder that a fig tree should bear figs, so also to wonder that the world should bear anything, whatsoever it is which in the ordinary course of nature it may bear. To a physician also and to a pilot it is a shame either for the one to wonder, that such and such a one should have an ague; or for the other, that the winds should prove Contrary.

In today's English

Whenever you meet someone, say to yourself at once: what are this man's beliefs about good and bad, about pain and pleasure and their causes, about honor and dishonor, about life and death? Such and such. Then if it is no surprise that he holds such beliefs, how can it be a surprise that he does such things? I will remember that he cannot help acting as he does, holding the beliefs he holds. Remember that it is as shameful to be surprised that the world produces what it naturally produces as to be surprised that a fig tree produces figs. It would be shameful, too, for a doctor to be surprised that someone has a fever, or for a ship's captain to be surprised that the wind is against him.

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Book VIII · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

Remember, that to change thy mind upon occasion, and to follow him that is able to rectify thee, is equally ingenuous, as to find out at the first, what is right and just, without help. For of thee nothing is required, ti, is beyond the extent of thine own deliberation and jun. merit, and of thine own understanding.

In today's English

Remember that changing your mind when there is reason to, and following someone who can set you right, is just as much the mark of a free and honest mind as finding what is right and just by yourself in the first place. Nothing is asked of you beyond what lies within your own judgment and understanding.



Casaubon (1634)

If it were thine act and in thine own power, wouldest thou do it? If it were not, whom dost tin accuse? the atoms, or the Gods? For to do either, the part of a mad man. Thou must therefore blame nobody, but if it be in thy power, redress what is amiss; if it be not, to what end is it to complain? For nothing should be done but to some certain end.

In today's English

If it was your doing and in your power, why did you do it? If it was not, whom are you blaming, the atoms or the gods? Either would be madness. So blame no one. If it is in your power, fix what is wrong. If it is not, what is the point of complaining? Nothing should be done without some purpose.

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Book VIII · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever dieth and falleth, however and where-soever it die and fall, it cannot fall out of the world, here it have its abode and change, here also shall it have its dissolution into its proper elements. The same are the world's elements, and the elements of which thou dost consist. And they when they are changed, they murmur not; why shouldest thou?

In today's English

Whatever dies and falls, however and wherever it dies and falls, cannot fall out of the world. If it stays here and changes here, it also breaks down here into its own elements, which are the elements of the world and the elements you are made of. And they do not complain when they change. Why should you?

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Book VIII · XVII



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever is, was made for something: as a horse, a vine. Why wonderest thou? The sun itself will say of itself, I was made for something; and so hath every god its proper function. What then were then made for? to disport and delight thyself? See how even common sense and reason cannot brook it.

In today's English

Everything exists for some purpose: a horse, a vine. Why are you surprised? The sun itself will tell you, 'I was made for something,' and so does every god have its proper work. So what were you made for? To amuse yourself and enjoy pleasure? See how even common sense will not stand for that.

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Book VIII · XVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Nature hath its end as well in the end and final consummation of anything that is, as in the begin-nine and continuation of it.

In today's English

Nature aims at the end of each thing just as much as at its beginning and continuation.



Casaubon (1634)

As one that tosseth up a ball. And what is a ball the better, if the motion of it be upwards; or the worse if it be downwards; or if it chance to fall upon the ground? So for the bubble; if it continue, what it the better? and if it dissolve, what is it the worse And so is it of a candle too. And so must thou reason with thyself, both in matter of fame, and in matter of death. For as for the body itself, (the subject of death) wouldst thou know the vileness of it? Turn it about that thou mayest behold it the worst sides upwards as well, as in its more ordinary pleasant shape; how doth it look, when it is old and withered? when sick and pained? when in the act of lust, and fornication? And as for fame. This life is short. Both he that praiseth, and he that is praised; he that remembers, and he that is remembered, will soon be dust and ashes. Besides, it is but in one corner of this part of the world that thou art praised; and

In today's English

Like someone tossing a ball. And what good is it to the ball to go up, or what harm to come down, or even to land on the ground? Or to a bubble: what good is it to hold together, or what harm to burst? And the same goes for a candle flame. Reason with yourself the same way about fame and about death. As for the body itself, the thing that dies, do you want to see how cheap it is? Turn it over and look at its worst side as well as its usual pleasant appearance. What does it look like when it is old and withered? When it is sick and in pain? In the act of lust? As for fame: life is short. The one who praises and the one who is praised, the one who remembers and the one who is remembered, will all soon be dust and ashes. Besides, you are praised only in one corner of this part of the world, and even in this corner not everyone praises you together, and hardly anyone does so consistently. And the whole earth itself, what is it

Casaubon (1634) · continued

yet in this corner, thou hast not the joint praises
of all men; no nor scarce of any one constantly.
And yet the whole earth itself, what is it but as
one point, in regard of the whole world?

In today's English · continued

but a point compared with the universe?

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Book VIII · XX



Casaubon (1634)

That which must be the subject of thy consideration, is either the matter itself, or the dogma, or the operation, or the true sense and signification.

In today's English

What you need to look at is either the thing itself, or the principle (dogma), or the action, or the true meaning of what is said.

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Book VIII · XXI



Casaubon (1634)

Most justly have these things happened unto thee: why dost not thou amend? O but thou hadst rather become good to-morrow, than to be so to-day.

In today's English

You deserve what has happened to you. Why not reform? Oh, but you would rather become good tomorrow than be good today.



Casaubon (1634)

Shall I do it? I will; so the end of my action be to do good unto men. Doth anything by way of cross or adversity happen unto me? I accept it, with reference unto the Gods, and their providence; the fountain of all things, from which whatsoever comes to pass, doth hang and depend.

In today's English

Shall I do it? I will, as long as the aim of my action is to do good to people. Does something unwelcome or painful happen to me? I accept it, referring it to the gods and their providence, the source of all things, from which everything that happens hangs and depends.

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Book VIII · XXIII



Casaubon (1634)

By one action judge of the rest: this bathing which usually takes up so much of our time, what is it? Oil, sweat, filth; or the sordes of the body: an excrementitious viscosity, the excrements of oil and other ointments used about the body, and mixed with the sordes of the body: all base and loathsome. And such almost is every part of our life; and every worldly object.

In today's English

Judge all the rest by one example. Bathing, which takes up so much of our time: what is it? Oil, sweat, dirt, the grime of the body, greasy water, the leftovers of oil and ointments mixed with the body's filth, all of it low and disgusting. Almost every part of life, and every worldly thing, is like that.

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Book VIII · XXIV



Casaubon (1634)

Lucilla buried Verus; then was Lucilla herself buried by others. So Secunda Maximus, then Secunda herself. So Epitynchanus, Diotimus; then Epitynchanus himself. So Antoninus Pius, Faustina his wife; then Antoninus himself. This is the course of the world. First Celer, Adrianus; then Adrianus himself. And those austere ones; those that foretold other men's deaths; those that were so proud and stately, where are they now? Those austere ones I mean, such as were Charax, and Demetrius the Platonic, and Eudaemon, and others like unto those. They were all but for one day; all dead and gone long since. Some of them no sooner dead, than forgotten. Others soon turned into fables. Of others, even that which was fabulous, is now long since forgotten. This thereafter thou must remember, that whatsoever thou art compounded of, shall soon be dispersed, and that thy life and breath, or thy soul, shall either be no more or shall ranslated (sp.), and appointed to some certain place and station.

In today's English

Lucilla buried Verus, then others buried Lucilla. Secunda buried Maximus, then Secunda was buried. Epitynchanus buried Diotimus, then Epitynchanus was buried. Antoninus Pius buried his wife Faustina, then Antoninus was buried. That is how the world goes. First Celer buried Hadrian, then Celer himself. And those stern men, who predicted other people's deaths, who were so proud and stately, where are they now? I mean such stern men as Charax, Demetrius the Platonist, Eudaemon, and others like them. All of them lasted a day, all long since dead and gone. Some were forgotten as soon as they died. Others soon became legends. Of others, even the legends have long been forgotten. So remember this: whatever you are made of will soon be scattered, and your life and breath, your soul, will either cease to be or be moved and assigned to some particular place.



Casaubon (1634)

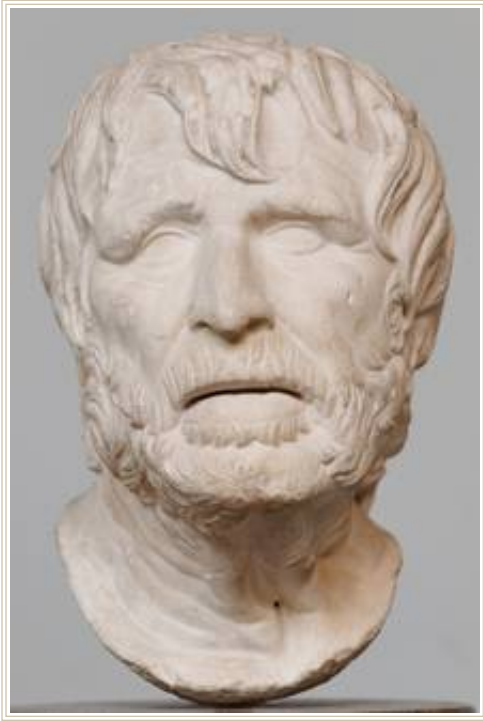
The true joy of a man, is to do that which properly belongs unto a man. That which is most proper unto a man, is, first, to be kindly affected towards them that are of the same kind and nature as he is himself to condemn all sensual motions and appetites, to discern rightly all plausible fancies and imaginations, to contemplate the nature of the universe; both it, and things that are done in it. In which kind of contemplation three several relations are to be observed The first, to the apparent secondary cause. The Second to the first original cause, God, from whom originally proceeds whatsoever doth happen in the world. The third and last, to them that we live and converse with: what use may be made of it, to their use and benefit.

In today's English

A person's true joy is to do what is properly human. What is most properly human is, first, to be kind toward those of the same kind and nature as yourself; to look down on the movements and appetites of the senses; to judge correctly the impressions that seem convincing; and to contemplate the nature of the universe and what happens in it. In this contemplation there are three relationships to consider. The first is to the immediate, secondary cause. The second is to the first, original cause, God, from whom everything that happens in the world ultimately comes. The third is to the people we live and deal with: how what happens can be used for their use and benefit.

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Book VIII · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

If pain be an evil, either it is in regard of the body; (and that cannot be, because the body of itself is altogether insensible;) or in regard of the soul. But it is in the power of the soul, to preserve her own peace and tranquillity, and not to suppose that pain is evil. For all judgment and deliberation; all prosecution, or aversion is from within, whither the sense of evil (except it be let in by opinion) cannot penetrate.

In today's English

If pain is bad, it is bad either for the body, which cannot be, since the body by itself feels nothing, or for the soul. But the soul has the power to keep its own peace and calm, and not to judge that pain is bad. All judgment and deliberation, all pursuing and avoiding, come from within, and no sense of evil can get in there unless opinion lets it in.

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Book VIII · XXVII



Casaubon (1634)

Wipe off all idle fancies, and say unto thyself incessantly; Now if I will, it is in my power to keep out of this my soul all wickedness, all lust, and concupiscences, all trouble and confusion. But on the contrary to behold and consider all things according to their true nature, and to carry myself towards everything according to its true worth. Remember then this thy power that nature hath given thee.

In today's English

Wipe away empty impressions, and keep saying to yourself: right now, if I choose, it is in my power to keep all wickedness, all lust and craving, and all disturbance and confusion out of my soul, and instead to see everything as it really is and to treat each thing according to its true worth. Remember this power that nature has given you.

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Book VIII · XXVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Whether thou speak in the Senate or whether thou speak to any particular, let thy speech In always grave and modest. But thou must not openly and vulgarly observe that sound and exact form of speaking, concerning that which is truly good and truly civil; the vanity of the world, and of worldly men: which otherwise truth and reason doth prescribe.

In today's English

Whether you speak in the Senate or to any individual, let your speech always be serious and modest. But you should not openly and crudely use that precise, strict way of speaking that truth and reason would otherwise prescribe about what is truly good and truly civil, and about the emptiness of the world and of worldly people.

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Book VIII · XXIX



Casaubon (1634)

Augustus his court; his wife, his daughter, his nephews, his sons-in-law his sister, Agrippa, his kinsmen, his domestics, his friends; Areus, Mæcenas, his slayers of beasts for sacrifice and divination: there thou hast the death of a whole court together. Proceed now on to the rest that have been since that of Augustus. Hath death dwelt with them otherwise, though so many and so stately whilst they lived, than it doth use to deal with any one particular man? Consider now the death of a whole kindred and family, as of that of the Pompeys, as that also that useth to be written upon some monuments, HE WAS THE LAST OF HIS OWN KINDRED. O what care did his predecessors take, that they might leave a successor, yet behold at last one or other must of necessity be THE LAST. Here again therefore consider the death of a whole kindred.

In today's English

The court of Augustus: his wife, his daughter, his grandsons, his stepsons, his sister, Agrippa, his relatives, his household, his friends, Areus, Maecenas, his priests who slaughtered animals for sacrifice and prophecy. There you have the death of an entire court. Now go on to the others who came after Augustus. Has death treated them, so many and so grand while they lived, any differently than it treats any single person? Now think of the death of a whole family line, like the Pompeys, and of what is often written on tombs: HE WAS THE LAST OF HIS FAMILY. How hard his ancestors worked to leave an heir, and yet in the end someone had to be THE LAST. So here again, think of the death of a whole family line.



Casaubon (1634)

Contract thy whole life to the measure and proportion of one single action. And if in every particular action thou dost perform what is fitting to the utmost of thy power, let it suffice thee. And who can hinder thee, but that thou mayest perform what is fitting? But there may be some outward let and impediment. Not any, that can hinder thee, but that whatsoever thou dost, thou may do it, justly, temperately, and with the praise of God. Yea, but there may be somewhat, whereby some operation or other of thine may be hindered. And then, with that very thing that doth hinder, thou mayest be well pleased, and so by this gentle and equanimous conversion of thy mind unto that which may be, instead of that which at first thou didst intend, in the room of that former action there succeedeth another, which agrees as well with this contraction of thy life, that we now speak of.

In today's English

Build your life one action at a time. If each action does what it should, as far as you can manage, be satisfied with that. And who can stop you from doing what is fitting? 'But there may be some outside obstacle.' None that can stop you from acting justly, with self-control, and with praise of God. 'Yes, but some particular action of mine may be blocked.' Then accept the very thing that blocks you gladly, and by calmly and evenly turning your mind to what is possible instead of what you first intended, another action takes the place of the first, one that fits just as well into this building of your life one action at a time.

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Book VIII · XXXI



Casaubon (1634)

Receive temporal blessings without ostentation, when they are sent and thou shalt be able to part with them with all readiness and facility when they are taken from thee again.

In today's English

Accept good fortune without showing off when it comes, and be ready to let it go easily when it is taken away again.

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Book VIII · XXXII



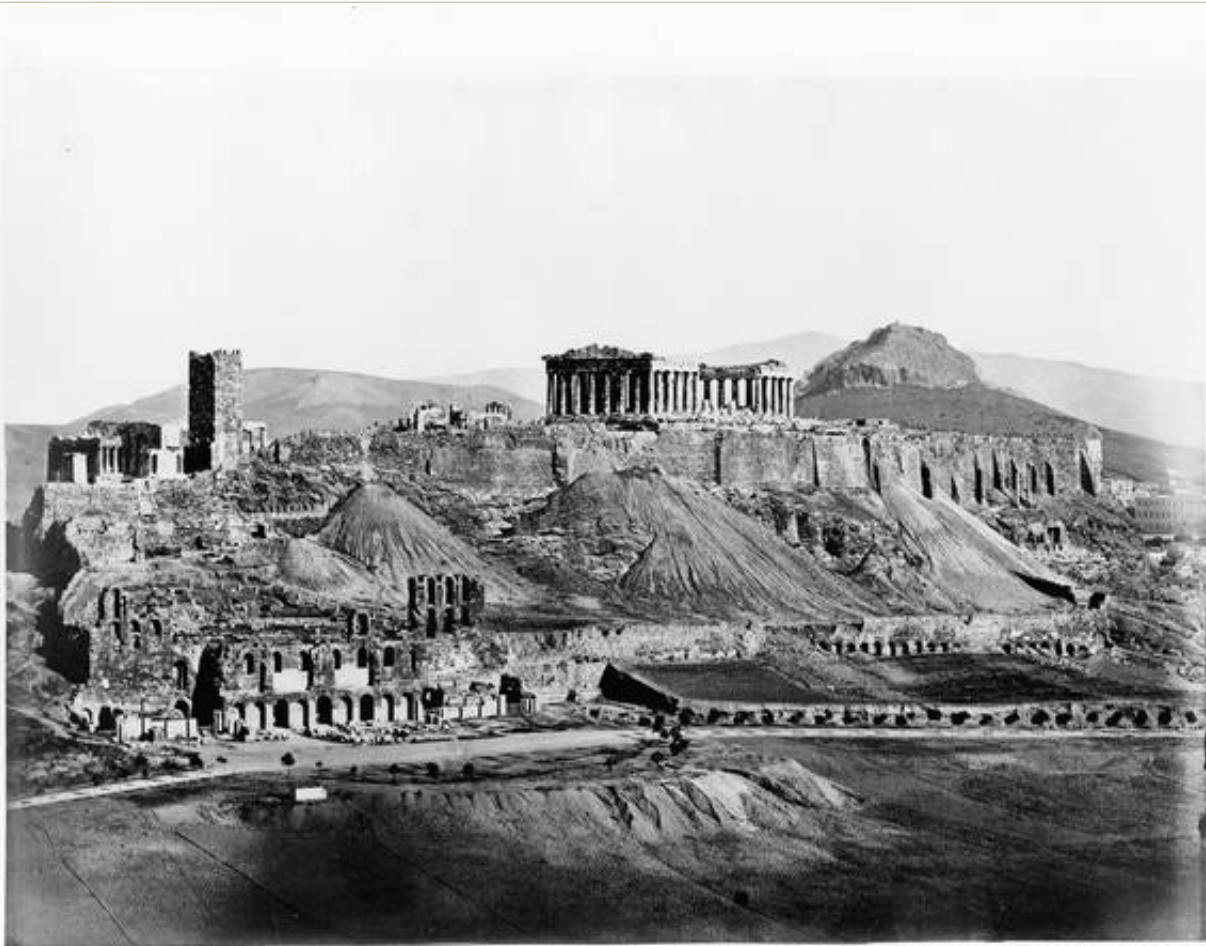
Casaubon (1634)

If ever thou sawest either a hand, or a foot, or a head lying by itself, in some place or other, as cut off from the rest of the body, such must thou conceive him to make himself, as much as in him lieth, that either is offended with anything that is happened, (whatsoever it be) and as it were divides himself from it: or that commits anything against the natural law of mutual correspondence, and society among men: or, he that, commits any act of uncharitableness. Whosoever thou art, thou art such, thou art cast forth I know not whither out of the general unity, which is according to nature. Thou went born indeed a part, but now thou hast cut thyself off. However, herein is matter of joy and exultation, that thou mayst be united again. God hath not granted it unto any other part, that once separated and cut off, it might be reunited, and come together again. But, behold, that GOODNESS how great and immense it is! which hath so much

esteemed MAN. As at first he was so made, that he needed not, except he would himself, have divided himself from the whole; so once divided and cut off, IT hath so provided and ordered it, that if he would himself, he might return, and grow together again, and be admitted into its former rank and place of a part, as he was before.

In today's English

If you have ever seen a hand or a foot or a head cut off and lying somewhere by itself, apart from the rest of the body, that is what a person makes of himself, as far as he can, when he resents something that has happened, whatever it is, and cuts himself off from it, or when he does something against the natural law of fellowship among people, or does any unkind act. Whoever you are, if you are like this, you have thrown yourself out, I do not know where, from the natural unity of the whole. You were born a part, but now you have cut yourself off. But here is something to be glad and rejoice about: you can be joined back again. God has not given this to any other part, that once it is separated and cut away, it can grow back together again. But see how great and boundless that GOODNESS is, which has valued MAN so highly. At first it made him so that he did not need to separate himself from the whole unless he chose to. And once he is separated and cut off, IT has arranged things so that, if he wishes, he can return, grow together again, and take back his former place as a part, as he was before.

*Acropolis from South*

Casaubon (1634)

As almost all her other faculties and properties the nature of the universe hath imparted unto every reasonable creature, so this in particular we have received from her, that as whatsoever doth oppose itself unto her, and doth withstand her in her purposes and intentions, she doth, though against its will and intention, bring it about to herself, to serve herself of it in the execution of her own destined ends; and so by this though not intended co-operation of it with herself makes it part of herself whether it will or no. So may every reasonable creature, what crosses and impediments soever it meets with in the course of this mortal life, it may use them as fit and proper objects, to the furtherance of whatsoever it intended and absolutely proposed unto itself as its natural

In today's English

The nature of the universe has given every rational being almost all its other powers, and in particular we have received this one from it. Whatever opposes nature and resists its purposes, nature turns, against that thing's will and intention, to its own use, making it serve the fated ends nature has set, and so, by this unintended cooperation, makes it part of itself whether it likes it or not. In the same way, every rational being can take whatever setbacks and obstacles it meets in this mortal life and use them as fitting material to advance whatever it set out to do as its natural goal and happiness.

Casaubon (1634) · continued
end and happiness.



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Book VIII · XXXIV

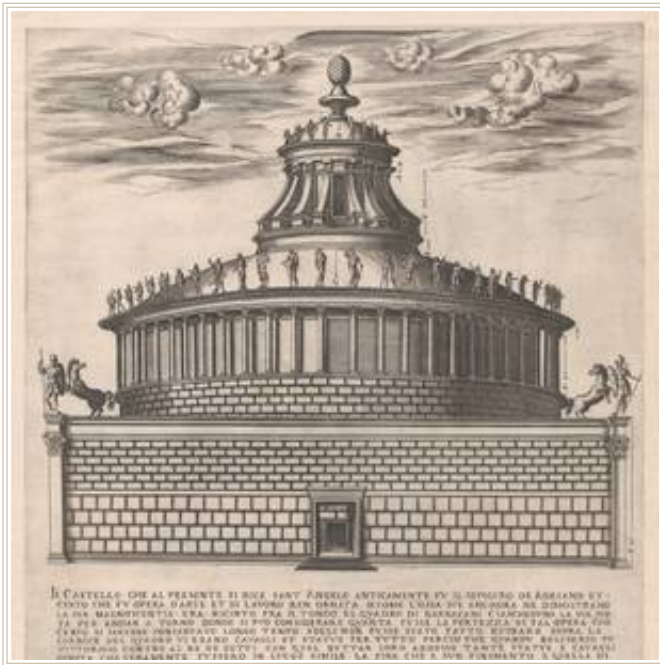


Casaubon (1634)

Let not the general representation unto thyself of the wretchedness of this our mortal life, trouble thee. Let not thy mind wander up and down, and heap together in her thoughts the many troubles and grievous calamities which thou art as subject unto as any other. But as everything in particular doth happen, put this question unto thyself, and say: What is it that in this present matter, seems unto thee so intolerable? For thou wilt be ashamed to confess it. Then upon this presently call to mind, that neither that which is future, nor that which is past can hurt thee; but that only which is present. (And that also is much lessened, if thou dost lightly circumscribe it:) and then check thy mind if for so little a while, (a mere instant), it cannot hold out with patience.

In today's English

Do not let the picture of your whole life, with all its misery, upset you. Do not let your mind wander around piling up all the troubles and terrible misfortunes you are as liable to as anyone else. Instead, as each thing happens, ask yourself: 'What is it about this, right now, that is so unbearable?' You will be ashamed to admit it. Then remember right away that neither the future nor the past can hurt you, only the present. And even that shrinks a great deal if you draw a line around it, and then scold your mind if it cannot hold out patiently for such a short time, a mere instant.



Casaubon (1634)

What? are either Panthea or Pergamus abiding to this day by their masters' tombs? or either Chabrias or Diotimus by that of Adrianus? O foolery! For what if they did, would their masters be sensible of It? or if sensible, would they be glad of it? or if glad, were these immortal? Was not it appointed unto them also (both men and women,) to become old in time, and then to die? And these once dead, what would become of these former? And when all is done, what is all this for, but for a mere bag of blood and corruption?

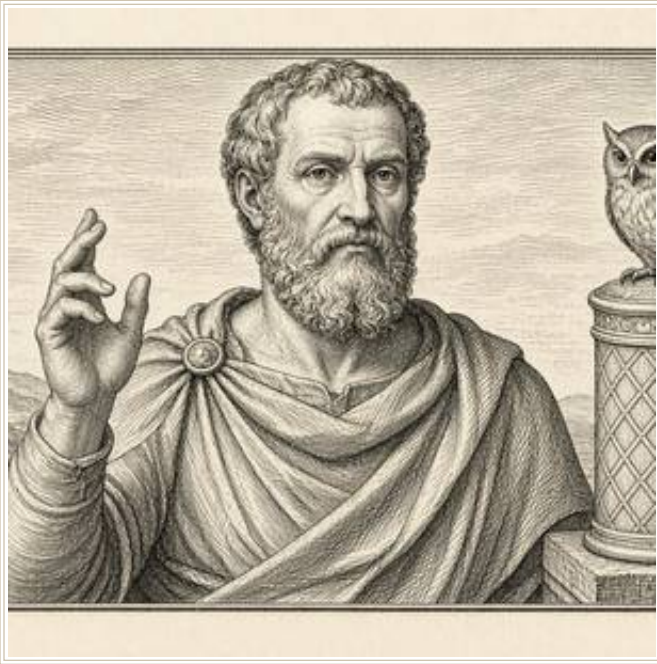
In today's English

Do Panthea or Pergamus still sit by their master's tomb today? Or Chabrias or Diotimus by Hadrian's? Ridiculous. And if they did, would their masters know? And if they knew, would they be

pleased? And if pleased, would the mourners be immortal? Were they not also fated, men and women alike, to grow old and then die? And when they died, what would become of their masters then? And in the end, what is all this for, but a bag of blood and decay?

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Book VIII · XXXVI



Casaubon (1634)

If thou beest quick-sighted, be so in matter of judgment, and best discretion, saith he.

In today's English

'If you have sharp eyes,' he says, 'use them in judgment and good sense.'



Casaubon (1634)

In the whole constitution of man, I see not any virtue contrary to justice, whereby it may be resisted and opposed. But one whereby pleasure and voluptuousness may be resisted and opposed, I see: continence.

In today's English

In the whole makeup of a human being I see no virtue that opposes and resists justice. But I do see one that opposes pleasure and self-indulgence: self-control.



Casaubon (1634)

If thou canst but withdraw conceit and opinion concerning that which may seem hurtful and offensive, thou thyself art as safe, as safe may be. Thou thyself? and who is that? Thy reason. 'Yea, but I am not reason.' Well, be it so. However, let not thy reason or understanding admit of grief, and if there be anything in thee that is grieved, let that, (whatsoever it be,) conceive its own grief, if it can.

In today's English

If you can only take away your opinion about what seems painful or harmful, you yourself are completely safe. You yourself? Who is that? Your reason. 'But I am not just reason.' Fine. Still, do not let your reason add distress to itself, and if some other part of you is suffering, let that part form its own judgment about it, if it can.

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Book VIII · XXXIX



Casaubon (1634)

That which is a hindrance of the senses, is an evil to the sensitive nature. That which is a hindrance of the appetitive and prosecutive faculty, is an evil to the sensitive nature. As of the sensitive, so of the vegetative constitution, whatsoever is a hindrance unto it, is also in that respect an evil unto the same. And so likewise, whatsoever is a hindrance unto the mind and understanding, must needs be the proper evil of the reasonable nature. Now apply all those things unto thyself. Do either pain or pleasure seize on thee? Let the senses look to that. Hast thou met with Some obstacle or other in thy purpose and intention? If thou didst propose without due reservation and exception now hath thy reasonable part received a blow indeed But if in general thou didst propose unto thyself what soever might be, thou art not thereby either hurt, nor properly hindered. For in those things that properly belong unto the mind, she cannot be hindered by any man. It is not fire, nor iron; nor the power of a tyrant nor the power of a slandering tongue; nor anything else that can penetrate into her.

In today's English

Whatever blocks the senses is bad for the sentient nature. Whatever blocks the faculty of desire and pursuit is bad for the sentient nature too. In the same way, whatever blocks the vegetative makeup of a plant is bad for it. And so, whatever blocks the mind and understanding must be what is properly bad for the rational nature. Now apply all this to yourself. Is pain or pleasure taking hold of you? Let the senses deal with it. Have you run into some obstacle to what you intended? If you set out without the proper reservation, then your rational part really has been hurt. But if you set out in general to do whatever was possible, you are neither harmed nor truly blocked. In the things that properly belong to the mind, no one can block it. Neither fire, nor steel, nor a tyrant, nor slander, nor anything else can get through to it.

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Book VIII · XL



Casaubon (1634)

If once round and solid, there is no fear that ever
it will change.

In today's English

Once it is a sphere, round and solid, there is no
fear that it will ever change.

259/415

Book VIII · XLI



Casaubon (1634)

Why should I grieve myself; who never did willingly grieve any other! One thing rejoices one and another thing another. As for me, this is my joy, if my understanding be right and sound, as neither averse from any man, nor refusing any of those things which as a man I am subject unto; if I can look upon all things in the world meekly and kindly; accept all things and carry myself towards everything according to the true worth of the thing itself.

In today's English

Why should I distress myself, when I have never willingly distressed anyone else? Different things make different people happy. As for me, my joy is this: that my ruling mind be healthy and sound, not turning away from any person or rejecting anything that happens to me as a human being, and that I can look at everything in the world gently and kindly, accept everything, and treat each thing according to its true worth.

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Book VIII · XLII



Casaubon (1634)

This time that is now present, bestow thou upon thyself. They that rather hunt for fame after death, do not consider, that those men that shall be hereafter, will be even such, as these whom now they can so hardly bear with. And besides they also will be mortal men. But to consider the thing in itself, if so many with so many voices, shall make such and such a sound, or shall have such and such an opinion concerning thee, what is it to thee?

In today's English

Give yourself this present moment. Those who chase fame after death do not realize that the people of the future will be just like the people they find so hard to put up with now, and that they too will be mortal. And looking at the thing itself: if so many people, with so many voices, make such and such a sound, or hold such and such an opinion about you, what is that to you?



Casaubon (1634)

Take me and throw me where thou wilt: I am indifferent. For there also I shall have that spirit which is within me propitious; that is well pleased and fully contented both in that constant disposition, and with those particular actions, which to its own proper constitution are suitable and agreeable.

In today's English

Pick me up and throw me wherever you like. It makes no difference to me. Even there I will keep the spirit within me well disposed, that is, happy and content, both in its settled state and in actions that suit its own proper makeup.



Casaubon (1634)

Is this then a thing of that worth, that for it my soul should suffer, and become worse than it was? as either basely dejected, or disordinately affected, or confounded within itself, or terrified? What can there be, that thou shouldest so much esteem?

In today's English

Is this worth so much that my soul should suffer for it and become worse than it was: crushed and humiliated, carried away by passion, confused, or terrified? What could be worth that much to you?



Casaubon (1634)

Nothing can happen unto thee, which is not incidental unto thee, as thou art a man. As nothing can happen either to an ox, a vine, or to a stone, which is not incidental unto them; unto every one in his own kind. If therefore nothing can happen unto anything, which is not both usual and natural; why art thou displeased? Sure the common nature of all would not bring anything upon any, that were intolerable. If therefore it be a thing external that causes thy grief, know, that it is not that properly that doth cause it, but thine own conceit and opinion concerning the thing: which thou mayest rid thyself of, when thou wilt. But if it be somewhat that is amiss in thine own disposition, that doth grieve thee, mayest thou not rectify thy moral tenets and opinions. But if it grieve thee, that thou doest not perform that which seemeth unto thee right and just, why doest not thou choose rather to perform it than to grieve? But somewhat that is stronger than thyself doth hinder thee. Let it not grieve thee then, if it be not thy fault that the thing is not performed. 'Yea but it is a thing of that nature, as that thy life is not worth the

while, except it may be performed.' If it be so, upon condition that thou be kindly and lovingly disposed towards all men, thou mayest be gone. For even then, as much as at any time, art thou in a very good estate of performance, when thou doest die in charity with those, that are an obstacle unto thy performance.

In today's English

Nothing can happen to you that is not natural to you as a human being, just as nothing can happen to an ox, a vine, or a stone that is not natural to it, each in its own kind. So if nothing can happen to anything that is not both normal and natural, why are you upset? The common nature of all things would surely not bring anyone anything unbearable. So if it is something external that distresses you, know that it is not the thing itself that causes the distress, but your own opinion about it, and you can get rid of that whenever you like. But if what distresses you is something wrong in your own character, can you not correct your principles? And if it distresses you that you are not doing what seems right and just to you, why not do it instead of being distressed? 'But something stronger than me is stopping me.' Then do not be distressed, since it is not your fault that it is not getting done. 'But it is the kind of thing that makes life not worth living unless it gets done.' If so, then leave life, as long as you are kind and loving toward everyone. For even then, as much as at any time, you are in a very good state of doing your duty, when you die at peace with those who stand in your way.



Acropolis from N West

Casaubon (1634)

Remember that thy mind is of that nature as that it becometh altogether unconquerable, when once recollected in herself, she seeks no other content than this, that she cannot be forced: yea though it so fall out, that it be even against reason itself, that it cloth bandy. How much less when by the help of reason she is able to judge of things with discretion? And therefore let thy chief fort and place of defence be, a mind free from passions. A stronger place, (whereunto to make his refuge, and so to become impregnable) and better fortified than this, hath no man. He that seeth not this is unlearned. He that seeth it, and betaketh not himself to this place of refuge, is unhappy.

In today's English

Remember that your mind becomes completely unconquerable when it collects itself and is content simply to refuse to be forced, even when its resistance is not reasonable. How much more when it can judge things carefully with the help of reason? So let your main fortress and place of defense be a mind free from passions. No one has a stronger, better fortified place to take refuge in and become impregnable. Whoever does not see this is ignorant. Whoever sees it and does not take refuge there is unfortunate.

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Book VIII · XLVII



Casaubon (1634)

Keep thyself to the first bare and naked apprehensions of things, as they present themselves unto thee, and add not unto them. It is reported unto thee, that such a one speaketh ill of thee. Well; that he speaketh ill of thee, so much is reported. But that thou art hurt thereby, is not reported: that is the addition of opinion, which thou must exclude. I see that my child is sick. That he is sick, I see, but that he is in danger of his life also, I see it not. Thus thou must use to keep thyself to the first motions and apprehensions of things, as they present themselves outwardly; and add not unto them from within thyself through mere conceit and opinion. Or rather add unto them: hut as one that understandeth the true nature of all things that happen in the world.

In today's English

Stick to your first bare impressions of things as they come to you, and do not add to them. You are told that someone is speak-

ing badly of you. Fine: that he is speaking badly of you is what you were told. That you have been harmed by it, you were not told. That is something opinion adds, and you must keep it out. I see that my child is sick. That he is sick, I see. That his life is in danger, I do not see. So get used to staying with your first impressions of things as they appear from outside, and not adding to them from within out of mere opinion. Or rather, do add to them, but as someone who understands the true nature of everything that happens in the world.

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Book VIII · XLVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Is the cucumber bitter? set it away. Brambles are in the way? avoid them. Let this suffice. Add not presently speaking unto thyself, What serve these things for in the world? For, this, one that is acquainted with the mysteries of nature, will laugh at thee for it; as a carpenter would or a shoemaker, if meeting in either of their shops with some shavings, or small remnants of their work, thou shouldest blame them for it. And yet those men, it is not for want of a place where to throw them that they keep them in their shops for a while: but the nature of the universe hath no such out-place; but herein doth consist the wonder of her art and skill, that she having once circumscribed herself within some certain bounds and limits, whatsoever is within her that seems either corrupted, or old, or unprofitable, she can change it into herself, and of these very things can make new things; so that she needeth not to seek elsewhere out of herself either for a new supply of matter and substance, or for a place where to throw out whatsoever is irrecoverably putrid and corrupt. Thus she, as for place, so for matter and art, is herself suf-

ficient unto herself.

In today's English

Is the cucumber bitter? Put it down. Are there brambles in the path? Go around them. That is enough. Do not go on to say, 'Why are such things in the world at all?' Someone who understands nature's workings will laugh at you, just as a carpenter or a shoemaker would if you found fault with the shavings and scraps lying around his shop. Yet they at least have somewhere to throw their scraps, and keep them in the shop only for a while. The nature of the universe has no outside place like that. The wonder of its craft is that, having drawn its own boundaries, it takes whatever inside it seems rotten, old, or useless, changes it back into itself, and makes new things out of it. So it does not need to look outside itself for new material, or for a place to throw away what is beyond saving. It is self-sufficient in place, in material, and in skill.

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Book VIII · XLIX



Casaubon (1634)

Not to be slack and negligent; or loose, and wanton in thy actions; nor contentious, and troublesome in thy conversation; nor to rove and wander in thy fancies and imaginations. Not basely to contract thy soul; nor boisterously to sally out with it, or furiously to launch out as it were, nor ever to want employment.

In today's English

Do not be sluggish or careless in your actions, or loose and undisciplined. Do not be quarrelsome or annoying in conversation. Do not let your thoughts drift and wander. Do not shrink your soul meanly, or let it burst out violently or charge off wildly. And never be without something worthwhile to do.



Casaubon (1634)

'They kill me, they cut my flesh; they persecute my person with curses.' What then? May not thy mind for all this continue pure, prudent, temperate, just? As a fountain of sweet and clear water, though she be cursed by some stander by, yet do her springs nevertheless still run as sweet and clear as before; yea though either dirt or dung be thrown in, yet is it no sooner thrown, than dispersed, and she cleared. She cannot be dyed or infected by it. What then must I do, that I may have within myself an overflowing fountain, and not a well? Beget thyself by continual pains and endeavours to true liberty with charity, and true simplicity and modesty.

In today's English

'They kill me, they cut my flesh, they hound me with curses.' So what? Can your mind not stay pure, wise, self-controlled, and just through all of it? It is like a spring of clear, sweet water. Someone standing by may curse it, but it keeps flowing just as clear and sweet as before. Even if mud or dung is thrown in, it is quickly scattered and washed away, and the spring runs clear again. It cannot be stained or polluted. So what must I do to have an ever-flowing spring within me and not a stagnant well? Work constantly to make yourself free, with kindness, simplicity, and modesty.



Casaubon (1634)

He that knoweth not what the world is, knoweth not where he himself is. And he that knoweth not what the world was made for, cannot possibly know either what are the qualities, or what is the nature of the world. Now he that in either of these is to seek, for what he himself was made is ignorant also. What then dost thou think of that man, who proposeth unto himself, as a matter of great moment, the noise and applause of men, who both where they are, and what they are themselves, are altogether ignorant? Dost thou desire to be commended of that man, who thrice in one hour perchance, doth himself curse himself? Dost thou desire to please him, who pleaseth not himself? or dost thou think that he pleaseth himself, who doth use to repent himself almost of everything that he

In today's English

Whoever does not know what the world is does not know where he is. Whoever does not know what the world was made for cannot know what its qualities or nature are. And whoever is lost on either point does not know what he himself was made for. So what do you think of someone who cares a great deal about the noise and applause of people who do not know where they are or who they are? Do you want praise from a man who curses himself perhaps three times an hour? Do you want to please a man who does not please himself? Or do you think a man pleases himself when he regrets almost everything he does?

Casaubon (1634) · continued
doth?



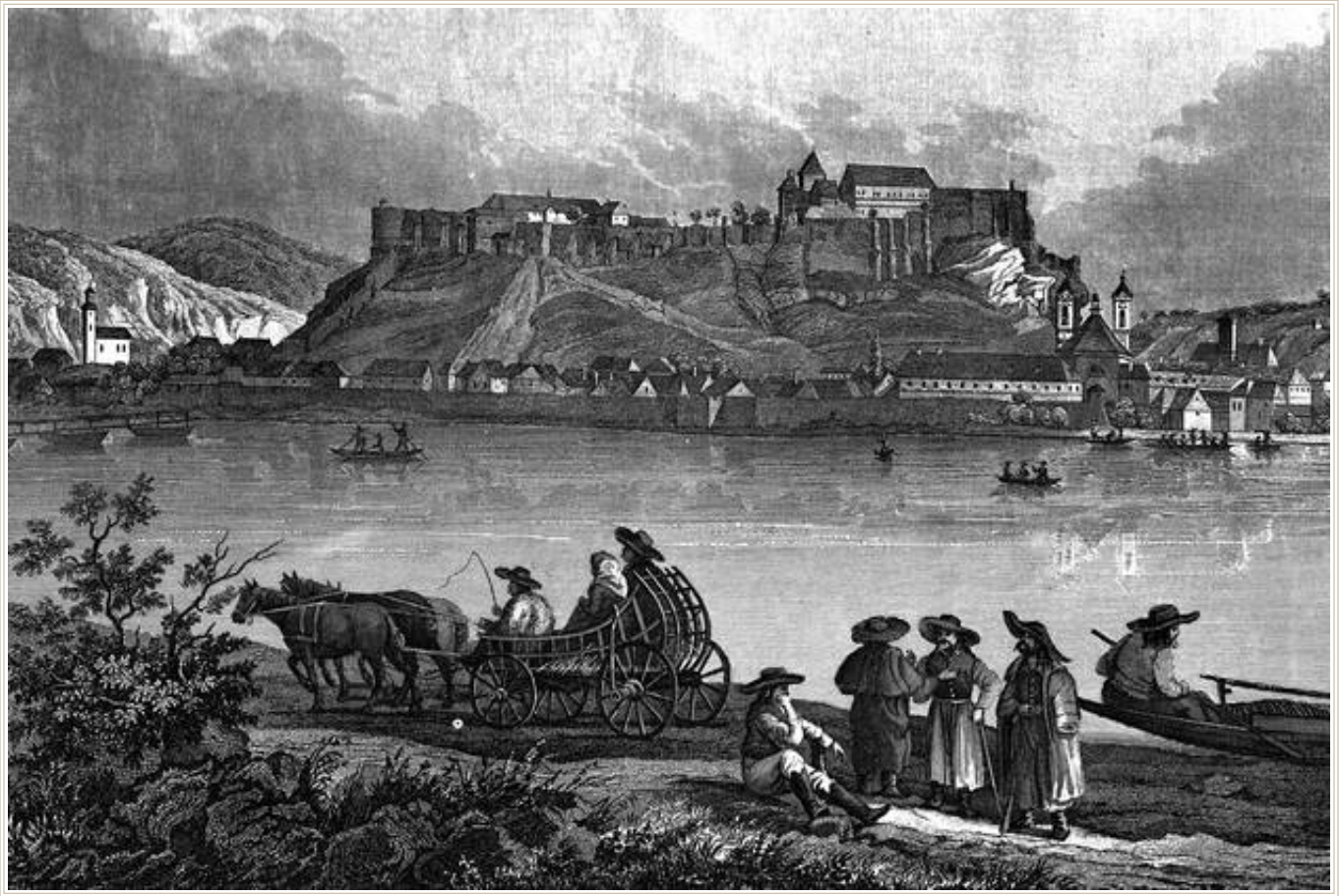


Casaubon (1634)

Not only now henceforth to have a common breath, or to hold correspondency of breath, with that air, that compasseth us about; but to have a common mind, or to hold correspondency of mind also with that rational substance, which compasseth all things. For, that also is of itself, and of its own nature (if a man can but draw it in as he should) everywhere diffused; and passeth through all things, no less than the air doth, if a man can but suck it in.

In today's English

From now on, do not merely breathe together with the air that surrounds you. Think together with the rational mind that surrounds all things. That mind is spread everywhere by its own nature, and flows through all things just as much as the air does, for anyone who can draw it in as he should.



Casaubon (1634)

Wickedness in general doth not hurt the world. Particular wickedness doth not hurt any other: only unto him it is hurtful, whosoever he be that offends, unto whom in great favour and mercy it is granted, that whensoever he himself shall but first desire it, he may be presently delivered of it. Unto my free-will my neighbour's free-will, whoever he be, (as his life, or his bode), is altogether indifferent. For though we are all made one for another, yet have our minds and understandings each of them their own proper and limited jurisdiction. For else another man's wickedness might be my evil which God would not have, that it might not be in another man's power to make me unhappy: which nothing now can do but mine own wickedness.

In today's English

Wickedness in general does not harm the world. A particular act of wickedness does not harm anyone else. It harms only the person who commits it, and he has been granted, by great kindness and mercy, the power to be free of it the moment he first truly wants to be. My neighbor's free will, whoever he is, is as indifferent to my free will as his breath or his body. For although we are made for one another, each of our minds has its own proper, limited authority. Otherwise another person's wickedness could be my harm, and God did not want that, so that no one else would have the power to make me unhappy. Nothing can do that now except my own wickedness.



Casaubon (1634)

The sun seemeth to be shed abroad. And indeed it is diffused but not effused. For that diffusion of it is a *τάσις* or an extension. For therefore are the beams of it called *ἄκτῖνες* from the word *ἐκτείνεσθαι* to be stretched out and extended. Now what a sunbeam is, thou mayest know if thou observe the light of the sun, when through some narrow hole it pierceth into some room that is dark. For it is always in a direct line. And as by any solid body, that it meets with in the way that is not penetrable by air, it is divided and abrupted, and yet neither slides off, or falls down, but stayeth there nevertheless: such must the diffusion in the mind be; not an effusion, but an extension. What obstacles and impediments soever she meeteth within her way, she must not violently, and by way of an impetuous onset light upon them; neither must she fall down; but she must stand, and give light unto that which doth admit of it. For as for that which doth not, it is its own fault and loss, if it bereave itself of her light.

In today's English

The sun seems to pour itself out. And it does spread everywhere, but it is never used up. This spreading is a *τάσις* (tasis, a stretching out). That is why its rays are called *ἄκτῖνες* (aktines), from the word *ἐκτείνεσθαι* (ekteinesthai), 'to be stretched out.' You can see what a ray is if you watch sunlight entering a dark room through a narrow opening. It always travels in a straight line. When it meets some solid body in its way that the air cannot pass through, it is split and broken off, yet it neither slides off nor falls down, but stays there. The mind's spreading should be like that: not a pouring out, but a stretching out. Whatever obstacles it meets in its path, it should not crash into them violently, nor fall down, but should stand firm and give light to whatever will receive it. As for whatever will not, it is that thing's own fault and loss if it robs itself of the light.

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Book VIII · LV



Casaubon (1634)

He that feareth death, either feareth that he shall have no sense at all, or that his senses will not be the same. Whereas, he should rather comfort himself, that either no sense at all, and so no sense of evil; or if any sense, then another life, and so no death properly.

In today's English

Whoever fears death fears either that he will have no sensation at all, or that his sensations will be different. But he should rather take comfort: if there is no sensation, there is no sensation of anything bad; and if there is sensation, then there is another life, and so, properly speaking, no death.

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Book VIII · LVI



Casaubon (1634)

All men are made one for another: either then teach them better, or bear with them.

In today's English

All people are made for one another. So either teach them better or put up with them.



Casaubon (1634)

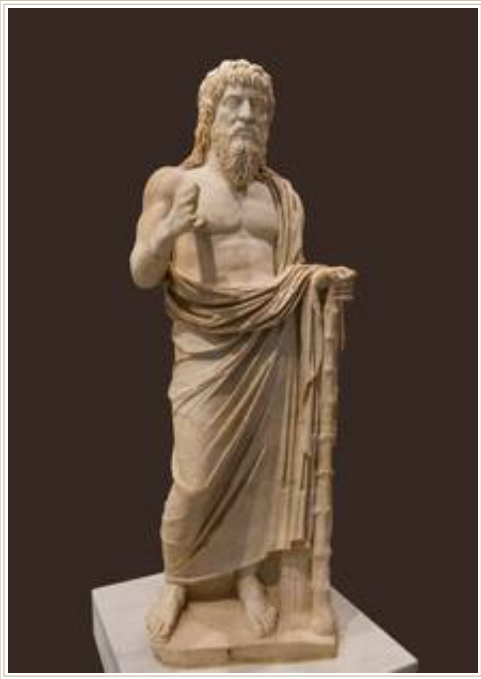
The motion of the mind is not as the motion of a dart. For the mind when it is wary and cautelous, and by way of diligent circumspection turneth herself many ways, may then as well be said to go straight on to the object, as when it useth no such circumspection.

In today's English

The mind does not move like an arrow. When the mind is careful and cautious and turns this way and that in its investigation, it is still moving straight toward its object, just as much as when it does not take such care.

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Book VIII · LVIII



Casaubon (1634)

To pierce and penetrate into the estate of every one's understanding that thou hast to do with: as also to make the estate of thine own open, and penetrable to any other.

In today's English

See into the ruling mind of everyone you deal with, and let everyone else see into yours.



Casaubon (1634)

He that is unjust, is also impious. For the nature of the universe, having made all reasonable creatures one for another, to the end that they should do one another good; more or less according to the several persons and occasions but in nowise hurt one another: it is manifest that he that doth transgress against this her will, is guilty of impiety towards the most ancient and venerable of all the deities. For the nature of the universe, is the nature the common parent of all, and therefore piously to be observed of all things that are, and that which now is, to whatsoever first was, and gave it its being, hath relation of blood and kindred. She is also called truth and is the first cause of all truths. He therefore that willingly and wittingly doth lie, is impious in that he doth receive, and so commit injustice: but he that against his will, in that he disagreeeth from the nature of the universe, and in that striving with the nature of the world he doth in his particular, violate the general order of the world. For he doth no better than strive and war against it, who contrary to his own nature applieth himself to that which is contrary to truth. For nature had before furnished him with instincts and opportunities sufficient for the attainment of it; which he having hitherto neglected, is not now able to discern that which is false from that which is true. He also that pursues

In today's English

Whoever does wrong is irreverent. The nature of the universe made rational beings for one another, to help each other, more or less depending on the person and the occasion, but never to harm one another. So whoever goes against its will is clearly guilty of irreverence toward the oldest and most revered of the gods. For the nature of the universe is the common parent of all things, and so all things should revere it. All that exists now is related by blood and kinship to whatever first existed and gave it being. This nature is also called truth, and is the first cause of all truths. So whoever lies willingly and knowingly is irreverent, because by deceiving he commits injustice. And whoever lies unwillingly is irreverent too, because he is out of tune with the nature of the universe and, by fighting against the nature of the world, disrupts the general order of the world in his own small part. For whoever turns, against his own nature, toward what is contrary to truth is doing nothing but fighting and waging war against that nature. Nature had already given him the instincts and resources he needed to reach the truth, and because he neglected them, he can no longer tell what is false from what is true.

Whoever pursues pleasure as truly good and runs from pain as truly bad is also irreverent. Such a person will inevitably often blame the common

Casaubon (1634) · continued

after pleasures, as that which is truly good and flies from pains, as that which is truly evil: is impious. For such a one must of necessity oftentimes accuse that common nature, as distributing many things both unto the evil, and unto the good, not according to the deserts of either: as unto the bad oftentimes pleasures, and the causes of pleasures; so unto the good, pains, and the occasions of pains. Again, he that feareth pains and crosses in this world, feareth some of those things which some time or other must needs happen in the world. And that we have already showed to be impious. And he that pursueth after pleasures, will not spare, to compass his desires, to do that which is unjust, and that is manifestly impious. Now those things which unto nature are equally indifferent (for she had not created both, both pain and pleasure, if both had not been unto her equally indifferent): they that will live according to nature, must in those things (as being of the same mind and disposition that she is) be as equally indifferent. Whosoever therefore in either matter of pleasure and pain; death and life; honour and dishonour, (which things nature in the administration of the world, indifferently doth make use of), is not as indifferent, it is apparent that he is impious. When I say that common nature doth indifferently make use of them, my meaning is, that they happen indifferently in the ordinary course of things, which by a necessary consequence, whether as principal or accessory, come to pass in the world, according to that first and ancient deliberation of Providence, by which she from some certain beginning, did resolve upon the creation of such a world, conceiving then in her womb as it were some certain rational generative seeds and faculties of things future, whether subjects, changes, successions; both such and such, and just so many.

In today's English · continued

nature for handing out many things to good and bad people without regard to what each deserves, since bad people often get pleasures and the things that produce them, and good people get pains and the things that cause them. Again, whoever fears pain and hardship fears something that is bound to happen in the world sooner or later, and we have already shown that to be irreverent. And whoever pursues pleasure will not hold back from doing wrong to get what he wants, and that is plainly irreverent. Now, toward the things nature treats as indifferent (it would not have made both pain and pleasure unless it were indifferent to both), those who want to live according to nature must be equally indifferent, sharing nature's mind and attitude. So whoever is not indifferent to pleasure and pain, death and life, honor and dishonor, which nature uses indifferently in running the world, is clearly irreverent. When I say that the common nature uses them indifferently, I mean that they happen indifferently in the ordinary course of things, which, as a necessary consequence, whether as primary or as side effects, come about in the world according to the original, ancient decision of providence. By that decision, from a certain starting point, providence resolved to create this world, conceiving in its womb, so to speak, certain rational seeds and generative powers of things to come: of beings, changes, and successions, of such kinds and in just such numbers.



Casaubon (1634)

It were indeed more happy and comfortable, for a man to depart out of this world, having lived all his life long clear from all falsehood, dissimulation, voluptuousness, and pride. But if this cannot be, yet it is some comfort for a man joyfully to depart as weary, and out of love with those; rather than to desire to live, and to continue long in those wicked courses. Hath not yet experience taught thee to fly from the plague? For a far greater plague is the corruption of the mind, than any certain change and distemper of the common air can be. This is a plague of creatures, as they are living creatures; but that of men as they are men or reasonable.

In today's English

It would be happiest and most comfortable to leave this world having lived your whole life free of all lying, pretense, self-indulgence, and pride. But if that cannot be, it is still some comfort to leave gladly, sick and tired of such things, rather than wanting to live and go on long in those bad ways. Has experience not yet taught you to run from the plague? For corruption of the mind is a far worse plague than any infection or sickness in the air around us. That plague attacks creatures as living animals. This one attacks people as human beings, that is, as rational beings.



Casaubon (1634)

Thou must not in matter of death carry thyself scornfully, but as one that is well pleased with it, as being one of those things that nature hath appointed. For what thou dost conceive of these, of a boy to become a young man, to wax old, to grow, to ripen, to get teeth, or a beard, or grey hairs to beget, to bear, or to be delivered; or what other action soever it be, that is natural unto man according to the several seasons of his life; such a thing is it also to be dissolved. It is therefore the part of a wise man, in matter of death, not in any wise to carry himself either violently, or proudly but patiently to wait for it, as one of nature's operations: that with the same mind as now thou dost expect when that which yet is but an embryo in thy wife's belly shall come forth, thou mayst expect also when thy soul shall fall off from that outward coat or skin: wherein as a child in the belly it lieth involved and shut up. But thou desirest a

In today's English

Do not look down on death. Welcome it, as one of the things nature wills. Just like growing from a boy into a young man, growing old, growing up, maturing, getting teeth, a beard, and gray hair, fathering children, being pregnant, and giving birth, and all the other natural processes that come with the seasons of a human life, so too is being dissolved. So it is the mark of a thoughtful person not to treat death violently or arrogantly, but to wait for it patiently as one of nature's workings. Just as you now wait for the child in your wife's womb to be born, wait in the same spirit for the hour when your soul will slip out of its outer covering, in which it lies wrapped up like a child in the womb. But if you want a more popular remedy against the fear of death, not as direct or philosophical but very powerful and penetrating, nothing will make you more willing to part with life than thinking about the things you will be

Casaubon (1634) · continued

more popular, and though not so direct and philosophical, yet a very powerful and penetrative recipe against the fear of death, nothing can make they more willing to part with thy life, than if thou shalt consider, both what the subjects themselves are that thou shalt part with, and what manner of disposition thou shalt no more have to do with. True it is, that, offended with them thou must not be by no means, but take care of them, and meekly bear with them. However, this thou mayst remember, that whensoever it happens that thou depart, it shall not be from men that held the same opinions that thou dost. For that indeed, (if it were so) is the only thing that might make thee averse from death, and willing to continue here, if it were thy hap to live with men that had obtained the same belief that thou hast. But now, what a toil it is for thee to live with men of different opinions, thou seest: so that thou hast rather occasion to say, Hasten, I thee pray, O Death; lest I also in time forget myself.

In today's English · continued

leaving behind, and the kind of characters you will no longer have to deal with. True, you must not be offended by them at all. You must care for them and bear with them gently. Still, you may remember that whenever you leave, it will not be from people who share your beliefs. That, if it were so, is the only thing that might make you reluctant to die and want to stay here: to live among people who have come to share your beliefs. But as it is, you see how exhausting it is to live among people who think differently, so that you have more reason to say, 'Hurry, death, I beg you, before I too forget myself.'

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Book IX · IV



Casaubon (1634)

He that sinneth, sinneth unto himself. He that is unjust, hurts himself, in that he makes himself worse than he was before. Not he only that committeth, but he also that omitteth something, is oftentimes unjust.

In today's English

Whoever does wrong does wrong to himself. Whoever is unjust harms himself, because he makes himself worse than he was before. And often it is not only the person who does something who is unjust, but also the person who fails to do something.

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Book IX · V



Casaubon (1634)

If my present apprehension of the object be right, and my present action charitable, and this, towards whatsoever doth proceed from God, be my present disposition, to be well pleased with it, it sufficeth.

In today's English

If my judgment of what is in front of me is correct, my present action is kind, and my present attitude toward whatever comes from God is to be well pleased with it, that is enough.

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Book IX · VI



Casaubon (1634)

To wipe away fancy, to use deliberation, to quench concupiscence, to keep the mind free to herself.

In today's English

Wipe away the impression. Think things through. Put out the craving. Keep the mind free and in its own hands.



Casaubon (1634)

Of all unreasonable creatures, there is but one unreasonable soul; and of all that are reasonable, but one reasonable soul, divided betwixt them all. As of all earthly things there is but one earth, and but one light that we see by; and but one air that we breathe in, as many as either breathe or see. Now whatsoever partakes of some common thing, naturally affects and inclines unto that whereof it is part, being of one kind and nature with it. Whatsoever is earthly, presseth downwards to the common earth. Whatsoever is liquid, would flow together. And whatsoever is airy, would be together likewise. So that without some obstacle, and some kind of violence, they cannot well be kept asunder. Whatsoever is fiery, doth not only by reason of the elementary fire tend upwards; but here also is so ready to join, and to burn together, that whatsoev-

er doth want sufficient moisture to make resistance, is easily set on fire. Whatsoever therefore is partaker of that reasonable common nature, naturally doth as much and more long after his own kind. For by how much in its own nature it excels all other things, by so much more is it desirous to be joined and united unto that, which is of its own nature. As for unreasonable creatures then, they had not long been, but presently begun among them swarms, and flocks, and broods of young ones, and a kind of mutual love and affection. For though but unreasonable, yet a kind of soul these had, and therefore was that natural desire of union more strong and intense in them, as in creatures of a more excellent nature, than either in plants, or stones, or trees. But among reasonable creatures, begun commonwealths, friendships, families, public meetings, and even in their wars, conventions, and truces. Now among them that were yet of a more excellent nature, as the stars and planets, though by their nature far distant one from another, yet even among them began some mutual correspondency and unity. So proper is it to excellency in a high degree to affect unity, as that even in things so far distant, it could operate unto a mutual sympathy. But now behold, what is now come to pass. Those creatures that are reasonable, are now the only creatures that have forgotten their natural affection and inclination of one towards another. Among them alone of all other things that are of one kind, there is not to be found a general disposition to flow together. But though they fly from nature, yet are they stopt in their course, and apprehended. Do they what they can, nature doth prevail. And so shalt thou confess, if thou dost observe it. For sooner mayst thou find a thing earthly, where no earthly thing is, than find a man that naturally can live by himself alone.

In today's English

All irrational creatures share one irrational soul, and all rational creatures share one rational soul, divided among them. In the same way, all earthly things share one earth, and all of us who see and breathe see by one light and breathe one air. Whatever shares in something common is naturally drawn toward the thing it is part of, since it is of the same kind. Everything earthly presses down toward the common earth. Everything liquid tends to flow together. Everything airy tends to come together too, so that it takes some barrier and a kind of force to keep them apart. Everything fiery rises because of the

In today's English · continued

elemental fire, and is also so ready to join and burn together here that anything without enough moisture to resist catches fire easily. So whatever shares in the common rational nature longs just as much, or even more, for its own kind. The more it surpasses other things in its nature, the more eager it is to blend and unite with what is of its own nature.

Among irrational creatures, almost as soon as they existed, there arose swarms, flocks, broods of young, and a kind of mutual affection. Though without reason, they had souls, and so the natural desire for union was stronger and more intense in them, as higher beings, than in plants, stones, or trees. Among rational creatures there arose communities, friendships, families, public assemblies, and even, in their wars, treaties and truces. And among beings higher still, the stars and planets, though far apart by nature, a kind of mutual correspondence and unity arose. So natural is it for what is highly excellent to seek unity that it can produce a mutual sympathy even between things so far apart.

But look at what has happened now. Rational creatures are now the only ones that have forgotten their natural affection and inclination toward one another. Among them alone, of all things of one kind, there is no general tendency to flow together. But though they run away from nature, they are caught and held back. Whatever they do, nature wins. You will admit it if you watch closely. You would sooner find an earthy thing that touches nothing earthy than a human being who can naturally live completely alone.

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Book IX · VIII



Casaubon (1634)

Man, God, the world, every one in their kind, bear some fruits. All things have their proper time to bear. Though by custom, the word itself is in a manner become proper unto the vine, and the like, yet is it so nevertheless, as we have said. As for reason, that beareth both common fruit for the use of others; and peculiar, which itself doth enjoy. Reason is of a diffusive nature, what itself is in itself, it begets in others, and so doth multiply.

In today's English

Human beings, God, and the world all bear fruit, each in its own kind and each in its own season. Though by custom the word is mostly used for vines and the like, it is still true, as we have said. Reason bears fruit too, both common fruit for the use of others and its own, which it enjoys itself. Reason spreads: what it is in itself, it produces in others, and so it multiplies.



Casaubon (1634)

Either teach them better if it be in thy power; or if it be not, remember that for this use, to bear with them patiently, was mildness and goodness granted unto thee. The Gods themselves are good unto such; yea and in some things, (as in matter of health, of wealth, of honour,) are content often to further their endeavours: so good and gracious are they. And mightest thou not be so too? or, tell me, what doth hinder thee?

In today's English

Teach them better if you can. If you cannot, remember that gentleness and kindness were given to you for exactly this purpose: to bear with them patiently. The gods themselves are kind to such people, and in some things, like health, wealth, and reputation, they often help them along, so good and gracious are they. Could you not be like that too? Tell me, what is stopping you?

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Book IX · X



Casaubon (1634)

Labour not as one to whom it is appointed to be wretched, nor as one that either would be pitied, or admired; but let this be thine only care and desire; so always and in all things to prosecute or to forbear, as the law of charity, or mutual society doth require.

In today's English

Do not work like someone fated to be miserable, or like someone who wants to be pitied or admired. Let your only care and desire be this: always and in everything to act or hold back as the law of kindness and fellowship requires.



Casaubon (1634)

This day I did come out of all my trouble. Nay I have cast out all my trouble; it should rather be for that which troubled thee, whatsoever it was, was not without anywhere that thou shouldest come out of it, but within in thine own opinions, from whence it must be cast out, before thou canst truly and constantly be at ease.

In today's English

Today I got out of all my trouble. No, I threw all my trouble out. That is the better way to say it, because whatever troubled you was not outside you, somewhere you had to get out of, but inside, in your own opinions, and that is where it must be thrown out from before you can be truly and lastingly at ease.

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Book IX · XII



Casaubon (1634)

All those things, for matter of experience are usual and ordinary; for their continuance but for a day; and for their matter, most base and filthy. As they were in the days of those whom we have buried, so are they now also, and no otherwise.

In today's English

All these things are familiar from experience, last only a day, and are made of the lowest, filthiest stuff. They are exactly the same now as they were in the days of those we have buried, and no different.

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Book IX · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

The things themselves that affect us, they stand without doors, neither knowing anything themselves nor able to utter anything unto others concerning themselves. What then is it, that passeth verdict on them? The understanding.

In today's English

The things that affect us stand outside the door. They know nothing about themselves and can say nothing about themselves to anyone. So what passes judgment on them? The ruling mind.

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Book IX · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

As virtue and wickedness consist not in passion, but in action; so neither doth the true good or evil of a reasonable charitable man consist in passion, but in operation and action.

In today's English

Just as virtue and vice lie not in being acted upon but in acting, so the true good or evil of a rational, social person lies not in what he undergoes but in what he does.

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Book IX · XV



Casaubon (1634)

To the stone that is cast up, when it comes down it is no hurt unto it; as neither benefit, when it doth ascend.

In today's English

For a stone thrown into the air, coming down is no harm, just as going up was no benefit.



Casaubon (1634)

Sift their minds and understandings, and behold what men they be, whom thou dost stand in fear of what they shall judge of thee, what they themselves judge of themselves.

In today's English

Look closely into their minds, and see what kind of people these are whose opinions of you you fear, and what they think of themselves.

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Book IX · XVII



Casaubon (1634)

All things that are in the world, are always in the estate of alteration. Thou also art in a perpetual change, yea and under corruption too, in some part: and so is the whole world.

In today's English

Everything in the world is always changing. You yourself are in constant change, and in part even decaying, and so is the whole world.

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Book IX · XVIII



Casaubon (1634)

it is not thine, but another man's sin. Why should it trouble thee? Let him look to it, whose sin it is.

In today's English

It is someone else's wrongdoing, not yours. Why should it trouble you? Let the one whose wrong it is deal with it.

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Book IX · XIX



Casaubon (1634)

Of an operation and of a purpose there is an ending, or of an action and of a purpose we say commonly, that it is at an end: from opinion also there is an absolute cessation, which is as it were the death of it. In all this there is no hurt. Apply this now to a man's age, as first, a child; then a youth, then a young man, then an old man; every change from one age to another is a kind of death And all this while here no matter of grief yet. Pass now unto that life first, that which thou livedst under thy grandfather, then under thy mother, then under thy father. And thus when through the whole course of thy life hitherto thou hast found and observed many alterations, many changes, many kinds of endings and cessations, put this question to thyself What matter of grief or sorrow dost thou find in any of these? Or what doest thou suffer

through any of these? If in none of these, then neither in the ending and consummation of thy whole life, which is also but a cessation and change.

In today's English

An activity comes to an end. A purpose comes to an end, as we commonly say of actions and intentions. Even an opinion can stop entirely, which is a kind of death for it. In none of this is there any harm. Now apply this to the stages of a person's life: first a child, then a boy, then a young man, then an old man. Every change from one stage to the next is a kind of death, and there was nothing to grieve about in any of it. Now go on to the life you lived first under your grandfather, then under your mother, then under your father. And when you have found and noticed, through the whole course of your life so far, many changes, many endings and stoppings, ask yourself: what was there to grieve over in any of these? What did you suffer through any of them? If nothing in any of them, then neither in the ending and completion of your whole life, which is also only a stopping and a change.

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Book IX · XX



Casaubon (1634)

As occasion shall require, either to thine own understanding, or to that of the universe, or to his, whom thou hast now to do with, let thy refuge be with all speed. To thine own, that it resolve upon nothing against justice. To that of the universe, that thou mayest remember, part of whom thou art. Of his, that thou mayest consider whether in the estate of ignorance, or of knowledge. And then also must thou call to mind, that he is thy kinsman.

In today's English

As the situation requires, turn quickly either to your own ruling mind, or to that of the universe, or to that of the person you are dealing with. To your own, so that it decides nothing against justice. To that of the universe, so that you remember

what you are a part of. To his, so that you consider whether he is acting out of ignorance or with knowledge. And then remember too that he is your kin.



Casaubon (1634)

As thou thyself, whoever thou art, were made for the perfection and consummation, being a member of it, of a common society; so must every action of thine tend to the perfection and consummation of a life that is truly sociable. What action soever of thine therefore that either immediately or afar off, hath not reference to the common good, that is an exorbitant and disorderly action; yea it is seditious; as one among the people who from such and such a consent and unity, should factiously divide and separate himself.

In today's English

Just as you yourself, whoever you are, were made as a member to help complete a common society, so every action of yours should help complete a truly social life. So any action of yours that is not related, directly or indirectly, to the common good is out of line and disorderly. It is even a kind of rebellion, like a citizen who, out of factional spirit, breaks away from the agreement and unity of the people.

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Book IX · XXII



Casaubon (1634)

Children's anger, mere babels; wretched souls bearing up dead bodies, that they may not have their fall so soon: even as it is in that common dirge song.

In today's English

Children's tantrums, mere babble, poor little souls carrying dead bodies around so that they will not fall down too soon, just as the old funeral song puts it.



Casaubon (1634)

Go to the quality of the cause from which the effect doth proceed. Behold it by itself bare and naked, separated from all that is material. Then consider the utmost bounds of time that that cause, thus and thus qualified, can subsist and abide.

In today's English

Go to the quality of the cause that produces the effect. Look at it by itself, stripped bare, separated from everything material. Then consider the longest time that a cause of this particular kind can last.

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Book IX · XXIV

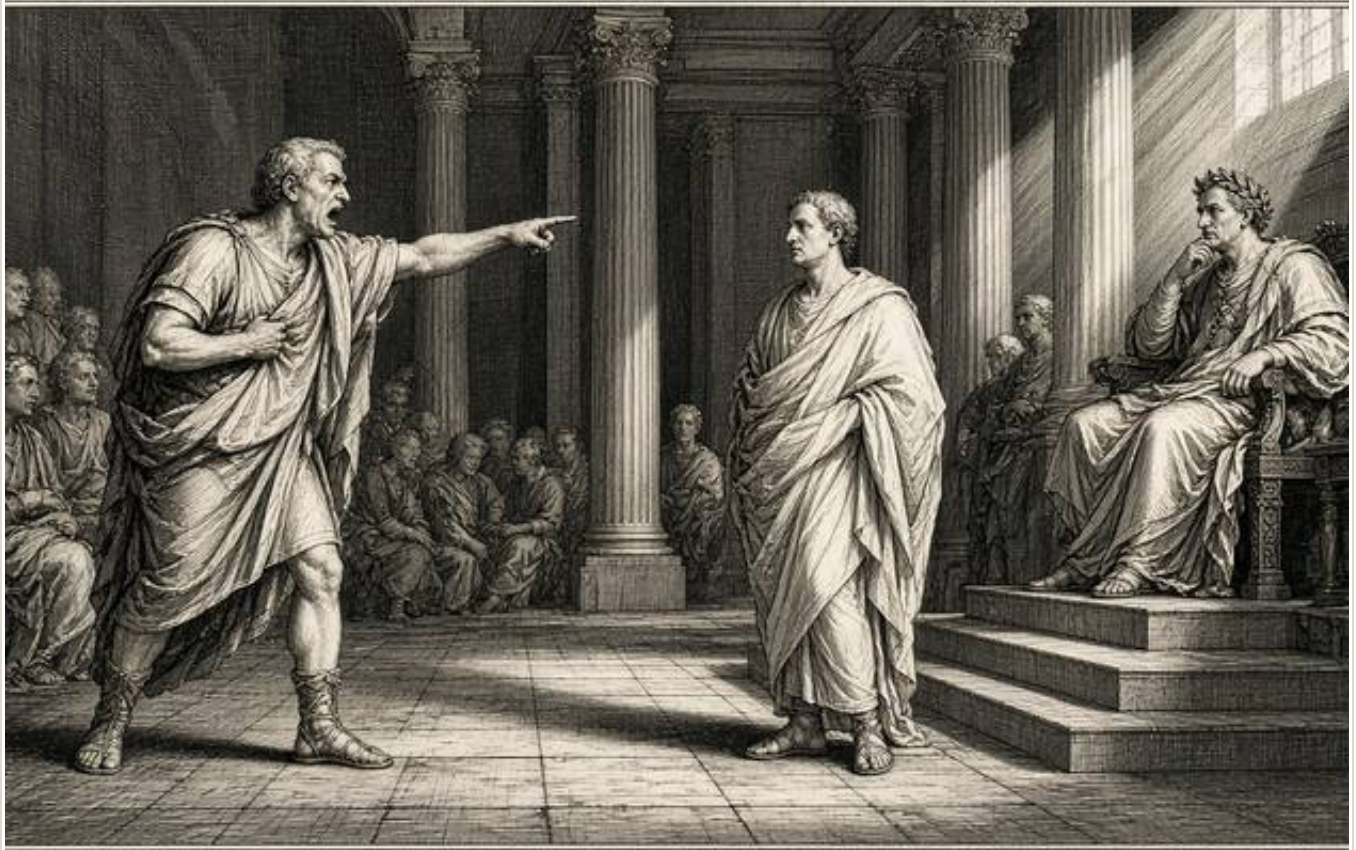


Casaubon (1634)

Infinite are the troubles and miseries, that thou hast already been put to, by reason of this only, because that for all happiness it did not suffice thee, or, that thou didst not account it sufficient happiness, that thy understanding did operate according to its natural constitution.

In today's English

You have already gone through countless troubles and miseries for one reason only: it was not enough for you, you did not count it as enough happiness, that your ruling mind was doing what it was made to do.



Casaubon (1634)

When any shall either impeach thee with false accusations, or hatefully reproach thee, or shall use any such carriage towards thee, get thee presently to their minds and understandings, and look in them, and behold what manner of men they be. Thou shalt see, that there is no such occasion why it should trouble thee, what such as they are think of thee. Yet must thou love them still, for by nature they are thy friends. And the Gods themselves, in those things that they seek from them as matters of great moment, are well content, all manner of ways, as by dreams and oracles, to help them as well as others.

In today's English

When someone falsely accuses you, or insults you hatefully, or treats you in any such way, go straight into their minds, look inside, and see what kind of people they are. You will see that there is no reason to be troubled by what people like that think of you. Yet you must still love them, because by nature they are your friends. And the gods themselves are glad to help them in every way, through dreams and oracles, with the things they care so much about, just as they help others.



Casaubon (1634)

Up and down, from one age to another, go the ordinary things of the world; being still the same. And either of everything in particular before it come to pass, the mind of the universe doth consider with itself and deliberate: and if so, then submit for shame unto the determination of such an excellent understanding: or once for all it did resolve upon all things in general; and since that whatsoever happens, happens by a necessary consequence, and all things indivisibly in a manner and inseparably hold one of another. In sum, either there is a God, and then all is well; or if all things go by chance and fortune, yet mayest thou use thine own providence in those things that concern thee properly; and then art thou well.

In today's English

Up and down, from age to age, the ordinary things of the world go round, always the same. Either the mind of the universe considers and decides about each particular thing before it happens, and if so, accept, for shame, the decision of so excellent a mind. Or it decided everything once and for all, and since then everything that happens follows as a necessary consequence, and all things hang together almost indivisibly and inseparably. In short, either there is a God, and then all is well; or, if everything happens by chance and fortune, you can still use your own foresight in the things that properly concern you, and then you are well.



Casaubon (1634)

Within a while the earth shall cover us all, and then she herself shall have her change. And then the course will be, from one period of eternity unto another, and so a perpetual eternity. Now can any man that shall consider with himself in his mind the several rollings or successions of so many changes and alterations, and the swiftness of all these rulings; can he otherwise but condemn in his heart and despise all worldly things? The cause of the universe is as it were a strong torrent, it carrieth all away.

In today's English

Soon the earth will cover us all, and then the earth itself will change, and what comes from that will change, and so on from one span of eternity to the next, forever. Can anyone who thinks about these waves of change and transformation rolling one after another, and how fast they come, help looking down on everything mortal? The cause of the universe is like a powerful river. It carries everything away.



Casaubon (1634)

And these your professed politicians, the only true practical philosophers of the world, (as they think of themselves) so full of affected gravity, or such professed lovers of virtue and honesty, what wretches be they in very deed; how vile and contemptible in themselves? O man! what ado doest thou keep? Do what thy nature doth now require. Resolve upon it, if thou mayest: and take no thought, whether anybody shall know it or no. Yea, but sayest thou, I must not expect a Plato's commonwealth. If they profit though never so little, I must be content; and think much even of that little progress. Doth then any of them forsake their former false opinions that I should think they profit? For without a change of opinions, alas! what is all that ostentation, but mere wretchedness of slavish minds, that groan privately, and yet would make a show of obedience to reason, and truth? Go too now and tell me of Alexander and Philip, and Demetrius Phalereus. Whether they understood what the common nature

requireth, and could rule themselves or no, they know best themselves. But if they kept a life, and swaggered; I (God be thanked) am not bound to imitate them. The effect of true philosophy is, unaffected simplicity and modesty. Persuade me not to ostentation and vainglory.

In today's English

And these so-called statesmen, who think of themselves as the only truly practical philosophers in the world, so full of put-on seriousness, these self-declared lovers of virtue and honesty, what miserable creatures they really are, how low and contemptible. Man, what are you fussing about? Do what your nature requires right now. Start, if you can, and do not look around to see whether anyone will notice. 'But,' you say, 'I must not hope for Plato's ideal republic. If they make even a little progress, I must be satisfied and think a lot of even that small step.' But does any of them give up his old false opinions, so that I could think he is making progress? Without a change of opinions, what is all this show but the misery of slavish minds that groan in private while pretending to obey reason and truth? Go on, then, and tell me about Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius of Phalerum. Whether they understood what the common nature requires and could govern themselves, they know best. But if they played the tragic hero and swaggered, thank God, no one has condemned me to imitate them. The work of true philosophy is simple and modest. Do not lead me into showing off and vanity.



Casaubon (1634)

From some high place as it were to look down, and to behold here flocks, and there sacrifices, without number; and all kind of navigation; some in a rough and stormy sea, and some in a calm: the general differences, or different estates of things, some, that are now first upon being; the several and mutual relations of those things that are together; and some other things that are at their last. Their lives also, who were long ago, and theirs who shall be hereafter, and the present estate and life of those many nations of barbarians that are now in the world, thou must likewise consider in thy mind. And how many there be, who never so much as heard of thy name, how many that will soon forget it; how many who but even now did commend thee, within a very little while perchance will speak ill of thee. So that neither fame, nor honour, nor anything else that this world doth afford, is worth the while. The sum

In today's English

Look down as if from some high place, and see here flocks, there countless sacrifices, and every kind of voyage, some through rough and stormy seas, some through calm; and the general differences in the state of things: some just coming into being, some living together side by side, some at their end. Consider too the lives of people long ago, and of those who will come after, and the present state and life of the many foreign nations now in the world. Think how many people have never even heard your name, how many will soon forget it, how many who praised you just now will perhaps soon speak badly of you. So neither fame, nor honor, nor anything else the world offers is worth it. Here is the sum of it all: accept contentedly whatever happens to you of which God is the cause, and do justly whatever you do of which you yourself are the cause. That will happen if, in both your decisions and your actions, you aim at noth-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

then of all; whatsoever doth happen unto thee, whereof God is the cause, to accept it contentedly: whatsoever thou doest, whereof thou thyself art the cause, to do it justly: which will be, if both in thy resolution and in thy action thou have no further end, than to do good unto others, as being that, which by thy natural constitution, as a man, thou art bound unto.

In today's English · continued

ing further than doing good to others, since that is what you are bound to by your nature as a human being.

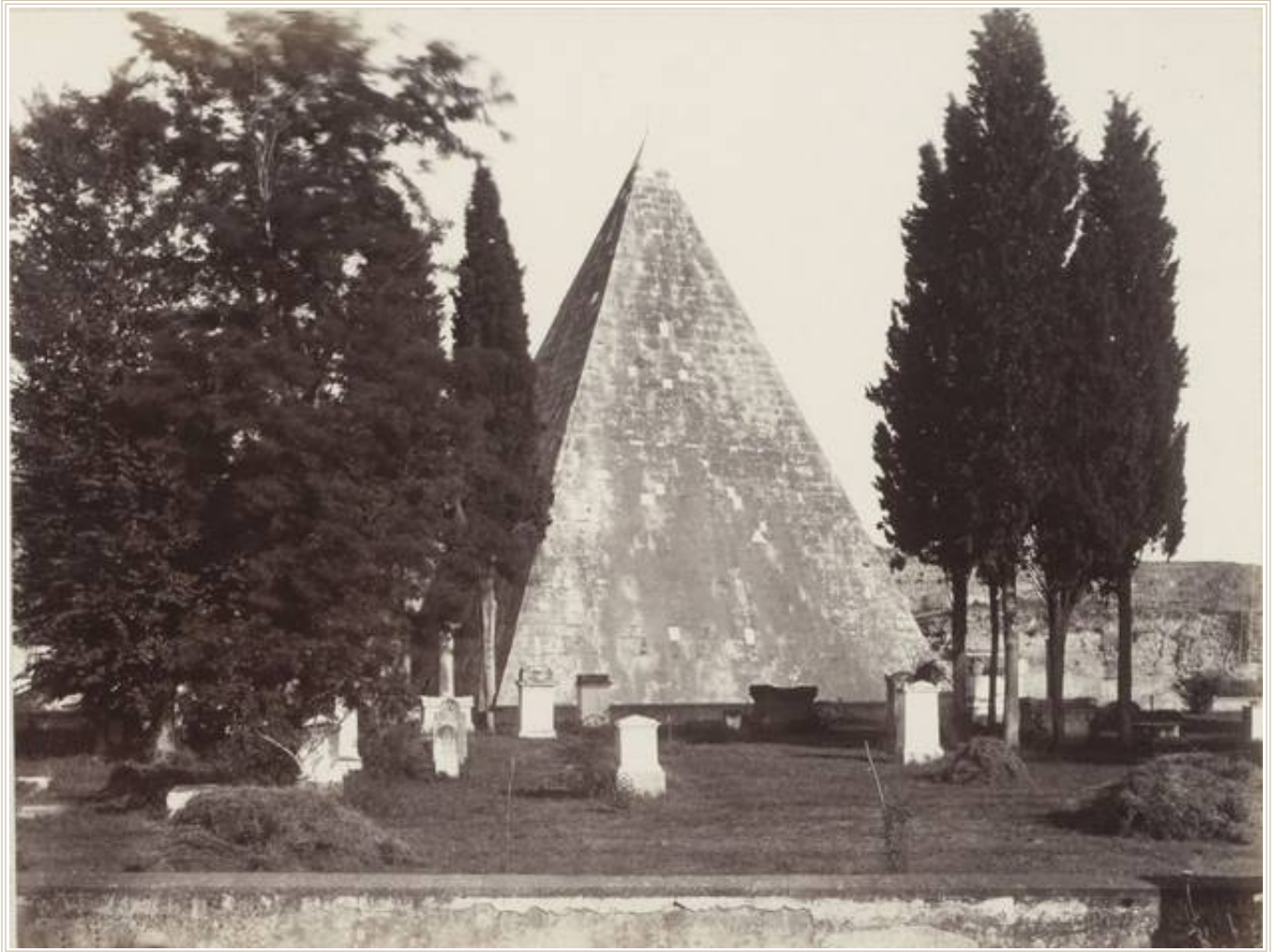


Casaubon (1634)

Many of those things that trouble and straiten thee, it is in thy power to cut off, as wholly depending from mere conceit and opinion; and then thou shalt have room enough.

In today's English

Many of the things that trouble and hem you in, you can cut away, since they depend entirely on opinion. Then you will have plenty of room.

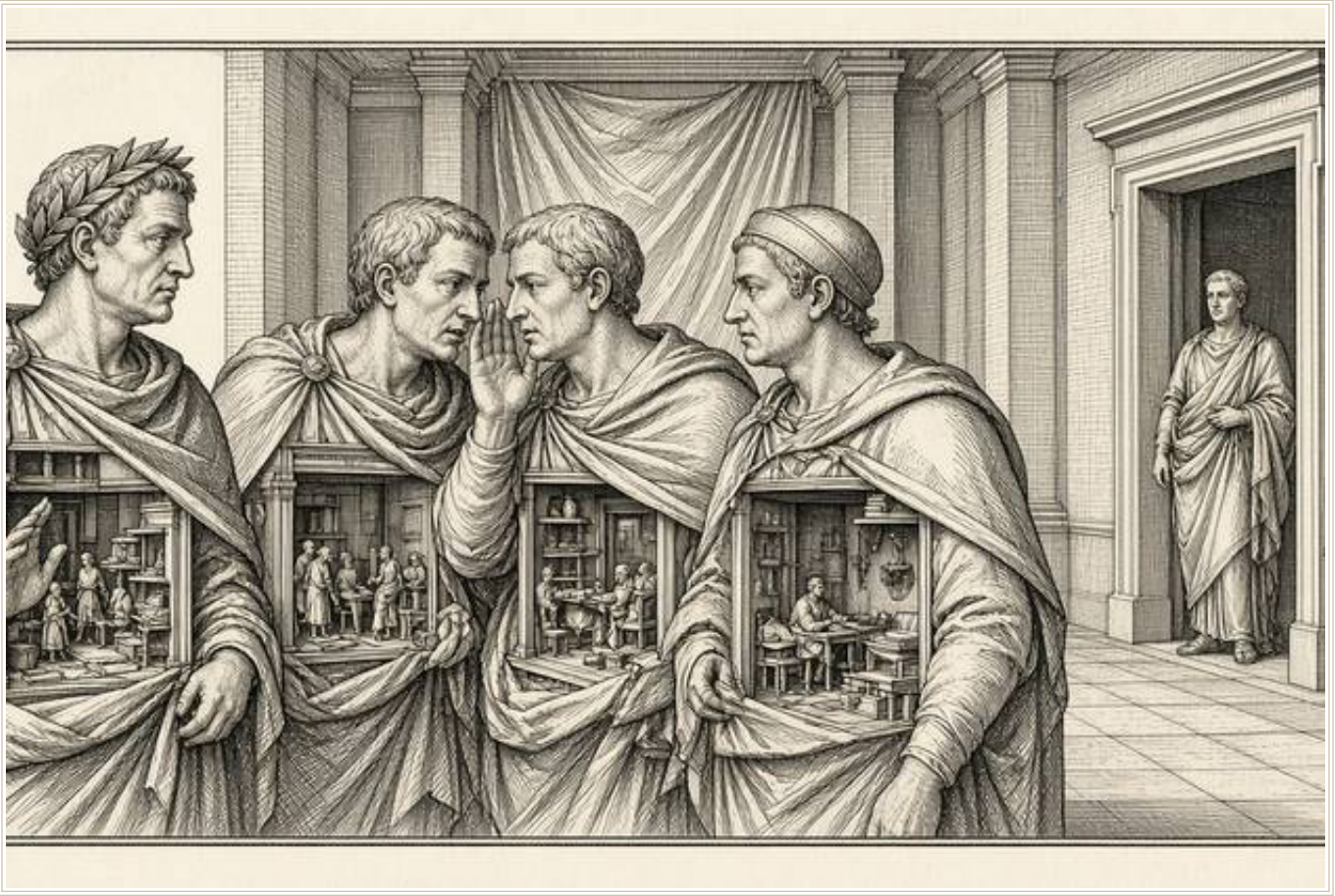


Casaubon (1634)

To comprehend the whole world together in thy mind, and the whole course of this present age to represent it unto thyself, and to fix thy thoughts upon the sudden change of every particular object. How short the time is from the generation of anything, unto the dissolution of the same; but how immense and infinite both that which was before the generation, and that which after the generation of it shall be. All things that thou seest, will soon be perished, and they that see their corruptions, will soon vanish away themselves. He that dieth a hundred years old, and he that dieth young, shall come all to one.

In today's English

Take in the whole world in your mind, and picture the whole course of the present age, and think about how quickly each particular thing changes. How short the time is from a thing's birth to its breaking up, and how immense and infinite the time before its birth and after its end. Everything you see will soon have perished, and those who watch it perish will soon vanish themselves. The person who dies at a hundred and the person who dies young will end up in the same place.



Casaubon (1634)

What are their minds and understandings; and what the things that they apply themselves unto: what do they love, and what do they hate for? Fancy to thyself the estate of their souls openly to be seen. When they think they hurt them shrewdly, whom they speak ill of; and when they think they do them a very good turn, whom they commend and extol: O how full are they then of conceit, and opinion!

In today's English

What are their ruling minds like? What do they devote themselves to? Why do they love and value what they do? Picture their souls laid open to view. When they think they are seriously hurting someone by speaking badly of him, or doing him a great favor by praising and celebrating him, how full they are of mere opinion!

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Book IX · XXXIII



Casaubon (1634)

Loss and corruption, is in very deed nothing else but change and alteration; and that is it, which the nature of the universe doth most delight in, by which, and according to which, whatsoever is done, is well done. For that was the estate of worldly things from the beginning, and so shall it ever be. Or wouldest thou rather say, that all things in the world have gone ill from the beginning for so many ages, and shall ever go ill? And then among so many deities, could no divine power be found all this while, that could rectify the things of the world? Or is the world, to incessant woes and miseries, for ever condemned?

In today's English

Loss and decay are really nothing but change, and change is what the nature of the universe loves most. By it and according to it, everything that happens happens well. This is how things in the world have been from the beginning, and how they always

will be. Or would you rather say that everything in the world has gone badly from the start, for so many ages, and always will go badly, and that among so many gods no divine power has ever been found in all this time to set things right, and that the world is condemned to endless pain and misery?



Casaubon (1634)

How base and putrid, every common matter is! Water, dust, and from the mixture of these bones, and all that loathsome stuff that our bodies do consist of: so subject to be infected, and corrupted. And again those other things that are so much prized and admired, as marble stones, what are they, but as it were the kernels of the earth? gold and silver, what are they, but as the more gross faeces of the earth? Thy most royal apparel, for matter, it is but as it were the hair of a silly sheep, and for colour, the very blood of a shell-fish; of this nature are all other things. Thy life itself, is some such thing too; a mere exhalation of blood: and it also, apt to be changed into some other common thing.

In today's English

How low and rotten the substance of everything is! Water, dust, and from their mixture, bones and all the disgusting stuff our bodies are made of, so easily infected and decayed. And the things people prize and admire so much: marble, what is it but a kind of hardened lump of earth? Gold and silver, what are they but the coarser dregs of the earth? Your most royal robes are, in material, the hair of a simple sheep, and in color, the blood of a shellfish. Everything else is like this. Your life itself is something of the same kind, a vapor rising from the blood, and it too can easily be changed into some other common thing.



Casaubon (1634)

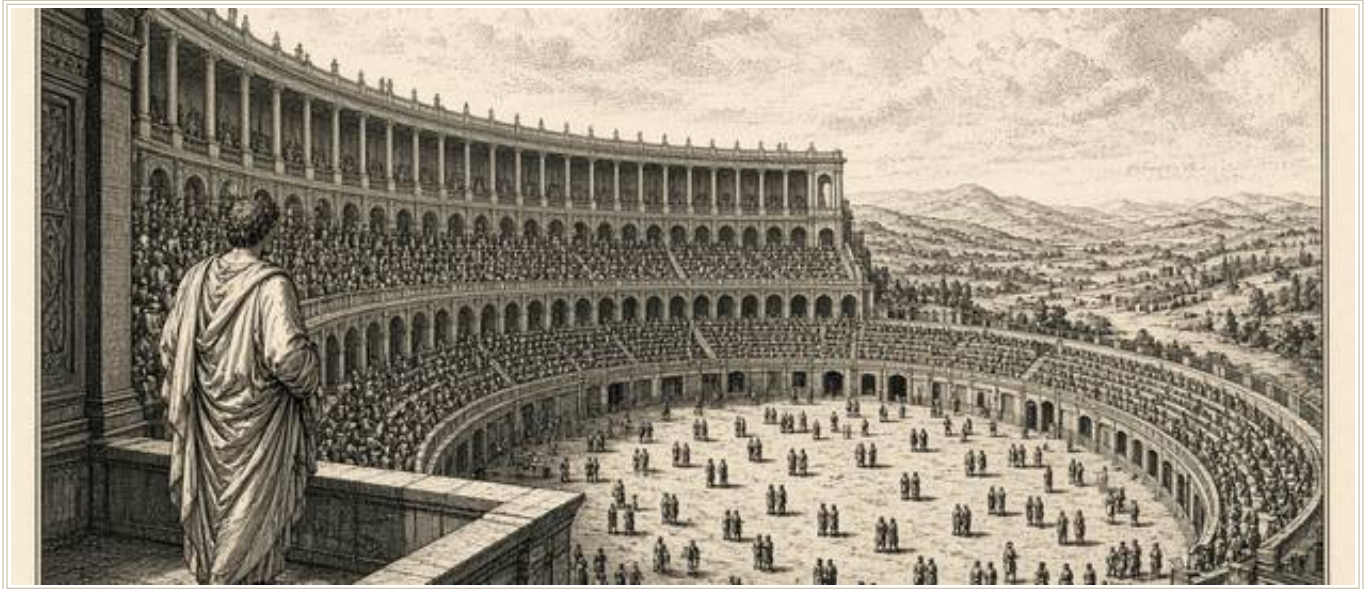
Will this querulousness, this murmuring, this complaining and dissembling never be at an end? What then is it, that troubleth thee? Doth any new thing happen unto thee? What doest thou so wonder at? At the cause, or the matter? Behold either by itself, is either of that weight and moment indeed? And besides these, there is not anything. But thy duty towards the Gods also, it is time thou shouldst acquit thyself of it with more goodness and simplicity.

In today's English

Will this grumbling, this muttering, this complaining and pretending never end? What is it that troubles you? Is anything new happening to you? What are you so amazed at? The cause, or the material? Look at each by itself. Is either of them really so important? And besides these, there is nothing. As for your duty toward the gods, it is time you carried it out with more goodness and simplicity.

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Book IX · XXXVI



Casaubon (1634)

It is all one to see these things for a hundred of years together or but for three years.

In today's English

It makes no difference whether you watch these things for a hundred years or for three.

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Book IX · XXXVII



Casaubon (1634)

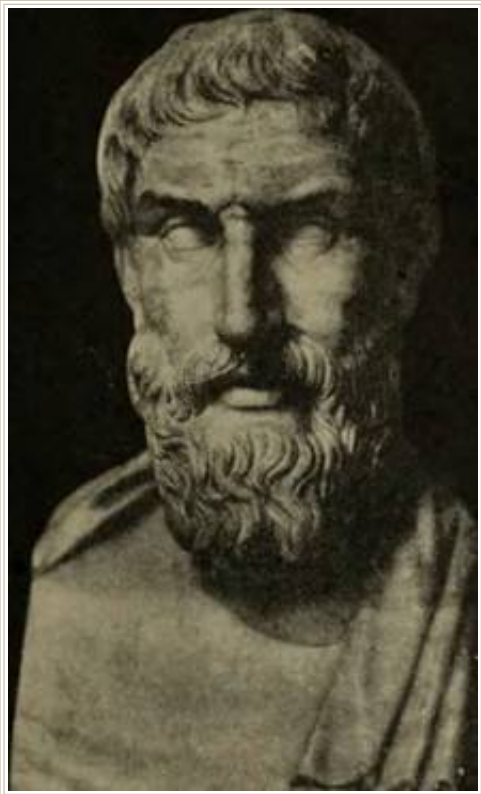
If he have sinned, his is the harm, not mine. But perchance he hath not.

In today's English

If he did wrong, the harm is his, not mine. But perhaps he did not.

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Book IX · XXXVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Either all things by the providence of reason happen unto every particular, as a part of one general body; and then it is against reason that a part should complain of anything that happens for the good of the whole; or if, according to Epicurus, atoms be the cause of all things and that life be nothing else but an accidental confusion of things, and death nothing else, but a mere dispersion and so of all other things: what doest thou trouble thyself for?

In today's English

Either everything happens to each individual by the providence of reason, as part of one whole body, and then it is unreasonable for a part to complain about anything that happens for the good of the whole. Or, as Epicurus says, atoms are the cause of everything, life is nothing but an accidental jumble of things, and death nothing but scattering, and the same for everything else. Either way, why are you troubling yourself?



Casaubon (1634)

Sayest thou unto that rational part, Thou art dead; corruption hath taken hold on thee? Doth it then also void excrements? Doth it like either oxen, or sheep, graze or feed; that it also should be mortal, as well as the body?

In today's English

Do you say to your rational part, 'You are dead, decay has taken hold of you'? Does it also produce excrement? Does it graze and feed like cattle or sheep, so that it should be mortal like the body?



Casaubon (1634)

Either the Gods can do nothing for us at all, or they can still and allay all the distractions and distempers of thy mind. If they can do nothing, why doest thou pray? If they can, why wouldst not thou rather pray, that they will grant unto thee, that thou mayst neither fear, nor lust after any of those worldly things which cause these distractions and distempers of it? Why not rather, that thou mayst not at either their absence or presence, be grieved and discontented: than either that thou mayst obtain them, or that thou mayst avoid them? For certainly it must needs be, that if the Gods can help us in anything, they may in this kind also. But thou wilt say perchance, 'In those things the Gods have given me my liberty: and it is in mine own power to do what I will.' But if thou mayst use this liberty, rather to set thy mind at true liberty, than wilfully with baseness and servility of mind to affect those things, which either to compass or to avoid is not in thy power, wert not thou better? And as for the Gods, who hath told thee, that they may not help us up even in those things that they have put in our own power? whether it be so or no, thou shalt soon perceive, if thou wilt but try thyself and pray. One prayeth that he may compass his desire, to lie with such or such a one, pray thou that thou mayst not lust to lie with her. Another how he may be rid of such

In today's English

Either the gods have no power to help us, or they can calm and settle all the disturbances and disorders of your mind. If they have no power, why do you pray? If they do, why not pray that they grant you not to fear or crave any of the worldly things that cause these disturbances, rather than praying to get those things or to avoid them? Why not pray not to be distressed or discontented whether they are present or absent? Surely, if the gods can help us in anything, they can help us in this. But perhaps you will say, 'The gods have put those things in my power, and it is up to me to do as I like.' But if you can use this freedom to set your mind truly free, would that not be better than chasing, with a mean and slavish mind, things that are not in your power to get or avoid? And who told you that the gods do not help us even in the things they have put in our power? You will soon see whether they do if you just try and pray. One man prays to succeed in sleeping with a certain woman. You pray not to desire to sleep with her. Another prays to be rid of someone. You pray to bear with him so patiently that you have no need to be rid of him. Another prays not to lose his child. You pray not to be afraid of losing him. Let all your prayers aim at this, and see what happens.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

a one; pray thou that thou mayst so patiently bear with him, as that thou have no such need to be rid of him. Another, that he may not lose his child. Pray thou that thou mayst not fear to lose him. To this end and purpose, let all thy prayer be, and see what will be the event.



Casaubon (1634)

'In my sickness' (saith Epicurus of himself:) 'my discourses were not concerning the nature of my disease, neither was that, to them that came to visit me, the subject of my talk; but in the consideration and contemplation of that, which was of especial weight and moment, was all my time bestowed and spent, and among others in this very thing, how my mind, by a natural and unavoidable sympathy partaking in some sort with the present indisposition of my body, might nevertheless keep herself free from trouble, and in present possession of her own proper happiness. Neither did I leave the ordering of my body to the physicians altogether to do with me what they would, as though I expected any great matter from them, or as though I thought it a matter of such great consequence, by their means to recover my health: for my present estate, methought, liked me very well, and gave me good content.' Whether therefore in sickness (if thou chance to sicken) or in what other kind of extremity soever, endeavour thou also to be in thy mind so affected, as he doth report of himself: not to depart from thy philosophy for anything

that can befall thee, nor to give ear to the discourses of silly people, and mere naturalists.

In today's English

Epicurus says of himself: 'In my illness I did not talk about the nature of my disease, nor was that what I discussed with those who came to visit me. I spent all my time considering and contemplating what was most important, and especially this: how my mind, though by a natural and unavoidable sympathy it shares to some extent in the present disorder of the body, could still stay free of disturbance and keep its own proper happiness. Nor did I leave my body entirely to the doctors to do with as they liked, as if I expected anything great from them, or as if I thought it so important to get my health back through them. My present condition seemed fine to me and gave me good content.' So whether in illness, if you happen to fall ill, or in any other hardship, try to keep your mind in the state he describes. Do not abandon your philosophy, whatever happens to you, and do not listen to the chatter of ignorant people and mere natural scientists.

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Book IX · XLII



Casaubon (1634)

It is common to all trades and professions to mind and intend that only, which now they are about, and the instrument whereby they work.

In today's English

It is common to every trade and profession to pay attention only to what they are doing right now and the tool they are doing it with.



Casaubon (1634)

When at any time thou art offended with any one's impudency, put presently this question to thyself: 'What? Is it then possible, that there should not be any impudent men in the world! Certainly it is not possible.' Desire not then that which is impossible. For this one, (thou must think) whosoever he be, is one of those impudent ones, that the world cannot be without. So of the subtile and crafty, so of the perfidious, so of every one that offendeth, must thou ever be ready to reason with thyself. For whilst in general thou dost thus reason with thyself, that the kind of them must needs be in the world, thou wilt be the better able to use meekness towards every particular. This also thou shalt find of very good use, upon every such occasion, presently to consider with thyself, what proper virtue nature hath furnished man with, against such a vice, or to encounter with a disposition vicious in this kind. As for example, against the unthankful, it hath given goodness and meekness, as an antidote, and so against another vicious in another kind some other peculiar faculty. And generally, is it not in thy power to instruct him better, that is in an error? For whosoever sinneth, doth in that

decline from his purposed end, and is certainly deceived, And again, what art thou the worse for his sin? For thou shalt not find that any one of these, against whom thou art incensed, hath in very deed done anything whereby thy mind (the only true subject of thy hurt and evil) can be made worse than it was. And what a matter of either grief or wonder is this, if he that is unlearned, do the deeds of one that is unlearned? Should not thou rather blame thyself, who, when upon very good grounds of reason, thou mightst have thought it very probable, that such a thing would by such a one be committed, didst not only not foresee it, but moreover dost wonder at it, that such a thing should be. But then especially, when thou dost find fault with either an unthankful, or a false man, must thou reflect upon thyself. For without all question, thou thyself art much in fault, if either of one that were of such a disposition, thou didst expect that he should be true unto thee: or when unto any thou didst a good turn, thou didst not there bound thy thoughts, as one that had obtained his end; nor didst not think that from the action itself thou hadst received a full reward of the good that thou hadst done. For what wouldst thou have more? Unto him that is a man, thou hast done a good turn: doth not that suffice thee? What thy nature required, that hast thou done. Must thou be rewarded for it? As if either the eye for that it seeth, or the feet that they go, should require satisfaction. For as these being by nature appointed for such an use, can challenge no more, than that they may work according to their natural constitution: so man being born to do good unto others whensoever he doth a real good unto any by helping them out of error; or though but in middle things, as in matter of wealth, life, preferment, and the like, doth help to further their desires he doth that for which he was made, and therefore can require no more.

In today's English

Whenever someone's shameless behavior offends you, ask yourself right away: 'Is it possible for there to be no shameless people in the world?' It is not possible. So do not demand the impossible. This person, whoever he is, is one of the shameless people the world cannot do without. Be ready to reason with yourself the same way about the sly and crafty, the treacherous, and everyone who does wrong. When you remind yourself in general that such people must exist in the world, you will be better able to be

In today's English · continued

gentle with each individual. It is also very useful, on every such occasion, to think at once about what virtue nature has given human beings to deal with that particular fault or that kind of bad character. Against the ungrateful, for example, it has given kindness and gentleness as an antidote, and against others, other particular powers. And in general, can you not teach the person who has gone wrong? For everyone who does wrong misses his intended goal and is certainly mistaken.

And again, how are you any worse off for his wrongdoing? You will find that none of the people you are angry with has actually done anything that could make your mind, the only place where harm and evil can really touch you, any worse than it was. And what is so upsetting or surprising about an uneducated person doing what uneducated people do? Should you not rather blame yourself, since you had every reason to expect that such a person would do such a thing, and yet you not only failed to foresee it but are even surprised that it happened? Above all, when you find fault with someone for being ungrateful or untrustworthy, turn your attention to yourself. You are clearly at fault if you expected someone of that character to keep faith with you, or if, when you did someone a favor, you did not stop there, as someone who had reached his goal, and did not consider that you had received your full reward from the act itself. What more do you want? You did good to a human being. Is that not enough? You did what your nature required. Must you be paid for it? That is like the eye demanding payment for seeing, or the feet for walking. Just as these, made by nature for such a purpose, can claim nothing more than to work according to their natural design, so a human being, born to do good to others, does what he was made for whenever he does someone real good by helping him out of error, or even helps him toward his goals in in-between things like wealth, life, or advancement, and so can ask for nothing more.



Casaubon (1634)

O my soul, the time I trust will be, when thou shalt be good, simple, single, more open and visible, than that body by which it is enclosed. Thou wilt one day be sensible of their happiness, whose end is love, and their affections dead to all worldly things. Thou shalt one day be full, and in want of no external thing: not seeking pleasure from anything, either living or insensible, that this world can afford; neither wanting time for the continuation of thy pleasure, nor place and opportunity, nor the favour either of the weather or of men. When thou shalt have content in thy present estate, and all things present shall add to thy content: when thou shalt persuade thyself, that thou hast all things; all for thy good, and all by the providence of the Gods: and of things future also shalt be as confident, that all will do well, as tending to the maintenance and preservation in some sort, of his perfect welfare and happiness, who is

In today's English

My soul, will the time ever come when you will be good, simple, whole, and more open and visible than the body that surrounds you? Will you one day know the happiness of those whose aim is love and whose attachment to worldly things is dead? Will you one day be full and in need of nothing outside yourself, not looking for pleasure from anything, living or lifeless, that this world can offer, not wanting more time to enjoy your pleasure, nor a better place or opportunity, nor good weather, nor the goodwill of people? When will you be content with your present state, and find that everything present adds to your contentment? When will you convince yourself that you have everything, that it is all for your good and all comes from the providence of the gods, and be just as confident about the future, that all will be well, since it all helps in some way to maintain and preserve the perfect well-being and happiness of the

Casaubon (1634) · continued

perfection of life, of goodness, and beauty; who begets all things, and containeth all things in himself, and in himself doth recollect all things from all places that are dissolved, that of them he may beget others again like unto them. Such one day shall be thy disposition, that thou shalt be able, both in regard of the Gods, and in regard of men, so to fit and order thy conversation, as neither to complain of them at any time, for anything that they do; nor to do anything thyself, for which thou mayest justly be condemned.

In today's English · continued

one who is perfect life, goodness, and beauty, who produces all things, holds all things within himself, and gathers back into himself from everywhere all things that break apart, so that he can produce others like them? One day your character will be such that you can live alongside gods and humans in a way that you never complain about them for anything they do, and never do anything yourself for which you could rightly be condemned.

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Book X · II



Casaubon (1634)

As one who is altogether governed by nature, let it be thy care to observe what it is that thy nature in general doth require. That done, if thou find not that thy nature, as thou art a living sensible creature, will be the worse for it, thou mayest proceed. Next then thou must examine, what thy nature as thou art a living sensible creature, doth require. And that, whatsoever it be, thou mayest admit of and do it, if thy nature as thou art a reasonable living creature, will not be the worse for it. Now whatsoever is reasonable, is also sociable, Keep thyself to these rules, and trouble not thyself about idle things.

In today's English

As someone governed entirely by nature, pay attention to what your nature requires in general. Having done that, if you find that your nature as a living, sentient creature will not be made worse by it, go ahead. Next, examine what your nature as a living, sentient creature requires, and accept and do that, whatever

it is, as long as your nature as a rational living creature will not be made worse by it. And whatever is rational is also social. Keep to these rules, and do not bother yourself with anything trivial.



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever doth happen unto thee, thou art naturally by thy natural constitution either able, or not able to bear. If thou beest able, be not offended, but bear it according to thy natural constitution, or as nature hath enabled thee. If thou beest not able, be not offended. For it will soon make an end of thee, and itself, (whatsoever it be) at the same time end with thee. But remember, that whatsoever by the strength of opinion, grounded upon a certain apprehension of both true profit and duty, thou canst conceive tolerable; that thou art able to bear that by thy natural constitution.

In today's English

Whatever happens to you is either something your nature equips you to bear, or something it does not. If you can bear it, do not be resentful, but bear it as nature has made you able to. If you cannot bear it, do not be resentful either, because it will soon finish you off, and it will end at the same moment you do. But remember that you are naturally able to bear anything that your own judgment can make bearable, by thinking of it as in your interest or as your duty.



Casaubon (1634)

Him that offends, to teach with love and meekness, and to show him his error. But if thou canst not, then to blame thyself; or rather not thyself neither, if thy will and endeavours have not been wanting.

In today's English

Teach the person who does wrong, with love and gentleness, and show him his mistake. If you cannot, blame yourself, or rather not even yourself, if you did not lack the will and the effort.

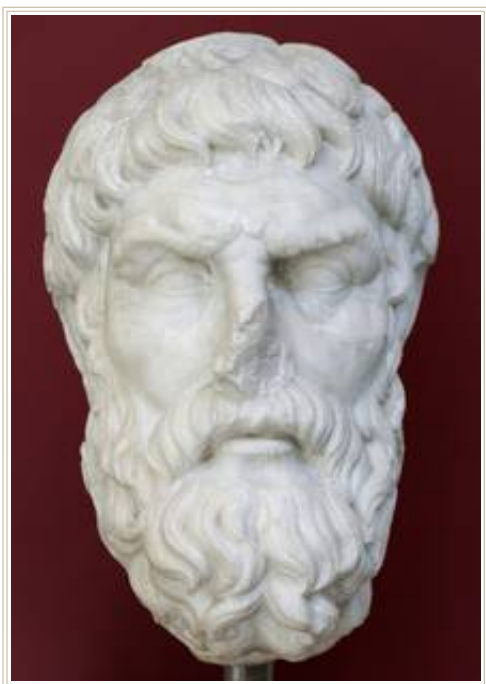


Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever it be that happens unto thee, it is that which from all time was appointed unto thee. For by the same coherence of causes, by which thy substance from all eternity was appointed to be, was also whatsoever should happen unto it, destined and appointed.

In today's English

Whatever happens to you was assigned to you from all time. By the same chain of causes that destined your existence from eternity, everything that would happen to it was also destined and assigned.



Casaubon (1634)

Either with Epicurus, we must fondly imagine the atoms to be the cause of all things, or we must needs grant a nature. Let this then be thy first ground, that thou art part of that universe, which is governed by nature. Then secondly, that to those parts that are of the same kind and nature as thou art, thou hast relation of kindred. For of these, if I shall always be mindful, first as I am a part, I shall never be displeased with anything, that falls to my particular share of the common chances of the world. For nothing that is behoveful unto the whole, can be truly hurtful to that which is part of it. For this being the common privilege of all natures, that they contain nothing in themselves that is hurtful unto them; it cannot be that the nature of the universe (whose privilege beyond other particular natures, is, that she cannot against her will by any higher external cause be constrained,) should beget anything and cherish it in her bosom that should tend to her own hurt and prejudice. As then I bear in mind that I am a part of such an universe, I shall not be displeased with anything that happens. And as I have relation of

kindred to those parts that are of the same kind and nature that I am, so I shall be careful to do nothing that is prejudicial to the community, but in all my deliberations shall they that are of my kind ever be; and the common good, that, which all my intentions and resolutions shall drive unto, as that which is contrary unto it, I shall by all means endeavour to prevent and avoid. These things once so fixed and concluded, as thou wouldst think him a happy citizen, whose constant study and practice were for the good and benefit of his fellow citizens, and the carriage of the city such towards him, that he were well pleased with it; so must it needs be with thee, that thou shalt live a happy life.

In today's English

Either we must foolishly imagine, with Epicurus, that atoms are the cause of everything, or we must admit that there is a nature. So let this be your first principle: you are part of a universe governed by nature. And second: you are related as kin to the parts that are of the same kind and nature as you. If I always keep these in mind, then first, as a part, I will never be unhappy with anything that falls to my share from the common chances of the world. Nothing that benefits the whole can truly harm a part of it. Since it is common to every nature that it contains nothing harmful to itself, the nature of the universe, which has the added privilege that no higher outside cause can force it against its will, cannot produce and nurture within itself anything that would harm it. So as long as I remember that I am part of such a universe, I will not be unhappy with anything that happens. And since I am related as kin to the parts of the same kind as me, I will take care to do nothing harmful to the community. In all my deliberations I will keep my own kind in view, and aim all my intentions and decisions at the common good, and do everything I can to prevent and avoid what goes against it. With this settled, my life must be a happy one, just as you would consider a citizen happy whose constant effort and practice was for the good of his fellow citizens, and who was content with whatever the city assigned him.



Casaubon (1634)

All parts of the world, (all things I mean that are contained within the whole world), must of necessity at some time or other come to corruption. Alteration I should say, to speak truly and properly; but that I may be the better understood, I am content at this time to use that more common word. Now say I, if so be that this be both hurtful unto them, and yet unavoidable, would not, thinkest thou, the whole itself be in a sweet case, all the parts of it being subject to alteration, yea and by their making itself fitted for corruption, as consisting of things different and contrary? And did nature then either of herself thus project and purpose the affliction and misery of her parts, and therefore of purpose so made them, not only that haply they might, but of necessity that they

In today's English

All the parts of the world, I mean everything contained in the whole world, must at some time perish. I should say change, to speak truly and properly, but to be better understood I will use the more common word for now. Now, I say, if this were both harmful to them and unavoidable, would the whole be in a fine state, with all its parts subject to change and, by the way they are made, fitted for decay, since they consist of different and opposite things? Did nature itself plan the suffering and misery of its parts, and deliberately make them so that they not only might but must fall into evil? Or did it not know what it was doing when it made them? Either claim is equally absurd. But setting aside nature in general and reasoning about particular things according to their

Casaubon (1634) · continued

should fall into evil; or did not she know what she did, when she made them? For either of these two to say, is equally absurd. But to let pass nature in general, and to reason of things particular according to their own particular natures; how absurd and ridiculous is it, first to say that all parts of the whole are, by their proper natural constitution, subject to alteration; and then when any such thing doth happen, as when one doth fall sick and dieth, to take on and wonder as though some strange thing had happened? Though this besides might move not so grievously to take on when any such thing doth happen, that whatsoever is dissolved, it is dissolved into those things, whereof it was compounded. For every dissolution is either a mere dispersion, of the elements into those elements again whereof everything did consist, or a change, of that which is more solid into earth; and of that which is pure and subtile or spiritual, into air. So that by this means nothing is lost, but all resumed again into those rational generative seeds of the universe; and this universe, either after a certain period of time to lie consumed by fire, or by continual changes to be renewed, and so for ever to endure. Now that solid and spiritual that we speak of, thou must not conceive it to be that very same, which at first was, when thou wert born. For alas! all this that now thou art in either kind, either for matter of substance, or of life, hath but two or three days ago partly from meats eaten, and partly from air breathed in, received all its influx, being the same then in no other respect, than a running river, maintained by the perpetual influx and new supply of waters, is the same. That therefore which thou hast since received, not that which came from thy mother, is that which comes to change and corruption. But suppose that that for the general substance, and more solid part of it, should still cleave unto thee never so close, yet what is that to the proper qualities and affections of it, by which persons are distinguished, which certainly are quite different?

In today's English · continued

own natures: how absurd and ridiculous it is first to say that all parts of the whole are, by their own makeup, subject to change, and then, when such a thing happens, as when someone falls ill and dies, to carry on and be amazed as if something strange had happened. Besides, you should be less upset when this happens if you remember that whatever breaks up breaks up into the things it was made of. Every breaking up is either a scattering of the elements back into the elements everything was made of, or a change of the solid part into earth and of the fine, spiritual part into air. So nothing is lost, but everything is taken back into the rational, generative seeds of the universe, and the universe itself is either consumed by fire after a certain period or renewed by continual changes, and so lasts forever. And do not think that the solid and spiritual parts we are talking about are the very same ones you had when you were born. Everything you now are, in substance and in life, flowed in only two or three days ago, partly from food you ate and partly from air you breathed. It is the same only in the way a river is the same, kept going by a constant flow of new water. So what changes and perishes is what you have taken in since, not what came from your mother. And even supposing that the general substance, the more solid part, stayed attached to you ever so closely, what does that have to do with the particular qualities and characteristics that make a person who he is, which are certainly quite different?



Casaubon (1634)

Now that thou hast taken these names upon thee of good, modest, true; of ἔμφρων, σύμφρων, ὑπέρφρων; take heed lest at any times by doing anything that is contrary, thou be but improperly so called, and lose thy right to these appellations. Or if thou do, return unto them again with all possible speed. And remember, that the word ἔμφρων notes unto thee an intent and intelligent consideration of every object that presents itself unto thee, without distraction. And the word σύμφρων, a ready and contented acceptance of whatsoever by the appointment of the common nature, happens unto thee. And the word ὑπέρφρων, a super-extension, or a transcendent, and outreaching disposition of thy mind, whereby it passeth by all bodily pains and pleasures, honour and credit,

In today's English

Now that you have taken on these names, good, modest, truthful, ἔμφρων, σύμφρων, ὑπέρφρων, be careful never to do anything that contradicts them and so wear them falsely and lose your right to them. And if you do lose them, get back to them as fast as you can. Remember that ἔμφρων (emphrōn, 'clear-minded') means paying close, intelligent attention to each thing that comes before you, without distraction. Σύμφρων (symphrōn, 'like-minded' with nature) means accepting readily and contentedly whatever the common nature assigns to you. Ὑπέρφρων (hyperphrōn, 'high-minded') means a lifting up, a reaching beyond, of your mind, by which it rises above all bodily pain and pleasure, reputation, death, and everything of that kind, as matters completely in-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

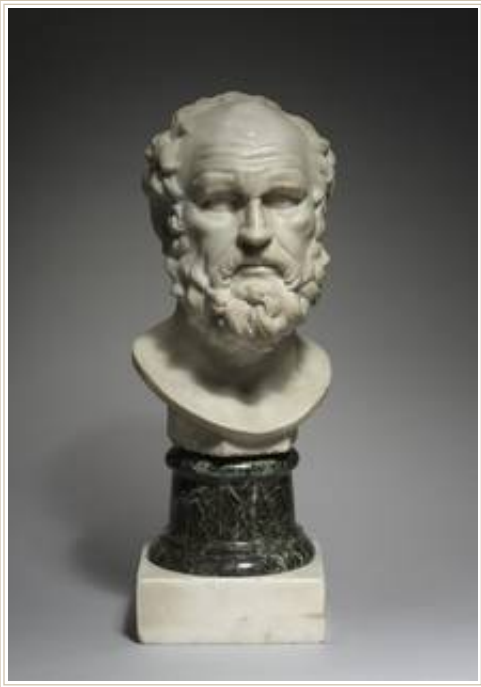
death and whatsoever is of the same nature, as matters of absolute indifferency, and in no wise to be stood upon by a wise man. These then if inviolably thou shalt observe, and shalt not be ambitious to be so called by others, both thou thyself shalt become a new man, and thou shalt begin a new life. For to continue such as hitherto thou hast been, to undergo those distractions and distempers as thou must needs for such a life as hitherto thou hast lived, is the part of one that is very foolish, and is overfond of his life. Whom a man might compare to one of those half-eaten wretches, matched in the amphitheatre with wild beasts; who as full as they are all the body over with wounds and blood, desire for a great favour, that they may be reserved till the next day, then also, and in the same estate to be exposed to the same nails and teeth as before. Away therefore, ship thyself; and from the troubles and distractions of thy former life convey thyself as it were unto these few names; and if thou canst abide in them, or be constant in the practice and possession of them, continue there as glad and joyful as one that were translated unto some such place of bliss and happiness as that which by Hesiod and Plato is called the Islands of the Blessed, by others called the Elysian Fields. And whensoever thou findest thyself; that thou art in danger of a relapse, and that thou art not able to master and overcome those difficulties and temptations that present themselves in thy present station: get thee into any private corner, where thou mayst be better able. Or if that will not serve forsake even thy life rather. But so that it be not in passion but in a plain voluntary modest way: this being the only commendable action of thy whole life that thus thou art departed, or this having been the main work and business of thy whole life, that thou mightest thus depart. Now for the better remembrance of those names that we have spoken of, thou shalt find it a very good help, to remember the Gods as often as may be: and that, the thing which they require at our hands of as many of us, as are by nature reasonable creation is not that with fair words, and outward show of piety and devotion we should flatter them, but that we should become like unto them: and that as all other natural creatures, the fig tree for example; the

In today's English · continued

different that a wise person should not care about. If you hold to these names without fail, and do not crave to be called by them by others, you will become a new person and begin a new life. To go on as you have been, torn apart and defiled as you must be by the kind of life you have lived so far, is the mark of someone very foolish and too attached to his life. He is like those half-eaten wretches matched against wild beasts in the arena, who, covered with wounds and blood, beg as a great favor to be kept alive until the next day, only to be thrown again, in the same state, to the same claws and teeth. So set sail, and carry yourself away from the troubles of your former life to these few names. If you can stay with them, keep practicing and holding them, and remain there as happy as if you had been carried off to the place of bliss that Hesiod and Plato call the Islands of the Blessed, and others the Elysian Fields. And whenever you feel you are in danger of slipping back, and cannot master the difficulties and temptations of your present position, go off to some quiet corner where you can do better. Or, if that does not work, leave life altogether, but not in anger, rather simply, freely, and modestly, so that this at least will be the one praiseworthy act of your whole life, that you left it this way, or that leaving it this way was the main work of your life. To help you remember these names, it will be very useful to think of the gods as often as you can, and to remember that what they want from us who are rational by nature is not to flatter them with fine words and an outward show of piety, but to become like them. Just as every other natural creature, the fig tree, for example, the dog, the bee, does what is proper to its own nature, so a human being should do what belongs to him as a human being.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

dog the bee: both do, all of them, and apply themselves unto that which by their natural constitution, is proper unto them; so man likewise should do that, which by his nature, as he is a man, belongs unto him.



Casaubon (1634)

Toys and fooleries at home, wars abroad: sometimes terror, sometimes torpor, or stupid sloth: this is thy daily slavery. By little and little, if thou doest not better look to it, those sacred dogmata will be blotted out of thy mind. How many things be there, which when as a mere naturalist, thou hast barely considered of according to their nature, thou doest let pass without any further use? Whereas thou shouldst in all things so join action and contemplation, that thou mightest both at the same time attend all present occasions, to perform everything duly and carefully and yet so intend the contemplative part too, that no part of that delight and pleasure, which the contemplative knowledge of everything according to its true nature doth of itself afford, might be lost. Or, that the true and contemplative knowledge of everything according to its own nature, might of itself, (action being subject to many lets and impediments) afford unto thee sufficient pleasure and happiness. Not apparent indeed, but not concealed. And when shalt thou attain to the happiness of true simplicity, and unaffected gravity? When shalt thou rejoice in the

certain knowledge of every particular object according to its true nature: as what the matter and substance of it is; what use it is for in the world: how long it can subsist: what things it doth consist of: who they be that are capable of it, and who they that can give it, and take it away?

In today's English

Silly games at home, war abroad, now terror, now numbness and lazy dullness: this is your daily slavery. Little by little, if you do not watch out, those sacred principles (dogmata) will be wiped from your mind. How many things do you look at merely as a student of nature, considering only what they are, and then let them pass without putting them to any further use? You should join action and contemplation in everything, so that you attend to every present task and do it properly and carefully, and at the same time keep up the contemplative part, so that none of the pleasure that comes from understanding each thing as it truly is gets lost. Or rather, so that the true, contemplative understanding of each thing in its own nature can, by itself, give you enough pleasure and happiness, since action is subject to many obstacles. A confidence not paraded, but not hidden either. When will you reach the happiness of true simplicity and unpretended seriousness? When will you enjoy a sure understanding of each particular thing as it truly is: what its material and substance are, what use it serves in the world, how long it can last, what it is made of, who can have it, and who can give it and take it away?



Casaubon (1634)

As the spider, when it hath caught the fly that it hunted after, is not little proud, nor meanly conceited of herself: as he likewise that hath caught an hare, or hath taken a fish with his net: as another for the taking of a boar, and another of a bear: so may they be proud, and applaud themselves for their valiant acts against the Sarmatai, or northern nations lately defeated. For these also, these famous soldiers and warlike men, if thou dost look into their minds and opinions, what do they for the most part but hunt after prey?

In today's English

A spider is proud of catching a fly. One man is proud of catching a hare, another of netting a fish, another of killing a boar, another a bear. Others are proud and applaud themselves for their brave deeds against the Sarmatians, the northern peoples recently defeated. For these famous soldiers and warriors too, if you look into their minds and opinions, what are they mostly do-

ing but hunting for prey?

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Book X · XI



Casaubon (1634)

To find out, and set to thyself some certain way and method of contemplation, whereby thou mayest clearly discern and represent unto thyself, the mutual change of all things, the one into the other. Bear it in thy mind evermore, and see that thou be thoroughly well exercised in this particular. For there is not anything more effectual to beget true magnanimity.

In today's English

Find and set yourself some definite method of contemplation by which you can clearly see and picture how all things change into one another. Keep it always in mind, and make sure you are thoroughly practiced in this. Nothing is more effective in producing true greatness of mind.

331/415

Book X · XII



Casaubon (1634)

He hath got loose from the bonds of his body, and perceiving that within a very little while he must of necessity bid the world farewell, and leave all these things behind him, he wholly applied himself, as to righteousness in all his actions, so to the common nature in all things that should happen unto him. And contenting himself with these two things, to do all things justly, and whatsoever God doth send to like well of it: what others shall either say or think of him, or shall do against him, he doth not so much as trouble his thoughts with it. To go on straight, whither right and reason directed him, and by so doing to follow God, was the only thing that he did mind, that, his only business and occupation.

In today's English

He has slipped free of his body, and seeing that very soon he must say goodbye to the world and leave all these things behind, he has given himself completely to justice in all his actions, and to the common nature in all that happens to him. Content with these two things, to do everything justly and to welcome whatever God sends, he does not even trouble his thoughts about

what others may say or think about him or do against him. To go straight where right and reason directed him, and by doing so to follow God, was the only thing he cared about, his only business and occupation.



Casaubon (1634)

What use is there of suspicion at all? or, why should thoughts of mistrust, and suspicion concerning that which is future, trouble thy mind at all? What now is to be done, if thou mayest search and inquiry into that, what needs thou care for more? And if thou art well able to perceive it alone, let no man divert thee from it. But if alone thou doest not so well perceive it, suspend thine action, and take advice from the best. And if there be anything else that doth hinder thee, go on with prudence and discretion, according to the present occasion and opportunity, still proposing that unto thyself, which thou doest conceive most right and just. For to hit that aright, and to speed in the prosecution of it, must needs be happiness, since it is that only which we can truly and properly be said to miss of, or miscarry in.

In today's English

What use is suspicion at all? Why should mistrust and worry about the future trouble your mind? If you can look into what needs to be done now, what more do you need? If you can see it clearly by yourself, let no one turn you from it. If you cannot see it so clearly by yourself, hold off and take advice from the best people. And if something else stands in your way, go forward carefully and sensibly, as the present situation and opportunity allow, always aiming at what you think most right and just. For hitting that and succeeding in it must be happiness, since that is the only thing we can truly be said to miss or fail at.

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Book X · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

What is that that is slow, and yet quick? merry,
and yet grave? He that in all things doth follow
reason for his guide.

In today's English

What is slow and yet quick, cheerful and yet seri-
ous? The person who follows reason as his guide
in everything.



Casaubon (1634)

In the morning as soon as thou art awaked, when thy judgment, before either thy affections, or external objects have wrought upon it, is yet most free and impartial: put this question to thyself, whether if that which is right and just be done, the doing of it by thyself, or by others when thou art not able thyself; be a thing material or no. For sure it is not. And as for these that keep such a life, and stand so much upon the praises, or dispraises of other men, hast thou forgotten what manner of men they be? that such and such upon their beds, and such at their board: what their ordinary actions are: what they pursue after, and what they fly from: what thefts and rapines they commit, if not with their hands and feet, yet with that more precious part of theirs, their minds: which (would it but admit of them) might enjoy faith, modesty, truth, justice, a good spirit.

In today's English

In the morning, as soon as you wake up, when your judgment is still freest and most impartial, before your feelings or outside things have worked on it, ask yourself whether it matters at all whether what is right and just is done by you, or by others when you cannot do it yourself. It certainly does not. And as for those people who put on such airs and care so much about other people's praise or criticism, have you forgotten what kind of people they are? What they are like in bed and at the table, what they do every day, what they chase after and what they run from, what thefts and robberies they commit, if not with their hands and feet, then with the most precious part of themselves, their minds, which, if they would allow it, could have trustworthiness, modesty, truth, justice, and a good spirit.

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Book X · XVI



Casaubon (1634)

Give what thou wilt, and take away what thou wilt, saith he that is well taught and truly modest, to Him that gives, and takes away. And it is not out of a stout and peremptory resolution, that he saith it, but in mere love, and humble submission.

In today's English

'Give what you want, and take back what you want,' says the person who is well taught and truly modest, to the one who gives and takes away. And he says it not out of defiant stubbornness, but out of pure love and humble acceptance.



Casaubon (1634)

So live as indifferent to the world and all worldly objects, as one who liveth by himself alone upon some desert hill. For whether here, or there, if the whole world be but as one town, it matters not much for the place. Let them behold and see a man, that is a man indeed, living according to the true nature of man. If they cannot bear with me, let them kill me. For better were it to die, than so to live as they would have thee.

In today's English

Live as detached from the world and all worldly things as someone living alone on a deserted mountain. For if the whole world is like one city, it makes little difference whether you live here or there. Let people see and observe a real human being, living according to the true nature of a human being. If they cannot stand me, let them kill me. It would be better to die than to live the way they would have you live.

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Book X · XVIII



Casaubon (1634)

Make it not any longer a matter of dispute or discourse, what are the signs and proprieties of a good man, but really and actually to be such.

In today's English

Stop arguing and talking about what the marks and qualities of a good person are, and actually be one.

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Book X · XIX



Casaubon (1634)

Ever to represent unto thyself; and to set before thee, both the general age and time of the world, and the whole substance of it. And how all things particular in respect of these are for their substance, as one of the least seeds that is: and for their duration, as the turning of the pestle in the mortar once about. Then to fix thy mind upon every particular object of the world, and to conceive it, (as it is indeed,) as already being in the state of dissolution, and of change; tending to some kind of either putrefaction or dispersion; or whatsoever else it is, that is the death as it were of everything in his own kind.

In today's English

Always picture to yourself the whole of time and the whole of substance, and how every particular thing, compared with

these, is in substance like the tiniest seed, and in duration like one turn of a pestle in a mortar. Then focus on each particular thing in the world and see it, as it truly is, as already breaking up and changing, heading toward some kind of rotting or scattering, or whatever else is the death, so to speak, of each thing in its own kind.



Casaubon (1634)

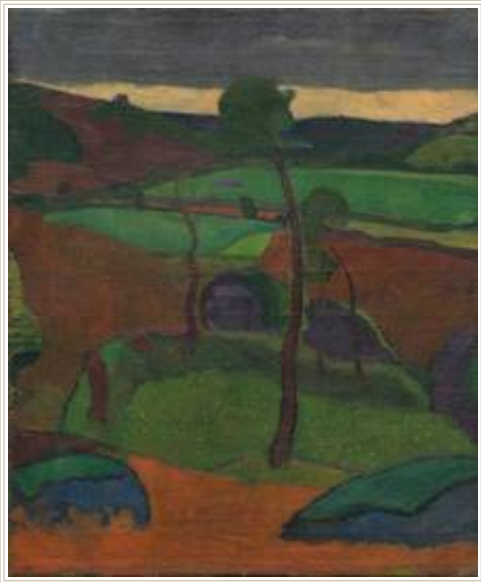
Consider them through all actions and occupations, of their lives: as when they eat, and when they sleep: when they are in the act of necessary exoneration, and when in the act of lust. Again, when they either are in their greatest exultation; and in the middle of all their pomp and glory; or being angry and displeased, in great state and majesty, as from an higher place, they chide and rebuke. How base and slavish, but a little while ago, they were fain to be, that they might come to this; and within a very little while what will be their estate, when death hath once seized upon them.

In today's English

Look at people through all the activities and occupations of their lives: when they eat, when they sleep, when they relieve themselves, when they have sex. Then again when they are at the height of their triumph, in the middle of all their pomp and glory, or when, angry and displeased, they scold and rebuke others with great dignity, as if from on high. Think how low and slavish they had to be only a little while ago to get there, and what their state will be very soon, once death has taken hold of them.

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Book X · XXI



Casaubon (1634)

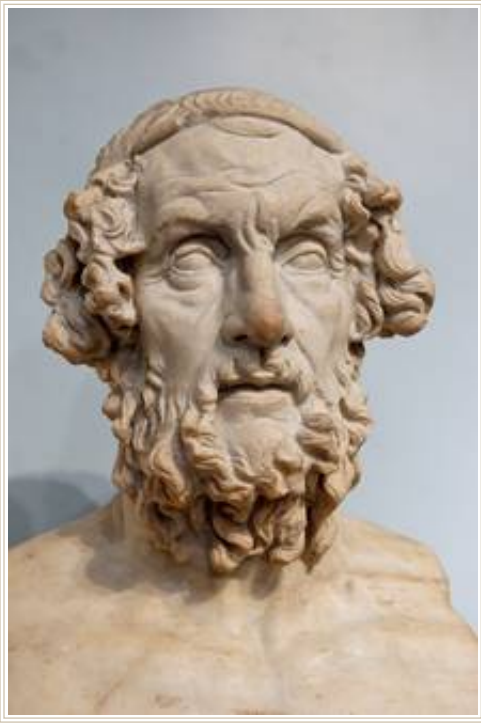
That is best for every one, that the common nature of all doth send unto every one, and then is it best, when she doth send it.

In today's English

Whatever the common nature sends each person is best for him, and it is best at the moment she sends it.

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Book X · XXII



Casaubon (1634)

The earth, saith the poet, doth often long after the rain. So is the glorious sky often as desirous to fall upon the earth, which argues a mutual kind of love between them. And so (say I) doth the world bear a certain affection of love to whatsoever shall come to pass With thine affections shall mine concur, O world. The same (and no other) shall the object of my longing be which is of thine. Now that the world doth love it is true indeed so is it as commonly said, and acknowledged ledged, when, according to the Greek phrase, imitated by the Latins, of things that used to be, we say commonly, that they love to be.

In today's English

'The earth,' says the poet, 'often longs for the rain.' And the glorious sky is often just as eager to fall upon the earth, which shows a kind of mutual love between them. So too, I say, the world has a certain loving affection for whatever is going to happen. 'My affections will agree with yours, O world.' What you long for, and nothing else, will be what I long for. That the world 'loves' is true, and it is commonly said and recognized when, fol-

lowing a Greek expression that the Latins also copy, we say of things that usually happen that they 'love' to happen.



Casaubon (1634)

Either thou dost Continue in this kind of life and that is it, which so long thou hast been used unto and therefore tolerable: or thou doest retire, or leave the world, and that of thine own accord, and then thou hast thy mind: or thy life is cut off; and then mayst thou rejoice that thou hast ended thy charge. One of these must needs be. Be therefore of good comfort.

In today's English

Either you continue in this kind of life, which you have been used to for so long and can therefore bear; or you withdraw, leaving the world of your own free will, and then you have what you wanted; or your life is cut short, and then you can be glad you have finished your duty. It must be one of these. So take heart.



Casaubon (1634)

Let it always appear and be manifest unto thee that solitariness, and desert places, by many philosophers so much esteemed of and affected, are of themselves but thus and thus; and that all things are them to them that live in towns, and converse with others as they are the same nature everywhere to be seen and observed: to them that have retired themselves to the top of mountains, and to desert havens, or what other desert and inhabited places soever. For anywhere it thou wilt mayest thou quickly find and apply that to thyself; which Plato saith of his philosopher, in a place: as private and retired, saith he, as if he were shut up and enclosed about in some shepherd's lodge, on the top of a hill. There by thyself to put these questions to thyself or to enter in these considerations: What is my chief and principal part, which

hath power over the rest? What is now the present estate of it, as I use it; and what is it, that I employ it about? Is it now void of reason or no? Is it free, and separated; or so affixed, so congealed and grown together as it were with the flesh, that it is swayed by the motions and inclinations of it?

In today's English

Always keep it clear in your mind that solitude and lonely places, so admired and sought after by many philosophers, are in themselves nothing special, and that everything is the same for people who live in towns and mix with others as it is for those who have withdrawn to mountaintops, deserted harbors, or any other lonely or inhabited place. The same nature is to be seen and observed everywhere. Anywhere you like, you can quickly find and apply to yourself what Plato says of his philosopher somewhere: as private and withdrawn, he says, as if he were shut up in a shepherd's hut on a hilltop. There, by yourself, ask yourself these questions or consider these things: What is my chief and ruling part, which has power over the rest? What state is it in now, as I use it, and what am I using it for? Is it empty of reason or not? Is it free and separate, or so attached and grown together, as it were, with the flesh that it is pushed around by the flesh's movements and urges?

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Book X · XXV



Casaubon (1634)

He that runs away from his master is a fugitive. But the law is every man's master. He therefore that forsakes the law, is a fugitive. So is he, whosoever he be, that is either sorry, angry, or afraid, or for anything that either hath been, is, or shall be by his appointment, who is the Lord and Governor of the universe. For he truly and properly is Νόμος, or the law, as the only νέμων, or distributor and dispenser of all things that happen unto any one in his lifetime, Whatsoever then is either sorry, angry, or afraid, is a fugitive.

In today's English

Someone who runs away from his master is a runaway. But the law is every person's master. So whoever abandons the law is a runaway. So too is anyone who is sad, angry, or afraid about anything that has happened, is happening, or will happen by the appointment of the one who is Lord and Governor of the universe. For he is truly and properly Νόμος (Nomos, 'law'), being

the only νέμων (nemōn, 'distributor') who hands out everything that happens to anyone in their lifetime. So whoever is sad, angry, or afraid is a runaway.



Casaubon (1634)

From man is the seed, that once cast into the womb man hath no more to do with it. Another cause succeedeth, and undertakes the work, and in time brings a child (that wonderful effect from such a beginning!) to perfection. Again, man lets food down through his throat; and that once down, he hath no more to do with it. Another cause succeedeth and distributeth this food into the senses, and the affections: into life, and into strength; and doth with it those other many and marvellous things, that belong unto man. These things therefore that are so secretly and invisibly wrought and brought to pass, thou must use to behold and contemplate; and not the things themselves only, but the power also by which they are effected; that thou mayst behold it, though not

In today's English

A man supplies the seed, and once it is placed in the womb he has nothing more to do with it. Another cause takes over, carries on the work, and in time brings a child to completion, a wonderful result from such a beginning! Again, a person swallows food, and once it is down he has nothing more to do with it. Another cause takes over and distributes this food to the senses and the feelings, into life and strength, and does many other marvelous things with it that belong to a human being. You should make a habit of looking at and thinking about these things that happen so secretly and invisibly. Look not only at the things themselves but also at the power that brings them about, so that you can see it, not with the body's eyes, but as plainly and clearly as you can see the

Casaubon (1634) · continued

with the eyes of the body, yet as plainly and visibly as thou canst see and discern the outward efficient cause of the depression and elevation of anything.

In today's English · continued

outward cause that makes something sink or rise.

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Book X · XXVII



Casaubon (1634)

Ever to mind and consider with thyself; how all things that now are, have been heretofore much after the same sort, and after the same fashion that now they are: and so to think of those things which shall be hereafter also. Moreover, whole dramata, and uniform scenes, or scenes that comprehend the lives and actions of men of one calling and profession, as many as either in thine own experience thou hast known, or by reading of ancient histories; (as the whole court of Adrianus, the whole court of Antoninus Pius, the whole court of Philippus, that of Alexander, that of Crœsus): to set them all before thine eyes. For thou shalt find that they are all but after one sort and fashion: only that the actors were others.

In today's English

Always keep in mind how everything that exists now has existed before in much the same way and the same form as now, and think the same of things to come. Also, set before your eyes whole dramata (dramas), uniform scenes that cover the lives and actions of people of one rank or profession, as many as you

have known from your own experience or from reading ancient histories: the whole court of Hadrian, the whole court of Antoninus Pius, the whole court of Philip, that of Alexander, that of Croesus. You will find they are all of one kind and fashion. Only the actors were different.



Casaubon (1634)

As a pig that cries and flings when his throat is cut, fancy to thyself every one to be, that grieves for any worldly thing and takes on. Such a one is he also, who upon his bed alone, doth bewail the miseries of this our mortal life. And remember this, that Unto reasonable creatures only it is granted that they may willingly and freely submit unto Providence: but absolutely to submit, is a necessity imposed upon all creatures equally.

In today's English

Picture everyone who grieves and frets over any worldly thing as being like a pig that squeals and kicks when its throat is cut. So too is the person who lies alone in bed and laments the miseries of our mortal life. And remember this: only rational creatures are given the ability to submit to Providence willingly and freely, but simply submitting is a necessity imposed equally on every creature.

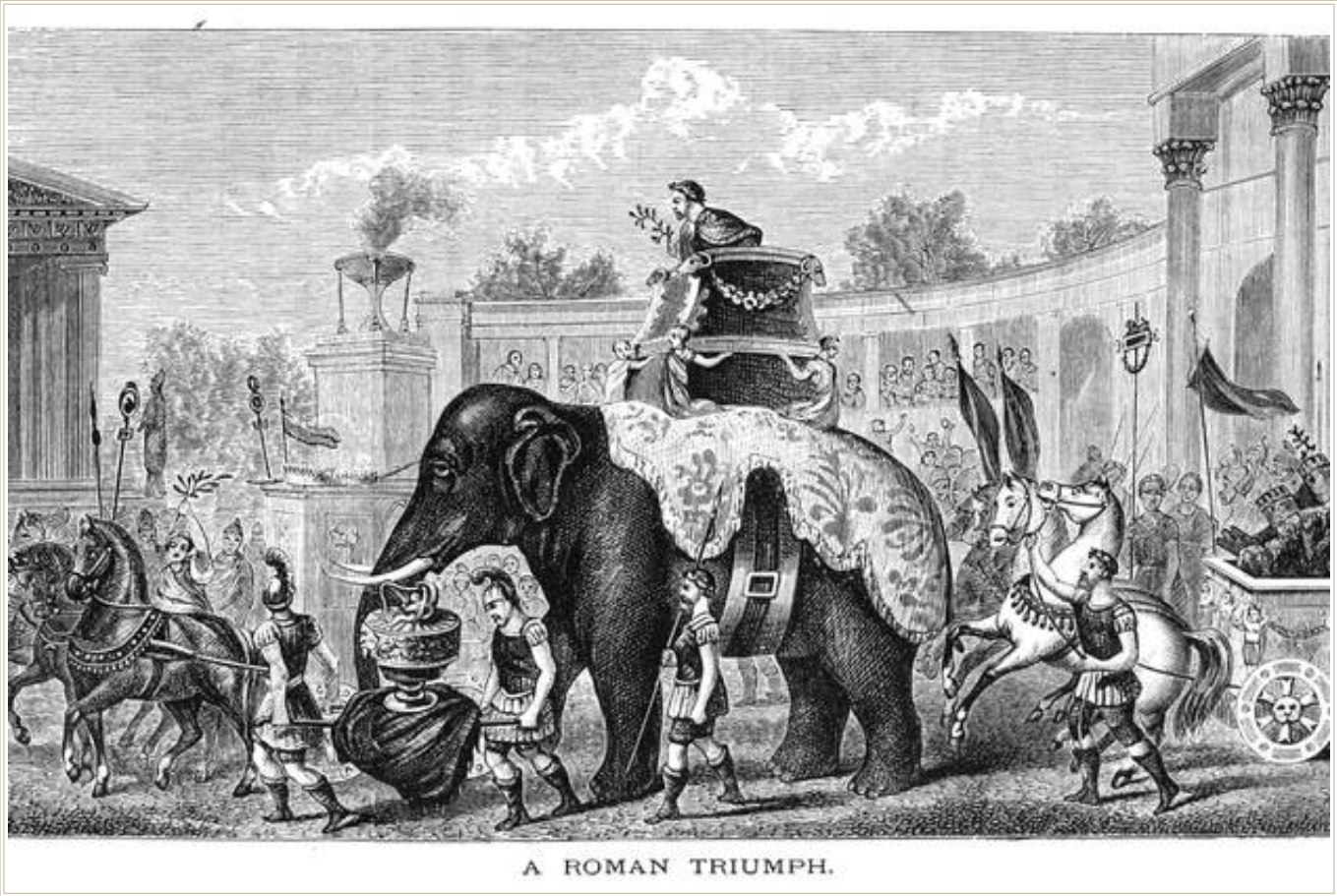


Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever it is that thou goest about, consider of it by thyself, and ask thyself, What? because I shall do this no more when I am dead, should therefore death seem grievous unto me?

In today's English

Whatever you are doing, think about it by yourself and ask: What? Should death seem terrible to me just because, once I am dead, I will not do this anymore?



Casaubon (1634)

When thou art offended with any man's transgression, presently reflect upon thyself; and consider what thou thyself art guilty of in the same kind. As that thou also perchance dost think it a happiness either to be rich, or to live in pleasure, or to be praised and commended, and so of the rest in particular. For this if thou shalt call to mind, thou shalt soon forget thine anger; especially when at the same time this also shall concur in thy thoughts, that he was constrained by his error and ignorance so to do: for how can he choose as long as he is of that opinion? Do thou therefore if thou canst, take away that from him, that forceth him to do as he doth.

In today's English

Whenever you are offended by someone's wrongdoing, immediately turn to yourself and consider what you are guilty of in the same line. Perhaps you too think it happiness to be rich, or to live in pleasure, or to be praised and admired, and so on in each case. If you remember this, you will soon forget your anger, especially if you also bear in mind that he was compelled to do it by his error and ignorance. How can he choose otherwise, as long as he holds that opinion? So, if you can, take away from him whatever forces him to act as he does.



Casaubon (1634)

When thou seest Satyro, think of Socraticus and Eutyches, or Hymen, and when Euphrates, think of Eutychio, and Sylvanus, when Alciphron, of Tropaeophorus, when Xenophon, of Crito, or Severus. And when thou doest look upon thyself, fancy unto thyself some one or other of the Cæsars; and so for every one, some one or other that hath been for estate and profession answerable unto him. Then let this come to thy mind at the same time; and where now are they all? Nowhere or anywhere? For so shalt thou at all time be able to perceive how all worldly things are but as the smoke, that vanisheth away: or, indeed, mere nothing. Especially when thou shalt call to mind this also, that whatsoever is once changed, shall never be again as long as the

In today's English

When you see Satyron, think of Socraticus and Eutyches, or Hymen. When you see Euphrates, think of Eutychion and Sylvanus. When Alciphron, think of Tropaeophorus. When Xenophon, think of Crito or Severus. And when you look at yourself, picture one of the Caesars. Do the same for everyone: picture someone from the past who matched him in rank and profession. Then at the same time ask yourself: where are they all now? Nowhere, or anywhere? In this way you will always be able to see that all worldly things are like smoke that vanishes, or really nothing at all. Especially when you also remember that whatever has once changed will never be again as long as the world lasts. And you, how long will you last? Why is it not enough for you to spend virtuously and fitting-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

world endureth. And thou then, how long shalt thou endure? And why doth it not suffice thee, if virtuously, and as becometh thee, thou mayest pass that portion of time, how little soever it be, that is allotted unto thee?

In today's English · continued

ly the portion of time, however small, that has been given to you?

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Book X · XXXII



Casaubon (1634)

What a subject, and what a course of life is it, that thou doest so much desire to be rid of. For all these things, what are they, but fit objects for an understanding, that beholdeth everything according to its true nature, to exercise itself upon? Be patient, therefore, until that (as a strong stomach that turns all things into his own nature; and as a great fire that turneth in flame and light, whatsoever thou doest cast into it) thou have made these things also familiar, and as it were natural unto thee.

In today's English

What material, what kind of life it is that you are so eager to get away from! For what are all these things but fitting objects for an understanding that sees everything according to its true nature to exercise itself on? So be patient until you have made these things familiar and natural to you, as a strong stomach turns everything into its own nature, and as a great fire turns whatever you throw into it into flame and light.



Casaubon (1634)

Let it not be in any man's power, to say truly of thee, that thou art not truly simple, or sincere and open, or not good. Let him be deceived whosoever he be that shall have any such opinion of thee. For all this doth depend of thee. For who is it that should hinder thee from being either truly simple or good? Do thou only resolve rather not to live, than not to be such. For indeed neither doth it stand with reason that he should live that is not such. What then is it that may upon this present occasion according to best reason and discretion, either be said or done? For whatsoever it be, it is in thy power either to do it, or to say it, and therefore seek not any pretences, as though thou wert hindered. Thou wilt never cease groaning and complaining, until such time as that, what pleasure is unto the voluptuous, be unto thee, to do in everything that presents itself, whatsoever may be done conformably and agreeably to the proper constitution of

man, or, to man as he is a man. For thou must account that pleasure, whatsoever it be, that thou mayest do according to thine own nature. And to do this, every place will fit thee. Unto the cylindrus, or roller, it is not granted to move everywhere according to its own proper motion, as neither unto the water, nor unto the fire, nor unto any other thing, that either is merely natural, or natural and sensitive; but not rational for many things there be that can hinder their operations. But of the mind and understanding this is the proper privilege, that according to its own nature, and as it will itself, it can pass through every obstacle that it finds, and keep straight on forwards. Setting therefore before thine eyes this happiness and felicity of thy mind, whereby it is able to pass through all things, and is capable of all motions, whether as the fire, upwards; or as the stone downwards, or as the cylindrus through that which is sloping: content thyself with it, and seek not after any other thing. For all other kind of hindrances that are not hindrances of thy mind either they are proper to the body, or merely proceed from the opinion, reason not making that resistance that it should, but basely, and cowardly suffering itself to be foiled; and of themselves can neither wound, nor do any hurt at all. Else must he of necessity, whosoever he be that meets with any of them, become worse than he was before. For so is it in all other subjects, that that is thought hurtful unto them, whereby they are made worse. But here contrariwise, man (if he make that good use of them that he should) is rather the better and the more praiseworthy for any of those kind of hindrances, than otherwise. But generally remember that nothing can hurt a natural citizen, that is not hurtful unto the city itself, nor anything hurt the city, that is not hurtful unto the law itself. But none of these casualties, or external hindrances, do hurt the law itself; or, are contrary to that course of justice and equity, by which public societies are maintained: neither therefore do they hurt either city or citizen.

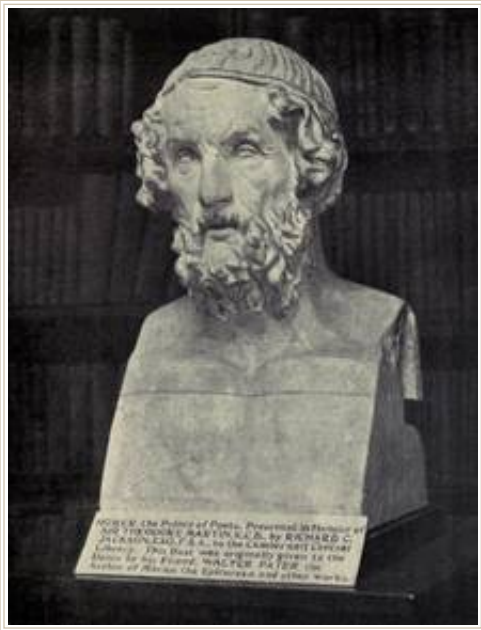
In today's English

Do not let anyone be able to say truthfully about you that you are not truly simple, or sincere and open, or not good. Whoever holds such an opinion of you, let him be mistaken. All of this depends on you. For who could stop you from being truly simple or good? Only resolve that you would rather not live than not be such a person. Indeed, reason does not allow someone who is not like this to go on living. So what, in the present situation, can be said or done according to the best reason and judgment? Whatever it is, you have the power to do it or say it, so do not look for excuses, as if you were being prevented.

In today's English · continued

You will never stop groaning and complaining until doing whatever fits the proper makeup of a human being, in everything that comes up, is to you what pleasure is to the pleasure-seeker. You should count as pleasure whatever you can do in line with your own nature, and every place will suit you for this. A cylinder, a roller, is not able to move everywhere by its own proper motion, and neither is water, fire, or anything else that is merely natural, or natural and able to sense but not rational, because many things can block their workings. But this is the special privilege of the mind and understanding: by its own nature and as it chooses, it can pass through every obstacle it meets and keep going straight ahead. So keep before your eyes this happiness of your mind, by which it can pass through everything and is capable of every movement, whether upward like fire, downward like a stone, or like the cylinder down a slope. Be content with this and look for nothing else.

All other kinds of hindrances that do not hinder your mind either belong to the body or come purely from opinion, when reason does not resist as it should but basely and cowardly lets itself be beaten. In themselves they can neither wound nor harm at all. Otherwise, whoever met any of them would necessarily become worse than before. For with everything else, whatever makes a thing worse is considered harmful to it. But here, on the contrary, a person who makes the right use of such hindrances becomes better and more praiseworthy for them, rather than worse. In general, remember that nothing can harm a natural citizen that does not harm the city itself, and nothing harms the city that does not harm the law itself. But none of these accidents or outside hindrances harm the law itself, or go against the course of justice and fairness by which communities are held together. So they harm neither city nor citizen.



Casaubon (1634)

As he that is bitten by a mad dog, is afraid of everything almost that he seeth: so unto him, whom the dogmata have once bitten, or in whom true knowledge hath made an impression, everything almost that he sees or reads be it never so short or ordinary, doth afford a good memento; to put him out of all grief and fear, as that of the poet, 'The winds blow upon the trees, and their leaves fall upon the ground. Then do the trees begin to bud again, and by the spring-time they put forth new branches. So is the generation of men; some come into the world, and others go out of it.' Of these leaves then thy children are. And they also that applaud thee so gravely, or, that applaud thy speeches, with that their usual acclamation, ἄξιονίστως, O wisely spoken I and speak well of thee, as on the other side, they that stick not to curse thee, they that privately and secretly dispraise and deride thee, they also are but leaves. And they also that shall follow, in whose memories the names of men famous after death, is preserved, they are but leaves neither. For even so is it of all

these worldly things. Their spring comes, and they are put forth. Then blows the wind, and they go down. And then in lieu of them grow others out of the wood or common matter of all things, like unto them. But, to endure but for a while, is common unto all. Why then shouldest thou so earnestly either seek after these things, or fly from them, as though they should endure for ever? Yet a little while, and thine eyes will be closed up, and for him that carries thee to thy grave shall another mourn within a while after.

In today's English

Just as someone bitten by a mad dog is afraid of almost everything he sees, so for someone whom the dogmata (true principles) have once bitten, in whom true knowledge has made its mark, almost everything he sees or reads, however short or ordinary, offers a good reminder to free him from all grief and fear. For example, the poet's lines: 'The winds blow on the trees, and their leaves fall to the ground. Then the trees begin to bud again, and by spring they put out new branches. So it is with the generations of men: some come into the world, and others go out of it.' Your children, then, are these leaves. And those who applaud you so solemnly, or applaud your speeches with their usual cry, ἄξιονίστως (axiopistōs, 'well spoken!'), and speak well of you, and on the other side those who do not hesitate to curse you, and those who privately and secretly criticize and mock you, they too are only leaves. And those who come after, in whose memories the names of men famous after death are kept, are only leaves as well. So it is with all these worldly things. Their spring comes and they are put out. Then the wind blows and they fall. And in their place others like them grow out of the wood, the common material of all things. Lasting only a short while is common to them all. So why should you so eagerly chase these things or run from them, as if they would last forever? A little while longer and your eyes will close, and soon after, someone will mourn the person who carries you to your grave.



Casaubon (1634)

A good eye must be good to see whatsoever is to be seen, and not green things only. For that is proper to sore eyes. So must a good ear, and a good smell be ready for whatsoever is either to be heard, or smelt: and a good stomach as indifferent to all kinds of food, as a millstone is, to whatsoever she was made for to grind. As ready therefore must a sound understanding be for whatsoever shall happen. But he that saith, O that my children might live! and, O that all men might commend me for whatsoever I do! is an eye that seeks after green things; or as teeth, after that which is tender.

In today's English

A healthy eye should be able to see everything visible, not only green things, since wanting only

green is the mark of sore eyes. In the same way a healthy ear and a healthy sense of smell should be ready for whatever there is to hear or smell, and a healthy stomach should take all kinds of food, just as a millstone takes whatever it was made to grind. So a sound mind should be ready for whatever happens. But the person who says, 'Oh, may my children live!' and 'Oh, may everyone praise me for whatever I do!' is an eye that wants only green things, or teeth that want only what is soft.



Casaubon (1634)

There is not any man that is so happy in his death, but that some of those that are by him when he dies, will be ready to rejoice at his supposed calamity. Is it one that was virtuous and wise indeed? will there not some one or other be found, who thus will say to himself; 'Well now at last shall I be at rest from this pedagogue. He did not indeed otherwise trouble us much: but I know well enough that in his heart, he did much condemn us.' Thus will they speak of the virtuous. But as for us, alas I how many things be there, for which there be many that glad would be to be rid of us. This therefore if thou shalt think of whensoever thou diest, thou shalt die the more willingly, when thou shalt think with thyself; I am now to depart from that world, wherein those that have been my nearest friends and acquaintances, they whom I have so much suffered for, so often prayed for, and for whom I have taken such care,

In today's English

No one is so fortunate in his death that some of the people around him when he dies will not be ready to welcome what they think is his misfortune. Was he virtuous and truly wise? Won't someone be found who will say to himself, 'Well, at last I will get some rest from this schoolmaster. He did not really bother us much otherwise, but I know very well that in his heart he thought poorly of us'? That is how they will talk about the virtuous. But as for us, alas, how many reasons there are why many people would be glad to be rid of us!

If you think about this whenever you die, you will die more willingly, when you think to yourself: I am now leaving a world in which even my closest friends and companions, the ones I have suffered so much for, prayed for so often, and cared for so much, even they want me to die, hoping they will live more happily after my death than before. So

Casaubon (1634) · continued

even they would have me die, hoping that after my death they shall live happier, than they did before. What then should any man desire to continue here any longer? Nevertheless, whensoever thou diest, thou must not be less kind and loving unto them for it; but as before, see them, continue to be their friend, to wish them well, and meekly, and gently to carry thyself towards them, but yet so that on the other side, it make thee not the more unwilling to die. But as it fareth with them that die an easy quick death, whose soul is soon separated from their bodies, so must thy separation from them be. To these had nature joined and annexed me: now she parts us; I am ready to depart, as from friends and kinsmen, but yet without either reluctancy or compulsion. For this also is according to Nature.

In today's English · continued

why would anyone want to stay here any longer? Still, whenever you die, do not be any less kind and loving toward them because of this. As before, keep seeing them as they are, stay their friend, wish them well, and treat them meekly and gently, but in such a way that it does not make you more reluctant to die. Just as with those who have an easy, quick death, whose soul is soon separated from the body, so should your separation from them be. Nature had joined and attached me to them; now she separates us. I am ready to leave, as from friends and family, but without either reluctance or being forced. For this too is according to Nature.



Casaubon (1634)

Use thyself; as often, as thou seest any man do anything, presently (if it be possible) to say unto thyself, What is this man's end in this his action? But begin this course with thyself first of all, and diligently examine thyself concerning whatsoever thou doest.

In today's English

Make a habit, whenever you see someone do anything, of immediately asking yourself, if possible: What is this person's aim in doing this? But start this practice with yourself first, and examine yourself carefully about everything you do.



Casaubon (1634)

Remember, that that which sets a man at work, and hath power over the affections to draw them either one way, or the other way, is not any external thing properly, but that which is hidden within every man's dogmata, and opinions: That, that is rhetoric; that is life; that (to speak true) is man himself. As for thy body, which as a vessel, or a case, compasseth thee about, and the many and curious instruments that it hath annexed unto it, let them not trouble thy thoughts. For of themselves they are but as a carpenter's axe, but that they are born with us, and naturally sticking unto us. But otherwise, without the inward cause that hath power to move them, and to restrain them, those parts are of themselves of no more use unto us, than the shuttle is of itself to the weaver, or the pen to the writer, or the whip to the coach-

man.

In today's English

Remember that what sets a person to work and has the power to pull his feelings one way or the other is not, properly speaking, any outside thing, but what is hidden within, in each person's dogmata (beliefs) and opinions. That is eloquence; that is life; that, to tell the truth, is the person himself. As for your body, which surrounds you like a vessel or case, and the many intricate instruments attached to it, do not let them trouble your thoughts. In themselves they are like a carpenter's axe, except that we are born with them and they are naturally attached to us. Otherwise, without the inner cause that has the power to move and restrain them, those parts are of no more use to us than a shuttle by itself is to the weaver, a pen to the writer, or a whip to the coachman.



Casaubon (1634)

The natural properties, and privileges of a reasonable soul are: That she seeth herself; that she can order, and compose herself: that she makes herself as she will herself: that she reaps her own fruits whatsoever, whereas plants, trees, unreasonable creatures, what fruit soever (be it either fruit properly, or analogically only) they bear, they bear them unto others, and not to themselves. Again; whensoever, and wheresoever, sooner or later, her life doth end, she hath her own end nevertheless. For it is not with her, as with dancers and players, who if they be interrupted in any part of their action, the whole action must needs be imperfect: but she in what part of time or action soever she be surprised, can make that which she hath in her hand whatsoever

In today's English

The natural qualities and privileges of a rational soul are these. It sees itself. It can order and shape itself. It makes itself whatever it wants to be. It gathers its own fruit, whereas plants, trees, and non-rational creatures bear whatever fruit they bear, whether literal fruit or something like it, for others and not for themselves. Again, whenever and wherever, sooner or later, its life ends, it has reached its own end anyway. It is not like dancers and actors, whose whole performance is left incomplete if they are interrupted partway through. In whatever part of time or action it is surprised, it can make whatever it has in hand complete and full, so that it can leave with this comfort: 'I have lived, and I lack nothing that properly belonged to me.'

Casaubon (1634) · continued

it be, complete and full, so that she may depart with that comfort, 'I have lived; neither want I anything of that which properly did belong unto me.' Again, she compasseth the whole world, and penetrateth into the vanity, and mere outside (wanting substance and solidity) of it, and stretcheth herself unto the infiniteness of eternity; and the revolution or restoration of all things after a certain period of time, to the same state and place as before, she fetcheth about, and doth comprehend in herself; and considers withal, and sees clearly this, that neither they that shall follow us, shall see any new thing, that we have not seen, nor they that went before, anything more than we: but that he that is once come to forty (if he have any wit at all) can in a manner (for that they are all of one kind) see all things, both past and future. As proper is it, and natural to the soul of man to love her neighbour, to be true and modest; and to regard nothing so much as herself: which is also the property of the law: whereby by the way it appears, that sound reason and justice comes all to one, and therefore that justice is the chief thing, that reasonable creatures ought to propose unto themselves as their end.

In today's English · continued

Again, it takes in the whole world and sees through its emptiness and mere surface, lacking substance and solidity, and it stretches out into the endlessness of eternity. It grasps and contains within itself the cycle by which all things return, after a certain period, to the same state and place as before. And it also sees clearly that those who come after us will see nothing new that we have not seen, and those who came before saw nothing more than we have. Anyone who has reached forty, if he has any sense at all, has in a way seen everything, past and future, since it is all of one kind. It is just as proper and natural for the human soul to love its neighbor, to be truthful and modest, and to value nothing so much as itself, which is also a quality of the law. This shows, incidentally, that sound reason and justice come to the same thing, and therefore that justice is the chief thing that rational creatures should set before themselves as their goal.



Casaubon (1634)

A pleasant song or dance; the Pancratiast's exercise, sports that thou art wont to be much taken with, thou shalt easily contemn; if the harmonious voice thou shalt divide into so many particular sounds whereof it doth consist, and of every one in particular shall ask thyself; whether this or that sound is it, that doth so conquer thee. For thou wilt be ashamed of it. And so for shame, if accordingly thou shalt consider it, every particular motion and posture by itself: and so for the wrestler's exercise too. Generally then, whatsoever it be, besides virtue, and those things that proceed from virtue that thou art subject to be much affected with, remember presently thus to divide it, and by this kind of division, in each particular to attain unto the contempt of the whole. This thou must transfer and apply to thy whole life also.

In today's English

A pleasant song or dance, or the pancratiast's performance (the pancration was an all-out combat sport), entertainments you usually enjoy a great deal, you will easily think little of if you break the harmonious song into the individual sounds it is made of and ask yourself about each one in turn whether it is this sound or that one that overwhelms you. You will be ashamed of it. Do the same with the dance, considering each movement and pose by itself, and the same with the wrestler's performance. In general, then, with anything besides virtue and what comes from virtue that you tend to be strongly affected by, remember to break it down this way at once, and by dividing it into its parts, come to think little of the whole. Apply this to your whole life as well.

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Book XI · III



Casaubon (1634)

That soul which is ever ready, even now presently (if need be) from the body, whether by way of extinction, or dispersion, or continuation in another place and estate to be separated, how blessed and happy is it! But this readiness of it, it must proceed, not from an obstinate and peremptory resolution of the mind, violently and passionately set upon Opposition, as Christians are wont; but from a peculiar judgment; with discretion and gravity, so that others may be persuaded also and drawn to the like example, but without any noise and passionate exclamations.

In today's English

How blessed and happy is the soul that is always ready, right now if need be, to be separated from the body, whether by being extinguished, scattered, or continuing in some other place and state! But this readiness must come not from a stubborn, defiant

determination of the mind, set violently and passionately on opposition, as Christians tend to do, but from its own judgment, with thought and seriousness, so that others too may be persuaded and drawn to follow its example, but without any noise or dramatic outbursts.



Casaubon (1634)

Have I done anything charitably? then am I benefited by it. See that this upon all occasions may present itself unto thy mind, and never cease to think of it. What is thy profession? to be good. And how should this be well brought to pass, but by certain theorems and doctrines; some Concerning the nature of the universe, and some Concerning the proper and particular constitution of man?

In today's English

Have I done something kind for others? Then I have benefited from it. Make sure this comes to mind on every occasion, and never stop thinking about it. What is your calling? To be good. And how can this be done well except through certain principles and teachings, some about the nature of the universe and some about the proper and particular makeup of a human being?



Casaubon (1634)

Tragedies were at first brought in and instituted, to put men in mind of worldly chances and casualties: that these things in the ordinary course of nature did so happen: that men that were much pleased and delighted by such accidents upon this stage, would not by the same things in a greater stage be grieved and afflicted: for here you see what is the end of all such things; and that even they that cry out so mournfully to Cithaeron, must bear them for all their cries and exclamations, as well as others. And in very truth many good things are spoken by these poets; as that (for example) is an excellent passage: 'But if so be that I and my two children be neglected by the Gods, they have some reason even for that,' &c. And again, 'It will but little avail thee to storm and rage against the things themselves,' &c. Again, 'To reap one's life, as a ripe ear of corn;' and whatsoever else is to be found in them, that is of

In today's English

Tragedies were first introduced to remind people of the chances and accidents of life: that these things happen in the ordinary course of nature, and that people who enjoyed such events on the stage should not be grieved and distressed by the same things on a larger stage. For here you see how all such things end, and that even those who cry out so mournfully, 'Alas, Cithaeron!' must bear them, for all their cries, just like everyone else. And truly, these poets say many good things. For example, this excellent passage: 'But if the gods neglect me and my two children, even this has its reason,' and so on. And again: 'It does you little good to rage at things themselves,' and so on. And again: 'To reap a life like a ripe ear of grain,' and anything else of the same kind found in them.

After tragedy came the Old Comedy, which was free to attack personal vices, and through this

Casaubon (1634) · continued

the same kind. After the tragedy, the ancient comedy was brought in, which had the liberty to inveigh against personal vices; being therefore through this her freedom and liberty of speech of very good use and effect, to restrain men from pride and arrogancy. To which end it was, that Diogenes took also the same liberty. After these, what were either the Middle, or New Comedy admitted for, but merely, (Or for the most part at least) for the delight and pleasure of curious and excellent imitation? 'It will steal away; look to it,' &c. Why, no man denies, but that these also have some good things whereof that may be one: but the whole drift and foundation of that kind of dramatical poetry, what is it else, but as we have said?

In today's English · continued

freedom of speech it was very useful in restraining people from pride and arrogance. For the same purpose Diogenes also took the same freedom. After these, what were the Middle and New Comedy introduced for, if not merely, or at least mostly, for the pleasure of clever and skillful imitation? 'It will slip away; watch out,' and so on. Of course, no one denies that these too have some good lines, and that may be one of them. But the whole aim and basis of that kind of dramatic poetry, what is it but what we have said?

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Book XI · VI



Casaubon (1634)

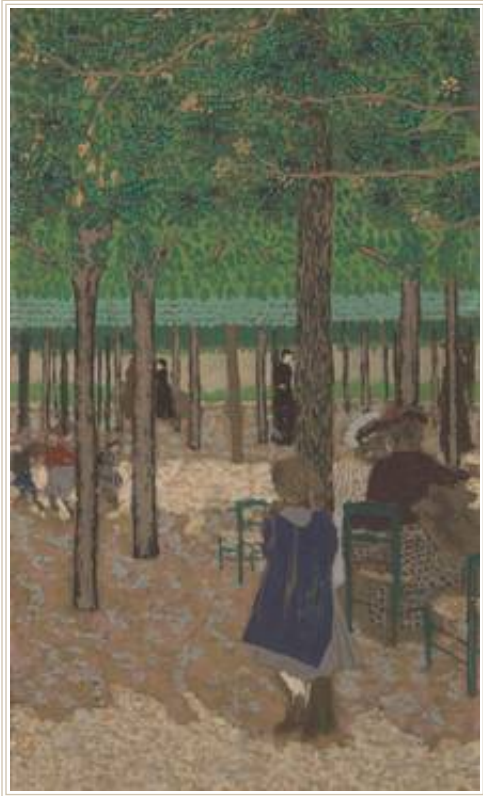
How clearly doth it appear unto thee, that no other course of thy life could fit a true philosopher's practice better, than this very course, that thou art now already in?

In today's English

How clear it is to you that no other way of life could suit the practice of a true philosopher better than the very one you are already in.

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Book XI · VII



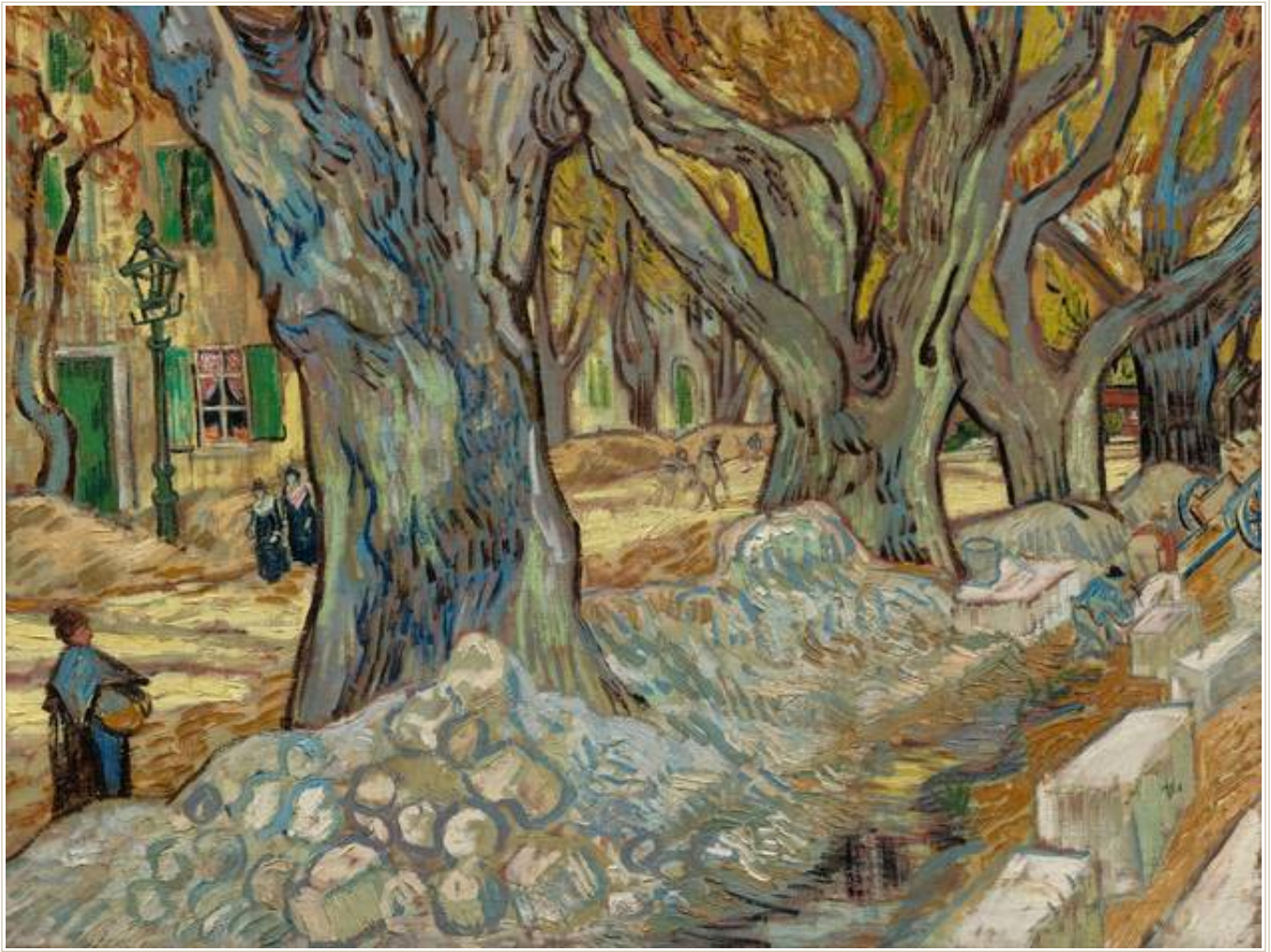
Casaubon (1634)

A branch cut off from the continuity of that which was next unto it, must needs be cut off from the whole tree: so a man that is divided from another man, is divided from the whole society. A branch is cut off by another, but he that hates and is averse, cuts himself off from his neighbour, and knows not that at the same time he divides himself from the whole body, or corporation. But herein is the gift and mercy of God, the Author of this society, in that, once cut off we may grow together and become part of the whole again. But if this happen often the misery is that the further a man is run in this division, the harder he is to be reunited and restored again: and however the branch which, once cut of afterwards was grafted in, gardeners can tell you is not like that which sprouted together at first, and still continued in the unity of the body.

In today's English

A branch cut off from the branch next to it is necessarily cut off from the whole tree. In the same way, a person separated from another person is separated from the whole community. A branch is cut off by someone else, but the one who hates and turns away cuts himself off from his neighbor, and does not real-

ize that at the same time he separates himself from the whole body, the whole community. But here is the gift and mercy of God, the founder of this community: once cut off, we can grow back together and become part of the whole again. But if this happens often, the trouble is that the further someone goes in this separation, the harder he is to reunite and restore. And in any case, as gardeners will tell you, a branch that was cut off and later grafted back on is not like one that grew with the tree from the start and stayed one with the body.



Casaubon (1634)

To grow together like fellow branches in matter of good correspondence and affection; but not in matter of opinions. They that shall oppose thee in thy right courses, as it is not in their power to divert thee from thy good action, so neither let it be to divert thee from thy good affection towards them. But be it thy care to keep thyself constant in both; both in a right judgment and action, and in true meekness towards them, that either shall do their endeavour to hinder thee, or at least will be displeased with thee for what thou hast done. For to fail in either (either in the one to give over for fear, or in the other to forsake thy natural affection towards him, who by nature is both thy friend and thy kinsman) is equally base, and much savouring of the disposition of a cowardly fugitive

In today's English

Grow together like branches of one tree in goodwill and affection, but not in opinions. Those who oppose you when you are doing right cannot turn you from your good action, so do not let them turn you from your goodwill toward them either. Take care to stay steady in both: in right judgment and action, and in true gentleness toward those who try to stop you, or at least are displeased with you for what you have done. To fail in either, to give up out of fear in the one case, or in the other to abandon your natural affection for someone who is by nature your friend and relative, is equally shameful, and very much like the behavior of a cowardly deserter.

Casaubon (1634) · continued
soldier.



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Book XI · IX



Casaubon (1634)

It is not possible that any nature should be inferior unto art, since that all arts imitate nature. If this be so; that the most perfect and general nature of all natures should in her operation come short of the skill of arts, is most improbable. Now common is it to all arts, to make that which is worse for the better's sake. Much more then doth the common nature do the same. Hence is the first ground of justice. From justice all other virtues have their existence. For justice cannot be preserved, if either we settle our minds and affections upon worldly things; or be apt to be deceived, or rash, and inconstant.

In today's English

No nature can be inferior to art, since all arts imitate nature. If so, it is most unlikely that the most perfect and comprehensive

nature of all should fall short in its work of the skill of the arts. Now it is common to all arts to make what is worse for the sake of what is better. Much more, then, does the common nature do the same. This is the first foundation of justice, and all the other virtues come from justice. For justice cannot be kept if we set our minds and desires on worldly things, or are easily deceived, or rash and changeable.



Casaubon (1634)

The things themselves (which either to get or to avoid thou art put to so much trouble) come not unto thee themselves; but thou in a manner goest unto them. Let then thine own judgment and opinion concerning those things be at rest; and as for the things themselves, they stand still and quiet, without any noise or stir at all; and so shall all pursuing and flying cease.

In today's English

The things you go to such trouble to get or to avoid do not come to you by themselves; in a way, you go to them. So let your own judgment and opinion about them be at rest, and as for the things themselves, they stand still and quiet without any noise or fuss at all. And then all chasing and running away will stop.

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Book XI · XI



Casaubon (1634)

Then is the soul as Empedocles doth liken it, like unto a sphere or globe, when she is all of one form and figure: when she neither greedily stretcheth out herself unto anything, nor basely contracts herself, or lies flat and dejected; but shineth all with light, whereby she does see and behold the true nature, both that of the universe, and her own in particular.

In today's English

The soul is, as Empedocles compares it, like a sphere or globe when it is all of one form and shape: when it neither greedily stretches out toward anything nor shrinks back meanly, nor lies flat and dejected, but shines all over with light, by which it sees and looks at the true nature both of the universe and of itself.



Casaubon (1634)

Will any condemn me? let him look to that, upon what grounds he does it: my care shall be that I may never be found either doing or speaking anything that doth truly deserve contempt. Will any hate me? let him look to that. I for my part will be kind and loving unto all, and even unto him that hates me, whom-soever he be, will I be ready to show his error, not by way of exprobaton or ostentation of my patience, but ingenuously and meekly: such as was that famous Phocion, if so be that he did not dissemble. For it is inwardly that these things must be: that the Gods who look inwardly, and not upon the outward appearance, may behold a man truly free from all indignation and grief. For what hurt can it be unto thee whatsoever any man else doth, as long as thou mayest do that which is proper and suitable to thine own nature? Wilt not thou (a man wholly appointed to be both what, and as the common good shall re-

In today's English

Will someone look down on me? That is his concern, and on what grounds he does it. My concern will be never to be found doing or saying anything that truly deserves contempt. Will someone hate me? That is his concern. For my part, I will be kind and loving to everyone, and even to the one who hates me, whoever he is, I will be ready to show him his error, not as a reproach or to show off my patience, but honestly and gently, like the famous Phocion, if he was not pretending. For these things must be within, so that the gods, who look at the inside and not the outward appearance, can see a person truly free of all resentment and grief. What harm can it do you, whatever anyone else does, as long as you can do what is proper and suited to your own nature? Will you not, a person made entirely to be what the common good requires and in the way it requires, accept what is now timely for the nature of the universe?

Casaubon (1634) · continued

quire) accept of that which is now seasonable to
the nature of the universe?

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Book XI · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

They condemn one another, and yet they seek to please one another: and whilst they seek to surpass one another in worldly pomp and greatness, they most debase and prostitute themselves in their better part one to another.

In today's English

They look down on one another, and yet they try to please one another. And while they try to outdo one another in worldly show and greatness, they most degrade and prostitute their better part to one another.



Casaubon (1634)

How rotten and insincere is he, that saith, I am resolved to carry myself hereafter towards you with all ingenuity and simplicity. O man, what doest thou mean! what needs this profession of thine? the thing itself will show it. It ought to be written upon thy forehead. No sooner thy voice is heard, than thy countenance must be able to show what is in thy mind: even as he that is loved knows presently by the looks of his sweetheart what is in her mind. Such must he be for all the world, that is truly simple and good, as he whose arm-holes are offensive, that whosoever stands by, as soon as ever he comes near him, may as it were smell him whether he will or no. But the affectation of simplicity is nowise laudable. There is nothing more shameful than perfidious friendship.

In today's English

How rotten and insincere is the person who says, 'From now on I have decided to deal with you with complete honesty and simplicity.' Man, what do you mean? What need is there for this announcement? The thing itself will show it. It should be written on your forehead. As soon as your voice is heard, your face should be able to show what is in your mind, just as someone who is loved knows at once from the looks of his sweetheart what is in her mind. Someone who is truly simple and good must be, for all the world, like a person whose armpits smell, so that whoever stands nearby notices him, as it were, the moment he comes close, whether he wants to or not. But a show of simplicity is not praiseworthy at all. Nothing is more shameful than treacherous friendship.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

Above all things, that must be avoided. However true goodness, simplicity, and kindness cannot so be hidden, but that as we have already said in the very eyes and countenance they will show themselves.

In today's English · continued

Above all, avoid it. In any case, true goodness, simplicity, and kindness cannot be hidden; as we have already said, they show themselves in the eyes and face.



Casaubon (1634)

To live happily is an inward power of the soul, when she is affected with indifferency, towards those things that are by their nature indifferent. To be thus affected she must consider all worldly objects both divided and whole: remembering withal that no object can of itself beget any opinion in us, neither can come to us, but stands without still and quiet; but that we ourselves beget, and as it were print in ourselves opinions concerning them. Now it is in our power, not to print them; and if they creep in and lurk in some corner, it is in our power to wipe them off. Remembering moreover, that this care and circumspection of thine, is to continue but for a while, and then thy life will be at an end. And what should hinder, but that thou mayest do well with all these things? For if they be according to nature, rejoice in them, and let them be pleasing and acceptable unto thee. But if they be against nature, seek thou

In today's English

Living happily is an inner power of the soul, when it is indifferent toward the things that are by nature indifferent. To be this way it must consider every worldly object both in its parts and as a whole, remembering also that no object can by itself produce any opinion in us, nor can it come to us, but stands outside, still and quiet, and that it is we ourselves who produce and, as it were, stamp opinions about them on ourselves. And it is in our power not to stamp them, and if they creep in and hide in some corner, it is in our power to wipe them away. Remember too that this care and watchfulness will only last a little while, and then your life will be over. And what is to stop you from doing well with all these things? If they are according to nature, be glad of them, and let them be pleasing and welcome to you. If they are against nature, look for what is according to your own nature, and whether it brings you credit or

Casaubon (1634) · continued

that which is according to thine own nature, and whether it be for thy credit or no, use all possible speed for the attainment of it: for no man ought to be blamed, for seeking his own good and happiness.

In today's English · continued

not, hurry as fast as you can to reach it. No one should be blamed for seeking his own good and happiness.



Casaubon (1634)

Of everything thou must consider from whence it came, of what things it doth consist, and into what it will be changed: what will be the nature of it, or what it will be like unto when it is changed; and that it can suffer no hurt by this change. And as for other men's either foolishness or wickedness, that it may not trouble and grieve thee; first generally thus; What reference have I unto these? and that we are all born for one another's good: then more particularly after another consideration; as a ram is first in a flock of sheep, and a bull in a herd of cattle, so am I born to rule over them. Begin yet higher, even from this: if atoms be not the beginning of all things, than which to believe nothing can be more absurd, then must we needs grant that there is a nature, that doth govern the universe. If such a nature, then are all worse things made for the better's sake; and all better for one another's sake. Secondly, what manner of men they be, at board, and upon their beds, and so forth. But above all things, how they are forced by their opinions that they hold, to do what they do; and even those things that they do, with what pride and self-conceit they do them. Thirdly, that if they do these things rightly, thou hast no reason to be grieved. But if not rightly, it must needs be that they do them against their wills, and through mere ignorance. For as, according to Plato's opin-

In today's English

With everything, you must consider where it came from, what it is made of, and what it will change into: what its nature will be, or what it will be like, once it has changed, and that it can suffer no harm from this change. And so that other people's foolishness or wickedness does not trouble and grieve you, consider these points.

First, in general: what is my relation to these people? We are all born for each other's good. Then, more particularly from another angle: just as a ram leads a flock of sheep and a bull a herd of cattle, so I am born to lead them. Begin even higher, from this: if atoms are not the origin of all things, and nothing could be more absurd than to believe they are, then we must grant that there is a nature that governs the universe. If there is such a nature, then all lesser things are made for the sake of the better, and all better things for the sake of one another.

Second, what kind of people they are at the table, in bed, and so on. But above all, how they are compelled by the opinions they hold to do what they do, and with what pride and self-satisfaction they do even those things.

Third, that if they are doing these things rightly, you have no reason to be upset. But if not rightly, they must be doing them against their will and

Casaubon (1634) · continued

ion, no soul doth willingly err, so by consequent neither doth it anything otherwise than it ought, but against her will. Therefore are they grieved, whensoever they hear themselves charged, either of injustice, or unconscionableness, or covetousness, or in general, of any injurious kind of dealing towards their neighbours. Fourthly, that thou thyself doest transgress in many things, and art even such another as they are. And though perchance thou doest forbear the very act of some sins, yet hast thou in thyself an habitual disposition to them, but that either through fear, or vain-glory, or some such other ambitious foolish respect, thou art restrained. Fifthly, that whether they have sinned or no, thou doest not understand perfectly. For many things are done by way of discreet policy; and generally a man must know many things first, before he be able truly and judiciously to judge of another man's action. Sixthly, that whensoever thou doest take on grievously, or makest great woe, little doest thou remember then that a man's life is but for a moment of time, and that within a while we shall all be in our graves. Seventhly, that it is not the sins and transgressions themselves that trouble us properly; for they have their existence in their minds and understandings only, that commit them; but our own opinions concerning those sins. Remove then, and be content to part with that conceit of thine, that it is a grievous thing, and thou hast removed thine anger. But how should I remove it? How? reasoning with thyself that it is not shameful. For if that which is shameful, be not the only true evil that is, thou also wilt be driven whilst thou doest follow the common instinct of nature, to avoid that which is evil, to commit many unjust things, and to become a thief, and anything, that will make to the attainment of thy intended worldly ends. Eighthly, how many things may and do oftentimes follow upon such fits of anger and grief; far more grievous in themselves, than those very things which we are so grieved or angry for. Ninthly, that meekness is a thing unconquerable, if it be true and natural, and not affected or hypocritical. For how shall even the most fierce and malicious that thou shalt conceive, be able to hold on against thee, if thou shalt still continue meek and loving unto him; and that even at that time, when

In today's English · continued

out of plain ignorance. For as, in Plato's view, no soul goes wrong willingly, it follows that it never does anything other than it should except against its will. That is why they are hurt whenever they hear themselves accused of injustice, lack of conscience, greed, or in general any wrong dealing toward their neighbors.

Fourth, that you yourself go wrong in many things and are just like them. And even if perhaps you refrain from actually committing certain wrongs, you still have a settled inclination toward them, and are only held back by fear, vanity, or some other ambitious, foolish motive.

Fifth, that you do not fully understand whether they have done wrong or not. Many things are done as a matter of prudent strategy, and in general a person must know a great deal before he can truly and wisely judge someone else's action.

Sixth, that whenever you take things very hard or make a great fuss, you forget that a human life lasts only a moment, and that before long we will all be in our graves.

Seventh, that it is not their wrongs themselves that properly trouble us, since those exist only in the minds of the people who commit them, but our own opinions about those wrongs. So remove that notion of yours that it is something terrible, be content to let it go, and you have removed your anger. But how should I remove it? How? By reasoning with yourself that it is not shameful to you. For if what is shameful is not the only true evil, then you too, while following the common instinct of nature to avoid evil, will be driven to do many unjust things, to become a thief, and anything else that helps you reach your intended worldly goals.

Eighth, how many things can and often do follow from such fits of anger and grief, far worse in themselves than the very things we are so upset or angry about.

Ninth, that gentleness is unconquerable, if it is real and natural, not put on or hypocritical. How could even the fiercest and most spiteful person you can imagine keep it up against you, if you stay gentle and loving toward him, and even at the mo-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

he is about to do thee wrong, thou shalt be well disposed, and in good temper, with all meekness to teach him, and to instruct him better? As for example; My son, we were not born for this, to hurt and annoy one another; it will be thy hurt not mine, my son: and so to show him forcibly and fully, that it is so in very deed: and that neither bees do it one to another, nor any other creatures that are naturally sociable. But this thou must do, not scoffingly, not by way of exprobaton, but tenderly without any harshness of words. Neither must thou do it by way of exercise, or ostentation, that they that are by and hear thee, may admire thee: but so always that nobody be privy to it, but himself alone: yea, though there be more present at the same time. These nine particular heads, as so many gifts from the Muses, see that thou remember well: and begin one day, whilst thou art yet alive, to be a man indeed. But on the other side thou must take heed, as much to flatter them, as to be angry with them: for both are equally uncharitable, and equally hurtful. And in thy passions, take it presently to thy consideration, that to be angry is not the part of a man, but that to be meek and gentle, as it savours of more humanity, so of more manhood. That in this, there is strength and nerves, or vigour and fortitude: whereof anger and indignation is altogether void. For the nearer everything is unto unpassionateness, the nearer it is unto power. And as grief doth proceed from weakness, so doth anger. For both, both he that is angry and that grieveth, have received a wound, and cowardly have as it were yielded themselves unto their affections. If thou wilt have a tenth also, receive this tenth gift from Hercules the guide and leader of the Muses: that is a mad man's part, to look that there should be no wicked men in the world, because it is impossible. Now for a man to brook well enough, that there should be wicked men in the world, but not to endure that any should transgress against himself, is against all equity, and indeed tyrannical.

In today's English · continued

ment he is about to wrong you, you are well disposed and calm, ready gently to teach and correct him? For example: 'My son, we were not born for this, to hurt and trouble one another. It will harm you, not me, my son.' And so show him firmly and fully that this is really so, and that neither bees do this to one another nor any other naturally social creatures. But you must do this not mockingly, not as a reproach, but tenderly, without harsh words. Nor should you do it as a performance or to show off, so that those standing by and listening may admire you, but always so that no one else is aware of it except him alone, even if others are present at the time.

Remember these nine headings well, as gifts from the Muses, and begin one day, while you are still alive, to be truly a human being. But on the other hand, be just as careful not to flatter people as not to be angry with them, since both are equally unloving and equally harmful. And in your passions, consider right away that being angry is not manly, but that being gentle and mild, as it is more humane, is also more manly. In this there is strength, sinew, vigor, and courage, which anger and resentment completely lack. The closer something is to freedom from passion, the closer it is to power. And just as grief comes from weakness, so does anger. Both the angry person and the grieving person have been wounded and have, as it were, cowardly given in to their feelings.

If you want a tenth as well, take this tenth gift from Hercules, the guide and leader of the Muses: it is madness to expect that there should be no wicked people in the world, because that is impossible. And to accept well enough that there should be wicked people in the world, but not to tolerate any of them wronging you, is against all fairness, and indeed tyrannical.



Casaubon (1634)

Four several dispositions or inclinations there be of the mind and understanding, which to be aware of, thou must carefully observe: and whensoever thou doest discover them, thou must rectify them, saying to thyself concerning every one of them, This imagination is not necessary; this is uncharitable: this thou shalt speak as another man's slave, or instrument; than which nothing can be more senseless and absurd: for the fourth, thou shalt sharply check and upbraid thyself; for that thou doest suffer that more divine part in thee, to become subject and obnoxious to that more ignoble part of thy body, and the gross lusts and concupiscences thereof.

In today's English

There are four tendencies of the mind that you must watch for carefully, and whenever you discover them, correct them, saying to yourself about each one: This idea is not necessary. This one is unloving. This one you would be saying as someone else's slave or tool, and nothing could be more senseless and absurd than that. For the fourth, scold and reproach yourself sharply, because you are letting the more divine part of you become subject to the baser part, your body, and its gross lusts and cravings.



Casaubon (1634)

What portion soever, either of air or fire there be in thee, although by nature it tend upwards, submitting nevertheless to the ordinance of the universe, it abides here below in this mixed body. So whatsoever is in thee, either earthy, or humid, although by nature it tend downwards, yet is it against its nature both raised upwards, and standing, or consistent. So obedient are even the elements themselves to the universe, abiding patiently wheresoever (though against their nature) they are placed, until the sound as it were of their retreat, and separation. Is it not a grievous thing then, that thy reasonable part only should be disobedient, and should not endure to keep its place: yea though it be nothing enjoined that is contrary unto it, but that only which is according to its nature? For we cannot say of it when it is disobedi-

ent, as we say of the fire, or air, that it tends upwards towards its proper element, for then goes it the quite contrary way. For the motion of the mind to any injustice, or incontinency, or to sorrow, or to fear, is nothing else but a separation from nature. Also when the mind is grieved for anything that is happened by the divine providence, then doth it likewise forsake its own place. For it was ordained unto holiness and godliness, which specially consist in an humble submission to God and His providence in all things; as well as unto justice: these also being part of those duties, which as naturally sociable, we are bound unto; and without which we cannot happily converse one with another: yea and the very ground and fountain indeed of all just actions.

In today's English

Whatever portion of air or fire there is in you, although by nature it tends upward, still submits to the order of the universe and stays down here in this mixed body. Likewise, whatever is earthy or watery in you, although by nature it tends downward, is still raised up and stands firm, against its nature. So obedient are even the elements to the universe, staying patiently wherever they are placed, even against their nature, until the signal, as it were, for their retreat and separation is sounded. Isn't it a terrible thing, then, that your rational part alone should be disobedient and refuse to keep its place, even though nothing contrary to it is required of it, only what is according to its nature?

We cannot say of it, when it disobeys, what we say of fire or air, that it is moving upward toward its proper element, because then it is going the opposite way entirely. For the movement of the mind toward injustice, self-indulgence, sorrow, or fear is nothing but a separation from nature. And when the mind is upset about something that has happened by divine providence, it also abandons its own place. For it was made for holiness and godliness, which consist especially in humble submission to God and His providence in all things, as well as for justice. These too are part of the duties we are bound to as naturally social creatures. Without them we cannot live happily together, and they are indeed the very ground and source of all just actions.



Casaubon (1634)

He that hath not one and the self-same general end always as long as he liveth, cannot possibly be one and the self-same man always. But this will not suffice except thou add also what ought to be this general end. For as the general conceit and apprehension of all those things which upon no certain ground are by the greater part of men deemed good, cannot be uniform and agreeable, but that only which is limited and restrained by some certain proprieties and conditions, as of community: that nothing be conceived good, which is not commonly and publicly good: so must the end also that we propose unto ourselves, be common and sociable. For he that doth direct all his own private motions and purposes to that end, all his actions will be agreeable and uniform; and by that means will be still the same man.

In today's English

Someone who does not have one and the same overall aim throughout his life cannot possibly be one and the same person throughout. But that is not enough unless you add what that overall aim should be. Consider: people's general ideas about all the things that most of them, on no sure basis, consider good cannot be consistent and in agreement; only the idea that is limited by certain conditions can be, namely the condition of community: that nothing be counted good that is not good for all and for the public. In the same way, the aim we set ourselves must be common and social. Whoever directs all his own private impulses and purposes toward that aim will have actions that are consistent and uniform, and in this way he will always be the same person.



Casaubon (1634)

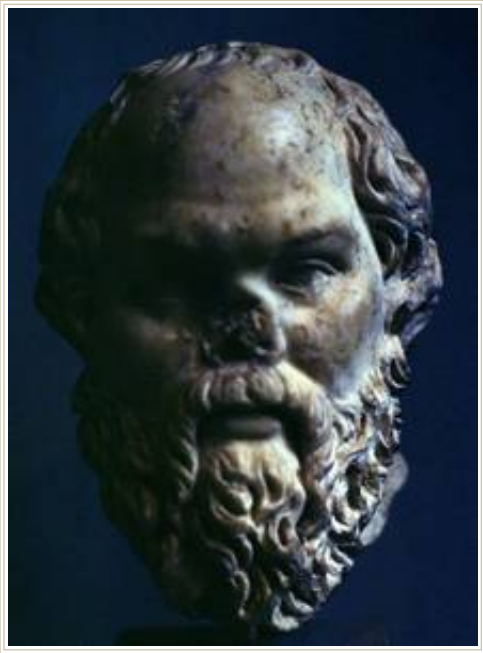
Remember the fable of the country mouse and the city mouse, and the great fright and terror that this was put into.

In today's English

Remember the fable of the country mouse and the city mouse, and the great fright and panic the country mouse was thrown into.

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Book XI · XXI



Casaubon (1634)

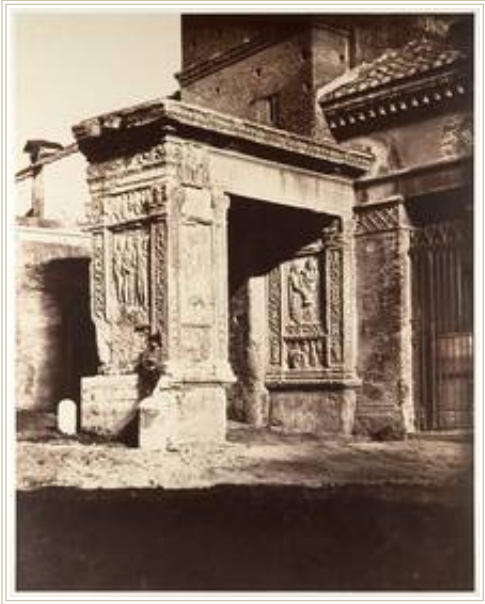
Socrates was wont to call the common conceits and opinions of men, the common bugbears of the world: the proper terror of silly children.

In today's English

Socrates used to call people's common notions and opinions the world's common bogeymen, the kind of thing that frightens silly children.

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Book XI · XXII



Casaubon (1634)

The Lacedæmonians at their public spectacles were wont to appoint seats and forms for their strangers in the shadow, they themselves were content to sit anywhere.

In today's English

At their public shows, the Spartans used to set aside seats for foreign visitors in the shade, while they themselves were content to sit anywhere.

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Book XI · XXIII



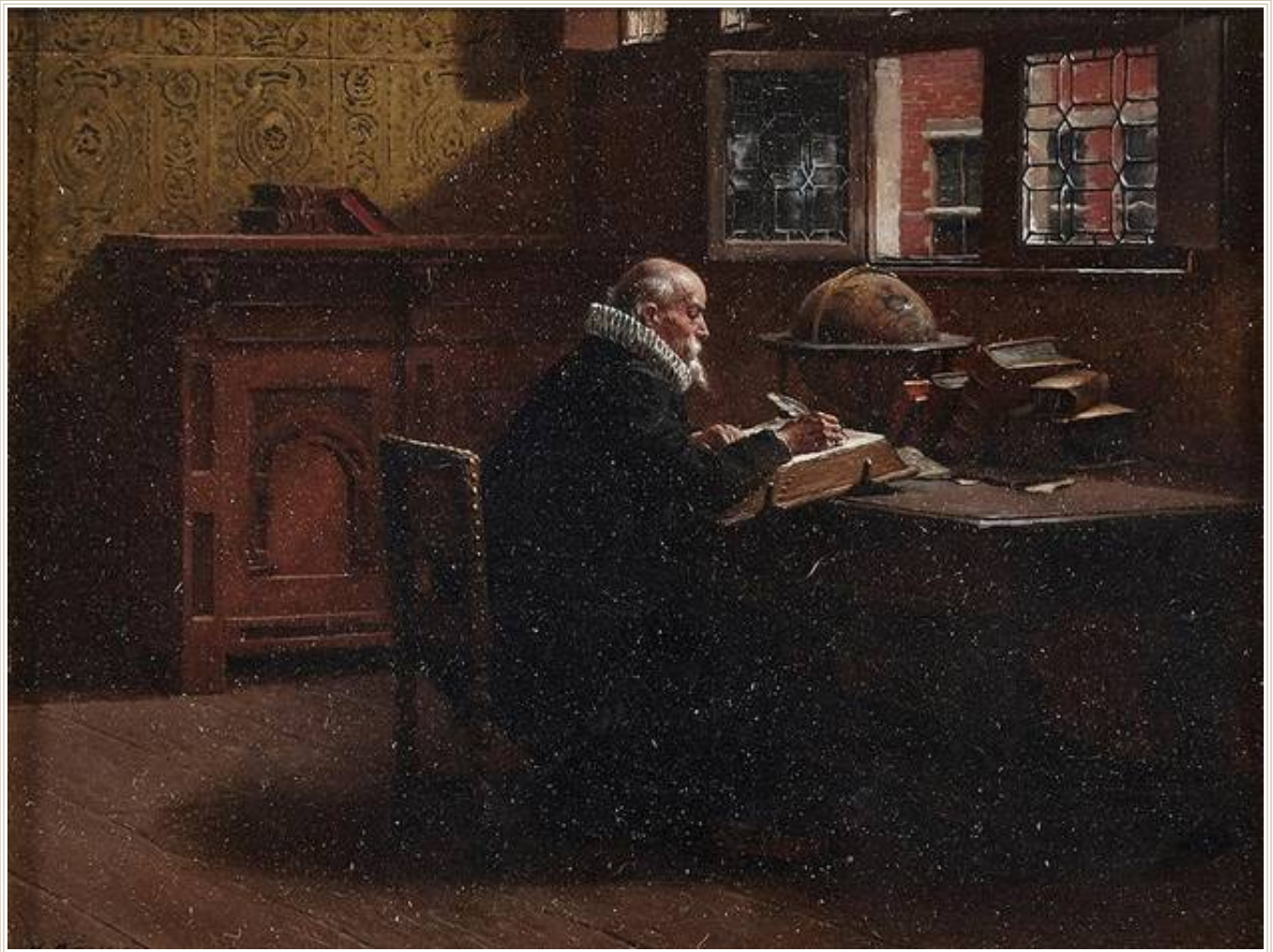
Casaubon (1634)

What Socrates answered unto Perdiccas, why he did not come unto him, Lest of all deaths I should die the worst kind of death, said he: that is, not able to requite the good that hath been done unto me.

In today's English

Remember what Socrates answered Perdiccas when asked why he would not come to him: 'So that I may not die the worst kind of death,' he said, meaning being unable to repay the good done to him.

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Book XI · XXIV



Casaubon (1634)

In the ancient mystical letters of the Ephesians, there was an item, that a man should always have in his mind some one or other of the ancient worthies.

In today's English

In the ancient sacred writings of the Ephesians there was a rule that a person should always keep in mind one or another of the great people of the past.



Casaubon (1634)

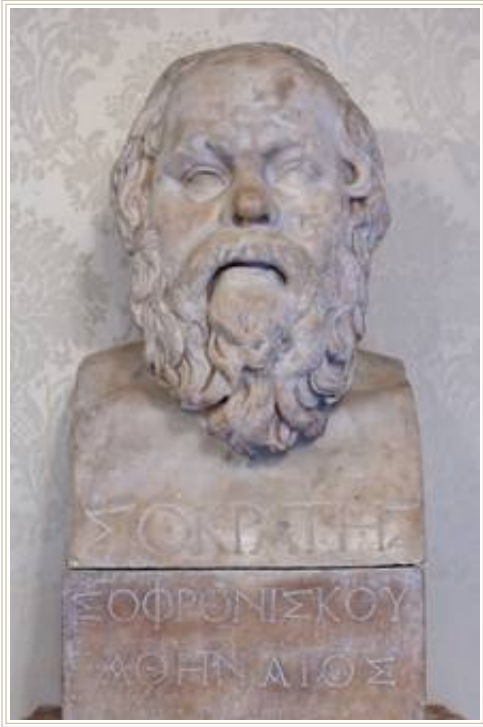
The Pythagoreans were wont betimes in the morning the first thing they did, to look up unto the heavens, to put themselves in mind of them who constantly and invariably did perform their task: as also to put themselves in mind of orderliness, or good order, and of purity, and of naked simplicity. For no star or planet hath any cover before it.

In today's English

The Pythagoreans used to make it the first thing they did early in the morning to look up at the heavens, to remind themselves of those beings who always and unfailingly carry out their task, and also to remind themselves of order, of purity, and of bare simplicity. For no star or planet has any covering in front of it.

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Book XI · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

How Socrates looked, when he was fain to gird himself with a skin, Xanthippe his wife having taken away his clothes, and carried them abroad with her, and what he said to his fellows and friends, who were ashamed; and out of respect to him, did retire themselves when they saw him thus decked.

In today's English

Think how Socrates looked when he had to wrap himself in an animal skin, after his wife Xanthippe had taken his clothes and gone out with them, and what he said to his companions and friends who were embarrassed and, out of respect for him, withdrew when they saw him dressed like that.



Casaubon (1634)

In matter of writing or reading thou must needs be taught before thou can do either: much more in matter of life. 'For thou art born a mere slave, to thy senses and brutish affections;' destitute without teaching of all true knowledge and sound reason.

In today's English

In writing or reading you must be taught before you can do either. Much more so in living. 'For you are born a mere slave to your senses and animal passions,' lacking, without teaching, all true knowledge and sound reason.

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Book XI · XXVIII



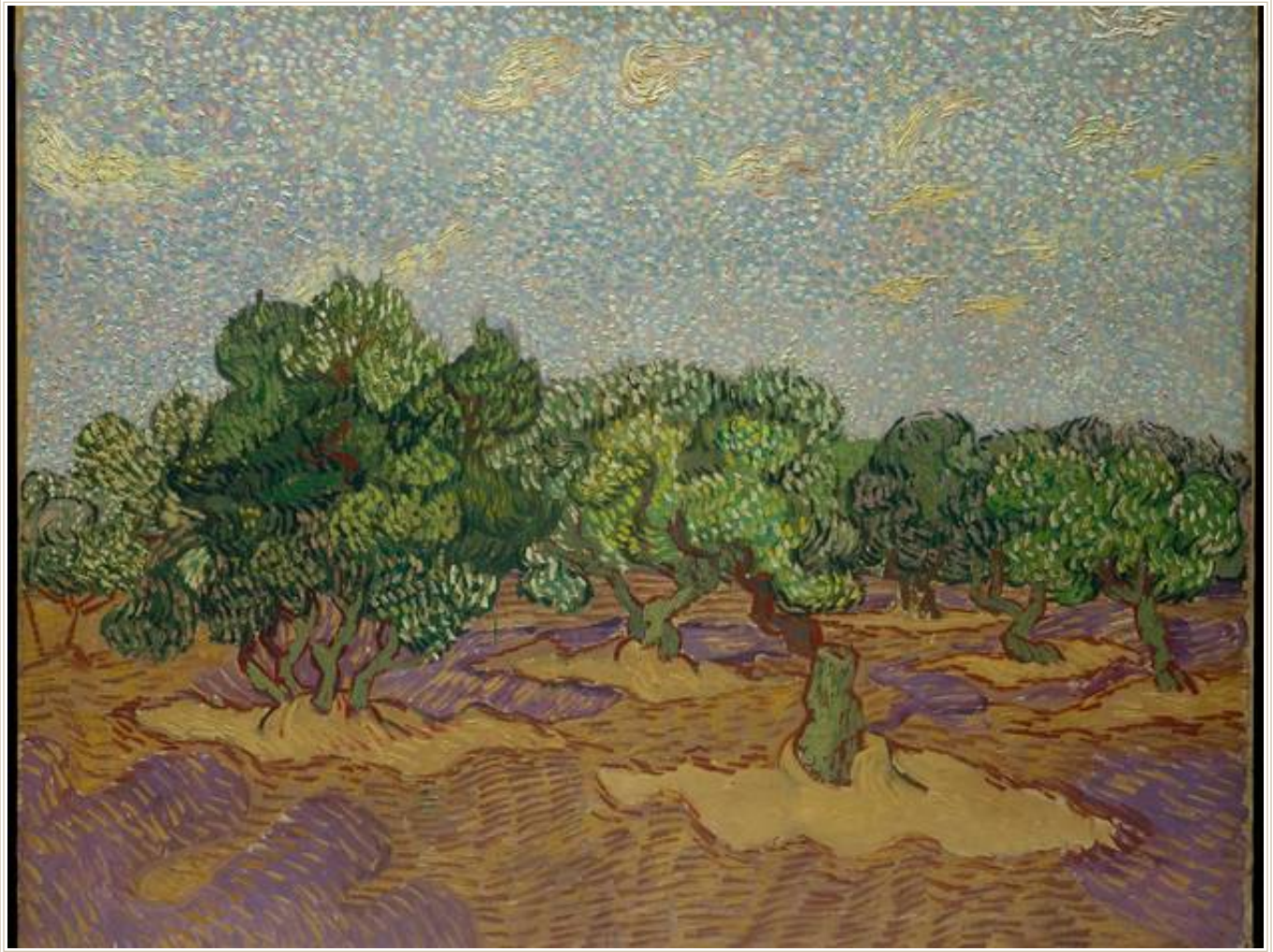
Casaubon (1634)

'My heart smiled within me.' 'They will accuse even virtue herself; with heinous and opprobrious words.'

In today's English

'My heart smiled within me.' 'They will accuse even virtue herself with vile and insulting words.'

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Book XI · XXIX



Casaubon (1634)

As they that long after figs in winter when they cannot be had; so are they that long after children, before they be granted them.

In today's English

Those who long for children before they are given them are like people who long for figs in winter, when they cannot be had.

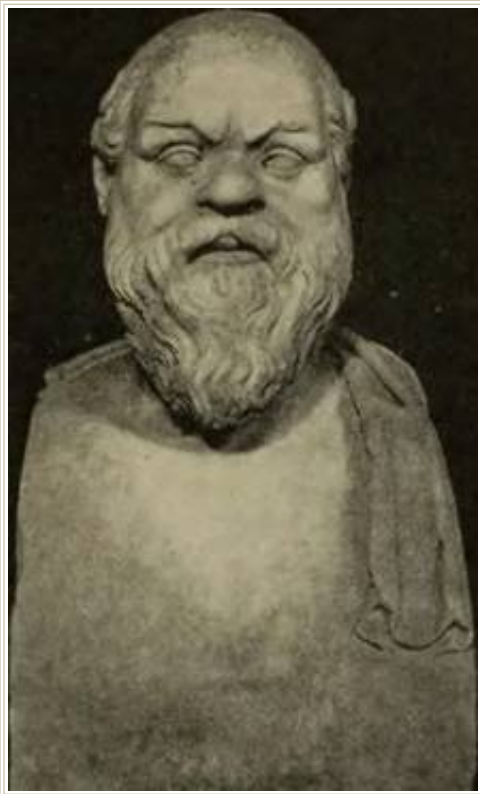


Casaubon (1634)

'As often as a father kisseth his child, he should say secretly with himself' (said Epictetus,) 'tomorrow perchance shall he die.' But these words be ominous. No words ominous (said he) that signify anything that is natural: in very truth and deed not more ominous than this, 'to cut down grapes when they are ripe.' Green grapes, ripe grapes, dried grapes, or raisins: so many changes and mutations of one thing, not into that which was not absolutely, but rather so many several changes and mutations, not into that which hath no being at all, but into that which is not yet in being.

In today's English

'Whenever a father kisses his child,' said Epictetus, 'he should say quietly to himself: Tomorrow perhaps he will die.' But these words are ill-omened. No words that point to something natural are ill-omened, he said; in truth they are no more ill-omened than 'harvesting grapes when they are ripe.' Green grapes, ripe grapes, dried grapes or raisins: so many changes of one thing, not into what has no being at all, but into what does not yet exist.



Casaubon (1634)

'Of the free will there is no thief or robber:' out of Epictetus; Whose is this also: that we should find a certain art and method of assenting; and that we should always observe with great care and heed the inclinations of our minds, that they may always be with their due restraint and reservation, always charitable, and according to the true worth of every present object. And as for earnest longing, that we should altogether avoid it: and to use averseness in those things only, that wholly depend of our own wills. It is not about ordinary petty matters, believe it, that all our strife and contention is, but whether, with the vulgar, we should be mad, or by the help of philosophy wise and sober, said he. XXXII. Socrates said, 'What will you have? the souls of reasonable, or unreasonable creatures? Of reasonable. But what? Of those whose reason is sound and perfect? or of those whose reason is vitiated and corrupted? Of those whose reason is sound and perfect. Why then labour ye not for such? Because we have them already. What then do ye so strive and contend between you?'

In today's English

'No one can steal or rob you of your free will,' from Epictetus. He also said this: we should find a certain art and method of assenting, and we should always watch the impulses of our minds with great care, so that they always come with proper restraint and reservation, always considerate of others, and in line with the true worth of each thing in front of us. As for intense craving, we should avoid it entirely, and feel aversion only toward things that depend entirely on our own will. 'Believe me,' he said, 'our whole struggle is not about ordinary trivial matters, but about whether we will be mad like the crowd, or wise and sober with the help of philosophy.'

XXXII. Socrates said: 'What do you want? The souls of rational creatures or of non-rational ones?' 'Of rational ones.' 'But which? Those whose reason is sound and complete, or those whose reason is flawed and corrupted?' 'Those whose reason is sound and complete.' 'Then why don't you work to get them?' 'Because we have them already.' 'Then why are you always fighting and quarreling with one another?'



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever thou doest hereafter aspire unto, thou mayest even now enjoy and possess, if thou doest not envy thyself thine own happiness. And that will be, if thou shalt forget all that is past, and for the future, refer thyself wholly to the Divine Providence, and shalt bend and apply all thy present thoughts and intentions to holiness and righteousness. To holiness, in accepting willingly whatsoever is sent by the Divine Providence, as being that which the nature of the universe hath appointed unto thee, which also hath appointed thee for that, whatsoever it be. To righteousness, in speaking the truth freely, and without ambiguity; and in doing all things justly and discreetly. Now in this good course, let not other men's either wickedness, or opinion, or voice hinder thee: no, nor the sense of this thy pampered mass of flesh: for let that which suffers, look to itself. If therefore whensoever the time of thy departing shall come, thou shalt readily leave all things, and shalt respect thy mind only, and that divine part of thine, and this shall be thine only fear, not that some time or other thou shalt cease to live, but thou shalt never begin to live according to nature: then shalt thou be a man indeed, worthy of that world, from which thou hadst thy beginning; then shalt thou cease to be a stranger in thy country, and to wonder at those things that happen daily,

In today's English

Whatever you hope to reach in the future, you can enjoy and have right now, if you do not begrudge yourself your own happiness. That will happen if you forget everything past, leave the future entirely to Divine Providence, and direct all your present thoughts and intentions to holiness and righteousness. To holiness, by willingly accepting whatever Divine Providence sends, as what the nature of the universe has assigned to you, and which has also assigned you to it, whatever it may be. To righteousness, by speaking the truth freely and without ambiguity, and by doing everything justly and wisely. And on this good path, do not let other people's wickedness, opinions, or talk get in your way, nor even the feelings of this pampered lump of flesh of yours: let the part that suffers look after itself. So if, whenever the time comes for you to leave, you let go of everything readily and care only for your mind and that divine part of you, and your only fear is not that you will someday stop living, but that you will never begin to live according to nature, then you will truly be a human being, worthy of the world you came from. Then you will no longer be a stranger in your own country, amazed at everyday events as if they were strange and unexpected, and anxiously dependent on all sorts of things outside your control.

Casaubon (1634) · continued

as things strange and unexpected, and anxiously
to depend of divers things that are not in thy power.



Casaubon (1634)

God beholds our minds and understandings, bare and naked from these material vessels, and out-sides, and all earthly dross. For with His simple and pure understanding, He pierceth into our inmost and purest parts, which from His, as it were by a water pipe and channel, first flowed and issued. This if thou also shalt use to do, thou shalt rid thyself of that manifold luggage, wherewith thou art round about encumbered. For he that does regard neither his body, nor his clothing, nor his dwelling, nor any such external furniture, must needs gain unto himself great rest and ease. Three things there be in all, which thou doest consist of; thy body, thy life, and thy mind. Of these the two former, are so far forth thine, as that thou art bound to take care for them. But the third alone is that which is properly thine. If then thou shalt separate from thyself, that is from thy mind, whatsoever other men either do or say, or whatso-

In today's English

God sees our minds bare and naked, stripped of these material vessels and outer coverings and all earthly dross. With His simple and pure understanding He reaches into our innermost and purest parts, which first flowed out from His own, as if through a water pipe and channel. If you make a habit of doing the same, you will free yourself of the great load of baggage that weighs you down on every side. Someone who pays no attention to his body, his clothes, his house, or any such outward equipment must gain great rest and ease.

There are three things in all that you are made of: your body, your life, and your mind. The first two are yours to the extent that you are bound to take care of them. But only the third is properly yours. So separate from yourself, that is, from your mind, whatever other people do or say, whatever you yourself have done or said before, all trou-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

ever thou thyself hast heretofore either done or said; and all troublesome thoughts concerning the future, and whatsoever, (as either belonging to thy body or life:) is without the jurisdiction of thine own will, and whatsoever in the ordinary course of human chances and accidents doth happen unto thee; so that thy mind (keeping herself loose and free from all outward coincidental entanglements; always in a readiness to depart:) shall live by herself, and to herself, doing that which is just, accepting whatsoever doth happen, and speaking the truth always; if, I say, thou shalt separate from thy mind, whatsoever by sympathy might adhere unto it, and all time both past and future, and shalt make thyself in all points and respects, like unto Empedocles his allegorical sphere, 'all round and circular,' &c., and shalt think of no longer life than that which is now present: then shalt thou be truly able to pass the remainder of thy days without troubles and distractions; nobly and generously disposed, and in good favour and correspondency, with that spirit which is within thee.

In today's English · continued

bling thoughts about the future, whatever belongs to your body or life and lies outside the control of your own will, and whatever happens to you in the ordinary course of human chances and accidents. Then your mind, keeping itself loose and free of all outside entanglements and always ready to leave, will live by itself and for itself, doing what is just, accepting whatever happens, and always speaking the truth. If, I say, you separate from your mind whatever might cling to it through attachment, along with all time past and future, and make yourself in every respect like Empedocles' allegorical sphere, 'all round and circular,' and so on, and think of no longer life than the one present now, then you will truly be able to spend the rest of your days without troubles and distractions, with a noble and generous disposition, and on good terms with the spirit within you.



Casaubon (1634)

I have often wondered how it should come to pass, that every man loving himself best, should more regard other men's opinions concerning himself than his own. For if any God or grave master standing by, should command any of us to think nothing by himself but what he should presently speak out; no man were able to endure it, though but for one day. Thus do we fear more what our neighbours will think of us, than what we ourselves.

In today's English

I have often wondered how it happens that every person loves himself most, and yet cares more about other people's opinions of him than his own. If some god or wise teacher stood beside any of us and ordered him to think nothing to himself that he would not immediately say out loud, no one could stand it, even for a single day. So we fear what our neighbors will think of us more than what we think of ourselves.



Casaubon (1634)

how come it to pass that the Gods having ordered all other things so well and so lovingly, should be overseen in this one only thing, that whereas then hath been some very good men that have made many covenants as it were with God and by many holy actions and outward services contracted a kind of familiarity with Him; that these men when once they are dead, should never be restored to life, but be extinct for ever. But this thou mayest be sure of, that this (if it be so indeed) would never have been so ordered by the Gods, had it been fit otherwise. For certainly it was possible, had it been more just so and had it been according to nature, the nature of the universe would easily have borne it. But now because it is not so, (if so be that it be not so indeed) be therefore confident that it was not fit it should be so for thou seest thyself,

that now seeking after this matter, how freely thou doest argue and contest with God. But were not the Gods both just and good in the highest degree, thou durst not thus reason with them. Now if just and good, it could not be that in the creation of the world, they should either unjustly or unreasonably oversee anything.

In today's English

How can it be that the gods, who have arranged everything else so well and so lovingly, overlooked this one thing: that some very good people, who have made many covenants with God, so to speak, and through many holy acts and outward services formed a kind of closeness with Him, should never be brought back to life once they are dead, but be gone forever? But you can be sure of this: if it really is so, the gods would never have arranged it that way if it had been fitting otherwise. It certainly was possible, and if it had been more just and according to nature, the nature of the universe would easily have allowed it. Since it is not so, if indeed it is not, be confident that it was not fitting that it should be. You see for yourself, in raising this question, how freely you argue and dispute with God. But if the gods were not just and good in the highest degree, you would not dare to reason with them like this. And if they are just and good, they could not have overlooked anything unjustly or unreasonably in making the world.

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Book XII · V



Casaubon (1634)

Use thyself even unto those things that thou doest at first despair of. For the left hand we see, which for the most part lieth idle because not used; yet doth it hold the bridle with more strength than the right, because it hath been used unto it.

In today's English

Practice even the things you at first despair of being able to do. We see that the left hand, which mostly sits idle because it is not used, still holds the reins more strongly than the right, because it has been trained to do so.



Casaubon (1634)

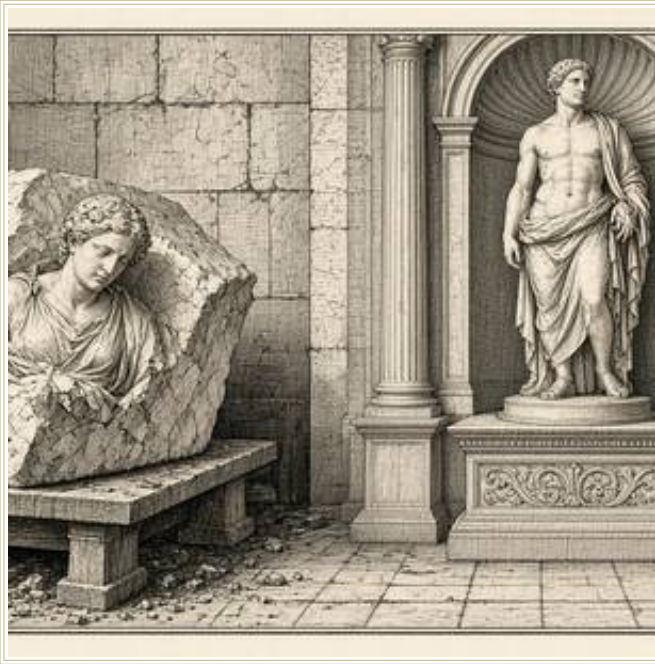
Let these be the objects of thy ordinary meditation: to consider, what manner of men both for soul and body we ought to be, whensoever death shall surprise us: the shortness of this our mortal life: the immense vastness of the time that hath been before, and will be after us: the frailty of every worldly material object: all these things to consider, and behold clearly in themselves, all disguise of external outside being removed and taken away. Again, to consider the efficient causes of all things: the proper ends and references of all actions: what pain is in itself; what pleasure, what death: what fame or honour, how every man is the true and proper ground of his own rest and tranquillity, and that no man can truly be hindered by any other: that all is but conceit and opinion. As for the use of thy dogmata, thou must carry thyself in the practice of them, rather like unto a pancratiastes, or one that at the same time both fights and wrestles with hands and feet, than a gladiator. For this, if he lose his sword that he fights with, he is gone: whereas the other hath still his hand free, which he may easily turn and manage at his will.

In today's English

Let these be the subjects of your regular reflection: what kind of people, in soul and body, we should be whenever death catches us; the shortness of this mortal life; the immense vastness of time before us and after us; the frailty of every material thing in the world. Consider all these and look at them clearly as they are, with every outer disguise removed and taken away. Consider also the causes that produce all things; the proper aims and purposes of all actions; what pain is in itself, what pleasure is, what death is, what fame or honor is; how each person is the true and proper source of his own rest and peace, and that no one can truly be hindered by anyone else; that it is all a matter of notion and opinion. As for using your dogmata (principles), you should handle yourself in practicing them more like a pancratiast, one who fights and wrestles with hands and feet at once, than like a gladiator. For the gladiator, if he loses the sword he fights with, is finished, while the other always has his hand free, which he can easily turn and use as he likes.

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Book XII · VII

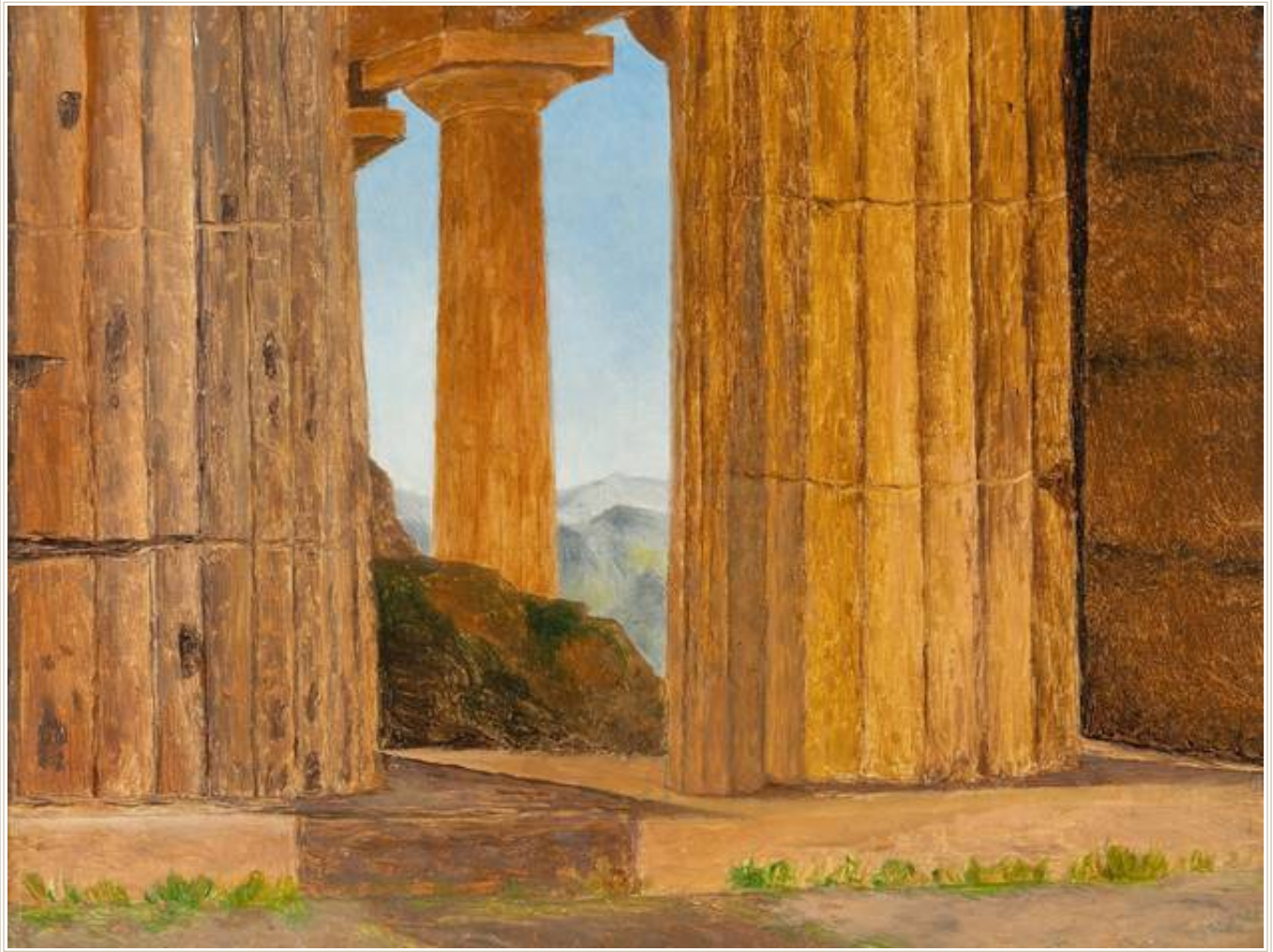


Casaubon (1634)

All worldly things thou must behold and consider,
dividing them into matter, form, and reference, or
their proper end.

In today's English

Look at and consider all worldly things by dividing
them into matter, form, and reference, that is,
their proper purpose.



Casaubon (1634)

How happy is man in this his power that hath been granted unto him: that he needs not do anything but what God shall approve, and that he may embrace contentedly, whatsoever God doth send unto him?

In today's English

How fortunate a human being is in the power he has been given: he need do nothing except what God will approve, and he can contentedly embrace whatever God sends him.



Casaubon (1634)

Whatsoever doth happen in the ordinary course and consequence of natural events, neither the Gods, (for it is not possible, that they either wittingly or unwittingly should do anything amiss) nor men, (for it is through ignorance, and therefore against their wills that they do anything amiss) must be accused. None then must be accused.

In today's English

For whatever happens in the ordinary course and sequence of natural events, we must not blame the gods, since they cannot do anything wrong, either knowingly or unknowingly, nor people, since whatever wrong they do is done through ignorance and so against their will. So no one is to be blamed.



Casaubon (1634)

How ridiculous and strange is he, that wonders at anything that happens in this life in the ordinary course of nature!

In today's English

How ridiculous and odd is the person who is amazed at anything that happens in this life in the ordinary course of nature!



Casaubon (1634)

Either fate, (and that either an absolute necessity, and unavoidable decree; or a placable and flexible Providence) or all is a mere casual confusion, void of all order and government. If an absolute and unavoidable necessity, why doest thou resist? If a placable and exorable Providence, make thyself worthy of the divine help and assistance. If all be a mere confusion without any moderator, or governor, then hast thou reason to congratulate thyself; that in such a general flood of confusion thou thyself hast obtained a reasonable faculty, whereby thou mayest govern thine own life and actions. But if thou beest carried away with the flood, it must be thy body perchance, or thy life, or some other thing that belongs unto them that is carried away: thy mind and understanding cannot. Or

In today's English

Either there is fate, and that is either an absolute necessity and unavoidable decree, or a Providence that can be appeased and moved; or everything is a mere random confusion with no order or government. If it is absolute, unavoidable necessity, why do you resist? If it is a Providence that can be appeased and moved by prayer, make yourself worthy of divine help and support. If it is all confusion without any ruler or governor, then you have reason to congratulate yourself that, in such a general flood of confusion, you yourself have been given a rational faculty with which you can govern your own life and actions. And if you are carried away by the flood, it may be your body, or your life, or something else belonging to them that is carried away; your mind and understand-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

should it be so, that the light of a candle indeed is still bright and lightsome until it be put out: and should truth, and righteousness, and temperance cease to shine in thee whilst thou thyself hast any being?

In today's English · continued

ing cannot be. Or should it be that a candle's light stays bright and shining until it is put out, and yet truth, righteousness, and self-control stop shining in you while you yourself still exist?



Casaubon (1634)

At the conceit and apprehension that such and such a one hath sinned, thus reason with thyself; What do I know whether this be a sin indeed, as it seems to be? But if it be, what do I know but that he himself hath already condemned himself for it? And that is all one as if a man should scratch and tear his own face, an object of compassion rather than of anger. Again, that he that would not have a vicious man to sin, is like unto him that would not have moisture in the fig, nor children to welp nor a horse to neigh, nor anything else that in the course of nature is necessary. For what shall he do that hath such an habit? If thou therefore beest powerful and eloquent, remedy it if thou canst.

In today's English

When you get the impression that so-and-so has done wrong, reason with yourself like this: How do I know whether this is really wrong, as it seems? And if it is, how do I know he has not already condemned himself for it? That is just like someone scratching and tearing at his own face, a reason for pity rather than anger. Again, wanting a wicked person not to do wrong is like wanting a fig to have no juice, children not to cry, a horse not to neigh, or anything else not to happen that is necessary in the course of nature. What else can someone with such a settled habit do? So if you are capable and persuasive, cure it if you can.

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Book XII · XIII



Casaubon (1634)

If it be not fitting, do it not. If it be not true, speak it not. Ever maintain thine own purpose and resolution free from all compulsion and necessity.

In today's English

If it is not fitting, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it. Always keep your own purpose and resolve free from all compulsion and necessity.

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Book XII · XIV



Casaubon (1634)

Of everything that presents itself unto thee, to consider what the true nature of it is, and to unfold it, as it were, by dividing it into that which is formal: that which is material: the true use or end of it, and the just time that it is appointed to last.

In today's English

With everything that comes before you, consider what its true nature is, and unfold it, as it were, by dividing it into its form, its matter, its true use or purpose, and the proper length of time it is meant to last.



Casaubon (1634)

It is high time for thee, to understand that there is somewhat in thee, better and more divine than either thy passions, or thy sensual appetites and affections. What is now the object of my mind, is it fear, or suspicion, or lust, or any such thing? To do nothing rashly without some certain end; let that be thy first care. The next, to have no other end than the common good. For, alas! yet a little while, and thou art no more: no more will any, either of those things that now thou seest, or of those men that now are living, be any more. For all things are by nature appointed soon to be changed, turned, and corrupted, that other things might succeed in their room.

In today's English

It is high time you understood that there is something in you better and more divine than your passions or your bodily appetites and feelings. What is my mind occupied with now? Is it fear, or suspicion, or lust, or anything like that? Let your first care be to do nothing rashly, without some definite aim. The next, to have no aim other than the common good. For, alas, a little while longer and you will be no more, and none of the things you now see, and none of the people now living, will exist any longer. Everything is made by nature to be soon changed, transformed, and decayed, so that other things can take its place.

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Book XII · XVI

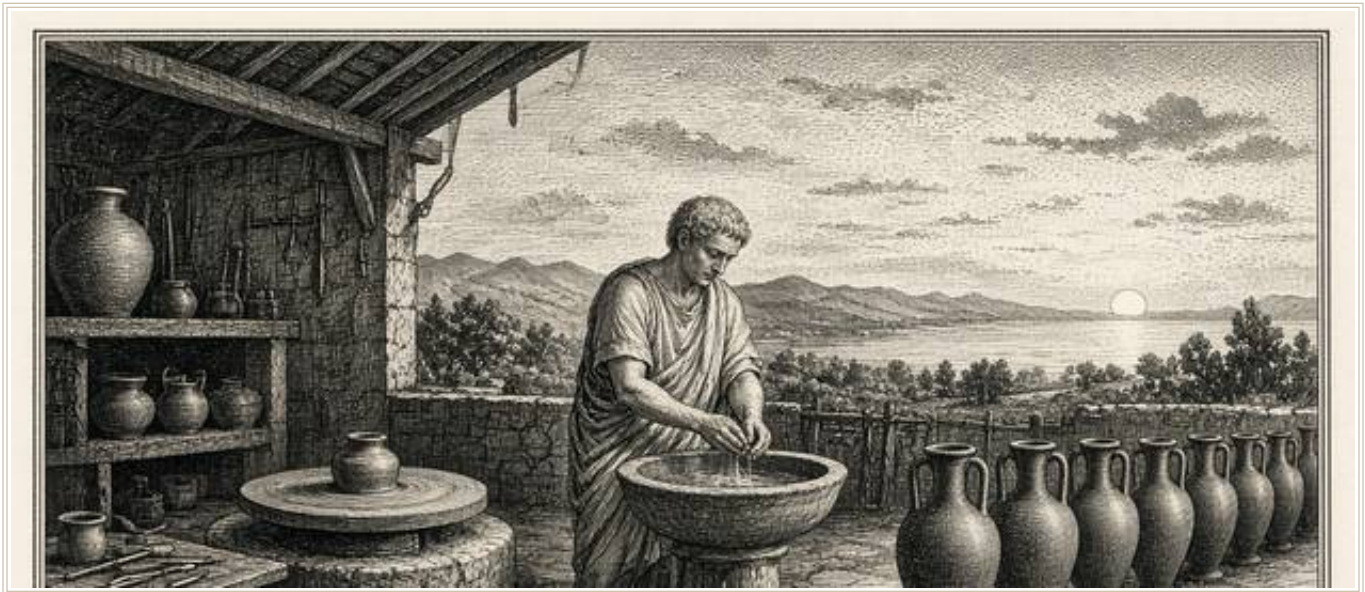


Casaubon (1634)

Remember that all is but opinion, and all opinion depends of the mind. Take thine opinion away, and then as a ship that hath stricken in within the arms and mouth of the harbour, a present calm; all things safe and steady: a bay, not capable of any storms and tempests: as the poet hath it.

In today's English

Remember that everything is opinion, and all opinion depends on the mind. Take away your opinion, and then, like a ship that has come within the arms and mouth of the harbor, there is instant calm, everything safe and steady: 'a bay that no storm or tempest can reach,' as the poet puts it.



Casaubon (1634)

No operation whatsoever it he, ceasing for a while, can be truly said to suffer any evil, because it is at an end. Neither can he that is the author of that operation; for this very respect, because his operation is at an end, be said to suffer any evil. Likewise then, neither can the whole body of all our actions (which is our life) if in time it cease, be said to suffer any evil for this very reason, because it is at an end; nor he truly be said to have been ill affected, that did put a period to this series of actions. Now this time or certain period, depends of the determination of nature: sometimes of particular nature, as when a man dieth old; but of nature in general, however; the parts whereof thus changing one after another, the whole world still continues fresh and new. Now that is ever best and most seasonable, which is for the good of the whole. Thus it appears that death of itself can neither be hurtful to any in particular, because it is not a shameful thing (for neither is it a thing that depends of our own will, nor of itself contrary to the common good) and generally, as it is both expedient and seasonable to the whole, that in that respect it must needs be good. It is that also, which is brought unto us by the order and appointment of the Divine Providence; so that he whose will and mind in these things runs along with the Divine ordinance, and by this concur-

In today's English

No activity of any kind, when it stops for a while, can truly be said to suffer any harm just because it has ended. Nor can the one who carried out that activity be said to suffer harm simply because his activity has ended. In the same way, the whole series of our actions, which is our life, cannot be said to suffer harm if it stops at some point, just because it has ended; nor can the one who brought this series of actions to a close truly be said to have been badly treated. Now this time or fixed period is set by nature: sometimes by a particular nature, as when someone dies old, but in any case by nature in general, whose parts change one after another so that the whole world stays always fresh and new. And whatever is for the good of the whole is always best and most timely.

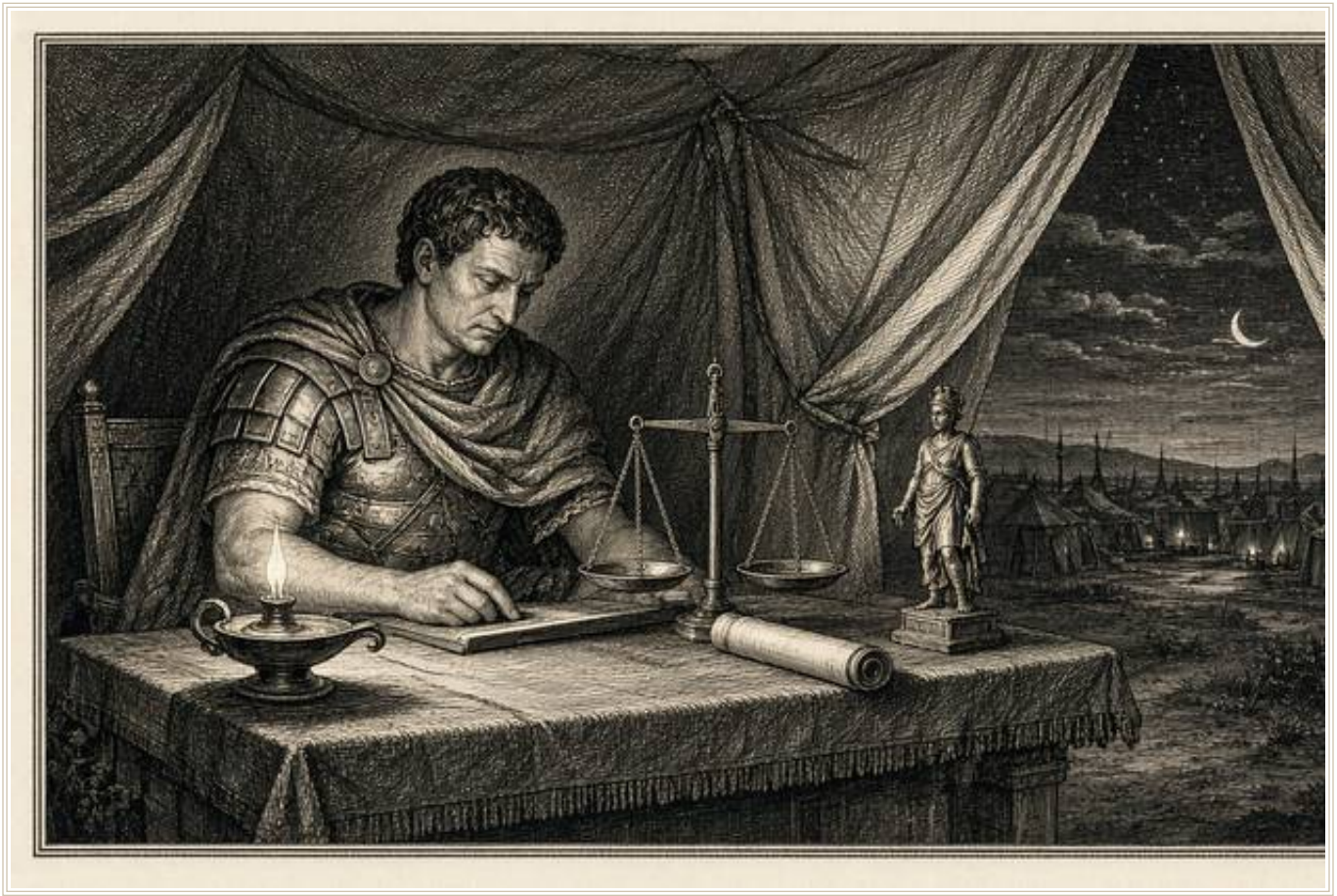
So it is clear that death in itself cannot harm any individual, because it is not shameful (it is neither something that depends on our own will nor something in itself contrary to the common good), and in general, since it is both useful and timely for the whole, it must in that respect be good. It is also brought to us by the order and appointment of Divine Providence. So the person whose will and mind in these matters run along with the divine order, and who, through this agreement of his will and mind with Divine Providence, is led

Casaubon (1634) · continued

rence of his will and mind with the Divine Providence, is led and driven along, as it were by God Himself; may truly be termed and esteemed the θεοφόρητος, or divinely led and inspired.

In today's English · continued

and carried along as if by God Himself, may truly be called and considered θεοφόρητος (theophorētos, 'carried by God'), divinely led and inspired.



Casaubon (1634)

These three things thou must have always in a readiness: first concerning thine own actions, whether thou doest nothing either idly, or otherwise, than justice and equity do require: and concerning those things that happen unto thee externally, that either they happen unto thee by chance, or by providence; of which two to accuse either, is equally against reason. Secondly, what like unto our bodies are whilest yet rude and imperfect, until they be animated: and from their animation, until their expiration: of what things they are compounded, and into what things they shall be dissolved. Thirdly, how vain all things will appear unto thee when, from on high as it were, looking down thou shalt contemplate all things upon earth, and the wonderful mutability, that they are subject unto: considering withal, the infinite both greatness and variety of things aerial and things celestial that are round about it. And

In today's English

You must always have these three things ready. First, about your own actions: whether you are doing anything idly or otherwise than justice and fairness require. And about the things that happen to you from outside: that they happen either by chance or by providence, and blaming either one is equally unreasonable. Second, what our bodies are like while still rough and unformed, until they receive a soul, and from receiving a soul until breathing their last: what they are made of and what they will break down into. Third, how empty everything will seem to you when, looking down as if from on high, you contemplate all things on earth and the astonishing changeability they are subject to, considering at the same time the endless size and variety of the things in the air and the heavens all around it. And however often you look at them, you will always see the same: the same things, and the same brief dura-

Casaubon (1634) · continued

that as often as thou shalt behold them, thou shalt still see the same: as the same things, so the same shortness of continuance of all those things. And, behold, these be the things that we are so proud and puffed up for.

In today's English · continued

tion of them all. And look, these are the things we are so proud and puffed up about.

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Book XII · XIX



Casaubon (1634)

Cast away from thee opinion, and thou art safe. And what is it that hinders thee from casting of it away? When thou art grieved at anything, hast thou forgotten that all things happen according to the nature of the universe; and that him only it concerns, who is in fault; and moreover, that what is now done, is that which from ever hath been done in the world, and will ever be done, and is now done everywhere: how nearly all men are allied one to another by a kindred not of blood, nor of seed, but of the same mind. Thou hast also forgotten that every man's mind partakes of the Deity, and issueth from thence; and that no man can properly call anything his own, no not his son, nor his body, nor his life; for that they all proceed from that One who is the giver of all things: that all things are but opinion; that no man lives properly, but that very instant of time which is now present. And therefore that no man whensoever he dieth can properly be said to lose any more, than an instant of time.

In today's English

Throw away opinion, and you are safe. And what stops you from throwing it away? When you are upset about anything, have you forgotten that everything happens according to the nature of

the universe, and that a wrong concerns only the one who did it? And also that what is happening now is what has always happened in the world, will always happen, and is happening everywhere right now? And how closely all people are related to one another, by a kinship not of blood or seed but of the same mind? You have also forgotten that every person's mind shares in the Deity and flows from it; that no one can properly call anything his own, not his son, not his body, not his life, since they all come from the One who gives all things; that everything is opinion; and that no one truly lives anything but the very instant of time that is present now. And therefore no one, whenever he dies, can properly be said to lose more than an instant of time.



Casaubon (1634)

Let thy thoughts ever run upon them, who once for some one thing or other, were moved with extraordinary indignation; who were once in the highest pitch of either honour, or calamity; or mutual hatred and enmity; or of any other fortune or condition whatsoever. Then consider what's now become of all those things. All is turned to smoke; all to ashes, and a mere fable; and perchance not so much as a fable. As also whatsoever is of this nature, as Fabius Catulinus in the field; Lucius Lupus, and Stertinus, at Baiæ Tiberius at Capreæ and Velius Rufus, and all such examples of vehement prosecution in worldly matters; let these also run in thy mind at the same time; and how vile every object of such earnest and vehement prosecution is; and how much more agreeable to true philosophy it is, for a man to carry himself in every matter that offers itself; justly, and moderately, as one that followeth the Gods with all simplicity. For, for a man to be proud and high conceited, that he is not proud and high conceited, is of all kind of pride and presumption, the most intolerable.

In today's English

Let your thoughts keep returning to those who were once extraordinarily angry about one thing or another; who were once at the very height of honor or of disaster, or of mutual hatred and hostility, or of any other fortune or condition. Then consider what has become of all that now. It has all turned to smoke, to ashes, to a mere story, and perhaps not even a story. Bring to mind at the same time everything of this kind: Fabius Catullinus in the country, Lucius Lupus and Stertinus at Baiae, Tiberius at Capri, Velius Rufus, and all such examples of intense pursuit of worldly things. And consider how worthless every object of such eager, intense pursuit is, and how much more in keeping with true philosophy it is to conduct yourself in every matter that comes up justly and moderately, as someone who follows the gods with complete simplicity. For to be proud and conceited about not being proud and conceited is the most intolerable kind of pride and presumption of all.



Casaubon (1634)

To them that ask thee, Where hast thou seen the Gods, or how knowest thou certainly that there be Gods, that thou art so devout in their worship? I answer first of all, that even to the very eye, they are in some manner visible and apparent. Secondly, neither have I ever seen mine own soul, and yet I respect and honour it. So then for the Gods, by the daily experience that I have of their power and providence towards myself and others, I know certainly that they are, and therefore worship them.

In today's English

To those who ask you, 'Where have you seen the gods, or how do you know for certain that there are gods, that you are so devoted in worshipping them?' I answer, first of all, that they are in a way visible and evident even to the eye. Second, I have never seen my own soul either, and yet I respect and honor it. So with the gods: from my daily experience of their power and providence toward myself and others, I know for certain that they exist, and so I worship them.

410/415

Book XII · XXII



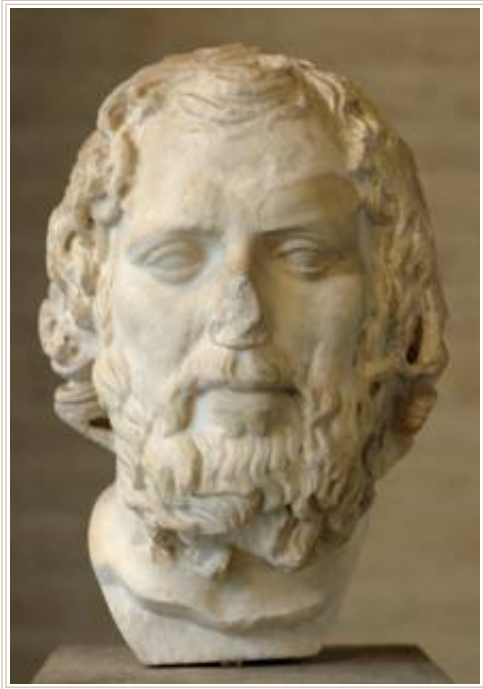
Casaubon (1634)

Herein doth consist happiness of life, for a man to know thoroughly the true nature of everything; what is the matter, and what is the form of it: with all his heart and soul, ever to do that which is just, and to speak the truth. What then remaineth but to enjoy thy life in a course and coherence of good actions, one upon another immediately succeeding, and never interrupted, though for never so little a while?

In today's English

The happiness of life consists in this: to know thoroughly the true nature of each thing, what its matter is and what its form is, and with all your heart and soul always to do what is just and to speak the truth. What remains, then, but to enjoy your life in a continuous chain of good actions, each following

right after the other, never interrupted even for the shortest time?



Casaubon (1634)

There is but one light of the sun, though it be intercepted by walls and mountains, and other thousand objects. There is but one common substance of the whole world, though it be concluded and restrained into several different bodies, in number infinite. There is but one common soul, though divided into innumerable particular essences and natures. So is there but one common intellectual soul, though it seem to be divided. And as for all other parts of those generals which we have mentioned, as either sensitive souls or subjects, these of themselves (as naturally irrational) have no common mutual reference one unto another, though many of them contain a mind, or reasonable faculty in them, whereby they are ruled and governed. But of every reasonable mind, this the particular nature, that it hath reference to whatsoever is of her own kind, and desireth to be united: neither can this common affection, or mutual unity and correspondency, be here intercepted or divided, or confined to particulars as those other common things are.

In today's English

There is only one light of the sun, even though it is blocked by walls, mountains, and a thousand other things. There is only one common substance of the whole world, even though it is enclosed and separated into countless different bodies. There is only one common soul, even though it is divided into innumerable individual beings and natures. So too there is only one common intelligent soul, even though it seems to be divided. As for all the other parts of the things we have mentioned, such as souls that only sense, or mere physical bodies, these by themselves, being naturally non-rational, have no shared connection with one another, even though many of them contain a mind or rational faculty that rules and governs them. But it is the particular nature of every rational mind that it relates to whatever is of its own kind and wants to be united with it, and this shared affection, this mutual unity and fellowship, cannot be blocked, divided, or confined to individuals here as those other common things are.



Casaubon (1634)

What doest thou desire? To live long. What? To enjoy the operations of a sensitive soul; or of the appetitive faculty? or wouldst thou grow, and then decrease again? Wouldst thou long be able to talk, to think and reason with thyself? Which of all these seems unto thee a worthy object of thy desire? Now if of all these thou doest find that they be but little worth in themselves, proceed on unto the last, which is, in all things to follow God and reason. But for a man to grieve that by death he shall be deprived of any of these things, is both against God and reason.

In today's English

What do you want? To live long. What for? To enjoy the workings of a soul that senses, or of the faculty of desire? Or would you grow, and then shrink again? Would you like to be able for a long time to talk, to think, and to reason with yourself? Which of all these seems to you worth wanting? If you find that all of them are worth little in themselves, move on to the last, which is to follow God and reason in everything. But to grieve that death will take away any of those other things is against both God and reason.

413/415

Book XII · XXV



Casaubon (1634)

What a small portion of vast and infinite eternity it is, that is allowed unto every one of us, and how soon it vanisheth into the general age of the world: of the common substance, and of the common soul also what a small portion is allotted unto us: and in what a little clod of the whole earth (as it were) it is that thou doest crawl. After thou shalt rightly have considered these things with thyself; fancy not anything else in the world any more to be of any weight and moment but this, to do that only which thine own nature doth require; and to conform thyself to that which the common nature doth afford.

In today's English

What a small part of vast, infinite eternity is given to each of us, and how quickly it vanishes into the endless age of the world! And what a small share of the common substance, and of the common soul too, is allotted to us! And on what a tiny clod, so to speak, of the whole earth you crawl! Once you have properly

considered these things for yourself, do not imagine anything else in the world to be of any weight or importance except this: to do only what your own nature requires, and to accept whatever the common nature brings.

414/415

Book XII · XXVI



Casaubon (1634)

What is the present estate of my understanding? For herein lieth all indeed. As for all other things, they are without the compass of mine own will: and if without the compass of my will, then are they as dead things unto me, and as it were mere smoke.

In today's English

What state is my mind in now? For everything really depends on this. All other things are outside the reach of my own will, and if they are outside the reach of my will, then they are like dead things to me, mere smoke.

415/415

Book XII · XXVII



Casaubon (1634)

To stir up a man to the contempt of death this among other things, is of good power and efficacy, that even they who esteemed pleasure to be happiness, and pain misery, did nevertheless many of them condemn death as much as any. And can death be terrible to him, to whom that only seems good, which in the ordinary course of nature is seasonable? to him, to whom, whether his actions be many or few, so they be all good, is all one; and who whether he behold the things of the world being always the same either for many years, or for few years only, is altogether indifferent? O man! as a citizen thou hast lived, and conversed in this great city the world. Whether just for so many years, or no, what is it unto thee? Thou hast lived (thou mayest be sure) as long as the laws and orders of the city required; which may be the common comfort of all. Why then should it be grievous unto thee, if (not a tyrant, nor an unjust judge, but) the same nature that brought thee in, doth now send thee out of the world? As if the praetor should fairly dismiss him from the stage, whom he had taken in to act a while. Oh, but the play is

not yet at an end, there are but three acts yet acted of it? Thou hast well said: for in matter of life, three acts is the whole play. Now to set a certain time to every man's acting, belongs unto him only, who as first he was of thy composition, so is now the cause of thy dissolution. As for thyself; thou hast to do with neither. Go thy ways then well pleased and contented: for so is He that dismisseth thee.

In today's English

One thing that is very effective in moving a person to think little of death is that even those who held pleasure to be happiness and pain to be misery nevertheless, many of them, thought as little of death as anyone. And can death be frightening to someone who considers good only what comes at the right time in the ordinary course of nature? To someone for whom it is all the same whether his actions are many or few, as long as they are all good? To someone who is completely indifferent whether he watches the things of the world, always the same, for many years or for only a few?

Man, you have lived as a citizen in this great city, the world. Whether for exactly so many years or not, what does it matter to you? You have lived, you can be sure, as long as the laws and orders of the city required, and that can be a comfort shared by everyone. So why should it be hard for you if, not a tyrant or an unjust judge, but the same nature that brought you in now sends you out of the world? It is as if the praetor (the magistrate who put on the public shows) politely dismissed from the stage an actor he had hired to play for a while. 'Oh, but the play is not over yet; only three acts have been performed!' Well said. In life, three acts are the whole play. Setting a definite time for each person's performance belongs only to the one who, as he was once the cause of your coming together, is now the cause of your coming apart. As for you, you have nothing to do with either. So go on your way well pleased and content, for the one who dismisses you is pleased and content too.

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