Letters

Sidonius Apollinaris (c. AD 430–490)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Table of Contents 1

Book 1 — I. 2

Book 1 — II. 3

Book 1 — III. 6

Book 1 — IV. 7

Book 1 — V. 8

Book 1 — VI. 11

Book 1 — VII. 13

Book 1 — VIII. 16

Book 1 — IX. 17

Book 1 — X. 19

Book 1 — XI. 20

Book 2 — I. 24

Book 2 — II. 26

Book 2 — III. 30

Book 2 — IV. 31

Book 2 — V. 32

Book 2 — VI. 33

Book 2 — VII. 34

Book 2 — VIII. 35

Book 2 — IX. 36

Book 2 — X. 39

Book 2 — XI. 41

Book 2 — XII. 42

Book 2 — XIII. 43

Book 2 — XIV. 45

Book 3 — I. 46

Book 3 — II. 48

Book 3 — III. 50

Book 3 — IV. 52

Book 3 — V. 53

Book 3 — VI. 54

Book 3 — VII. 55

Book 3 — VIII. 56

Book 3 — IX. 57

Book 3 — X. 58

Book 3 — XI. 59

Book 3 — XII. 60

Book 3 — XIII. 62

Book 3 — XIV. 65

Book 4 — I. 66

Book 4 — II. 68

Book 4 — III. 69

Book 4 — IV. 72

Book 4 — V. 73

Book 4 — VI. 74

Book 4 — VII. 75

Book 4 — VIII. 76

Book 4 — IX. 78

Book 4 — X. 80

Book 4 — XI. 81

Book 4 — XII. 83

Book 4 — XIII. 84

Book 4 — XIV. 85

Book 4 — XV. 86

Book 4 — XVI. 87

Book 4 — XVII. 88

Book 4 — XVIII. 89

Book 4 — XIX. 91

Book 4 — XX. 92

Book 4 — XXI. 93

Book 4 — XXII. 95

Book 4 — XXIII. 97

Book 4 — XXIV. 98

Book 4 — XXV. 100

Book 5 — I. 102

Book 5 — II. 103

Book 5 — III. 104

Book 5 — IV. 105

Book 5 — V. 106

Book 5 — VI. 107

Book 5 — VII. 108

Book 5 — VIII. 110

Book 5 — IX. 111

Book 5 — X. 112

Book 5 — XI. 113

Book 5 — XII. 114

Book 5 — XIII. 115

Book 5 — XIV. 116

Book 5 — XV. 117

Book 5 — XVI. 118

Book 5 — XVII. 120

Book 5 — XVIII. 123

Book 5 — XIX. 124

Book 5 — XX. 125

Book 5 — XXI. 126

Book 6 — I. 127

Book 6 — II. 129

Book 6 — III. 130

Book 6 — IV. 131

Book 6 — V. 132

Book 6 — VI. 133

Book 6 — VII. 134

Book 6 — VIII. 135

Book 6 — IX. 136

Book 6 — X. 137

Book 6 — XI. 138

Book 6 — XII. 139

Book 7 — I. 141

Book 7 — II. 143

Book 7 — III. 146

Book 7 — IV. 147

Book 7 — V. 148

Book 7 — VI. 150

Book 7 — VII. 153

Book 7 — VIII. 155

Book 7 — IX. 156

Book 7 — X. (XI) 161

Book 7 — XI. (X) 162

Book 7 — XII. 163

Book 7 — XIII. 165

Book 7 — XIV. 166

Book 7 — XV. 169

Book 7 — XVI. 170

Book 7 — XVII. 171

Book 7 — XVIII. 173

Book 8 — I. 174

Book 8 — II. 175

Book 8 — III. 176

Book 8 — IV. 178

Book 8 — V. 180

Book 8 — VI. 181

Book 8 — VII. 185

Book 8 — VIII. 186

Book 8 — IX. 187

Book 8 — X. 189

Book 8 — XI. 190

Book 8 — XII. 194

Book 8 — XIII. 196

Book 8 — XIV. 197

Book 8 — XV. 199

Book 8 — XVI. 200

Book 9 — I. 202

Book 9 — II. 203

Book 9 — III. 204

Book 9 — IV. 206

Book 9 — V. 207

Book 9 — VI. 208

Book 9 — VII. 209

Book 9 — VIII. 211

Book 9 — IX. 212

Book 9 — X. 216

Book 9 — XI. 217

Book 9 — XII. 220

Book 9 — XIII. 221

Book 9 — XIV. 224

Book 9 — XV. 226

Book 9 — XVI. 228

Table of Contents

CONTENTS

VOLUME I INTRODUCTION . . . . . xi BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... clvi LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS . . . . clx TRANSLATION, BOOKS I-III . . . . 1 VOLUME II TRANSLATION, BOOKS IV-IX ... 3 NOTES . . . . . .215 INDEX 254

Book 1 — I.

To his friend Constantius c. A.D. 477 [1] WITH all the influence you derive from a genius for sound advice, you have long urged me to correct, revise, and bring together in one volume the more finished of those occasional letters which matters, men, and times have drawn from me: I am to set presumptuous foot where Symmachus of the ample manner, and Pliny of the perfected art have gone before. [2] Of Cicero as letter-writer I had best be dumb; not Julius Titianus himself, in his Letters of Famous Women, could worthily reproduce that model; he tried to imitate a style which was not of his time," and Fronto's other pupils, in their jealousy, called him 'ape of orators' for his pains. I have always been horribly conscious how far I fall short of these great examples; I have consistently claimed for each the privilege of his own period and genius. [3] But I have done your will; here you have the letters, not merely to revise, for that is nothing, but to polish and, as the phrase goes, clear of lees. Do I not know you devoted not to studies only, but to the studious too? Which devotion now makes you launch me, despite my fears, upon this deep main of ambition. [4] I had been safer had I breathed no word about these |2 trifles, content with the reception of my poems, which good luck surely helped to recognition rather than skill of mine. Such fame as I have should be to me an anchor cast in the haven of safe repute. I ought to be content with it after the envious snarls of all the Scyllas which my ship has passed. But if the tooth of jealousy spares these extravagances of mine, volume shall follow upon volume, all full-brimming with my most copious flow of correspondence. Farewell.

Book 1 — II.

To [his brother-in-law] Agricola* A.D. 454(?) [1] You have often begged a description of Theodoric the Gothic king, whose gentle breeding fame commends to every nation; you want him in his quantity and quality, in his person, and the manner of his existence. I gladly accede, as far as the limits of my page allow, and highly approve so fine and ingenuous a curiosity.

Well, he is a man worth knowing, even by those who cannot enjoy his close acquaintance, so happily have Providence and Nature joined to endow him with the perfect gifts of fortune; his way of life is such that not even the envy which lies in wait for kings can rob him of his proper praise. [2] And first as to his person. He is well set up, in height above the average man, but below the giant. His head is round, with curled hair retreating somewhat from brow to crown. His nervous |3 neck is free from disfiguring knots. The eyebrows are bushy and arched; when the lids droop, the lashes reach almost half-way down the cheeks. The upper ears are buried under overlying locks, after the fashion of his race. The nose is finely aquiline; the lips are thin and not enlarged by undue distension of the mouth. Every day the hair springing from his nostrils is cut back; that on the face springs thick from the hollow of the temples, but the razor has not yet come upon his cheek, and his barber is assiduous in eradicating the rich growth on the lower part of the face. [3] Chin, throat, and neck are full, but not fat, and all of fair complexion; seen close, their colour is fresh as that of youth; they often flush, but from modesty, and not from anger. His shoulders are smooth, the upper- and forearms strong and hard; hands broad, breast prominent; waist receding. The spine dividing the broad expanse of back does not project, and you can see the springing of the ribs; the sides swell with salient muscle, the well-girt flanks are full of vigour. His thighs are like hard horn; the knee-joints firm and masculine; the knees themselves the comeliest and least wrinkled in the world. A full ankle supports the leg, and the foot is small to bear such mighty limbs.

[4] Now for the routine of his public life. Before daybreak he goes with a very small suite to attend the service of his priests. He prays with assiduity, but, if I may speak in confidence, one may suspect more of habit than conviction in this piety. Administrative duties of the kingdom take up the rest of the morning. Armed nobles stand about the royal seat; the mass of guards in their garb of skins are admitted that they may |4 be within call, but kept at

the threshold for quiet's sake; only a murmur of them comes in from their post at the doors, between the curtain and the outer barrier. And now the foreign envoys are introduced. The king hears them out, and says little; if a thing needs more discussion he puts it off, but accelerates matters ripe for dispatch. The second hour arrives; he rises from the throne to inspect his treasure-chamber or stable.

[5] If the chase is the order of the day, he joins it, but never carries his bow at his side, considering this derogatory to royal state. When a bird or beast is marked for him, or happens to cross his path, he puts his hand behind his back and takes the bow from a page with the string all hanging loose; for as he deems it a boy's trick to bear it in a quiver, so he holds it effeminate to receive the weapon ready strung. When it is given him, he sometimes holds it in both hands and bends the extremities towards each other; at others he sets it, knot-end downward, against his lifted heel, and runs his finger up the slack and wavering string. After that, he takes his arrows, adjusts, and lets fly. He will ask you beforehand what you would like him to transfix; you choose, and he hits. If there is a miss through either's error, your vision will mostly be at fault, and not the archer's skill.

[6] On ordinary days, his table resembles that of a private person. The board does not groan beneath a mass of dull and unpolished silver set on by panting servitors; the weight lies rather in the conversation than in the plate; there is either sensible talk or none. The hangings and draperies used on these occasions are sometimes of purple silk, sometimes only of linen; art, |5 not costliness, commends the fare, as spotlessness rather than bulk the silver. Toasts are few, and you will oftener see a thirsty guest impatient, than a full one refusing cup or bowl. In short, you will find elegance of Greece, good cheer of Gaul, Italian nimbleness, the state of public banquets with the attentive service of a private table, and everywhere the discipline of a king's house. What need for me to describe the pomp of his feast days? No man is so unknown as not to know of them. But to my theme again. [7] The siesta after dinner is always slight, and sometimes intermitted. When inclined for the board-game, he is quick to gather up the dice, examines them with care, shakes the box with expert hand, throws rapidly, humorously apostrophizes them, and patiently waits the issue. Silent at a good throw, he makes merry over a bad, annoyed by neither fortune, and always the philosopher. He is too proud to ask or to refuse a revenge; he disdains to avail himself of one if offered; and if it is opposed will quietly go on playing.

You effect recovery of your men without obstruction on his side; he recovers his without collusion upon yours.You see the strategist when he moves the pieces; his one thought is victory. [8] Yet at play he puts off a little of his kingly rigour, inciting all to good fellowship and the freedom of the game: I think he is afraid of being feared. Vexation in the man whom he beats delights him; he will never believe that his opponents have not let him win unless their annoyance proves him really victor. You would be surprised how often the pleasure born of these little happenings may favour the march of great affairs. Petitions that some wrecked influence |6 had left derelict come unexpectedly to port; I myself am gladly beaten by him when I have a favour to ask, since the loss of my game may mean the gaining of my

cause. [9] About the ninth hour, the burden of government begins again. Back come the importunates, back the ushers to remove them; on all sides buzz the voices of petitioners, a sound which lasts till evening, and does not diminish till interrupted by the royal repast; even then they only disperse to attend their various patrons among the courtiers, and are astir till bedtime. Sometimes, though this is rare, supper is enlivened by sallies of mimes, but no guest is ever exposed to the wound of a biting tongue. Withal there is no noise of hydraulic organ, or choir with its conductor intoning a set piece;

you will hear no players of lyre or flute, no master of the music, no girls with cithara or tabor; the king cares for no strains but those which no less charm the mind with virtue than the ear with melody. [10] When he rises to withdraw, the treasury watch begins its vigil; armed sentries stand on guard during the first hours of slumber. But I am wandering from my subject. I never promised a whole chapter on the kingdom, but a few words about the king. I must stay my pen; you asked for nothing more than one or two facts about the person and the tastes of Theodoric; and my own aim was to write a letter, not a history. Farewell. |7

* Translated by Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, ii. 352. The king here described is Theodoric II, successor of Thorismund, predecessor of Euric.

Book 1 — III.

To his friend Filimatius A. D. 467 [1] INDICT me now by the laws against intrigue, degrade me from the Senate for keeping patient eyes on the promotion to which, after all, birth gives me claim, since my own sire and my wife's, my grandsire and his sire too before him were urban and praetorian prefects, or held high rank in court and army. [2] If it comes to that, consider our friend Gaudentius, who but now of tribune's rank, towers in the dignity of the Vicariate above the unenterprising sloth of our good citizens. Of course our young nobles grumble at his passing over their heads; as for him, his one sentiment is satisfaction. And they now respect a man scorned till yesterday; amazed at such a sudden rise, they look up to one as magistrate on whom as neighbour they looked down. He for his part sets his crier to stun the ears of his drowsy detractors; though envy goads them to hostility they always find a friendly bench reserved for them in court. [3] You too had best make good the loss of your old office by the membership of the prefect's council now offered you; if you fail to do so, if you sit without the advantage which such a position confers, you will be set down as one only fit to represent a Vicarius. Farewell. |8

Book 1 — IV.

To his friend Gaudentius A. D. 467 [1] CONGRATULATIONS, most honoured friend; the rods of office are yours by merit. To win your dignities you did not parade your mother's income, or the largess of your ancestors, your wife's jewels, or your paternal inheritance. In place of all this, it was your obvious sincerity, your proven zeal, your admitted social charm which won you favour in the imperial household.O thrice and four times happy man, whose rise means joy to friends, gall to enemies, and glory to your own posterity, to say nothing of the example given to the active and alert, and the spur applied to the listless and the slow. The man who tries to emulate you, be his spirit what it will, may haply owe the last success to his own exertions, but will certainly owe his start to your example. [2] I fancy I see among the envious, with all deference to better citizens be it said, the old miserable arrogance, the old scorn of service affected by men too slack to serve, men lost to all ambition, who crown their cups with sophistries about the charm of a free life out of office, their motive a base indolence, and not the love of the ideal which they pretend. . . .

[3] [Such a] taste the wisdom of our fathers rejected, for fear that boys might take advantage of it; they likened school orations to a textile fabric, and perfectly understood that, in the case of youthful eloquence, it is harder to spin out the terse than cut the exuberant short. So much for this subject; for the rest, remember that |9 if Providence approves my endeavours and brings me back safe and sound, I mean to repay your goodness with equal measure.

Book 1 — V.

To his friend Herenius * A. D. 467

[1] YOUR letter finds me at Rome. You are solicitous to know whether the affairs which have brought me so far go forward as we hoped, what route I took, and how I fared on it, what rivers celebrated in song I saw, what towns famed for their fair sites, what mountains reputed as the haunt of gods, what glorious battlefields; for it is your delight to check the descriptions you have read by the more accurate relation of the eye-witness. I am rejoiced that you inquire about my doings, because I know that your interest springs from the heart. Well then, though little accidents there were, I will begin, under kind Providence, with things of good event; it was the wont of our ancestors, as you know, to develop even a tale of mishap from fortunate beginnings. [2] As bearer of the imperial letter, I was able to avail myself of the public post on leaving our beloved Lyons + ; my path lay amid the homes of kinsmen and acquaintances; and I lost less time from scarcity of horses than from multiplicity of friends, so closely did every one cling about me, shouting each against the other best wishes |10 for a happy journey and safe return. In this way I drew near the Alps, which I ascended easily and without delay; formidable precipices rose on either side, but the snow was hollowed into a track, and the way thus smoothed before me.

[3] Such rivers, too, as could not be crossed in boats, had convenient fords or traversable bridges with covered arches, built by the art of old time from the foundations to the stoned road above. On the Ticino I boarded the packet known as the cursoria, which soon bore me to the Po; be sure I laughed over those convivial songs of ours about Phaethon's sisters and their unnatural tears of amber gum. [4] I passed the mouth of many a tributary from Ligurian or Euganean heights, sedgy Lambro, blue Adda, swift Adige, slow Mincio, borne upon their very eddies as I looked; their margins and high banks were clothed with groves of oak and maple. Everywhere sweetly resounded the harmony of birds, whose loose-piled nests swayed on the hollow canes, or amid the pointed rushes and smooth reed-grass luxuriantly flourishing in the moisture of this wet riverain soil. [5] The way led past Cremona, over whose proximity the Mantuan Tityrus so deeply sighed. We just touched at Brescello to take on Aemilian boatmen in place of our Venetian rowers, and, bearing to the right, soon reached Ravenna, where one would find it hard to say whether Caesar's road, passing

between the two, separates or unites the old town and the new port. The Po divides above the city, part flowing through, part round the place.

It is diverted from its main bed by the State dykes, and is thence led in diminished volume through derivative channels, the two |11 halves so disposed that one encompasses and moats the walls, the other penetrates them and brings them trade ----[6] an admirable arrangement for commerce in general, and that of provisions in particular. But the drawback is that, with water all about us, we could not quench our thirst; there was neither pure-flowing aqueduct nor filterable cistern, nor trickling source, nor unclouded well. On the one side, the salt tides assail the gates; on the other, the movement of vessels stirs the filthy sediment in the canals, or the sluggish flow is fouled by the bargemen's poles, piercing the bottom slime. [7] From Ravenna we came to the Rubicon, which borrows its name from the red colour of its gravels, and formed the frontier between the old Italians and the Cisalpine Gauls, when the two peoples divided the Adriatic towns. Thence I journeyed to Rimini and Fano, the first famed for its association with Caesar's rebellion, the second tainted by the fate of Hasdrubal; for hard by flows Metaurus, more durably renowned through the fortune of a single day than if it had never ceased to run red to this hour, and roll down the dead on blood-stained waters to the Dalmatian Sea. [8] After this I just traversed the other towns of the Flaminian Way----in at one gate, out at the other----leaving the Picenians on the left and the Umbrians on the right;

and here my exhausted system succumbed either to Calabrian Atabulus or to air of the insalubrious Tuscan region, charged with poisonous exhalations, and blowing now hot, now cold. Fever and thirst ravaged the very marrow of my being; in vain I promised to their avidity draughts from pleasant fountain or hidden well, yes, and from every stream present or |12 to come, water of Velino clear as glass, of Clitunno ice-cold, cerulean of Teverone, sulphureous of Nera, pellucid of Farfa, muddy of Tiber; I was mad to drink, but prudence stayed the craving. [9] Meanwhile, Rome herself spread wide before my view, but I felt like draining down her aqueducts, or even the water of her naval spectacles. Before I reached the city limits I fell prostrate at the triumphal threshold of the Apostles, and in a flash I felt the languor vanish from my enfeebled limbs. After which proof of celestial protection, I alighted at the inn of which I have engaged a part, and there I am trying to get a little rest, writing as I lie upon my couch. [10] As yet I have not presented myself at the bustling gates of Emperor or Court official. For my arrival coincided with the marriage of the patrician Ricimer, to whom the hand of the Emperor's daughter was being accorded in the hope of securer times for the State. Not individuals alone, but whole classes and parties are given up to rejoicing; you have the best of it on your side of the Alps.

While I was writing these lines, scarce a theatre, provision-market, praetorium, forum, temple, or gymnasium but echoed to the passage of the cry Thalassio! and even at this hour the schools are closed, no business is doing, the Courts are voiceless, missions are postponed; there is a truce to intrigue, and all the serious business of life seems merged in the buffooneries of the stage. [11] Though the bride has been given away, though the

bridegroom has put off his wreath, the consular his palm-broidered robe, the brideswoman her wedding gown, the distinguished senator his toga, and the plain man his cloak, yet the noise of the great gathering has |13 not died away in the palace chambers, because the bride still delays to start for her husband's house. When this merrymaking has run out its course, you shall hear what remains to tell of my proceedings, if indeed these crowded hours of idleness to which the whole State seems now surrendered are ever to end, even when the festivities are over. Farewell.

* Paraphrased by Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, ii. 454; For the occasion of Sidonius' visit to Rome, see Introduction, p. xxvii. + Rhodanusiae nostrae.

Book 1 — VI.

To his friend Eutropius* A. D. 467 [1] I HAVE long wished to write, but feel the impulse more than ever now, when by the Christ's preventing grace, I am actually on the way to Rome. My sole motive, or at least my chief one, is to drag you from the slough of your domestic ease by an appeal to you to enter the imperial service. . . . [2] Moreover, by the goodness of God, your age, your health of body and mind concur to fit you for the task; you have horses, arms, wardrobe, establishment, slaves in plenty; the one thing lacking, unless I greatly err, is the courage to begin. In your own home you are energetic enough; it is only at the idea of exile from it that a dull despondency intimidates you. How can it fairly be described as exile, for one with blood of senators in his veins and with the effigies of ancestors in the trabea daily forced upon his sight, to visit Rome once in his prime----Rome the abode of law, the |14 training-school of letters, the fount of honours, the head of the world, the motherland of freedom, the city unique upon earth, where none but the barbarian and the slave is foreign?

[3] Shame on you now if you bury yourself among cow-keeping rustics, or grunting swine-herds, as if it were the height of your felicity to feel the plough-handle tremble above the cleft furrow, or, bowed over your scythe, to spoil the meadow of its flowery wealth, or hoe the luxuriant vines with a face bent earthwards. Have done! awake! sleek ease has unstrung the sinews of your mind; raise it to higher things. Is it a less duty in a man of your descent to cultivate himself than his estate? [4] In fine, what you are pleased to call a young man's exercise is really a relaxation only fit for broken soldiers, when their feeble hands exchange rusty sword for belated mattock. Suppose you achieve your end; suppose that vineyard upon vineyard foams with purple juice, while piled granaries collapse under endless mounds of grain; suppose plump neatherds drive the crowding cows with their swollen udders into the reeking yards to milk: what then? What use will it be to have enlarged your patrimony by sordid gains like these, to have lived recluse not only among such things, but, O deeper shame! for such things' sake? You will have only yourself to thank if one day you stand, you a nobleman born, obscure in your white hairs behind your juniors seated in debate, if you smart under the speech of some poor man risen to honour by office, and with anguish see yourself distanced by those in whom it would once have been presumption to follow in our train.

[5] But why say more? ’Take my appeal |15 as it is meant, and you shall find me at your side ready to anticipate and share your every effort. But if you let yourself be caught in the insidious nets of pleasure; if you choose to yoke yourself, as the saying is, with the tenets of Epicurus, who frankly sacrifices virtue, and defines the chief good as physical delight, then, be our posterity my witness, I wash my hands of the disgrace. Farewell.

* Partly translated by Chaix; p. 264. For the effect of the letter on Eutropius, see III. vi.

Book 1 — VII.

To his friend Vincentius A. D. 468

[1] THE case of Arvandus distresses me, nor do I conceal my distress, for it is our emperor's crowning praise that a condemned prisoner may have friends who need not hide their friendship. I was more intimate with this man than it was safe to be with one so light and so unstable, witness the odium lately kindled against me on his account, the flame of which has scorched me for this lapse from prudence. [2] But since I had given my friendship, honour bound me fast, though he on his side has no steadfastness at all; I say this because it is the truth and not to strike him when he is down. For he despised friendly advice and made himself throughout the sport of fortune; the marvel to me is, not that he fell at last, but that he ever stood so long. How often he would boast of weathering adversity, when we, with a less superficial sense of things, deplored the sure disaster of his rashness, unable to call happy any man who only sometimes and |16 not always deserves the name. [3] But now for your question as to his government; I will tell you in few words, and with all the loyalty due to a friend however far brought low. During his first term as prefect his rule was very popular; the second was disastrous. Crushed by debt, and living in dread of creditors, he was jealous of the nobles from among whom his successor must needs be chosen.

He would make fun of all his visitors, profess astonishment at advice, and spurn good offices; if people called on him too rarely, he showed suspicion; if too regularly, contempt. At last the general hate encompassed him like a rampart; before he was well divested of his authority, he was invested with guards, and a prisoner bound for Rome. Hardly had he set foot in the city when he was all exultation over his fair passage along the stormy Tuscan coast, as if convinced that the very elements were somehow at his bidding. [4] At the Capitol, the Count of the Imperial Largess, his friend Flavius Asellus, acted as his host and jailer, showing him deference for his prefectship, which seemed, as it were, yet warm, so newly was it stripped from him. Meanwhile, the three envoys from Gaul arrived upon his heels with the provincial decrees empowering them to impeach in the public name. They were Tonantius Ferreolus, the ex-prefect, and grandson, on the mother's side, of the Consul Afranius Syagrius, Thaumastus, and Petronius, all men practised in affairs and eloquent, all conspicuous ornaments of our country. [5] They brought, with other matters entrusted

to them by the province, an intercepted letter, which Arvandus' secretary, now also under arrest, declared to have been | 17 dictated by his master.

It was evidently addressed to the King of the Goths,* whom it dissuaded from concluding peace with 'the Greek Emperor', + urging that instead he should attack the Bretons north of the Loire, and asserting that the law of nations called for a division of Gaul between Visigoth and Burgundian. There was more in the same mad vein, calculated to inflame a choleric king, or shame a quiet one into action. Of course the lawyers found here a flagrant case of treason. [6] These tactics did not escape the excellent Auxanius and myself; in whatever way we might have incurred the impeached man's friendship, we both felt that to evade the consequences at this crisis of his fate would be to brand us as traitors, barbarians, and poltroons. We at once exposed to the unsuspecting victim the whole scheme which a prosecution, no less astute than alert and ardent, intended to keep dark until the trial; their scheme was to noose in some unguarded reply an adversary rash enough to repudiate the advice of all his friends and rely wholly on his own unaided wits. We told him what to us and to more secret friends seemed the one safe course; we begged him not to give the slightest point away which they might try to extract from him on pretence of its insignificance; their dissimulation would be ruinous to him if it drew incautious admissions in answer to their questions. [7] When he grasped our point, he was beside himself;

he suddenly broke out into abuse, and cried: 'Begone, you and your nonsensical fears, degenerate sons of prefectorian fathers; leave this part of the affair to | 18 me; it is beyond an intelligence like yours. Arvandus trusts in a clear conscience; the employment of advocates to defend him on the charge of bribery shall be his one concession.' We came away in low spirits, disturbed less by the insult to ourselves than by a real concern; what right has the doctor to take offence when a man past cure gives way to passion? [8] Meanwhile, our defendant goes off to parade the Capitol square, and in white raiment too; he finds sustenance in the sly greetings which he receives; he listens with a gratified air as the bubbles of flattery burst about him. He casts curious eyes on the gems and silks and precious fabrics of the dealers, inspects, picks up, unrolls, beats down the prices as if he were a likely purchaser, moaning and groaning the whole time over the laws, the age, the senate, the emperor, and all because they would not right him then and there without investigation. [9] A few days passed, and, as I learned afterwards (I had left Rome in the interim), there was a full house in the senate-hall. Arvandus proceeded thither freshly groomed and barbered, while the accusers waited the decemvirs' summons unkempt and in half-mourning, snatching from him thus the defendant's usual right, and securing the advantage of suggestion which the suppliant garb confers.

The parties were admitted and, as the custom is, took up positions opposite each other. Before the proceedings began, all of prefectorian rank were allowed to sit; instantly Arvandus, with that unhappy impudence of his, rushed forward and forced himself almost into the very bosoms of the judges, while the ex-prefect* gained subsequent credit | 19 and respect by placing himself quietly and modestly amidst his colleagues at the lowest end of the benches, to

show that his quality of envoy was his first thought, and not his rank as senator. [10] While this was going on, absent members of the house came in; the parties stood up and the envoys set forth their charge. They first produced their mandate from the province, then the already-mentioned letter; this was being read sentence by sentence, when Arvandus admitted the authorship without even waiting to be asked. The envoys rejoined, rather cruelly, that the fact of his dictation was obvious. And when the madman, blind to the depth of his fall, dealt himself a deadly blow by repeating the avowal not once, but twice, the accusers raised a shout, and the judges cried as one man that he stood convicted of treason out of his own mouth. Scores of legal precedents were on record to achieve his ruin.

[11] Only at this point, and then not at once, is the wretched man said to have turned white in tardy repentance of his loquacity, recognizing all too late that it is possible to be convicted of high treason for other offences than aspiring to the purple. He was stripped on the spot of all the privileges pertaining to his prefecture, an office which by re-election he had held five years, and consigned to the common jail as one not now first degraded to plebeian rank, but restored to it as his own. Eye-witnesses report, as the most pathetic feature of all, that as a result of his intrusion upon his judges in all that bravery and smartness while his accusers dressed in black, his pitiable plight won him no pity when he was led off to prison a little later. How, indeed, could any one be much moved at his |20 fate, seeing him haled to the quarries or hard labour still all trimmed and pomaded like a fop? [12] Judgement was deferred a bare fortnight. He was then condemned to death, and flung into the island of the Serpent of Epidaurus. There, an object of compassion even to his enemies, his elegance gone, spewed, as it were, by Fortune out of the land of the living, he now drags out by benefit of Tiberius' law his respite of thirty days after sentence, shuddering through the long hours at the thought of hook and Gemonian stairs, and the noose of the brutal executioner.

[13] We, of course, whether in Rome or out of it, are doing all we can; we make daily vows, we redouble prayers and supplications that the imperial clemency may suspend the stroke of the drawn sword, and rather visit a man already half dead with confiscation of property, and exile. But whether Arvandus has only to expect the worst, or must actually undergo it, he is surely the most miserable soul alive if, branded with such marks of shame, he has any other desire than to die. Farewell.

* Euric. + Anthemius. * Tonantius Ferreolus.

Book 1 — VIII.

To his friend Candidianus* A. D. 468 [1] You congratulate me on my prolonged stay at Rome, though I note the touch of irony, and your wit at my expense. You say you are glad your old friend has at last seen the sun, since on the Saône his chances of | 21 a good look at it are few and far between. You abuse my misty Lyons, and deplore the days so cloaked by morning fog that the full heat of noon can scarcely unveil them. [2] Now does this nonsense fitly come from a native of that oven of a town Cesena? You have shown your real opinion of your charming and convenient natal soil by leaving it. The midges of Po may pierce your ears; the city frogs may croak and swarm on every side, but you know very well that you are better off in exile at Ravenna than at home. In that marsh of yours the laws of everything are always the wrong way about; the waters stand and the walls fall, the towers float and the ships stick fast, the sick man walks and the doctor lies abed, the baths are chill and the houses blaze, the dead swim and the quick are dry, the powers are asleep and the thieves wide awake, the clergy live by usury and the Syrian chants the Psalms, business men turn soldiers and soldiers business men, old fellows play ball and young fellows hazard, eunuchs take to arms and rough allies to letters. [3] And that is the kind of city you choose to settle in, a place that may boast a territory but little solid ground. Be kinder, therefore, to Transalpines who never provoked you; their climate wins too cheap a triumph if it shines only by comparison with such as yours. Farewell.

* Partly translated by Hodgkin, i. 860, and by Chaix, i. 273. Cf. Letter V.

Book 1 — IX.

To his friend Herenius A. D. 468

[1] THE patrician Ricimer well married, and the wealth of both empires blown to the winds in the process, the |22 community has at last resumed its sober senses and opened door and field again to business. Even before this happened I had already been made welcome to the home of the prefectorian Paul, and enjoyed the friendliest and most hospitable treatment in a house no less respectable for piety than learning. I do not know the man more eminent in every kind of accomplishment than my host. I am amazed when I think of the subtleties which he propounds, the figures of rhetoric adorning his judgements, the polish of his verses, the wonders which his fingers can perform. And over and above this encyclopaedic knowledge, he has a still better possession, a conscience superior even to all this science. Naturally, my first inquiries as to possible avenues to court-favour were addressed to him; with him I discuss the likeliest patrons for the advancement of our hopes. [2] There is, however, little need to hesitate; the number of those whose influence merits our consideration is so small. There are, indeed, many senators of wealth and birth, ripe in experience, helpful in counsel, all of the highest rank, and equal in real consideration. But without disparagement to others, we found two consulars, Gennadius Avienus and Caecina Basilius, in enjoyment of a peculiar eminence, and conspicuous above the rest;

if you leave out of the account the great military officers, these two members of the exalted order easily come next to the emperor himself. We found them both deserving of the highest admiration; but their characters were very different; what resemblance there was rested rather on inborn than acquired qualities. Let me give you a short description of the pair. [3] Avienus reached the consulate |23 by luck, Basilius by merit. It was observed that the former attained his dignities with enviable rapidity, but that although the latter was slower, he won the greater number of distinctions in the end. If either chanced to leave his house, a whole populace of clients was afoot to escort him, and pressed about him like a human tide. But though the two were in so far on a level, the spirits and expectations of their friends were very far from equal. Avienus would do all that in him lay for the advancement of his sons, or sons-in-law, or brothers, but was so absorbed in family candidates that his energy in the interest of outside aspirants was proportionately impaired. [4] There was a further reason for preferring the Decian to the Corvinian family. What Avienus could only obtain

for his own connexions while in office, Basilius obtained for strangers while he was in a private station. Avienus opened his mind freely, and at' once, but little came of it; Basilius rarely and not for some time, but to the petitioner's advantage. Neither of the two was inaccessible or costly of approach;

but in the one case cultivation reaped mere affability, in the other, solid gain. [5] After long balancing of alternatives, we finally compromised in this sense; we would preserve all due respect for the older consular, whose house we were duly frequenting, but devote our real attention to the habitué's of Basilius' house. Now while, with the assistance of this right honourable friend, I was considering how best to advance the matter of our Arvernian petition,the Kalends of January came round, on which day the emperor's name was to be enrolled in the Fasti as consul for a second year. [6] 'The very thing,' cried my |24 patron. 'My dear Sollius, I well know that you are engaged in an exacting duty, but I do wish you would bring out your Muse again in honour of the new consul; let her sing something appropriate to the occasion, in whatever haste composed. I will obtain you an audience, be there to encourage you before you begin to recite, and guarantee you a good reception when you have done. I have some experience in these matters; trust me when I say that serious advantage may accrue from this little scheme.' I took the hint; he did not withdraw from the suggested plan, but gave me the support of an invincible ally in the act of homage imposed upon me, and managed so to influence my new consul, that I was incontinently named president of his senate.

[7] But I expect you are tired to death of this prolix letter, and would much rather peruse my little work itself at your leisure. Indeed, I am sure you would, so the eloquent pages bear you the verses herewith, and must do duty for me until I come to speak for myself a few days hence. If my lines win the suffrage of your critical judgement, I shall be just as delighted as if a speech of mine in the assembly or from the rostra called forth the 'bravos' not of senators alone but of all the citizens. I warn you, nay, I insist with you, not to think of setting this slight piece of mine on the same plane as the hexameters of your own Muse, for by the side of yours my lines will suggest the triviality of epitaph-mongers rather than the grandeur of heroic verse. [8] Rejoice, all the same, with the panegyrist; he cannot claim the credit of a fine performance, but at least he has the reward of one. And so, if gay may enliven grave, I will imitate |25 the Pyrgopolinices of Plautus, and conclude in a robustious and Thrasonical vein. And since, by Christ's aid, I have got the prefecture by a lucky pen, I bid you treat me as my new state demands; pile up all conceivable felicitations and exalt to the stars my eloquence or my luck, according as I please, or fail to please, your judgement.

I can imagine your smile when you see your friend carrying it off in this style with the braggart airs of the old stage-soldier. Farewell.

Book 1 — X.

To his friend Campanianus A. D. 468 [1] THE Intendant of Supplies has personally presented the letter in which you commend him as your old friend to my new judgement. I am greatly indebted to him, but most of all to yourself for this evidence of your resolve to assume my friendship certain and proof against all suspicion. I welcome, I eagerly embrace this opportunity of acquaintance, and of intimacy, since my desire to oblige you cannot but draw closer the bonds which already unite us. [2] But please commend me in my turn to his vigilant care, commend, that is, my cause and my repute. For I rather fear that there may be an uproar in the theatres if the supplies of grain run short, and that the hunger of all the Romans will be laid to my account. I am on the point of dispatching him immediately to the harbour in person, because news is to hand that five ships from Brindisi have put in at Ostia laden with wheat and honey. |26 A stroke of energy on his part, and we should have these cargoes ready in no time for the expectant crowds; he would win my favour, I the people's, and he and I together yours. Farewell.

Book 1 — XI.

To his friend Montius About A. D. 461-7 [1] ON the eve of your departure to visit your people of Franche-Comté, most eloquent of friends, you ask me for a copy of a certain satire, assuming it really of my composition. I must say the request surprises me; it is not nice to jump to a false conclusion about a friend's conduct in this manner. It is so likely----is it not?----that at my then age and with my total lack of leisure, I should devote my energies to a kind of literature which it would have been presumptuous in a young man doing his service to compose, and assuredly perilous to publish. Why, a mere nodding acquaintance with a grammarian would suffice to recall the advice of the Calabrian: 'Against the libellous poet, is there not remedy of law and sentence?'

[2] To prevent any more credulity of this sort as regards your old friend, I will set forth at some length, and from the beginning, the events which brought on my head the sound and smoke of public odium. In the reign of Majorian, an anonymous but very mordant satire in verse was circulated at court; gross in its invective, it took advantage of unprotected names, |27 though it lashed vice, its attack was above all personal.The inhabitants of Aries (that city was the scene of these events) were much excited; they wanted to know on which of our poets the weight of public indignation was to fall; at their head were the men whom the invisible author had most visibly branded. [3] It chanced that the illustrious Catullinus arrived at this juncture from Clermont; always a close friend of mine, he was then nearer to me than ever, as we had just served together; a common duty away from home brings (you know how) fellow citizens nearer. Well, Paeonius and Bigerrus set a trap for the unsuspecting visitor: they took him off his guard, and asked him, before numerous witnesses, whether he was familiar with the new poem. 'Let me hear some of it,' said Catullinus. But when they went on jestingly to quote various passages from the satire, he burst out laughing, and asseverated, rather inopportunely, perhaps, that such verses deserved to be immortalized, and set up in letters of gold on the rostra or the Capitol.

[4] At this Paeonius flamed out, for he was the man whom the fiery tooth of the satirist had most sharply bitten. 'Ha!' he cried to the crowd attracted to the spot, 'I have found out the author of this public outrage. Just look at Catullinus half dead with laughter there; obviously he knew all the points beforehand. How could he thus anticipate, and conclude from a mere part, unless he were already acquainted with the whole? We know that Sidonius is

in Auvergne. It is easy to infer that he wrote the thing and that Catullinus was the first to hear it from his lips.' Now I was not only absent, but ignorant and innocent as a babe; that did not prevent a tempest of fury and |28 abuse against me; they cast to the winds loyalty, fair play, and fair inquiry; [5] such power had this popular favourite to draw the fickle crowd whither he would. As you know, Paeonius was a demagogue well versed in the tribune's art of troubling the waters of faction. But if you asked 'whence his descent and where his home?' 'tis known he was nothing more than a plain citizen, whom the eminence of his stepfather more than any distinction of his own house first brought to public notice. He was bent on rising, and more than once let it be seen that he would stick at nothing to attain his end; though mean by nature he would spend freely for his own advancement.

For example, when the engagement of his daughter (against whom I would not breathe a word) brought him the alliance of a family above his own, our Chremes, if rumour does not lie, announced to his Pamphilus a dower magnificently beyond the strict civic standard. [6] Again, when the Marcellian conspiracy to seize the diadem was brewing, what did our friend do? A novus homo, and in his grey hairs, he must needs constitute himself the leader of the young nobility until in the fullness of time the efforts of a lucky audacity were rewarded, for the interregnum, like a rift in clouds, threw a flash of splendour on the obscurity of his birth. The throne was vacant, the State in confusion; but he, and only he, had the face, without waiting for credentials, to assume the fasces as prefect in Gaul, and for months together climb, in the sight of gods and men, the tribunal distinguished by so many illustrious magistrates. Like a public accountant or advocate promoted to honours at the close of a professional career, he |29 just managed to get recognition at the very end of his official term. [7] A prefect and senator in such wise that only my respect for the character of his son-in-law prevents me from exposing him as utterly as he deserves, behold him unashamed to fan the odium of good and bad alike against one still nominally his friend, as if I were the only man of my epoch competent to string a verse or two together.

I came to Aries suspecting nothing ----how should I?----though my enemies were good enough to believe I dared not venture. The next day I paid my duty to the emperor, and went down to the forum, as I always do. As soon as I appeared, the conspiracy was at once confounded, being of the sort which, as Lucan says, dares put nothing to the touch. Some fell cringing at my knees, abasing themselves beyond propriety; others hid behind statues or columns to avoid the necessity of salutation; others, again, with looks of affected sorrow, walked closely at my sides. [8] I was wondering all the time what might be the meaning of this excess, first in insolence and now in abasement, but was determined not to ask, when one of the gang, put up, no doubt, to play the part, came forward to exchange greeting. We talked, and incidentally he remarked: 'You see these people?' 'I do indeed,' I answered, 'and I may say that their proceedings astonish me as much as they impress me little.' To which my kind interpreter rejoined: 'It is in your quality of satirist that they show this fear or detestation of you.' 'How so,' I cried, 'on what grounds? when did I give them the excuse? who detected the offence?

who brought the charge and who the proof?' Then, with a smile, I continued thus: 'My dear sir, if you |30 don't mind, oblige me by asking these excited persons from me, whether it was a professed informer or spy who got up this imaginative story about my writing a satire. If they have to make the inevitable apology later, it will be better for them to give up this outrageous behaviour at once.' [9] No sooner had he conveyed the message, than they all came to offer their hands and salutations, not man by man, and with decorum, but the whole herd with a rush. Our Curio was left all alone to breathe imprecations on the base deserters, until at fall of evening he was hurried off home on the shoulders of bearers gloomier than mutes. [10] The next day the emperor commanded my presence at the banquet he was giving on the occasion of the Games. At the left end of the couch was Severinus, the consul of the year, who managed to trim his sails to a wind of even favour throughout our vast dynastic changes and all the uneven fortunes of the State. Next him was the ex-prefect Magnus, who had just laid down the consul's office, and by virtue of these two dignities was no unworthy neighbour. Beyond Magnus was his nephew Camillus, who had also held two offices, and by his conduct of them added equal lustre to his father's proconsular rank and his uncle's consulship.

Next to him was Paeonius, and then Athenius, a man versed in every turn of controversy and vicissitude of the times. After them came Gratianensis, a character not to be mentioned in the same breath with evil; and though lower in rank than Severinus, above him in the imperial estimation. I was last, upon the left side of the emperor, who lay at the right extremity of the table. [11] When the dinner was well advanced, the prince |31 addressed a few short remarks to the consul. He then turned to the ex-consul, with whom he talked several times, the subjects being literary. At an early opportunity he addressed himself to Camillus, with the remark: 'My dear Camillus, you have so admirable an uncle that I pride myself on having conferred a consulship on your family.' Camillus, who coveted a like promotion, saw his chance, and replied: 'A consulship, Sire! you surely mean a first?' Even the emperor's presence did not check the loud applause which greeted this rejoinder. [12] By accident, or of set purpose, I cannot say which, the prince now passed over Paeonius, and addressed some question or other to Athenius. Paeonius had the bad manners to take the oversight ill, and made matters worse by answering before the other had time to speak. The emperor only laughed; it was his way to be very genial in society so long as his own dignity was observed. To Athenius the laugh came as compensation for the slight he had suffered.

That craftiest of all the elders had been boiling with suppressed resentment all the time because Paeonius had been placed above him, but he calmed himself enough to say: 'It no longer surprises me, Sire, that he should try to push himself into my place, when he has now pushed into your Majesty's conversation.' [13] The illustrious Gratianensis here remarked that the episode opened a wide field to a satirist. On this, the emperor turned round to me and said: 'It is news to me, Count Sidonius,that you are a writer of satires.' 'Sire,' I answered, 'it is news to me too.' 'Anyhow,' he replied with a laugh, 'I beg you to be merciful to me.' 'I shall |32 spare myself also,' I rejoined, 'by refraining from illegality.' Thereupon the emperor said: 'What shall we do, then, to the people who have provoked you?' 'This,

Sire,' I answered. ' Whoever my accuser be, let him come out into the open. If I am proved guilty, let me abide the penalty. But if, as will probably be the case, I rebut the charge, I ask of your clemency permission to write anything I choose about my assailant, provided I observe the law.' [14] The emperor looked at Paeonius, who was hesitating, and made a sign of inquiry whether he accepted the conditions. But he had not a word to answer, and the prince spared his embarrassment;

at last, however, he managed to say: 'I agree to your conditions, if you can put them in verse on the spot.' 'Very well,' I said; and turning back, as if to call for water for my hands, I remained in that attitude the time occupied by a quick servant in going round the table. I then resumed my former position, and the emperor said: 'Your undertaking was to ask in an impromptu our sanction for writing satire.' I replied:

'O mightiest prince, I pray that this be thy decree: let him who calls me libeller or prove his charge, or fear.'

[15] I do not want to seem conceited, but the applause which followed was equal to that which had greeted Camillus; though it was earned, of course, less by the merit of the verse than by the speed with which I had composed. Then the emperor cried: 'I call God and the common weal to witness that in future I give you licence to write what you please; the charge brought against you was not susceptible of proof. It would be most unjust if the imperial decision allowed such latitude to private quarrels that evident malice might imperil |33 by obscure charges nobles whom conscious innocence puts wholly off their guard.' At this pronouncement I modestly bent my head and thanked him; the face of my opponent, which had previously shown successive signs of rage and vexation, now grew pale. Indeed, it was almost frozen with terror, as if he had received the order to present his neck to the executioner's drawn sword. [16] Little more was said before we rose from the table. We had withdrawn a short distance from the imperial presence, and were in the act of putting on our mantles, when the consul fell upon my bosom, the ex-prefects seized my hands, and my guilty friend abased himself so often and so profoundly, that he aroused universal pity, and bade fair to place me in a more invidious position by his entreaties than he had ever done by his insinuations.

Urged to speak by the throng of nobles round me, I closed the episode by telling him that he might set his mind at rest; I should write no satire on his base intrigue so long as he abstained henceforward from the misrepresentation of my actions. It should be punishment enough for him to know that his ascription of the lampoon to me had added to my credit and brought nothing but discredit on himself. [17] In fine, honoured lord, the man whom I thus confounded had not been loudest in calumny; he was a mere whisperer. But since, by his offence, I had the satisfaction of being so warmly greeted by so many men of the highest influence and position, I confess that it was almost worth while to have borne the scandal of the exordium for the sake of so triumphant a conclusion. Farewell.

Book 2 — I.

To [his brother-in-law] Ecdicius* c. A.D. 470 [1] YOUR countrymen of Auvergne suffer equally from two evils. 'What are those?' you ask. Seronatus' presence, and your own absence. Seronatus----his very name first calls for notice; I think that when he was so named, a prescient fortune must have played with contradictions, as our predecessors did, who by antiphrasis used the root of 'beautiful' in their word for war, the most hideous thing on earth; and, with no less perversity, the root of mercy in their name for Fate, because Fate never spares. This Catiline of our day is just returned from the region of the Adour to blend in whole confusion the fortune and the blood of unhappy victims which down there he had only pledged himself in part to shed. [2] You must know that his long-dissembled savagery comes daily further into the light. His spite affronts the day; his dissimulation was abject as his arrogance is servile. He commands like a despot; no tyrant more exacting than he, no judge more peremptory in sentence, no barbarian falser in false witness. The livelong day he goes armed from cowardice, and starving from pure meanness. Greed makes him |35 formidable, and vanity cruel; he continually commits himself the very thefts he punishes in others. To the universal amusement he will rant of war in a civilian company, and of literature among Goths. Though he barely knows the alphabet, he has the conceit to dictate letters in public and the impudence to revise them under the same conditions.

[3] All property he covets he makes a show of buying; but he never thinks of paying, nor does he trouble to furnish himself with deeds, knowing it hopeless to prove a title. In the council-chamber he commands, but in counsel he is mute. He jests in church and preaches at table; snores on the bench, and breathes condemnation in his bedroom. His actions are filling the woods with dangerous fugitives from the estates, the churches with scoundrels, the prisons with holy men. He cries the Goths up and the Romans down; he prepares illusions for prefects and collusions with public accountants. He tramples under foot the Theodosian Code to set in its place the laws of a Theodoric, raking up old charges to justify new imposts. [4] Be quick, then, to unravel the tangle of affairs that makes you linger; cut short whatever causes your delay. Our people are at the last gasp; freedom is almost dead. Whether there is any hope, or whether all is to be despair, they want you in their midst to lead them. If the State is powerless to succour, if, as rumour says, the Emperor Anthemius is without resource, our nobility is determined to follow your lead, and give up their country or the hair of their heads.Farewell. |36

* Partly translated by Fertig, Part i, p. 20.

Book 2 — II.

T0 his friend Domitius A.D. 461-7(?) [1] You attack me for staying in the country; I might with greater reason complain of you for lingering in town. Spring already gives place to summer; the sun has travelled his full range to the Tropic of Cancer and now advances on his journey towards the pole. Why should I waste words upon the climate which we here enjoy? The Creator has so placed us that we are exposed to the afternoon heats. Enough said; the whole world glows; the snow is melting on the Alps; the earth is seamed with gaping heat-cracks. The fords are nothing but dry gravel, the banks hard mud, the plains dust; the running streams languish and hardly drag themselves along; as for the water, hot is not the word; it boils. [2] We are all perspiring in light silks or linens; but there you stay at Ameria all swathed up under your great gown, buried in a deep chair, and setting with many yawns 'My mother was a Samian' to pupils paler from the heat than from any fear of you. As you love your health, get away at once from your suffocating alleys, join our household as the most welcome of all guests, and in this most temperate of retreats evade the intemperate dog-star.

[3] You may like to know the kind of place to which you are invited. We are at the estate known as Avitacum, a name of sweeter sound in my ears than my own patrimony because it came to me with my |37 wife. Infer the harmony which established between me and mine; it is God's ordinance; but you might be pardoned for fearing it the work of some enchantment. On the west rises a big hill, pretty steep but not rocky, from which issue two lower spurs, like branches from a double trunk, extending over an area of about four jugera. But while the ground opens out enough to form a broad approach to the front door, the straight slopes on either side lead a valley right to the boundary of the villa, which faces north and south. [4] On the south-west are the baths, which so closely adjoin a wooded eminence that if timber is cut on the hill above, the piles of logs slide down almost by their own weight, and are brought up against the very mouth of the furnace. At this point is the hot bath, which corresponds in size with the adjoining unguentarium, except that it has an apse with a semicircular basin; here the hot water pressing through the sinuous lead pipes that pierce the wall issues with a sobbing sound. The chamber itself is well heated from beneath; it is full of day, and so overflowing with light that very modest bathers seem to themselves something more than naked.

[5] Next come the spacious frigidarium, which may fairly challenge comparison with those in public baths. The roof is pyramidal, and the spaces between the converging ridges are covered with imbricated tiles; the architect has inserted two opposite windows about the junction of walls and dome, so that if you look up, you see the fine coffering displayed to the best advantage. The interior walls are unpretentiously covered with plain white stucco, and the apartment is designed by the nicest calculation of space |38 to contain the same number of persons as the semicircular bath holds bathers, while it yet allows the servants to move about without impeding one another. [6] No frescoed scene obtrudes its comely nudities, gracing the art to the disgrace of the artist. You will observe no painted actors in absurd masks, and costumes rivalling Philistio's gear with colours gaudy as the rainbow.You will find no pugilists or wrestlers intertwining their oiled limbs in those grips which, in real bouts, the gymnasiarch's chaste wand unlocks the moment the enlaced limbs look indecent. [7] Enough you will see upon these walls none of those things which it is nicer not to look upon. A few verses there are, harmless lines enough, since no one either regrets perusal or cares to peruse again. If you want to know what marbles are employed, neither Paros nor Carystos, nor Proconnesos, nor Phrygia, nor Numidia, nor Sparta have contributed their diverse inlays.

I had no use for stone that simulates a broken surface, with Ethiopic crags and purple precipices stained with genuine murex. Though enriched by no cold splendour of foreign marble, my poor huts and hovels do not lack the coolness to which a plain citizen may aspire. But now I had really better talk about the things I have, than the things I lack. [8] With this hall is connected on the eastern side an annexe, a piscina, or, if you prefer the Greek word, baptistery, with a capacity of about twenty thousand modii. Into this the bathers pass from the hot room by three arched entrances in the dividing wall. The supports are not piers but columns, which your experienced architect calls the glory of buildings. Into this piscina, then, a stream lured from the brow |39 of the hill is conducted in channels curving round the outside of the swimming basin; it issues through six pipes terminating in lions' heads which, to one entering rapidly, seem to present real fangs, authentic fury of eyes, indubitable manes. [9] When the master of the house stands here with his household or his guests about him, people have to shout in each other's ears, or the noise of falling water makes their words inaudible; the interference of this alien sound forces conversations which are quite public to assume an amusing air of secrecy. On leaving this chamber you see in front of you the withdrawing-room;

adjoining it is the storeroom, separated only by a movable partition from the place where the maids do our weaving.

[10] On the east side a portico commands the lake, supported by simple wooden pillars instead of pretentious monumental columns. On the side of the front entrance is a long covered space unbroken by interior divisions; it may be incorrect to call this a hypodrome, but I may fairly award it the name of cryptoporticus. At the end it is curtailed by a section cut off

to form a delightfully cool bay, and here when we keep open festival, the whole chattering chorus of nurses and dependants sounds a halt when the family retires for the siesta.

[11] The winter dining-room is entered from this cryptoporticus; a roaring fire on an arched hearth often fills this apartment with smoke and smuts. But that detail I may spare you; a glowing hearth is the last thing I am inviting you to enjoy just now. I pass instead to things which suit the season and your present need. From here one enters a smaller chamber or dining-room, |40 all open to the lake and with almost the whole expanse of lake in its view. This chamber is furnished with a dining-couch and gleaming sideboard upon a raised area or dais to which you mount gradually, and not by abrupt or narrow steps from the portico below. Reclining at this table you can give the idle moments between the courses to the enjoyment of the prospect. [12] If water of our famous springs is served and quickly poured into the cups, one sees snowy spots and clouded patches form outside them; the sudden chill dulls the fugitive reflections of the surface almost as if it had been greased. Such cups restrict one's draughts; the thirstiest soul on earth, to say nothing of Your Abstemiousness, would set lip to the freezing brims with caution. From table you may watch the fisherman row his boat out to mid-lake, and spread his seine with cork floats, or suspend his lines at marked intervals to lure the greedy trout on their nightly excursions through the lake with bait of their own flesh and blood:

what phrase more proper, since fish is literally caught by fish? [13] The meal over, we pass into a withdrawing-room, which its coolness makes a perfect place in summer. Facing north, it receives all the daylight but no direct sun: a very small intervening chamber accommodates the drowsy servants, large enough to allow them forty winks but not a regular sleep. [14] It is delightful to sit here and listen to the shrill cicala at noon, the croak of frogs in the gloaming, the clangour of swans and geese in the earlier night or the crow of cocks in the dead of it, the ominous voice of rooks saluting the rosy face of Dawn in chorus, or, in the half-light, nightingales fluting in the bushes and |41 swallows twittering under the eaves. To this concert you may add the seven-stopped pipe of the pastoral Muse, on which the very wakeful Tityri of our hills will often vie one with another, while the herds about them low to the cow-bells as they graze along the pastures. All these tuneful songs and sounds will but charm you into deeper slumbers. [15] If you leave the colonnade and go down to the little lakeside harbour, you come to a greensward, and, hard by, to a grove of trees where every one is allowed to go. There stand two great limes, with roots and trunks apart, but the boughs interwoven in one continuous canopy. In their dense shade we play at ball when my Ecdicius honours me with his company;

but the moment the shadow of the trees shrinks to the area covered by the branches we stop for want of ground, and repose our tired limbs at dice.

[16] I have described the house; I now owe you a description of the lake. It extends in a devious course towards the east, and when violent winds lash it to fury, drenches the lower part of the house with spray. At its head the ground is marshy and full of bog-holes, impassable to the explorer; a slimy and saturated mud has formed there, and cold springs

rise on all sides; the edges are fringed with weed. When the wind drops, small boats cleave its changeful surface in all directions. But if dirty weather comes up from the south the whole lake is swollen into monstrous waves and a rain of spray comes crashing over the tree-tops upon the banks. [17] By nautical measure, it is seventeen stadia in length. Where the river comes in, the broken water foams white against the rocky barriers; but the |42 stream soon wins clear of the overhanging crags, and is lost in the smooth expanse. Whether the river itself makes the lake, or is only an affluent, I know not; certain it is that it reaches the other end, and flows away through subterranean channels which only deprive it of its fish, and leave it intact in volume. The fish, driven into more sluggish waters, increase in size, red bodied and white under the belly. They cannot either return or escape; they fatten, and go self-contained as it were in portable jails of their own composition. [18] On the right, a wooded shore curves with an indented line;

on the left, it opens to a level sweep of grass. On the southwest the shallows along the banks look green; overarching boughs lend the water their own hue, and the water transmits it to the pebbles at the bottom; on the east, a similar fringe of foliage produces a like tint. On the north, the water preserves its natural colour; on the west, the shore is covered with a tangle of common growths crushed in many places where boats have rowed over them; close by, tufts of smooth reeds bend to the wind, and pulpy flat leaves of aquatic plants float upon the surface; the sweet waters nourish the bitter sap of the grey-green willows growing near. [19] In the deep middle of the lake is an islet, at one end of which projects a turning post upon boulders naturally piled, worn by contact with oar-blades during our aquatic sports; at this point competitors often collide and come to cheerful grief. Our fathers used to hold boat-races here in imitation of the Trojan ceremonial games at Drepanum.

It is not in my bond to describe the estate itself; suffice it to say that it has spreading woods and flowery |43 meadows, pastures rich in cattle and a wealth of hardy shepherds. [20] Here I must conclude. Were my pen to run on much further the autumn would overtake you before you reached the end. Accord me, then, the grace of coming quickly; your return shall be as slow as ever you choose. And forgive me if, in my fear of overlooking anything about our situation here, I have given you facts in excess and beyond the fair limits of a letter. As it is, there are points which I have left untouched for fear of being tedious. But a reader of your judgement and imagination will not exaggerate the size of the descriptive page, but rather that of the house so spaciously depicted. Farewell.

Book 2 — III.

To [his friend Magnus] Felix c. A.D. 472 [1] I REJOICE, honoured lord, to see you win the distinction of this most exalted title; and all the more because the news is announced to me by special messenger. For though you are now high among the powers, and after all these years the patrician dignity comes back to the Philagrian house by your felicity , you will discover, most loyal of friends, how much your honours grow by being shared, and how far so rare a modesty as yours exalts a lofty station. [2] It was for these qualities that the Roman people once preferred Quintus Fabius the Master of the Horse to Cursor with his dictatorial rigour and his Papirian pride; for these that Pompey surpassed all rivals in a popularity |44 which he was too wise to scorn. By these Germanicus won the whole world's favour and forced Tiberius to repress his envy. For these reasons I will not concede all the credit for your promotion to the imperial pleasure. It has only one advantage over ours; were we to oppose your claims, it has the power to override us. Your peculiar privilege, your unique advantage is this: you have neither actual rival nor visible successor. Farewell.

Book 2 — IV.

To his friend Sagittarius* A.D. 461-7 [1] THE honourable § Projectus is ardently bent upon your friendship; I trust that you will not repel his advances. He is of noble lineage; the reputation of his father and his uncle, and his grandfather's eminence in the Church unite to lend a lustre to his name; he has indeed all that conduces to distinction; family, wealth, probity, energetic youth; but not till he is assured of your good graces, will he consider himself to have attained the culminating point of his career. [2] Although he has already asked and obtained from the widow of the late honourable Optantius her daughter's hand----may God speed his hopes----he fears that little will have been gained by all his vows, unless his own solicitude, or my intercession gains him your support as well. For you have taken the place of the girl's dead father; you have succeeded to his share in the |45 responsibility for her upbringing; it is to you that she looks for a father's love, a patron's guidance, a guardian's bounden care. [3] And since it is but natural that your admirable government of your household should attract men of the right stamp even from distant places, reward the modesty of this suppliant wooer by a kindly response. In the usual course of events it would have fallen to you to obtain him the mother's consent; as it is, he saves you this trouble, and you have only to sanction a troth already approved. Your reputation gives you in effect a parental authority in regard to this match; the father himself, if he had lived, could not have claimed a greater. Farewell.

* Or to Syagrius, as C. § Clarissimus.

Book 2 — V.

To his friend Petronius A.D. 461-7 [1] JOHN, my friend, is caught inextricably in the labyrinth of a complex business, and is at a loss what to hope and what abandon until your experienced eye, or another as good (if such there be), has looked into his titles to determine their validity. The case is confusing in that it has more than one side, and he does not see whether his statement should maintain one line of action or impugn another. [2] I most earnestly beg you, therefore, to examine his documents and tell him what his rights are, what he ought to allege or refute, and what his procedure should be. Let but the stream of this affair flow from the springs of your advice, and I have no fear that the other side will manage to reduce its volume by any unfair diversion. Farewell. |46

Book 2 — VI.

To his friend Pegasius A.D. 461-7 [1] THERE is a proverb that delay is often best; I have just had proof that it is true. We have had your friend Menstruanus long enough among us, to find him worthy of a place among our dearest and most intimate friends. He is agreeable, and of refined manners, moderate, sensible, religious, and no spendthrift; his is a personality which confers as much as it obtains when admitted to the most approved of friendships. [2] I tell you this for my own satisfaction, and not to inform you of what you already know. As a result, content will now reign in three separate quarters. You will be pleased at this seal set on your judgement in the choice and adoption of your friends; the Arvenians will be pleased, since to my certain knowledge they liked him for the very qualities which, I am sure, commended him to you; lastly Menstruanus himself will be gratified at receiving the good opinion of honourable men. Farewell.

Book 2 — VII.

To his friend Explicius A.D. 461-7 [1] You have given so many proofs of your impartiality that you have won universal respect, and for that reason I am always more than eager to send all seekers after justice to your judgement-seat; by so doing I ease |47 the disputants from their burden, and myself from all necessity of argument. These ends I shall attain in the present case, unless your diffidence should prompt you to refuse the parties audience; but your very inaccessibility is the best proof of your impartiality. For almost every one else intrigues to be chosen as an arbitrator, expecting to gain something in influence or advantage. [2] Be indulgent, therefore, to men who press on each other's heels to enjoy the privilege of pleading before so fair a judge; your repute is such that the loser can never be so stupid as to impugn your verdict, or the winner so over-subtle as to deride it. Both sides respect the truth; those against whom the verdict goes respect you; those whom it favours show their gratitude. Therefore I implore your early decision on the matter in dispute between Alethius and Paulus. I believe your sound sense and healthy judgement can alone heal the malady of this interminable quarrel, and that they will be far more effective than any decrees of decemvirs or of pontiffs. Farewell.

Book 2 — VIII.

To his friend Desideratus A.D. 461-7 [1] I WRITE oppressed by a great sorrow. Three days ago Filimatia died, and all business was suspended out of respect to her memory. She was an obedient wife, a kindly mistress, a capable mother, a dutiful daughter, whether at home or abroad, earning the willing service of her inferiors, the affection of her equals, and the |48 consideration of the great. Left an only daughter at her mother's death, she so bewitched her father by her charming ways, that though he was still a young man, he never longed for a male heir. And now her sudden death pierces two hearts, leaving a husband desolate and a father childless. The mother of five children has been snatched away before her time, her very fertility her worst misfortune; had she been left, and the invalid father taken, the little ones would seem less helpless than now. [2] The tributes of affection which we pay the dead are not vain; it was not the sinister train of bearers who buried her; all present were dissolved in tears, and the very strangers hung upon the bier as if they would hold it back. They imprinted kisses on it, until more like one in slumber than one dead, she was received by her relatives and the clergy, to be laid to rest in her long home. When the rites were done, the bereaved father begged me to write an elegy for her tombstone; I did it while my tears were still almost warm, choosing the hendecasyllabic in place of the elegiac measure. If you do not think the lines too bad, my bookseller shall include them in the volumes of my selected poems; if you do, the heavy verse shall be confined to the heavy stone.

[3] Here is my epitaph: 'In this tomb a mourning country's hands have laid the matron Filimatia, whom with fierce stroke and swift, fate snatched from spouse, from sire, from five orphaned children. O pride of thy house, O glory of thy consort, O wise and pure and seemly, O strict and tender, and worthy to precede even the aged, by what art of thy gentle nature didst thou unite the |49 qualities which seem at discord with each other? For a grave ease and a modesty not too severe for gaiety were ever the companions of thy life. Therefore we mourn thee taken, thy sixth lustre hardly run, and the due rites paid in this undue season of thy prime.' Whether you like the verses or not, hasten back to the city. You owe the bereaved homes of two fellow townsmen the duty of consolation. Pray God you so act that the manner of your action may never be your reproach hereafter. Farewell.

Book 2 — IX.

To his friend Donidius * A.D. 461-7

[1] To your question why, having got as far as Nimes, I still leave your hospitality expectant, I reply by giving the reason for my delayed return. I will even dilate upon the causes of my dilatoriness, for I know that what I enjoy is your enjoyment too. The fact is, I have passed the most delightful time in the most beautiful country in the company of Tonantius Ferreolus and Apollinaris, the most charming hosts in the world. Their estates march together; their houses are not far apart; and the extent of intervening ground is just too far for a walk and just too short to make the ride worth while. The hills above the houses are under vines and olives; they might be Nysa and Aracynthus, famed in song. The view from one villa is over a wide flat country, that from the other over |50 woodland; yet different though their situations are, the eye derives equal pleasure from both. [2] But enough of sites; I have now to unfold the order of my entertainment. Sharp scouts were posted to look out for our return; and not only were the roads patrolled by men from each estate, but even winding short-cuts and sheep-tracks were under observation, to make it quite impossible for us to elude the friendly ambush. Into this of course we fell, no unwilling prisoners; and our captors instantly made us swear to dismiss every idea of continuing our journey until a whole week had elapsed.

[3] And so every morning began with a flattering rivalry between the two hosts, as to which of their kitchens should first smoke for the refreshment of their guest; nor, though I am personally related to one, and connected through my relatives with the other, could I manage by alternation to give them quite equal measure, since age and the dignity of prefectorian rank gave Ferreolus a prior right of invitation over and above his other claims. [4] From the first moment we were hurried from one pleasure to another. Hardly had we entered the vestibule of either house when we saw two opposed pairs of partners in the ball-game repeating each other's movements as they turned in wheeling circles; in another place one heard the rattle of dice boxes and the shouts of the contending players; in yet another, were books in abundance ready to your hand; you might have imagined yourself among the shelves of some grammarian, or the tiers of the Athenaeum, or a bookseller's towering cases. They were so arranged that the devotional works were near the ladies' seats; where the master sat were those |51 ennobled by the great style of Roman eloquence. The arrangement had

this defect, that it separated certain books by certain authors in manner as near to each other as in matter they are far apart. Thus Augustine writes like Varro, and Horace like Prudentius; but you had to consult them on different sides of the room.

[5] Turranius Rufinus' interpretation of Adamantius Origen was eagerly examined by the readers of theology among us; according to our several points of view, we had different reasons to give for the censure of this Father by certain of the clergy as too trenchant a controversialist and best avoided by the prudent; but the translation is so literal and yet renders the spirit of the work so well, that neither Apuleius' version of Plato's Phaedo, nor Cicero's of the Ctesiphon of Demosthenes is more admirably adapted to the use and rule of our Latin tongue. [6] While we were engaged in these discussions as fancy prompted each, appears an envoy from the cook to warn us that the moment of bodily refreshment is at hand. And in fact the fifth hour had just elapsed, proving that the man was punctual, had properly marked the advance of the hours upon the water-clock . The dinner was short, but abundant, served in the fashion affected in senatorial houses where inveterate usage prescribes numerous courses on very few dishes, though to afford variety, roast alternated with stew. Amusing and instructive anecdotes accompanied our potations; wit went with the one sort, and learning with the other. To be brief, we were entertained with decorum, refinement, and good cheer. [7] After dinner, if we were at Vorocingus (the name of one estate) we walked over to our |52 quarters and our own belongings.

If at Prusianum, as the other is called, [the young] Tonantius and his brothers turned out of their beds for us because we could not be always dragging our gear about: they are surely the elect among the nobles of our own age. The siesta over, we took a short ride to sharpen our jaded appetites for supper. [8] Both of our hosts had baths in their houses, but in neither did they happen to be available; so I set my own servants to work in the rare sober interludes which the convivial bowl, too often filled, allowed their sodden brains. I made them dig a pit at their best speed either near a spring or by the river; into this a heap of red-hot stones was thrown, and the glowing cavity then covered over with an arched roof of wattled hazel. This still left interstices, and to exclude the light and keep in the steam given off when water was thrown on the hot stones, we laid coverings of Cilician goats' hair over all. [9] In these vapour-baths we passed whole hours with lively talk and repartee; all the time the cloud of hissing steam enveloping us induced the healthiest perspiration.

When we had perspired enough, we were bathed in hot water; the treatment removed the feeling of repletion, but left us languid; we therefore finished off with a bracing douche from fountain, well or river. For the river Garden runs between the two properties; except in time of flood, when the stream is swollen and clouded with melted snow, it looks red through its tawny gravels, and flows still and pellucid over its pebbly bed, teeming none the less with the most delicate fish. [10] I could tell you of suppers fit for a king; it is not my sense of shame, but simply want of space which sets |53 a limit to my revelations. You would have a great story if I turned the page and continued on the other side; but I am always ashamed to disfigure the back of a letter with an inky pen. Besides, I am on the point of leaving

here, and hope, by Christ's grace, that we shall meet very shortly; the story of our friends' banquets will be better told at my own table or yours----provided only that a good week's interval first elapses to restore me the healthy appetite I long for. There is nothing like thin living to give tone to a system disordered by excess. Farewell.

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 324 f.

Book 2 — X.

To his friend Hesperius c. A. D. 470 [1] WHAT I most love in you is your love of letters, and I strive to enhance the generous devotion by the highest praises I can give; your firstfruits please the better for it, and even my own work begins to rise in my esteem. For the richest reward of a man's labours is to see promising young men growing up in that discipline of letters for which he in his own day smarted under the cane. The numbers of the indifferent grow at such a rate that unless your little band can save the purity of the Latin tongue from the rust of sorry barbarisms we shall soon have to mourn its abolition and decease. All the fine flowers of diction will lose their splendour through the apathy of our people. [2] But of that another time. My present duty is to send you what you asked, namely, any verses I might have written since we saw each other last, to compensate |54 you for my absence. I now satisfy your desire; young though you are, your judgement is already so matured that even we seniors like to obey your wishes.

A church has recently been built at Lyons, and carried to a successful completion by the zeal of Bishop Patiens; you know his holy, strenuous, and ascetic life, how by his abounding liberality and hospitable love towards the poor he erects to an equal height the temple of a spotless reputation. [3] At his request I wrote a hurried inscription for the end of the church in triple trochaic, a metre by this time as familiar to you as it has long been to me. Hexameters by the illustrious poets Constantius and Secundinus adorn the walls by the altar; these mere shame forbids me to copy here for you. It is with diffidence that I let my verse appear at all; comparison of their accomplished work with the poor efforts of my leisure would be too overwhelming. Just as a too beautiful bridesmaid makes the worst escort for a bride, and a dark man looks his swarthiest in white, so does my scrannel pipe sound common and is drowned by the music of their nobler instruments. Holding the middle post in space and the last in merit, my composition stands condemned as a poor thing, no less for its faulty art than for the presumption which has set it where it is. Their inscriptions properly outshine mine, which is but a sketchy and fanciful production. But excuses are of little use: let the wretched reed warble the lines demanded of me:

[4] 'O thou * who here applaudest the labours of Patiens our pontiff and father, be it thine to receive of heaven |55 an answer to a prayer according with thy desire. High stands the church in splendour, extending neither to right nor left, but with towering front looking

towards the equinoctial sunrise. Within is shining light, and the gilding of the coffered ceiling allures the sunbeams golden as itself. The whole basilica is bright with diverse marbles, floor vaulting and windows all adorned with figures of most various colour, and mosaic green as a blooming mead shows its design of sapphire cubes winding through the ground of verdant glass. The entrance is a triple portico proudly set on Aquitanian columns; a second portico of like design closes the atrium at the farther side, and the mid-space is flanked afar by columns numerous as forest stems. On the one side runs the noisy highway, on the other leaps the Saône; here turns the traveller who rides or goes afoot, here the driver of the creaking carriage; here the towers, bowed over the rope, raise their river-chant to Christ till the banks re-echo Alleluia. So raise the psalm, O wayfarer and boatman, for here is the goal of all mankind, hither runs for all the way of their salvation.'

[5] You see I have done your bidding as if you were the older and I the younger man. But mind not to forget that I expect repayment with compound interest; and to make the payment easy and positively delightful, there is only one thing to do: read shamelessly; never stop longing for your books. The auspicious event, now so near, I mean the home-coming of your bride, must not distract you; keep steadily before your mind how many wives have held the lamp for studious or meditative lords----Marcia for Hortensius, Terentia for |56 Tullius, Calpurnia for Pliny, Pudentilla for Apuleius, Rusticana for Symmachus. [6] When you are inclined to complain that feminine companionship may deaden not only your eloquence but your poetic talent as well, and dull the fine edge which long study has set upon your diction, remember how often Corinna helped her Ovid to round off a verse, Lesbia her Catullus, Caesennia her Gaetulicus, Argentaria her Lucan, Cynthia her Propertius, or Delia her Tibullus. Why, it is as clear as day that, to the studious, marriage is opportunity, and only to the idle an excuse. Set to, then; do not permit a mob of the unlettered to discourage your zeal for letters. For it is Nature's law in all the arts that the rarer the accomplishment, the higher the value. Farewell.

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 328 ff., who uses a corresponding English metre; also by Fertig, ii. 37.

Book 2 — XI.

To his friend Rusticus A. D. 461-7 [1] IF only we lived nearer to each other, and the distance which sunders us were less vast, I should allow no remissness in correspondence to affect the duties of our established intimacy. I should not cease, the foundations of our mutual friendship once laid, to raise thereon a noble structure by all honourable attention. The distance of our homes from each other may hardly affect the union of hearts linked once for all, yet it interferes with the intercourse of minds. [2] The remoteness of our cities is really responsible for the rarity of our letters; but so close is our friendship that we keep accusing ourselves, though all the time the |57 obstacles are purely natural, and afford no real ground either for blame or for excuse. I opened my gates in a good hour, illustrious lord, to your messengers, in whom I marked the effect of your training and the influence of their master's unassuming manners. I heard with pleasure all they had to say, and finally dismissed them as the event required. Farewell.

Book 2 — XII.

To his brother-in-law Agricola A. D. 461-7

[1] WHAT a fast and well-built boat you have sent, roomy enough to hold a couch; and a present of fish too! In addition, a steersman who knows the whole river well, with sturdy and expert oarsmen who seem able to shoot up-stream just as fast as down. But you must hold me excused if I decline your invitation to join your fishing; stronger nets than yours detain me here, nets of anxiety for our invalids, a source of concern not merely to our own circle but to many beyond its limits. If the natural feelings of a brother awaken in you the moment you open this, you too will give up the expedition and return. [2] The cause of this general solicitude is our Severiana. At first she was troubled by a shattering intermittent cough; upon this an exhaustive fever supervened which has grown worse during successive nights. She longs to get away into the country; when your letter came, we were actually preparing to leave town for the villa. Whether you decide to stay where you are, or to come to us, join your prayers to ours that Nature with her vigorous |58 growth may bring back health to one pining for country air. Your sister and I have been living in suspense between hope and fear; we thought that to oppose the invalid's wish would only make her fret the more.

So under Christ's guidance we are determined to fly the languor and heat of town with all our household, and incidentally escape the doctors also, who disagree across the bed, and by their ignorance and endless visits conscientiously kill off their patients. Only Justus shall be of our party, but in the quality of friend, not as physician; Justus, who, if this were a time for jesting, I could easily prove a Chiron rather than a Machaon.Let us then with all the more diligence entreat and beseech the Lord that the cure which our efforts fail to effect may come down to our invalid from above. Farewell.

Book 2 — XIII.

To Senanus* A. D. 461-7

[1] THE advocate Marcellinus has brought your letter; I find him a man of experience; he is of the sort that makes friends. The consecrated words of greeting over, you give all the rest of your space, no trifling amount, to laudation of Petronius Maximus, your imperial patron. With more persistence (or shall I call it amiability? than truth and justice, you style him 'the most fortunate', because, after holding all the most honourable offices of state, he at last attained the diadem. Personally, I shall always refuse to call |59 that man fortunate who is poised on the precipitous and slippery peak of office. [2] O the unspeakable miseries of that life, the life of your fortunates! And are they who usurp the title, as Sulla did, really to be so styled for trampling upon all law and justice, and believing power the only happiness? Does not their blindness to their own most harassing servitude alone prove them more wretched than other men? For as kings rule their subjects, so desire of domination dominates kings. [3] Were the fate of all princes before and after him left out of the account, this Maximus of yours would alone provide the maximum of warnings.He had scaled with intrepidity the prefectorian, the patrician, the consular citadels; with an unsated appetite for office, he took for a second term posts which he had already held.

But when the supreme effort brought him to the yawning gulf of the imperial dignity, his head swam beneath the diadem at sight of that enormous power, and the man who once could not bear to have a master could not now endure to be one. [4] Imagine how much was left in all this of the influence, the power, and the stability of the old life; then think of this two-months' principate, its beginning, its whirlwind course, its end. Is it not plain that his real happiness was over and done before this epithet of 'fortunate' was ever given him? The man who once was so great a figure, with his conspicuous way of life, his banquets, his lavish expense, his retinues, his literary pursuits, his official rank, his estates, his extensive patronage; who so jealously watched the flight of time that the clock must set before his eyes the passage of every hour; this man, once made emperor, and prisoned |60 in the palace walls, was rueing his own success before the first evening fell. And when his mountainous cares forbade him to mete the hours in his former tranquil way, he had to make instant renunciation of the old regular life; he soon discovered that the business of empire and a senatorial ease are inconsistent with each other. [5] The future did not deceive his sad

forebodings; it was no help to him to have traversed all other offices of the court in the fairest of fair weather;

his rule of it was from the first tempestuous, with popular tumults, tumults of soldiery, tumults of allies. And the climax was unprecedentedly swift and cruel; Fortune, who had long cozened him, showed now all her faithlessness and made a bloody end; it was the last of her that stung him, as the tail of the scorpion stings. A prominent, noble man of high culture, whose talents raised him to quaestor's rank, a man of great influence among the nobility, I mean Fulgentius, used to say that whenever the thrice-loathed burden of a crown set Maximus longing for his ancient ease, he would often hear him exclaim: 'Happy thou, O Damocles, whose royal duresse did not outlast a single banquet!' [6] History tells us that Damocles was a Sicilian of Syracuse, and an acquaintance of the tyrant Dionysius. One day, when he was extolling to the skies the privileges of his patron's life without any comprehension of its drawbacks, Dionysius said to him: 'Would you like to see for yourself, at this very board, what the blessings and the curses of royalty are like?' 'I should think I would,' replied the other. Instantly the dazzled and delighted creature was stripped of his commoner's garb and made resplendent with robes of Tyrian and Tarentine dye; |61 they set him on a gold couch with coverings of silk, a figure glittering with gems and pearls. [7] But just as a Sardanapalian feast was about to begin, and bread of fine Leontine wheat was handed round;

just as rare viands were brought in on plate of yet greater rarity; just as the Falernian foamed in great gem-like cups and unguents tempered the ice-cold crystal; just as the whole room breathed cinnamon and frankincense and exotic perfumes floated to every nostril; just as the garlands were drying on heads drenched with nard,----behold a bare sword, swinging from the ceiling right over his purple-mantled shoulders, as if every instant it must fall and pierce his throat. The menace of that heavy blade on that horsehair thread curbed his greed and made him reflect on Tantalus; the awful thought oppressed him that all he swallowed might be rendered through gaping wounds. [8] He wept, he prayed, he sighed in every key; and when at last he was let go, he was off like a flash, flying the wealth and the delights of kings as fast as most men follow after them. A horror of high estate brought him back with longing to the mean, nicely cautioned never again to think or call the mortal happy who lives ringed round with army and guards, or broods heavy over his spoils while the steel presses no less heavily upon him than he himself upon his gold. If such a state be the goal of happiness I know not my lord brother; but that those who attain it are the most miserable of men is proved beyond dispute. Farewell. |62

* Partly translated by Hodgkin, ii. 200-3.

Book 2 — XIV.

To his friend Maurusius A. D. 461-7 [1] I HEAR that your vines have responded to your hard work and our general hopes with a more abundant harvest than a threatening and lean year promised. I expect that you will consequently stay longer at the village of Vialoscum; was not the place formerly called Martialis, from the time when it formed Caesar's winter quarters? Of course you have a rich vineyard there, and a large farm besides worthy of its great proprietor, both of which will keep you and yours busy harvesting the various crops and always in fresh quarters. [2] When your granaries and stores are full, you may decide to pass the snowy months of Janus and Numa in rural ease by your smoking hearth until swallow and stork reappear; if so, we too shall cut short engagements hardly promising enough to keep us in town, and while you enjoy your country life we shall enjoy your society. You know me well enough to be aware that even the sight of a fine estate with ample revenues could never give me half the satisfaction or the keen pleasure which I derive from intercourse with a neighbour of my own years and so worthy of my esteem. Farewell.

Book 3 — I.

To his friend Avitus c. A. D. 472

[1] FROM our earliest boyhood and through our youth you and I have been linked by many bonds of mutual affection. To begin with, our mothers were very near relations. Then we were born about the same time and were contemporaries at school; we were together initiated into the study of the arts and employed our leisure in the same amusements; we were promoted by the same imperial favour; we were colleagues in the service of the state. Lastly, in personal likings and antipathies our judgement has always agreed----perhaps a stronger and more efficient factor this, in widening the scope of friendship than all the rest together. [2] The outward resemblance of our careers drew us together by the bond of similar occupation; inwardly we were less alike, for yours was by far the higher and more excellent nature. And now I gladly recognize that yours is the hand to crown the edifice of our long mutual regard by this most timely endowment of the church in our poor town of Clermont, whose unworthy bishop I am. In this estate of Cutiacum, lying almost at its gates, you have indeed made an important addition to its property; to the members of our sacred profession |64 whom your generosity has thus enriched, the convenience of access counts for almost as much as the revenue which the place yields. [3] Under your late sister's will, you were only a co-heir, but the example of your piety has already moved your surviving sister to emulate your good works.

And heaven has already repaid you as you deserve for your own deed and its effect upon her; God has chosen you out to be exalted by unusual good fortune in inheritances. He did not long delay to reward your devotion a hundredfold, and it is our sure belief that these earthly gifts will be followed by heavenly gifts hereafter. I may tell you, if you are really unaware of it, that the Nicetian succession is heaven's repayment for Cutiacum surrendered. [4] We pray you in the future to extend to the city itself the interest you have already shown its church; henceforward it should be more than ever the object of your protection since you have inherited a property there. You may conclude from the attitude of the Goths how valuable the place might become if you would only make it frequent visits; they are always depreciating their own Septimania, and even talking of returning it to the empire, all because they covet this land of yours, which they would like to annex even if everything

upon it were laid waste. [5] But by God's grace and your mediation a more tranquil outlook lies before us.

For though the Goths have broken their old bounds, though their valour and the impetus of a vague greed have pushed their frontiers to the Rhône and Loire, yet the esteem in which you are held and the weight your opinion carries, should so influence both sides that we shall learn to refuse when we ought, and they to refrain |65 from further demands when met with a firm denial. Farewell.

Book 3 — II.

To his friend Constantius A. D. 474

[1] THE people of Clermont salute you, a great guest in their lowly homes, coming without ambitious retinue and simply environed by their love. Merciful God, what joy they felt amid their tribulation when you set your venerated foot within their half-ruined walls. How dense was the crowd of both sexes, and of every rank and age about you; how impartially you gave a cheering word to one and all; how kind the small boys found you, how considerate the young men, how helpful in advice the older among us. What tears you shed over our buildings ruined by the flames and our homes half burned to the ground, as if you had been the father of us all. What grief you showed at the sight of fields buried under the bones of the unburied dead. And afterwards what a power of encouragement you were, with what spirit you urged the people to repair their loss. [2] Over and above this, you found the city no less desolated by internal dissension than by the barbarian onslaught; but you conciliated all; you renewed their harmony; you gave the country back her sons. The walls are re-manned, the people restored to them at unity, all thanks to you; your counsel it was which brought them back into one mind as into one city. They all regard you as their father and themselves as your children; they perceive with an infallible eye |66 wherein lies your greatest title to praise.

[3] For day by day it is borne in upon their minds what a magnificent thing this is that you have done at so advanced an age and in so delicate and infirm a state of health. Despite your noble birth and the veneration with which you are regarded, you broke down every barrier by sheer force of love; all the difficulties of the journey were nothing to you, long ways and short days, thick snows and thin fare, wide wastes and narrow lodging,roads full of holes, now sodden with rain, now ribbed with frost, highways covered with rough stones, rivers slippery with ice; you had steep hills to climb, valleys choked with continual landslides to pass; through every discomfort you came triumphant with the love of a whole people for your reward because your own comfort was the last thing of which you thought. [4] And now we beseech the Lord that he may hear our prayer and set far the term of your life; that the friendship of all good men may be yours to have and hold; that our affection which you seem to be leaving behind may ever be about your path; and finally, that the fair structure

of our concord which you began to restore, may be regarded from foundation to summit as your peculiar work. Farewell.

Book 3 — III.

To his brother-in-law Ecdicius A. D. 474

[1] THERE never was a time when my people of Clermont needed you so much as now; their affection for you is |67 a ruling passion for more than one reason. First, because a man's native soil may rightly claim the chief place in his affection; secondly, because you were not only your countrymen's joy at birth, but the desire of their hearts while yet unborn. Perhaps of no other man in this age can the same be said; but the proof of the statement is that as your mother's time advanced, the citizens with one accord fell to checking every day as it went by. [2] I will not dwell on those common things which yet so deeply stir a man's heart, as that here was the grass on which as an infant you crawled, or that here were the first fields you trod, the first rivers you swam, the first woods through which you broke your way in the chase. I will not remind you that here you first played ball and cast the dice, here you first knew sport with hawk and hound, with horse and bow. I will forget that your schooldays brought us a veritable confluence of learners and the learned from all quarters, and that if our nobles were imbued with the love of eloquence and poetry, if they resolved to forsake the barbarous Celtic dialect, it was to your personality that they owed all.

[3] Nothing so kindled their universal regard for you as this, that you first made Romans of them and never allowed them to relapse again. And how should the vision of you ever fade from any patriot's memory as we saw you in your glory upon that famous day, when a crowd of both sexes and every rank and age lined our half-ruined walls to watch you cross the space between us and the enemy? At midday, and right across the middle of the plain, you brought your little company of eighteen safe through some thousands of the Goths, a feat which |68 posterity will surely deem incredible. [4] At the sight of you, nay, at the very rumour of your name, those seasoned troops were smitten with stupefaction; their captains were so amazed that they never stopped to note how great their own numbers were and yours how small. They drew off their whole force to the brow of a steep hill; they had been besiegers before, but when you appeared they dared not even deploy for action. You cut down some of their bravest, whom gallantry alone had led to defend the rear. You never lost a man in that sharp engagement, and found yourself sole master of an absolutely exposed plain with no more soldiers to back you than you often have guests at your own table.

[5] Imagination may better conceive than words describe the procession that streamed out to you as you made your leisurely way towards the city, the greetings, the shouts of applause, the tears of heartfelt joy. One saw you receiving in the press a veritable ovation on this glad return; the courts of your spacious house were crammed with people. Some kissed away the dust of battle from your person, some took from the horses the bridles slimed with foam and blood, some inverted and ranged the sweat-drenched saddles; others undid the flexible cheek-pieces of the helmet you longed to remove, others set about unlacing your greaves. One saw folk counting the notches in swords blunted by much slaughter, or measuring with trembling fingers the holes made in cuirasses by cut or thrust. [6] Crowds danced with joy and hung upon your comrades; but naturally the full brunt of popular delight was borne by you. You were among unarmed men at last; but not all your arms would have availed to extricate |69 you from them. There you stood, with a fine grace suffering the silliest congratulations; half torn to pieces by people madly rushing to salute you, but so loyally responsive to this popular devotion that those who took the greatest liberties seemed surest of your most generous acknowledgements. [7] And finally I shall say nothing of the service you performed in raising what was practically a public force from your private resources, and with little help from our magnates.

I shall not tell of the chastisement you inflicted on the barbaric raiders, and the curb imposed upon an audacity which had begun to exceed all bounds; or of those surprise attacks which annihilated whole squadrons with the loss of only two or three men on your side. Such disasters did you inflict upon the enemy by these unexpected onsets, that they resorted to a most unworthy device to conceal their heavy losses. They decapitated all whom they could not bury in the short night-hours, and let the headless lie, forgetting in their desire to avoid the identification of their dead, that a trunk would betray their ruin just as well as a whole body. [8] When, with morning light, they saw their miserable artifice revealed in all its savagery, they turned at last to open obsequies; but their precipitation disguised the ruse no better than the ruse itself had concealed the slaughter. They did not even raise a temporary mound of earth over the remains; the dead were neither washed, shrouded, nor interred; but the imperfect rites they received befitted the manner of their death. Bodies were brought in from everywhere, piled on dripping wains; and since you never paused a moment in following up the rout, they had to be taken into houses which were then hurriedly set |70 alight, till the fragments of blazing roofs, falling in upon them, formed their funeral pyres. [9] But I run on beyond my proper limits;

my aim in writing was not to reconstruct the whole story of your achievements, but to remind you of a few among them, to convince you how eagerly your friends here long to see you again; there is only one remedy, at once quick and efficacious, for such fevered expectancy as theirs, and that is your prompt return. If, then, the entreaties of our people can persuade you, sound the retreat and start homeward at once. The intimacy of kings is dangerous; court it no more; the most distinguished of mankind have well compared it to a flame, which illuminates things at a short distance but consumes them if they come within its range. Farewell.

Book 3 — IV.

To his friend Magnus Felix A.D. 473 [1] THE bearer of this is Gozolas, a Jew, and a client of your excellency, a man I should like if I could only overcome my contempt for his sect. I write in great anxiety. Our town lives in terror of a sea of tribes which find in it an obstacle to their expansion and surge in arms all round it. We are exposed as a pitiful prey at the mercy of rival peoples, suspected by the Burgundians, almost in contact with the Goths; we have to face at once the fury of our assailants and the envy of our defenders. [2] But of this more later. Only let me know that all goes well with you, and I shall be |71 content. For though we may be punished in the sight of all men for some obscure offence, we are still generous enough of heart to desire for others all prosperity. If a man cannot wish others well in evil times he is no better than a captive; the enemy that takes him is his own unworthy nature. Farewell.

Book 3 — V.

To his friend Hypatius A.D. 473

[1] THE excellent Donidius admires and respects your character; and had he no other aim than his own family advantage, he might safely confide in your acknowledged reputation, and feel no need of another's advocacy. But he thinks so well of me, that he would have me ask for him what he could certainly obtain alone. Consequently, you will acquire a crowning title of distinction in making both of us your debtors, though one alone will reap the material benefit. [2] He seeks to acquire the other moiety of the estate of Eborolacum,abandoned even before the barbarian came, but now in possession of a patrician family; his rights are clear, but the added weight of your support would be very welcome. Respect for the memory of his ancestors, and no mere greed, inclines him to this purchase, for down to the recent death of his stepfather the whole property belonged to his family. He is of an economical turn of mind, but not the man to covet his neighbour's goods; the loss of a former possession in itself troubles him little; the point of honour decides him; it is not avarice which prompts his action, but the |72 shame of inactivity. [3] Deign therefore to consider what you owe to your own credit, to his honourable desire, to my friendly intercession; help to secure for him this chance of rounding off the estate. These paternal acres are not just casually known to him; he crawled upon them as an infant hardly weaned. He will make little profit by their recovery; but he feels that it would have been too contemptible not to make the effort. Whatever favour you may be able to accord to one whom I regard as a brother in years, a son by profession, a fellow citizen by origin, and a friend by loyalty, I shall be as much beholden as if the matter turned to my own particular advantage. Farewell.

Book 3 — VI.

To his friend Eutropius A. D. 470 (?) [1] IF kind memories still remain to you of our old comradeship and of an intimacy ever and again renewed, you will readily understand that our soaring wishes will follow your ascent to each new height of office. We rejoice with you over your insignia, believing that thereby your house and our friendship are alike promoted. In proof whereof I remind you of my letter of exhortations , which I think had no small share in this result. [2] But what trouble I had in persuading you that a man might be a philosopher and a prefect at the same time! You were deep in the tenets of Plotinus, and the Platonic school had seduced you into a quietism unsuited to your age. I maintained that only a man without family |73 obligations was free to profess a philosophy of that nature. Most people ascribed your scorn for public service to simple indolence; malignant tongues added that our nobles fail to rise in the state less from disinclination than incapacity. [3] Now, therefore, as a Christian should, I begin by rendering unstinted thanks to Our Lord who has raised you to an official rank befitting your exalted birth; our hopes are also raised, so that we may fairly look for even better things to come. It is a common saying with provincials that a good year really depends less on ample crops than on a good administration; it must be yours, honoured lord, to crown all our expectations by such measures as the present occasion demands. Our nobles do not forget the stock from which you spring; they are sure that so long as the family of Sabinus controls their destinies, they have nothing to fear from the house of Sabinianus.Farewell.

Book 3 — VII.

To his friend [Magnus] Felix A.D. 474

[1] You are very sparing in your correspondence. Each of us obeys his own temperament: I gossip, you hold your peace. And since in other obligations of friendship you are beyond reproach, I am driven to the conclusion that this indefatigable love of ease must itself be a kind of virtue. But, seriously, will no thought of old acquaintance ever lift you from the rut of this interminable silence? Or are you really unaware that it is nothing short of insult to refuse a talkative man an |74 answer? You bury yourself in the depths of a library or office and give no sign of life, yet all the while expect the attention of a line now and then from me; and this though you know quite well that mine is rather a ready than a gifted pen. [2] The apprehensions among which we live ought alone to furnish you with subject enough for letters; write then, and do not fail to entrust a good bulky missive to some one coming our way, to relieve your friends' anxieties and especially to let them know whether the new quaestor Licinianus is likely to open a door of safety out of these mutual alarms. He is described as one who has more than fulfilled the expectations formed of him, proving greater on acquaintance than his great repute; in fine, a man conspicuously endowed with the best gifts of nature and good fortune.

[3] A model of judgement, adorned with equal discretion and personal charm, this trusty envoy is worthy of the power which he represents. He is quite free from affectation or pretence; there is nothing feigned in the gravity which lends weight to his words. He does not follow the example of most envoys who seek a reputation as safe men, and are over-timid in diplomacy; on the other hand, he is not to be numbered among those ambassadors to barbarian courts, who sell their master's secrets, and work for their own advantage rather than that of their mission. [4] Such is the character of the man as favourable rumour carries it to us. But let us know at once if the description squares with fact. Then perhaps we may snatch some breathing-space from our unceasing vigils; at present neither a snowy day nor a cloudy moonless night will tempt our people from their watch upon the walls. Even were the barbarian |75 to draw off to winter quarters, their fears are too deep to be eradicated; at the most, they can only be deferred. Encourage us with hope of better times; you may regard our country as remote, but the cause we stand for is as near to your own heart as to ours. Farewell.

Book 3 — VIII.

To his friend Eucherius (No indication of date) [1] I HAVE the highest respect for the men of antiquity, but mere priority in time shall never lead me to place the virtues and the merits of our contemporaries upon a lower plane of excellence. It may be true that the Roman state has sunk to such extreme misery that it has ceased to reward its loyal sons; but I will not therefore admit that a Brutus or a Torquatus is never born into our age. You ask the purport of this declaration? You yourself shall point my moral, most capable of men; the state owes you the rewards which history applauds when granted to the great men of the past. [2] Men ignorant of the facts had best refrain from carelessly conceived opinions; they had best abandon the obstinate habit of looking up to the men of old time and down on those of our own day. It is abundantly clear that the recognition which the state owes you is now long overdue. Yet what is there to wonder at in this, when a race of uncivilized allies directs the Roman power, yes, and bids fair to bring it crashing to the ground? We have men of rank and valour who excel anything we ourselves could hope, or our enemies believe. |76 Aye, and they do the old deeds; but the reward is not forthcoming. Farewell.

Book 3 — IX.

To his friend Riothamus c. A. D. 472 [1] I WILL write once more in my usual strain, mingling compliment with grievance. Not that I at all desire to follow up the first words of greeting with disagreeable subjects, but things seem to be always happening which a man of my order and in my position can neither mention without unpleasantness, nor pass over without neglect of duty. Yet I do my best to remember the burdensome and delicate sense of honour which makes you so ready to blush for others' faults. [2] The bearer of this is an obscure and humble person, so harmless, insignificant, and helpless that he seems to invite his own discomfiture; his grievance is that the Bretons are secretly enticing his slaves away. Whether his indictment is a true one, I cannot say; but if you can only confront the parties and decide the matter on its merits, I think the unfortunate man may be able to make good his charge, if indeed a stranger from the country unarmed, abject and impecunious to boot, has ever a chance of a fair or kindly hearing against adversaries with all the advantages he lacks, arms, astuteness, turbulences, and the aggressive spirit of men backed by numerous friends. Farewell. | 77

Book 3 — X.

To his friend Tetradius A. D. 461-7 [1] IT is a most laudable trait in the character of younger men when they resort to more experienced heads in questions of perplexity; as the honourable Theodoras now does. He is a man of good family, but quite as much ennobled by his admirable modesty as by his high descent. My letter introduces him to the source of humane letters, I mean the pure fount of your erudition, to which he is setting out with the most commendable ardour, hoping to learn much himself and perhaps bring away as much to impart to others. [2] Should even an experience like yours fail to give him all the help he needs against such factious and powerful opponents, at all events your skill and advice will stand him in good stead. Unless you wish me to conclude that you regard our joint petition as troublesome and importunate, justify his hopes of you and this testimonial of mine by a favourable reply, so that the cause and wavering fortunes of this suppliant may be fortified by your salutary counsel. Farewell.

Book 3 — XI.

To his friend Simplicius (No indication of date) [1] A KIND of fatality attends my hopes, and you still grudge us a sight of you. But, most excellent of |78 men, we need not therefore regard you as one whose memorable actions must necessarily escape our notice. For all our people, the notables included, hail you with one accord as the model of all that a father should be, even in the select and critical society in which you move. [2] The manner in which you have brought up your daughter, and chosen a husband for her, confirms the opinion of our friends; and the accomplishment of your desires in this union must have raised in your mind an agreeable uncertainty whether you have most excelled in the choice of the one or the education of the other. On that score, venerable parents, you may wholly set your minds at rest; you surpass every one because your children surpass even you. Please, therefore, excuse my earlier letter; it was negligent of me not to have sent it before I did, but the dispatch of it, I fear, betrayed the chatterer. My officiousness will lose its blemish of loquacity if you condone the impertinence of this greeting by sending me an answer. Farewell.

Book 3 — XII.

To his nephew Secundus c. A. D. 467

[1] I HAVE dreadful news. Yesterday profane hands all but desecrated the grave where my grandsire and your great-grandsire lies, but God's intervening arm stayed the accomplishment of an impious act. The cemetery had for years been overcrowded with burned and unburned burials, and interment there had long ceased. But snows and constant rains had caused the mounds |79 to settle; the raised earth had been dispersed, and the ground had resumed its former even surface. This explained how it was that some undertaker's men presumed to profane the spot with their grave-digging tools just as if it were unoccupied by human bodies. [2] Must I relate what happened? They had already unturfed the ground, so that the soil showed black, and were piling the fresh sods upon the old grave. By a mere chance I happened to be passing on my way to Clermont, and saw this public outrage from the top of a neighbouring hill. I gave my horse his head, and dashed at full speed over the intervening ground, flat or steep was all the same to me; I grudged even those brief moments, and sending a shout before me, stopped the infamy even before I myself reached the scene. The villains, caught in the act, were still hesitating whether to make off or hold their ground, when I was upon them. It was wrong, no doubt, but I could not allow them an instant's impunity;

on the very grave of our beloved ancestor I gave them such a trouncing as should in future secure the dead from molestation, and safeguard the pious care of the survivors. [3] I did not reserve the case for the judgement of our good bishop, considering it best for the common advantage not to do so; I knew too well the strength of my own case, and his gentle nature; he was certain to judge me with too much severity, and these fellows with too great a lenience. To satisfy his right to be informed I did explain the whole affair after I had resumed my journey, and this upright and holy man gave me far more than the mere absolution I expected; he extolled my righteous indignation, declaring that in his opinion men who perpetrated |80 so audacious a deed deserved the death our forefathers would have inflicted. [4] The incident should help to prevent any similar mischance in future, and I beg you to see that the disturbed earth is at once raised to a mound again, and to have a smooth flat slab placed upon it at my expense. I have deposited a sum of money with the venerable Gaudentius to cover the cost of the stone and of the mason's labour. The verses

which I enclose were composed the night of the occurrence; of course they are not finished to perfection; I was too busy with preparations for the road.

[5] Such as they are, please have them carved on the tomb with the smallest possible delay, and be specially careful that the stonemason makes no errors either by negligence or with intention; for whatever the cause, the captious reader will put it all down to me. If you carry out this pious obligation I shall thank you no less heartily than if you were not certain to receive part of the praise and credit. For were I, your uncle, no longer with you, the whole responsibility of this duty would have devolved on you as the next descendant after myself.

'A grandson not all unworthy of such a grandsire, I dedicate to him, though all too late, this epitaph, my father and my paternal uncles being dead, that you, O passer by, may never tread on unmounded earth, unwitting of the reverence due to him who is buried in this grave. Here lies Apollinaris, who, having ruled all Gaul, was gathered to the bosom of a mourning country. He was learned in the law and helpful to his kind above all other men. He laboured for the land, and for the State, and in the cause of eloquence; and, example perilous to others, he dared be free |81 under the rule of tyrants. But this stands as his chief title to fame, that of all his race he was the first to purify his brow with the sign of the cross and his limbs with baptismal water; he first abandoned the old sacrilegious rites. This is the highest glory, this the transcendent virtue, if a man outstrip in hope those whom he equals in honours, and is placed by his desert above his fathers though on earth his titles were the same as theirs.'

[6] I know well that this epitaph is unworthy of our accomplished ancestor; yet methinks the souls of the lettered do not refuse a poetic tribute. And neither of us need regard as too belated the pious duty which we have now fulfilled in our quality as heirs in the third and fourth degree. How many revolving years rolled by before Alexander celebrated funeral rites for Achilles' shade, or Julius Caesar for the shade of that Hector whom he treated as an ancestor of his own? Farewell.

Book 3 — XIII.

To [his son] Apollinaris c. A. D. 469

[1] THE love of purity which leads you to shun the company of the immodest has my whole approval; I rejoice at it and respect it, especially when the men you shun are those whose aptitude for scenting and retailing scandals leaves nothing privileged or sacred, wretches who think themselves enormously facetious when they violate the public sense of shame by shameless language. Hear now from my lips that the |82 standard-bearer of the vile troop is the very Gnatho of our country. [2] Imagine an arch-stringer of tales, arch-fabricator of false charges, arch-retailer of insinuations. A fellow whose talk is at once without end and without point; a buffoon without charm in gaiety; a bully who dares not stand his ground. Inquisitive without insight, and three-times more the boor for his brazen affectation of fine manners. A creature of the present hour, with ever a carping word ready for the past and a sneer for the future. When he is after some advantage, no beggar so importunate as he; when refused, none so bitter in depreciation. Grant his request and he grumbles, using every artifice to get better terms; he moans and groans when called on to refund a debt, and if he pays, you never hear the end of it. But when any one wants a loan of him he lies about his means and pretends he has not the wherewithal; if he does lend, he makes capital out of the loan, and bruits the secret abroad; if debtors delay repayment he resorts to calumny;

when they have absolved the debt he tries to deny receipt. [3] Abstinence is his abomination, he loves the table; but a man who lives well wins no praise from him unless he treats well too. Personally, he is avarice itself; the best of bread is not for his digestion unless it is also the bread of others. He only eats at home if he can pilfer his viands, and send them off amid a storm of buffets. He cannot indeed be wholly denied the virtue of frugality; he fasts when he cannot get himself invited. Yet with the light perversity of the parasite, he will often excuse himself when asked; on the other hand, if he sees that men avoid him, he will fish for invitations. [4] If left out he grows abusive; if admitted, unbearably |83 elate: no blow descends on him unexpected. If dinner is served late, he falls like a bandit upon the dishes; if appetite is stilled too soon, he falls to lamentation. Thirst unquenched makes him quarrelsome; drunkenness makes him sick. If he banters others, he grows scurrilous; if others banter him, ungovernable; take him for all in all, he is like the filth in sewers,

the fouler the more you stir it. His life brings pleasure to few, love to none, contemptuous mockery to all. He is one to burst bladders or break canes upon, one whose thirst for drink is only excelled by his thirst for scandal;

exhaling loathsomeness, frothing wine, uttering venom, he makes one doubt for what to hate him most, his unsavouriness, his drunken habits, or his villany. [5] 'But', you may say, 'perhaps a fair complexion lends a colour to a vile nature; perhaps his charm of person redeems ineptitude of mind; the man may have elegance or exquisite taste; he may create a good impression on those who meet him.' In point of fact, his person is fouler and more unsightly than a corpse rolled half-burnt from the pyre when the brands have settled----such a thing as a very undertaker's slave could not bring himself to put back. He hardly sees out of his; eyes, which, like the Stygian lake, roll waters down through darkness. [6] His ears are elephantine; an ulcered skin surrounds each aperture with indurated waste, either helix is bossed with suppurating tumours. His nose is broad at the nostril and narrow at the bridge, strait for his own olfactory ends, but for the spectator a cavernous vision of horror. He obtrudes a face with leaden lips and a bestial rictus, with purulent gums and brown teeth; a foul mephitic odour breathes from his |84 decayed and hollow teeth, enhanced by eructations from the feasts of yesterday and the bilge of his excesses at the board. [7] A forehead too he flaunts hideous with creases and distension of the brows. He grows a beard which age vainly whitens, since Sylla's malady keeps it black. His whole face is as pale as if it were ever dolorous with infesting shades.

I spare you the hulking residue, gout-ridden, fat and flabby. I spare you his weal-furrowed skull, covered with almost as many scars as hairs. I spare you the description of a nape so short that when his head is thrown back it seems to merge into his shoulder-blades. [8] The sunken carriage, the lost grace and vigour of his arms, the gouty hands bound cestus-like with greasy poultices; all these I spare you, so too the acrid hircine armpits that entrench his sides, and pollute the air for every nostril near him with a reek three times more pestilent than that from Ampsanctus' cave. And breasts collapsed with adiposity horrible on a man's body even in mere protuberance, but now hanging like a mother's. And the pendulous folds of the abdomen about genitals thrice shameful in their debility, a foul creased covering worse than what it hides. [9] Why should I tell of his back and spine? True, the ribs do sweep round from the vertebral joints and cover the chest, but the whole branching structure of bones is drowned under a billowing main of belly. I pass over the fat reins and buttocks which make even his paunch look insignificant in comparison. I pass the bent and withered thigh, the swollen knees, the slender hams, the horny shanks, the weak ankles, the small toes and enormous feet.

As I have drawn him, he is horrible enough in his deformity, a monster |85 from whom his infinite noisomeness drains half the blood and life, who cannot sit a litter or walk a yard, however much they prop him. But his tongue is more detestable still than his other members. [10] He keeps it busy in the service of the vilest prurience; but it is most dangerous of all to patrons with anything to hide. For those in luck he belauds, but those who are

unfortunate he betrays; let a tempting moment but urge to disclosure of a friend's secret, and instantly this Spartacus will break all bars and open every seal. He will mine with the unseen tunnels of his treachery the houses which the rams of open war have failed to breach. This is the fashion in which our Daedalus crowns the edifice of his friendships, sticking as close as Theseus in prosperity; but when adversity comes, more elusive than any Proteus. [11] The more you avoid even a first introduction to such company the better you will please me; especially to those so shameless that they talk like degraded players at the booths, and know neither bar nor bridle. For when a man exults in leaving all seemliness and decency behind, and fouls a loose tongue with the dirt of all lawless licence, be sure his heart is no less filthy than his language. You may find an evil liver with a serious tongue; the foul tongue and virtuous life are very rarely allied. Farewell.

Book 3 — XIV.

To his friend Placidus After A. D. 477 [1] THOUGH your loved Grenoble holds you far from me, I learn from a sure channel----your former hosts---- |86 that you are kind enough to prefer my trifles in prose or verse to all the other volumes on your shelves. It goes without saying that it gave me pleasure to hear how my writings occupy your leisure; but I understand well enough that it is really affection for the author and not the quality of his work which procures you this delight. My debt is all the greater; friendship wins me the honour which you could not honestly give the composition. [2] For the rest, I have not yet considered what definitive reply I shall make to the detractors of my work. The self-appointed critic absorbs a sound or unsound style with equal appetite; he cares no more that the world should exalt his favourite than that it should despise the object of his mockery. And so we see the fine construction, the comeliness and grandeur of our Latin tongue exposed to contemptuous criticism of idle quidnuncs; minds careless and so flippant as this want books only to carp at; their use for literature is a mere abuse. Farewell.

Book 4 — I.

To his friend Probus A.D. 461-7

[1] You married my cousin , whence the first and principal tie between us; the cousinly relationship often leads to a stronger, purer, and more unmixed affection than that between two brothers. For when brothers' quarrels over property are once appeased, their children have no longer cause for disagreement, and so it often happens that cousins are the more deeply attached; the enmities arising from the partition of estates are over, the tie of blood relationship remains. The second link between us is intellectual, and formed by a similarity of studies; our literary taste is identical; we praise and blame the same things; a style approved or disapproved by one produces the same impression on the other. [2] But I am presumptuous in venturing a comparison between my judgement and yours. It is common knowledge among young and old that you were my real master, though we were nominally both pupils of another. You were everybody's teacher in every branch of literature. All of us learned from you, except those who had not the brains, or could not do themselves proper justice: our epic poets derived from you their lofty vein, our comic poets their humour, our lyric poets their musical art; from |4 you the orator drew his rhetoric, the historian his respect for truth, the satirist his pictorial gift, the grammarian his fidelity to rule, the panegyrist his plausibility, the sophist his gravity of style, the writer of epigram his petulance and point, the commentator his lucid method, the lawyer his obscurity. Heavens!

how proud our respective fathers used to be when they saw that Christ had given you grace to teach and me to learn, that you not only did what lay within your power but also enjoyed the doing of it, and so deserved a name for goodness no less than a learned reputation. [3] And indeed in your case Eusebius' house proved a veritable mint of the sciences and arts; you were there struck on a philosophical die, and to the delight of your own instructor were able to impart to the rest of us every phase of knowledge and of eloquent expression. Just as Plato the pupil was more expert than Socrates, so did you excel our good Eusebius. While he was maturing our tender, unformed and plastic youth with ruthless floggings, or trying to ground it on wholesome principles, there you were, a dialectician born, moving with Attic ease through all the categories of Aristotle.

[4] Yet how admirable his principles were after all, how precious in possession! If only some migratory philosopher could export them to the Sigambri on their marshes, or the Alans of

the Caucasus, or the mare-milking Geloni, the horny hearts of all these stark and brutal folks, yes and all their frozen fibres, were surely thawed and softened, while we should cease to sneer and scoff, and tremble by turns at their stolidity and their ferocious natures, which now brood in bestial |5 dullness, now burst into swift flame. [5] Since, then, our family connexion and our studies thus unite us, preserve the laws of friendship unshaken, wherever your abode may be; though my home is far from yours, let our hearts draw nearer by virtue of this affection, which I for my part will keep inviolate as long as breath remains in my body. Farewell.

Book 4 — II.

Claudianus [Mamertus] to the Lord Bishop Sidonius A. D. 472 [1] IF I could only meet you now and again, my dear lord, were it only for a short time, I should not have to look about on all sides for any kind of messenger whose goodwill or necessities might help me pay the debt of correspondence owed you. Numerous causes, all sad ones, prevent me from seeing you again; even an opportunity of writing comes rarely or not at all. Whether all this excuses me or not, you yourself must judge. [2] But in often favouring with your letters persons who either do not expect them, or deserve to get them less than I, you on your side are guilty of an offence against the laws of friendship which may not be committed with impunity. Though I have said little, I confess that it has wounded me never to have received from you any acknowledgement of the book which you have deigned to allow me to publish under the auspices of your illustrious name. But perhaps you cannot spare even |6 a few short moments for a friendship of such long standing as ours?

[3] I wonder if you will ever involve yourself in any interest which does not turn to other folks' advantage. When you propitiate God by prayer, you entreat Him not only for your friends but for men you have never seen; when you search out the mysteries of Holy Writ, the more deeply your own mind is imbued with doctrine, the fuller the stream which you impart to others. When you lavish your goods upon the poor, there is a sense in which you may be said to serve yourself, but your aim is the service of others. Not a single action of yours is so barren as to yield abundant fruit to your sole self and not to a host of other people as well. [4] No possible pretext, then, can be alleged by any stretch of fancy on which an intimate friend like myself should be deprived of his own especial fruit, while strangers in scores are allowed to eat of it in plenty. I suppose you follow the precedent of the giver in the Gospel, and accord to the unworthy but importunate what you deny to a hungering friend. But if you allow yourself to grow hardened in this habit, I shall take measures to assure your repentance. For if your taciturnity exceeds all reason, my communications shall do the same. It is quite evident that you will have to be punished by my letters, as I myself am punished by your silence. Farewell. |7

Book 4 — III.

To Claudianus [Mamertus] A.D. 472

[1] You declare, most honoured master, that I have offended against the laws of friendship: you allege that though it is my turn to give you epistolary greeting, I have let my tablets and stylus lie, and no traveller's hand has been burdened with papyrus of mine inscribed with my assiduous wishes for your welfare. The suggestion is unfair; you cannot really suppose that any man on earth, with the least devotion to Latin letters, would lightly submit his compositions to the ordeal of being read to you; you, with whose accomplishments, but for the overwhelming privilege of antiquity, I should never rank either Fronto's gravity, or the fulminating force of Apuleius; for compared with you the Varros, both he of the Atax and he of Reate, and the Plinies, uncle and nephew, will always seem provincial. [2] In support of this opinion I have only to mention your new volume on the nature of the Soul, with all its wealth of evidence and mastery of diction. The dedication to me I regarded as an inestimable gift: the fame which my own books would never keep alive, would now be immortalized by yours. Great God! what a wonderful book it is, and of what authority! abstruse in subject, in exposition clear as day; in statement serried, expansive in discussion, and though barbed with many a point of syllogism, yet soft with vernal flowers of eloquence! [3] You have found ancient words which by their very age regain the charm of novelty;

compared with these even a classic vocabulary |8 seems obsolete. And what is more, the style, so succinct in its short clauses, has yet an even flow; loaded with facts, concise in comment, these pages do not merely propound----they inform. It was once, and rightly, held the highest part of eloquence to condense much matter into a small space and aim at exhausting the subject before the paper. [4] And what a charming feature it is in your books, when you allow some relaxation in the sustained display of mastery and interpose most welcome graces amid the severities of argument; by this means the reader's attention, strained by following that exhaustive analysis of doctrine and philosophy, is suddenly relieved by the most delightful of digressions, comforting as harbours after open seas. O work of endless excellences! O worthy expression of a genius subtle without tenuity, which neither freshets of hyperbole swell, nor mean terms minish and abase! [5] And then the unrivalled, the unique learning conspicuous in so many fields, and used to hold its own with the great masters in the discussion of every art. It does not hesitate, if need be, to wield the plectrum with Or-

pheus himself, or the staff with Aesculapius, or the rule with Archimedes, the horoscope with Euphrates, the compasses with Perdix, the plummet with Vitruvius; it never ceases to explore the ages with Thales, or the stars with Atlas; to study weight with Zetus, number with Chrysippus, or measure with Euclid.

[6] I can only say that no man of our times produces his knowledge with more effect, in the stress of conflict with the adversary can point with more justice to his own share in maintaining the spirit and the letters of Greece and Rome. Here is a writer who has the perception of Pythagoras, the clear logic of |9 Socrates; he can unfold a theme with Plato or involve it with Aristotle; the charm of Aeschines is his, and the indignation of Demosthenes; he is as fresh and vivid as Hortensius; he storms like a Cethegus; he is impetuous as Curio, cautious as Fabius; in finesse the equal of Crassus, in reserve of Caesar, in suasion of Cato, in dissuasion of Appius, in persuasion of Tully himself. [7] Compare him now with the holy Fathers; you find him instructive as Jerome, destructive as Lactantius, constructive as Augustine; soaring in flight like Hilary, in humility meek as John; a Basil in rebuke, in consolation a Gregory. He is fluent as Orosius, terse as Rufinus; he has Eusebius' gift of narrative and Eucherius' power to stir, Paulinus' rousing voice, the perseverance of an Ambrose. [8] And now for my opinion on your hymn. I find it at once admirable in brevity and richness of content, at once tender and exalted, in poetic charm and truth to history superior to any lyrics or dithyrambs that I know. It is your peculiar merit that you observe each foot in the metre, each syllable in the foot, and each emphasis in the syllable;

and in a restricted measure none too rich in opportunity, you contrive to include great opulence of words; the compressed, terse metre does not exclude long-drawn beauty of ornate diction. It seems mere play to you, with your tiny trochees and tinier pyrrhics, to surpass in effect not merely the Molossian and anapaestic ternary, but even the quaternary, the epitrite and Paeonian rhythms.

[9] Your grand exordium overflows the customary strait limits, as a great gem is hardly confined in a poor setting; as the mettle of a strong steed flashes out, and he chafes on the bit if he is held in over rough and |10 broken ground; so it is with you; you are conscious of a speed to which a proper field is denied. What more shall I say? I will assert that neither Athens was ever so Attic, nor the Muses so musical as Claudian, if indeed a long period of inaction has not robbed me even of my critical capacity. For in deference to the profession which has been thrust upon me, I am endeavouring step by step to acquire a new style of writing, while I unlearn my old one by leaps and bounds; little remains now of a good speaker, except that I am more than ever the indifferent poet. I must therefore beg your indulgence if, remembering who and what I am, I seldom blend my thin and parching rivulet with your mighty river. The whole world shall honour the music of your silver trumpet, music thrice blessed in finding neither rival nor equal, though it has sounded all these years over the earth, charming the ears and lips of peoples, while I, too, strove to spread its fame. But all that your servant now dares in public speech is to raise his voice among town-councillors and teachers or even among market-quacks; these are the majority now, and

(with all apologies to the best among them), even in their ambitious efforts, but illiterately lettered. But as for you, who can ring the changes on verse and prose and write in metre or without it exactly when you please, your emulators will be few, and those only whom Apollo loves. Farewell. |11

Book 4 — IV.

To [his kinsmen] Simplicius and Apollinaris c. A.D. 472

[1] AT last I send the promised Faustinus, for whom you have been waiting; he is the father of a family, a noble by birth, and a man to be accounted one of the chief ornaments of our common country. In years he is a brother to me, in community of sentiment a friend. How often have he and I together blended grave and gay! how often, in the far-off days of our youth, played ball and dice together, and vied in leaping, running, hunting, or swimming, always honourable rivals because firmest friends! He was my elder, but only by a little; the difference did not so much bind me to defer to him, as make it a delight to follow; he too was more deeply charmed not to be given deference, but simply affection. Only with advancing years, and with his entry into the Church, has my old love for him insensibly passed into veneration. [2] This is the man through whom I greet you, in the ardent desire that I may see you very soon, if God will, and the state of the country permit. Unless, then, my wish is irksome to you, inform me, by return of this good messenger, in what places you expect to be, and when. I am firmly determined to shake myself free from all obstacles and hindrances of personal affairs, and allow myself the privilege of long and intimate hours in your society, if only some major force does not upset my plans, as I am half afraid it may. [3] You too might find it worth while |12 to talk them over with Brother Faustinas in the light of probable events. I made him my envoy because I love him and know that he returns my feelings. If he justifies my good opinion, I shall be very thankful. All men set him high in their esteem; and perhaps he is none the worse for not being a perfect paragon. Farewell.

Book 4 — V.

To his friend [Magnus] Felix A.D. 474 [1] I SALUTE you a second time by the same messenger as before. Your Gozolas (may I soon call him mine too!) acts once more as the carrier of my letter. Spare us both, therefore, the indignity of an open slight; for if you persist in silence, every one will think that you look down on me and on the destined bearer of your reply. [2] As on the last occasion, I ask nothing as to the state of public affairs, fearing it may be painful to you to announce unfavourable events at a time when fortune fails us. It would not be like you to send false news; and as there is nothing pleasant to record, I would rather learn of disaster from any one but my friends. Farewell.

Book 4 — VI.

To [his kinsman] Apollinaris A. D. 472

[1] I SENT you a verbal warning lately by the priest Faustinus, my old comrade and new brother in the ministry, and glad I am that you have listened to it. It is the root-principle of practical wisdom to avoid |13 unnecessary risks; if a man takes them, and a rash course ends in trouble, it is futile to break out into lamentations and abuse Fate for the consequences of one's own bad management. [2] You ask the trend of these remarks. I confess I was much afraid that, at a time when all men felt anxiety, you might feel none; and that the house which stood solid as a rock through all these years might be shaken at last through a misplaced devotion. I feared that the solemnity to which the ladies of your family so looked forward might be spoiled for their gentle souls by these alarms, though I well know that true religion is so deeply implanted in their breasts that they would have rejoiced to suffer a sort of martyrdom in honour of the Martyr had anything untoward befallen upon the way. But I have less innocence, and therefore more distrust of events; amid such uncertainties I prefer the safer side; it takes little to make me join those who discover danger in the very heart of safety. [3] I therefore approve your action in putting off so perilous an expedition, and refusing to expose the fortunes of a family like yours to such a hazard. The journey, once undertaken, might possibly have prospered;

but I for one will never vote for the reckless kind of measure which only luck can justify. Providence, I doubt not, will grant a happy issue to our prayers, and under new blessings of peace we shall look back upon these tenors as mere memories; but those who wish to enjoy security in future must learn caution from the present hour. [4] Meanwhile, I draw your attention to the bearer's complaint of some wrong done him by one of your people, by name Genesius. If you find that facts bear out the grievance, I beg of you to do the plaintiff justice and grant him |14 a quick return to his distant home. But if he has fanned up a flame of calumny out of culpable spite, the defendant can enjoy the foretaste of his discomfiture, when he thinks of his wanton accuser, wayworn and impoverished, bearing all for nothing the hard consequences of a rash accusation, and that at the very height of winter, when the ice is thick and the snow lies piled in drifts. The litigious are apt to find this a season when hearings are generally short, but there is plenty of time for suffering damage. Farewell.

Book 4 — VII.

To his kinsman Simplicius (Date not indicated)

[1] 'You spur the willing,' is the usual comment of the man who meant to do unasked the thing you ask of him. You ask how the quotation applies? The bearer of these lines insists on a letter of introduction from me, whereas, the moment I knew where he was going I should myself have begged the privilege of giving it before he opened his mouth, obliging him not so much from consideration for him as from my warm feeling towards yourself. For the rest, my messenger calculates that by doing me a service he will have deserved a good turn; he has obtained what he wanted, but without ever dreaming how close the bond is which unites you and me. [2] Miles away though I remain, I shall be able to picture his stupefaction on his arrival, when the mere fact that he comes from me secures him respectful welcome, and he finds no effectual use for a letter which it was really superfluous to solicit. I can see it all as if I were there; the novelty of everything to one whose |15 wits are not of the sharpest; his confusion as a stranger invited to make himself at home, or as a nervous guest drawn into conversation, or as a countrified fellow called on to take his part in polite gaiety, or as a poor man set down at a sumptuous board.

It will be strange indeed to a man from these parts, where ill-cooked viands and too much onion afford the only fare, to find himself as nobly regaled as if he had eaten his fill all his days at Apician banquets, served by the rhythmic carvers of Byzantium. 3. Anyhow, whatever his merit or importance, he could not have better helped me to pay my debt of friendship. Men of his type are often almost beneath our notice; at the same time friends who, like ourselves, are thrown back on letters for their intercourse would lose many a chance of writing were they too particular about the person of their messengers. Farewell.

Book 4 — VIII.

To his friend Evodius * A.D. 467 (?)

[1] I WAS just setting out for a remote country district when your messenger handed me your letter, and told his acquaintances in confidence that you were on the point of visiting Toulouse in obedience to a summons from the King. This gave me an excuse to shake off the embarrassing crowd which delayed my early start, and allowed me to give you such reply as a traveller booted and spurred could attempt. [2] My servants had gone ahead at dawn to pitch my tent eighteen miles away at a spot with many conveniences for camping, |16 a cold spring issuing from a wooded hill with a meadow of rich grass at the foot; a river in the foreground stocked with waterfowl and fish; and in addition to these advantages, almost on the bank, the new home of an old friend whose boundless hospitality is the same, whether you try to refuse it or not. [3] After stopping behind to do what you required, that I might send the messenger back at once from the end of the town, I found it was already more than four hours after dawn; the sun was well up, and his gathering heat had absorbed the heavy dews of night. The torrid air and our parched throats got worse and worse, and so cloudless was the sky that the only protection from the blazing heat was the dust we made ourselves. The long way was a weariness, stretching in full view for miles in front of us across the grassy plain;

before it had time to tire us, it already terrified by its prospect; it meant that our lunch would be late. [4] All this introduction is to convince you, honoured lord and brother, that when I obeyed your behests I had small time to spare and little leisure of mind or body. I return now to the substance of your letter. After the usual salutations, you asked a poem of twelve verses suitable for engraving on a large two-handled cup, the sides of which from foot to rim were fluted with six channels. [5] The verses you design, I suppose, for the hollows of the flutings, or, better still, if that seems more suitable, for the ridges between, and, as I gather, you intend to assure yourself an invincible protection for all your plans, actual or prospective, by offering the cup, enriched with this embellishment, to Ragnahild, the queen.I did your bidding then, not as I could have wished, |17 but as best circumstances allowed. You must blame yourself for giving the silversmith time but the poet none; though you know perfectly well that in the literary smithy the verses forged upon the metric anvil want polishing no less severely than any metal. But all this is beside the mark; here is

your poem: * 'The shell which bears Cythera behind the fish-tailed Triton, compared with this must yield its pride of place. Bend thy queenly head, exalted patroness, to our prayer; accept this humble gift; graciously look down upon Evodius who seeks thy favour;

make him great, and thine own glory shall grow greater. Thy sire and thy lord's sire were kings; royal too is thy lord, may thy son also reign a king, both by his father's side and after him. Happy water enclosed in this gleaming metal, reflecting a royal face yet brighter! For when the queen shall deign to touch it with her lips, the silver shall draw new splendour from her countenance.' If you love me well enough to make use of such idle stuff, conceal my authorship and properly rely for success on your own part of the offering. For in such a mart or such a school as this barbaric court, your silver page will get all the notice, and not my poor inscription. Farewell.

* The first part translated by Hodgkin, ii. 330-2. * Translated into German verse by Fertig, Part i, p. 32; and into prose by Chaix, i. 353.

Book 4 — IX.

To his friend Industrius + c. A.D. 472

[1] I RECENTLY visited the illustrious Vectius, and was able to study his way of life at close quarters as |18 leisurely as if I had nothing else to do. I found it well worth knowing, and therefore not unworthy of description. In the first place, and this may rightly be regarded as the highest praise of all, the whole household emulates the master's flawless purity of life. His servants are efficient, those in the country obliging, those at his town house friendly, obedient and contented with their lord. His table is open to the stranger no less than to his own clients; there reigns a large hospitality, and an even larger moderation. [2] It is of less moment that the man of whom we speak is without a rival in training a horse, judging a dog, or in bearing hawk afield; that his dress is always exquisite and his girdle to match, that all his accoutrements are splendid. The majesty of his gait accords with his gravity of mind, and as the first secures him consideration abroad, so the last maintains his dignity at home. His is an indulgence which does not spoil, a punishment without brutality, a tempered severity, stern but never dreadful. [3] With all this he is a regular reader of the Scriptures; even at meal times he enjoys this nutriment of the soul.

He studies the Psalms, and yet more frequently chants them, setting a new precedent by living after this fashion in martial dress, the complete monk in all but the monastic habit.Though he abstains from eating game, he indulges in the chase; to have the sport without the spoil accords with the secret delicacy of his religious feeling. [4] The comfort of his widower's life is his little daughter, sole pledge of his lost wife's love; he brings her up with the tenderness of a grandfather, a mother's sedulous care, a father's kindness. In addressing his servants he does not give way to violence, and he is not above |19 taking their advice upon occasion; in investigating an offence he is never inquisitorial, he rules those under him by reason and not mere authority: you might take him for the steward in his own house. [5] All this virtue and moderation seemed to me to deserve recording for the benefit of others; the outlines of it at least should be common knowledge. It would be well for our age if every member of our sacred profession were stirred to emulation by the story irrespective of a garb which in these days often deceives the world. For be it said without offence to my own order, if only the good men among us manifest their individual qualities, I shall prefer the layman of priestly instincts to the priest. Farewell.

+ Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 340-2.

Book 4 — X.

To his friend [Magnus] Felix A.D. 477 [1] IT is many years since I have written to you, my good lord, and this greeting breaks a long silence; I had not the heart to keep up the old frequent correspondence while I was living in banishment from my country, and my spirit was broken by the hard lot of an exile. You ought to have compassion on one who admits his delinquency as I do; for whosoever is brought low should go humbly and not attempt to preserve the same familiar footing as before with those towards whom affection may be less in place than reverence. That is why I have said nothing so long, and why, after the arrival of my son Heliodorus,I could at least acquiesce in your silence, though I could hardly be expected to regard it with satisfaction. |20 [2] You used to say, in jest, that you stood in positive awe of my eloquence. Even were it seriously meant, the ground for that excuse is gone; for as soon as I had finished my volume of Letters, which, though I say it, was a careful piece of work, I reverted to the every-day style in everything else. And indeed my fine style itself is much on the same level; for what is the use of giving finish to phrases which will never see the light? If, however, you are faithful to an old friendship and allow our correspondence once more to follow its former course, I too will return to the old track and be as communicative as ever. Nay more, if Christ will guide my steps and my patron on his return will only sanction my departure, how eagerly will I fly to meet you wherever you may be, and revive by my presence a friendship which my negligent pen has left to languish. Farewell.

Book 4 — XI.

To his friend Petreius * c. A.D. 473

[1] I MOURN the loss of your great uncle Claudianus, snatched from us only the other day; it is the loss of our age; perhaps we shall never see his. like again. He was a man of wisdom, prudence and learning; eloquent, and of an active and ingenious mind above all his compatriots and contemporaries. He was a philosopher all his days without prejudice to his faith. It |21 was only by his faith, and by his adoption of ordinary dress, that he dissociated himself from his friends of the Platonic school; for he never let his hair and beard grow long and would make fun of the philosopher's mantle and staff, sometimes with much bitterness. [2] How delightful it used to be when a party of us would visit him just for the pleasure of hearing his opinion! With what freedom from diffidence or pretence would he at once open his whole mind for our common benefit, delighted if some insoluble and thorny point arose to prove the vast resources of his knowledge! If there were many of us, he expected us all, of course, to listen, but nominated a single spokesman, probably the one whom we ourselves should have chosen; then in his methodical way, now addressing one, now another, and giving each his turn, he would bring forth all the treasures of his learning, not without the accompaniment of trained and appropriate gesture. [3] When he had finished, we would put our adverse criticisms in syllogistic form;

but nothing was admitted which was not well considered and susceptible of proof, for rash objections he would at once demolish. Most of all we respected him for his tolerance of some men's persistent dullness of apprehension. It amounted almost to an amiable weakness; we could admire his patience, but it was beyond our imitation. Who could shrink from consulting on any recondite point a man who would gladly suffer in argument the stupid questions of the ignorant and the simple?

[4] So far as to his intellectual interests. It is beyond my power adequately to extol him in other relations of life. Mindful in all things of our weak mortal nature, he was always ready with consolation, helping the |22 clergy by his deeds, the people by his words, mourners with exhortation, the destitute with words of comfort. He gave the prisoner money; he fed the hungry, he clothed the naked. To enlarge upon these things were indeed vanity of repetition. He was poor in this world's goods, but the good deeds with which he richly endowed his soul he concealed from notice in the hope of a better reward hereafter. . .

. [5] For his elder brother the bishop he had the most affectionate regard; he reverenced him as a father, he loved him as a son. And the brother in his turn looked up to him with boundless admiration, knowing that he had in him a counsellor in every disputed question, a representative in his churches, an agent in business matters, a steward on his farms, a registrar of all ecclesiastical dues, an associate in his reading, an interpreter in difficulties of exposition, a travelling companion upon his visitations. They were the very exemplars of brotherly affection, with an absolute confidence in each other. [6] But why do I add fuel to the flame of a sorrow which it was my purpose to assuage? I meant to have begun by saying that I have written an elegy to this ungrateful shade----the phrase is Virgil's, as you know, and applied to the dead, who can render no man thanks. They are sad lines full of sorrow; the writing of them was no light task to one who has lost the habit of composing; but grief heavy with rising tears moved me from my natural indolence. This is the elegy:

'Beneath this sod lies Claudianus, at once the glory and grief of his brother Mamertus, the wonder and supreme pride of the bishops. In three fields of learning he was a master and a shining light, the |23 Roman, the Greek, and the Christian; all of them as a monk in his prime he made his own by secret discipline; he was orator, logician, poet, commentator, geometer, musician; skilled also to loose the bonds of disputation, and with the sword of the word dissect the sects that harass the Catholic faith. Well was he skilled to chant psalms and lead a choir; for his grateful brother he taught the trained groups of singers to chant before the altar. His was the choice that at the yearly conclave appointed the passages to be read in season. A priest of the second order, he eased his brother's shoulder of the bishop's burden; for while the other bore the insignia of pontifical rank, it was he who undertook the labour. But thou whoe'er tbou art that grievest, O kindly reader, over the thought that of such a man nothing now survives, wet not this marble with thy tears: the mind and its renown come not down into this grave.'

[7] Such are the lines that I composed over the remains of this brother of my soul, as soon as I reached the spot. For when they buried him I was away, though absence did not wholly rob me of the longed opportunity for tears. For while I was pondering what to write, my heart swelled to overflowing; I gave it rein, and over my epitaph I wept as others had wept above the tomb. I write this to you for fear you should imagine that my devotion is only to living friends, and censure me as one who thinks less tenderly of those who are gone than of those who are yet alive. And indeed, in days when hardly a trace of loyalty remains among survivors, you might well be pardoned for counting as a small company those who are faithful to the departed. Farewell. |24 * Most of this letter is translated by Guizot, Histoire de la civilisation en France, ed. 1846, i. 167-8. See also Fertig, Part iii, p. 10.

Book 4 — XII.

To [his kinsmen] Simplicius and Apollinaris* c. A.D. 472

[1] THE excitable mind of man is like nothing so much as a wrecking sea; it is lashed to confusion by contrary tidings as if it bred its own rough weather. A few days ago, I and the son whom we both regard as ours were together enjoying the admirable Hecyra of Terence. Seated at his side as he studied, I forgot the cleric in the father; to increase his ardour and incite my docile scholar to a more perfect appreciation of the comic rhythms, I had in my own hands a play with a similar plot, the Epitrepontes of Menander. [2] We were reading, and jesting, and applauding the fine passages ---- the play charmed him, and he me, we were both equally absorbed, ---- when all of a sudden a household slave appears, pulling a long face. 'I have just seen outside', he said, 'the reader Constans, back from his errand to the lords Simplicius and Apollinaris. He says that he delivered your letters, but has lost the answers given him to bring back.' [3] No sooner did I hear this, than a storm-cloud of annoyance rose upon the clear sky of my enjoyment; the mischance made me so angry that for several days I was inexorable and forbade the blockhead my presence; I meant to make him sorry for himself unless he restored me the letters all and sundry, to say nothing of yours, which as long as I am a reasonable being |25 I shall always want most because they come least often.

[4] However, after a time my anger gradually abated; I sent for him and asked whether, besides the letters, he had been entrusted with a verbal message. He was all a-tremble and ready to grovel at my feet; he stammered in conscious guilt, and could not look me in the face, but he managed to answer: 'Nothing.' The message from which I was to have received so much instruction and delight, had been all consigned to the pages which had been lost. So there is nothing else for it; you must resort to your tablets once more, unfold your parchment, and write it all out anew. I shall bear with such philosophy as I may this unfortunate obstacle to my desires until the hour when these lines reach you, and you learn that yours have never yet reached me. Farewell.

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 340-2.

Book 4 — XIII.

To his friend Vectius c. A.D. 472

[1] NOT long ago I went to see the church of Chantelle at the request of the excellent Germanicus, who is clearly the personage of the place. Though he now has sixty years behind him, he cultivates such bravery of fashion that not content with growing younger, he gets more boyish every day. His clothes fit close, his boots are tight, his hair is cut wheel-fashion; the tweezers have searched the depths of all his wrinkles to get every single hair out of his face. [2] Heaven has given him strong and well-knit limbs, an unimpaired sight, an easy and rapid gait; his teeth are complete and his mouth |26 wholesome. He has a perfect digestion, an even circulation, a sound heart and lungs, his loins are free from stiffness, his liver from congestion. His hand is firm, his back straight, endowed with the health of youth, all he asks for age is its proper privilege of respect. [3] God has indeed shown him peculiar mercies. But on that very account I beg, nay, I enjoin you, as a neighbour and intimate friend, to give him a piece of that advice which a character like yours invests with such authority: tell him not to put his trust too much in such unstable things, or fancy himself immune from all decay; tell him it is high time for him to embrace religion, to gather strength from innocence reborn, and by good deeds to become a new man in his old age.

[4] Tell him that few of us are free from secret faults, and it were well for him to pour forth full and open satisfaction for all the hidden offences which memory can recall. A man who is a priest's son and has a son of his own a bishop, must sanctify his own life, or he will be even as a rosebush. Of roses born, and bearing the same, he comes between the old bloom and the new; and the briery thorns about him may be likened to his wounding sins. Farewell.

Book 4 — XIV.

To his friend Polemius A.D. 477 [1] CORNELIUS TACITUS your ancestor, consular in the reigns of the Ulpians, in his history introduces a German Commander as saying, 'My acquaintance with Vespasian goes back to old days, and while he |27 was a private person we were called friends.' You ask the object of this preface. To remind you that your position as a public man ought not to involve neglect of private friendships. Almost two years ago, our old regard for you rather than our satisfaction at your new dignity, led us to rejoice over your elevation to the post of praetorian prefect in Gaul. But for the misfortunes of the Empire, nothing would satisfy us but the enrichment of everybody and every province by the various benefits of your administration. [2] And now that proper feeling prevents us from asking what it is beyond your power to grant, I should like to know what generosity you would have shown us in deed, when in word you have proved so obstinately avaricious. For if I compare you with your ancestors, I must consider you more than the equal of Tacitus in eloquence, and in poetry above Ausonius. If this new prefecture has turned a philosopher's head, remember the line:

We too have served for name and fame. [3] But if you scorn the lowliness of our profession because we priests voluntarily lay bare before Christ, the Healer of human lives and fortunes, the ugly sores of the sick heart, which in us are at least unswollen by pride, however much they may have hitherto offended for want of proper tending, I would have you know this, that it is one thing for a man to stand before the magistrate in the forum, another thing for him to stand before the Judge of all the world. The offender who avows his crime to you is condemned; but among us the same confession made to God is absolved. It is therefore abundantly clear that you judges of this world are wrong |28 in fastening guilt on him who is amenable to another jurisdiction than yours. [4] You cannot therefore any longer ignore the force of my complaint; whether your prosperity makes you forget old friendship, or only neglect it, the result in either case is almost equally bitter to me. If, then, you have any serious thoughts of the future, write to me as to a priest; if of the present, as to a colleague. There is a virtue which never disdains an old friend for a new one; if it was born in you, develop it; if not, at once implant it in your heart. Otherwise you will appear to treat your friends as one does flowers, which are only cherished as long as they are fresh. Farewell.

Book 4 — XV.

To his friend Elaphius After A.D. 472

[1] MAKE ready a great feast, and couches to receive a great company. By numerous roads parties yet more numerous converge upon you, for since the date of your coming dedication is now universally known, all our good friends are bent upon invasion. Your letter tells us that the baptistery so long in the builder's hands is now ready for consecration. We must all keep festival in honour of the faith that we own, and some of us for other causes too; you to celebrate the accomplishment of your vow; I to do my part as bishop; and many others to show their recognition of your enterprise. For indeed you set a great precedent, erecting a new fabric in an epoch when other men have hardly courage to repair an old one. [2] For the future |29 I pray that as your present vow is paid, you may make new vows to the glory of God to be redeemed in coming prosperous years; and that, too, not as the expression of a concealed faith, but of manifest conversion. I further pray that in happier times than these Christ may grant my own desire and the hope of the people of Rouergue, and that you who now offer an altar for your own soul's weal, may then offer the holy Sacrifice for theirs. [3] Though the days draw in with the late autumn, and leaves from every tree rustle in the anxious traveller's ear;

though your castle of the mountain crags is hard to reach when winter is so near, yet with Christ to guide my steps I shall traverse your rugged mountain flanks; I shall not shrink from rocks beneath or overhanging snows; no, not even if the way winds in spirals up the long slopes and returns continually upon itself. For should there be no festivities after all, yet you are one of those for whom, to use the words of Tully, a man would even tramp to Thespiae. Farewell.

Book 4 — XVI.

To his friend Ruricius (No indication of date) [1] PATERNINUS has given me your letter; I can hardly say whether it pleases most by wit or charm. It presents such eloquence, such fragrant flowers of diction, that your progress is clearly due to something more than an acknowledged study: you must be working in secret as well. The abstraction of a book of mine to copy, for which you so apologize, I regard |30 as an act redounding to your credit, and requiring no excuse. What can you do really wrong, when even your faults are laudable? [2] I am not the least vexed at being played this little trick in my absence; it is no loss at all, but really a signal privilege. The volume you appropriated to your use has not therefore ceased to be my property; your knowledge has not been increased at the cost of other people's. On the contrary, you shall have full credit for your action, and rightly; for your nature has the quality of flame, which communicates itself entirely and yet remains entire; it is proper that you should act like your own element. Be no more uneasy, then; that were to betray a little too much uncertainty of your friend, who would only deserve the wound of blame were he vulnerable by the dart of envy. Farewell.

Book 4 — XVII.

To his friend Arbogast c. A.D. 477

[1] YOUR friend Eminentius, honoured lord, has delivered a letter dictated by yourself, admirable in style, and bearing in every line the evidence of three shining virtues. The first is the friendliness which leads you to esteem the lowly talents of one so far away, and so anxious to avoid publicity. The second is the modesty which makes you over-sensitive to blame, but deservedly wins you praise. The third is the gentle humour which makes you in the wittiest way accuse yourself of writing wretched stuff, whereas you have drunk at the well-spring |31 of Roman eloquence, and no draughts from the Moselle can take the taste of Tiber from your mouth. You have your conversation among barbarians, yet you permit no barbarism to pass your lips; in eloquence and valour you equal those ancient generals whose hands could wield the stylus no less skilfully than the sword. [2] The Roman tongue is long banished from Belgium and the Rhine; but if its splendour has anywhere survived, it is surely with you; our jurisdiction is fallen into decay along the frontier, but while you live and preserve your eloquence, the Latin language stands unshaken. As I return your greeting, my heart is glad within me that our vanishing culture has left such traces with you; continue your assiduous studies, and you will feel more surely every day that the man of education is as much above the boor as the boor in his turn above the beast.

[3] Were I to obey your wish and send you a commentary on some part of the Scriptures, it would be sorry verbiage; you would do far better to direct your request to the clergy of your own district. They are venerable in years, approved in faith, known by works; they are ready in speech and tenacious in memory, my superiors in all sublimer gifts. Even if we leave out of the account the bishop of your city, a character of supreme perfection, blessed in the possession and repute of all the virtues, you may far more appropriately consult on any kind of problem the celebrated fathers of the Church in Gaul; Lupus and Auspicius are both within your reach, and however inquisitive you may be, you will not get to the bottom of a learning such as theirs. In any case, you must pardon me for disobeying you in this matter, and that not only out of |32 kindliness, but from simple justice; for if it is fair that you should escape from incompetence, it is equally right that I should avoid conceit. Farewell.

Book 4 — XVIII.

To his friend Lucontius c. A.D. 470 [1] I FEAR you have a memory defective in the matter of others' requests but infallible in the matter of your own. It would be tedious to repeat all the promises of swift return which you and your family made to me and mine; not the smallest of them have you kept. Far from it, your flight was cunningly planned to make us think you were coming back for Easter; you took no heavy baggage out of town, neither carriage nor cart for luggage appeared in your train.

[2] It is too late to complain of the trick you made the ladies play us, causing them to travel with only the lightest of effects, while you and our brother Volusianus were hardly escorted by a single client or attendant. By this device you cheated the friends who came to see you off with the delusive hope that they were soon to see you back. Certainly our good brother Volusianus deceived us by the pretence of a short trip, when in fact he was probably bound, not merely for his own estate at Baiocassium, but the whole second province of Lyons into the bargain. [3] As for yourself, though you have broken faith by idling all this time away down there, you yet have the face to ask me for any poetical trifles I may have recently composed. I obey; but |33 simply because you deserve the rubbish you will get; the verses I am sending are so rustic and unfinished that no one would believe they came from town and not from the depths of the country. [4] You must know that Bishop Perpetuus, a worthy successor of his great predecessor, has just rebuilt on a greater scale than before the basilica of the saintly pontiff and confessor Martin. It is said to be a great and memorable work, and all that we should expect when one such man does honour to another.

For the walls of this church he has demanded of me the inscription you are now to criticize, and sure as he is of his place in my affection, he takes no denial in matters of this kind. [5] Would I could think this offering of mine would prove no blot upon the magnificence of that pile and its wealth of gifts; but I fear it must be so, unless some happy chance should lend its very defects a charm where all is of such perfection, just as a dark spot on a fair body is mocked at first, and then compels approval. But why should I dilate upon all this? Put down your shepherd's pipe, and give a supporting hand to this hobbling elegy of mine:

*'Over the body of Martin, venerated in every land, the body in which renown survives the life departed, there rose a structure meet for poor men's worship, and unworthy of its famous Confessor. Always a sense of shame weighed heavy on the citizens when they thought of

the saint's great glory, and the small attraction of his shrine. But Perpetuus the bishop, sixth in line after him, has now taken away the disgrace; he has removed the inner shrine from the modest chapel and |34 reared this great building over it. By the favour of so powerful a patron the founder's fame has risen together with the church, which is such as to rival the temple of Solomon, the seventh wonder of the world. That shone resplendent with gems and gold and silver; but this fane shines with a light of faith beyond the brilliance of all metals. Avaunt, Envy of the venomous tooth! be our forefathers absolved; may our posterity, however fond of its own voice, presume to add or alter nothing. And till the second coming of Christ to raise all people from the dead, may the fane of Perpetuus perpetually endure.'

[6] I send you, as you see, the most recent verses I can find. But if you persist in spinning vain delays, the concession will not stop me from shaking the stars with my complaints; nor, if the case requires it, shall I shrink from a resort to satire, and you will be very much mistaken if you imagine that I shall be as suave as in the verses you have had to-day. For it is a law of human nature that man is more telling, more fiery, and quicker on the mark in his censure than in his praise. Farewell. * Translated by Fertig, Part ii, pp. 37-8; and by Chaix, i. 329.

Book 4 — XIX.

To his friend Florentinus (No indication of date) [1] You blame me for my delay and my silence. I can purge myself of both charges, for I am not only on my way, but as you see, I write as well. Farewell. |35

Book 4 — XX.

To his friend Domnicius * c. A. D. 470

[1] You take such pleasure in the sight of arms and those who wear them, that I can imagine your delight if you could have seen the young prince Sigismer on his way to the palace of his father-in-law in the guise of a bridegroom or suitor in all the pomp and bravery of the tribal fashion. His own steed with its caparisons, other steeds laden with flashing gems, paced before and after; but the conspicuous interest in the procession centred in the prince himself, as with a charming modesty he went afoot amid his bodyguard and footmen, in flame-red mantle, with much glint of ruddy gold, and gleam of snowy silken tunic, his fair hair, red cheeks and white skin according with the three hues of his equipment. [2] But the chiefs and allies who bore him company were dread of aspect, even thus on peace intent. Their feet were laced in boots of bristly hide reaching to the heels; ankles and legs were exposed. They wore high tight tunics of varied colour hardly descending to their bare knees, the sleeves covering only the upper arm. Green mantles they had with crimson borders; baldrics supported swords hung from their shoulders, and pressed on sides covered with cloaks of skin secured by brooches. [3] No small part of their adornment consisted of their arms; in their hands they grasped barbed spears and missile axes; their left sides were guarded by shields, which flashed with tawny |36 golden bosses and snowy silver borders, betraying at once their wealth and their good taste. Though the business in hand was wedlock, Mars was no whit less prominent in all this pomp than Venus. Why need I say more? Only your presence was wanting to the full enjoyment of so fine a spectacle. For when I saw that you had missed the things you love to see, I longed to have you with me in all the impatience of your longing soul. Farewell.

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 364.

Book 4 — XXI.

To his friend Aper c. A.D. 472

[1] IN every genealogy the father's line must take precedence, yet we owe not a little to our mothers. For it hardly befits us to accord a lesser honour to her who bore, than to him who begot us. I leave the biologist the care of defining what we are or how we came into the world, passing on to the subject introduced by these reflections. [2] Your father is an Aeduan, your mother comes from Auvergne. Aeduan, then, you are first and foremost, but yet not altogether. For remember the passage in Virgil to the effect that Pallas is Arcadian, but at the same time Samnite. He might have qualified, as a foreigner, to lead the Etruscans against Mezentius, save only for the fact that through his Samnite mother he traced his descent in part to her country of Etruria. Here you have evidence of great moment from the greatest of authorities (unless, indeed, you believe poets false to facts even when they deal with history), that |37 the mother's country must count no less than that of the father. [3] Now if the Arvernians in their turn rightly claim at any rate a half-share in you, pray give a patient hearing to the complaint of men who yearn for your presence, and now unburden the bosom-secret of a whole population through the lips of a single spokesman.

Imagine them as standing before you and addressing you face to face. 'What is our offence, ungrateful fellow citizen, that all these years you shun the soil which nourished you as if it were an enemy's country? Here we tended your cradle, here we heard your infant cries and formed your tender limbs; it was our people who carried you in their arms. [4] This was the country of your grandsire Fronto, whose indulgence to you was equalled only by his own self-discipline, which our models of to-day might take as a model for themselves. This was the country of your grandmother Auspicia, who from a single heart after her daughter's death gave to the helpless orphan a devotion great enough for two. Your aunt was also of our land, and so was Frontina, the virgin holier than a nun, held by your mother in respect, by your father in veneration, and so ascetic and austere in her life, so perfect in God's faith and fear, that she inspired an awe in all men. It was here that our schools vied one with the other to perfect you in grammar and in rhetoric, when the time came for your initiation in the liberal arts, with such results that even by virtue of your education alone you cannot but think of Clermont with affection. [5] I shall not recall to you the unique charm of our

land; the broad main of tillage, where the profitable waters flow harmless through the crops, bringing rich increase;

where the more the |38 industrious man traffics, the less he need fear shipwreck; the land which is easy to the traveller, fertile to the cultivator, to the hunter a perpetual joy; where pastures crown the hill-tops and vineyards clothe the slopes, where villas rise on the low-lands and castles on the rocks, forests here and clearings there, valleys with springs, head-lands washed by rivers; the land, in short, of which a single glimpse suffices to make many a stranger forget his own country. [6] Need I remind you of the town which was always so devoted to you that you ought to find no society more agreeable than that of its nobility? You were received with open arms, and all were so delighted to have you with them that no one could ever see enough of you. Need I speak of your own property? the more you visit it the better it will make good your outlay. For the very expenses of a proprietor cultivating his own land contribute to the increase of his income. I unburden myself thus in the name of all our citizens, and certainly of the best among them. Such is the affection which they show, so high the compliment implied in their desire, that you may imagine the greater joy which will be yours if you assent to their request. Farewell.

Book 4 — XXII.

To his friend Leo A.D. 477

[1] THE magnificent Hesperius, pearl of friends and glory of letters, informed me on his return from Toulouse not long ago that you wished me to begin writing history as soon as my volume of Letters is |39 completed. I need not tell you with what respect and gratitude I receive an opinion of such weight, and moreover so flattering to myself; for if you hold that I ought to abandon the work of smaller compass for the greater, it must be because you think me competent. But frankly, I find it easier to respect your judgement than to follow your advice. [2] The task indeed is one which is worthy of your recommendation, but it is no less worthy of your own practice. Tacitus long ago gave similar advice to Pliny and then anticipated his friend by following his own counsel. The precedent bears perfectly on your suggestion; for I am a mere disciple of Pliny,whereas in the old historical style you excel Tacitus. Could he return to earth, could he witness your literary eminence and reputation, he would soon follow the hint conveyed by his own name. [3] You, therefore, are the man to shoulder the burden of your own proposal; you have an excellent gift of eloquence and to vast erudition you join unrivalled opportunities. For as adviser of a most potent sovereign, whose policy is concerned with all the world, you are admitted to the secrets of his business and his laws, his wars and treaties, you understand their local significance, their extent and their importance. Who, then, more fit to gird him for the task than he who is behind the great scene of public affairs, who knows the movements of the peoples, the embassies that pass between them, the generals' feats of arms, the treaties of the princes, who stands himself at such an altitude that he need neither suppress the truth nor broider the fabric of a lie?

[4] How different is my own condition, afflicted with |40 the griefs of exile, deprived of the old facilities for study; a cleric, sworn to renounce ambition, and keep the middle path of his obscurity. My trust is no longer in the gifts of this present world, but in the hope of a world to come. My failing strength plays me false, and makes me delight in idleness; I care no more for the praise of my own generation, and as little for that of men who shall come after me. [5] History is the last field in which I should now pursue fame; we churchmen are ill-advised to publish our own affairs and rash to meddle with those of others; we record the past without advantage to ourselves, and the present from imperfect knowledge; we write

what is untrue to our disgrace, and what is true at our peril. It is a work or subject in which the mention even of the virtuous wins a man scant credit, and of the great, unbounded enmity. Forthwith some hue and flavour of satire invades the historian's style, and this is wholly incongruous with our vows. Historical writing begins in spite, proceeds in weariness, and ends in ill repute. [6] Let a cleric once dabble in it, and all these woes will fall upon him; forthwith the viper's tooth of envy is into us; if our style be straightforward, we are called mad; if polished, we are presuming beyond our place. But you can enter upon this province with a light heart;

your fame allows you to spring from strength to strength. You will tread the neck of the detractor or lightly leap above it. None will have written in a more exalted vein than you, none so near the antique manner, even though your theme be the story of our own times. For as you were trained long since in the art of letters, and now are no less versed in that of |41 affairs, you have left the venomed fang no hold whatever on you. Therefore it is that in years to come your works will be consulted with advantage, heard with delight, and read with assurance of their authority. Farewell.

Book 4 — XXIII.

To his friend Proculus c. A.D. 472

[1] YOUR son, whom I may almost call mine also, hastaken refuge with me, full of sorrow for having left you, overwhelmed with shame and repentance of his desertion. When I heard what he had done, I rebuked him for this truancy with sharp words and threatening looks. The voice was mine, but I spoke in your place; I denounced him as one whose proper meed was disinheritance, the cross, the sack, and the other penalties of parricides. He flushed red in his confusion, but made no brazen excuses for his fault; and when I convicted him on every point, such floods of streaming tears accompanied his contrition that it was impossible to doubt his future amendment. [2] I entreat you, therefore, to show mercy on one who now shows none to himself; imitate Christ and do not condemn him who admits that he deserves to be condemned. You may prove inexorable; you may subject him to unheard-of punishments; but no torture you can inflict will hurt him like his own remorse. Free him from his despairing fears; justify my confidence in you; relieve yourself from the secret anguish you must feel (if I know aught of a father's feelings) at the spectacle of |42 a son crushed by undisguised affliction. I shall only have done him harm if you lift a finger against him, which I trust you will not do unless you mean to remain as hard as rock and rigid as impenetrable adamant.

[3] If I am right in expecting something better from your known character and warm heart, be indulgent and forgive; I pledge myself that, once reconciled, he will henceforward be a loyal son. To absolve him promptly of his fault is to bind me by a new obligation. I earnestly beg you to do more, and grant him instant pardon; I want you, when he returns, not to open him your door alone, but your heart as well. Great God! what a bright day will dawn for you, what joyous news it will be to me, what gladness will fill his soul, when he casts himself at his father's feet and receives from those injured lips, those lips of terrible aspect, not reproaches but a kiss! Farewell.

Book 4 — XXIV.

To his friend Turnus * A.D. 461-7 [1] THE Mantuan's lines suit perfectly your name and your affair: Turnus, what never God would dare To promise to his suppliant's prayer, Lo, here, the lapse of time has brought E'en to your hands, unasked, unsought. You remember that a long time ago your father Turpio (he was then of tribune's rank) sought and obtained a loan of Maximus, an official of the Palatine Service; he assigned nothing as security or guarantee, either in money or land; there is only a document ensuring the creditor his twelve per cent. This interest had been accumulating ten years, and had doubled the capital sum. [2] When your father was grievously ill and near his death, the public authority put serious pressure on him for the payment of the debt; the bailiffs too behaved in an intolerably brutal manner. I was then setting out for Toulouse, and the sick man, in despair, wrote entreating me to intercede with his creditor for at least a short delay. Of course I at once promised to do what I could, for Maximus and I are something more than acquaintances, and linked by old ties of hospitality. I therefore diverged from my route to pay him a visit, though his estate lies some miles distant from the highway.

[3] On my arrival, he came out himself to meet me. But how changed his walk from the old erect and rapid gait; how changed the old frank regard and hearty voice! His dress, his walk, his humility, his pallor, his mode of speech----all declared the churchman. And then his hair was short and his beard long; he had simple tripod seats; coarse Cilician hangings covered his doors ; the beds were featherless, the tables unadorned. His entertainment was as plain as it was kindly, with more vegetable than meat; if any richer dish appeared, it was brought not to him but to his guests. [4] When we rose from table, I asked my neighbours quietly to which of the three orders he belonged; |44 was he monk, clerk, or penitent? They told me he was so popular that his fellow citizens had thrust priestly office upon him against his inclination. When morning came, and the servants and clients were busy catching the animals, I begged a private interview, which he at once granted. I began by congratulations on his new dignity which he had not expected, but my petition followed close upon them. [5] I preferred the prayer of our common friend Turpio; I urged his straits and his extremity; I told how much harder it seemed to the sick man's afflicted friends that his soul should be released from a body still held in the bond of debt. I implored him to remember his new calling and our ancient fellowship;

I entreated him at least to accord delay, and so to moderate the barbarous importunities of the collectors, who were barking like dogs about a death-bed; I asked that if Turpio died, the heirs should be granted the respite of the mourner's year, and that if, as I hoped, he recovered health, he should be left in peace during the time of convalescence from so exhausting a sickness. [6] I had got thus far with my petition when this charitable soul began to weep copious tears, not for the delay in recovering his debt but for the peril of the debtor, and restraining his sobs, cried: 'Far be it from me, a cleric, to demand from a sick man what as an official I should hardly have brought myself to ask from a sound one. But I am so attached to my friend's children also, that, even should he die, I shall require of them not a penny more than the law of our friendship sanctions. You shall write to them in their anxiety, enclosing a letter from me to confirm the authority of yours. Assure them |45 that whatever be the issue of our brother's illness, (and may it prove a happy one! I give them a whole year's respite; I will also remit that half of the debt represented by the accumulated interest, and content myself with the simple return of the loan.' On this, I rendered thanks to God first, and then to my host, who so respected his good name and conscience;

I assured this good friend that he laid up as a treasure in advance for himself what I was empowered to remit to you, and purchased a heavenly kingdom by refusing to drive a hard bargain here on earth. It now remains for you to use every effort for the repayment of the principal, and to return him heartfelt thanks in the name of your young brother and sister, who by reason of their tender age can know nothing of their own good fortune. There is no excuse for you to say, 'I am only a co-heir; the estate has not yet been divided; it is common knowledge that I have come off worse than the other two; my brother and sister are still minors; a husband has yet to be found for her, a guardian for him, and a surety for the guardian when appointed.' Such things are sometimes said with fairness to creditors, but only to the bad ones. You are fortunate in having to deal with a person ready to remit half your debt when he might exact the whole. Do not keep him waiting; he would be within his right if he demanded once more in his resentment all that his lenience had excused. Farewell. |46

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 345.

Book 4 — XXV.

To his friend Domnulus* c. A.D. 470

[1] I CANNOT delay an hour in letting you know of an event which must cause you the greatest pleasure, anxious as you were to learn what success attended the piety and firmness of our metropolitan and father in Christ, Patiens, upon the occasion of his visit to Châlon. He went to ordain a bishop for that town, where discipline had been imperilled after the retirement and subsequent death of the young bishop Paulus. Some of the provincial bishops formed his escort; others had preceded him. When the Episcopal Council met, it found that the opinion of the citizens was not unanimous, and that there existed private factions of the kind so ruinous to the public welfare. [2] The presence of three candidates aggravated these evils. The first had no moral qualification whatever, but only the privilege of ancient lineage, of which he made the most. The second was brought in on the applause of parasites, bribed to support him by the free run of a gourmand's table. The third had a tacit understanding with his supporters, that if he attained the object of his ambition, the plundering of the Church estates should be theirs. [3] Seeing this, the holy Patiens and the holy Euphronius determined that no |47 thought of odium or popularity should move them from the firmness and severity of the saner judgement. They communicated their intention to their fellow bishopsin secret conclave assembled, before they made it public.

Then, with a complete disregard of the unruly crowd, they suddenly joined their hands upon the holy John, a man conspicuous for an honourable, humane and gentle life, and without the faintest suspicion of what they proposed, or the slightest desire for preferment. [4] This John was first a Reader, and had been a server at the altar from his tender years. In course of time and strenuous duty he became archdeacon, in which office or rank his efficiency kept him back; they would not give him promotion because they did not wish to relieve him of functions he performed so well. Such was the man, a member only of the second order, on whom they laid their hands, to the perplexity of the factions, which had no acclamations ready for one never even put forward for the office, but dared not at the same time say anything against a man whom his own career acclaimed. So, to the stupefaction of the intriguers, the rage of bad citizens, and the delight of good, without one dissentient voice, they two consecrated their new colleague. [5] And now, unless the monasteries of the Jura keep you, where you love to ascend as if in foretaste of a celestial habitation, this letter

ought to reach you, bringing the happy news, how these our fathers and protectors opined in accord, or accorded in opinion----whichever you will.

Rejoice too in his name whom Euphronius and Patiens consecrated, the one by testimony, the other by laying on of hands, the two together by their concurring |48 judgement; in all which events Euphronius acted as beseemed his age and the long tenure of his high office, Patiens, for whom no praise could ever be too high, as befitted one who by his ecclesiastical dignity is the first person in our city, and by the priority of the city, the first citizen in all the province. Farewell.

* Partly translated by Guizot, Hist, de la civilisation en France, ed. 1846, i. 81-2.

Book 5 — I.

To his friend Petronius A.D. 478 [1] THEY tell me you devote patient but not unpleasant hours to the perusal of my Letters; you who have achieved mastery in studies of widest scope, can yet notice the most insignificant writings of another. This is great, and well becomes the enthusiast for letters. But you are repaid for it by the most perfect kind of fame; for he who is generous enough to praise other men's talent will not fail to find his own conspicuously acknowledged. [2] I commend to you my friend Vindicius, a man of piety, and admirably suited for the dignity of deacon which he has recently attained. I had no time to copy what you wanted from my tablets, as it was incumbent on me to do, so I have entrusted him with these trifling lines just to have something to send; but such is your kindness that you accept any letter of mine as if it were an exceeding great reward. [3] Meanwhile I commend to your notice the affair of this same bearer who is taken to your neighbourhood by a troublesome business in which he finds himself involved. Two possibilities lie before him: he may either enter peacefully upon an inheritance, or he may be entangled in legal proceedings. |50 His paternal uncle has died a bachelor and intestate, and he is taking steps to inherit as next of kin; but factious opposition may bar his way. Against each and every difficulty which may be raised, you, after Christ, are the suppliant's best hope; I am confident that if he finds favour in your sight, his cause will prove victorious. Farewell.

Book 5 — II.

To his friend Nymphidius c. A.D. 472 [1] CLAUDIANUS MAMERTUS, the most accomplished of our Christian philosophers and the most learned man in the world, wrote not long ago a notable work in three volumes on the Nature of the Soul; in its embellishment and final elaboration he employed the method of the disposition and logical arrangement of profane philosophy, demonstrating that the nine Muses are not maidens at all, but Liberal Arts. The attentive reader discovers in his pages the real personified titles of the Nine, who of themselves and for themselves create their proper appellations. For in this book Grammar divides, and Rhetoric declaims; Arithmetic reckons, Geometry metes; Music balances, Logic disputes; Astrology predicts, Architecture constructs; Poetry attunes her measures. [2] Pleased with the novelty of a theory like this, and kindled to enthusiasm by so much ripe wisdom, you had hardly seen the book before you asked to have it for a short time to examine and copy it and to make extracts; you promised to return |51 it quickly, and your request was granted as soon as made. Now, it is far from fitting that I should be deceived in this little matter, and that you should be the deceiver. It is high time for you to send the book back; if you liked it, you must have had enough of it by now; if you dislike it, more than enough. Whichever it be, you have now to clear your reputation. If you mean to delay the return of a volume for which I have to ask you, I shall think that you care more for the parchment than for the work. Farewell.

Book 5 — III.

To [his kinsman] Apollinaris A.D. 472 [1] IT was perhaps only fair that you should retaliate on my loquacious habits by applying the curb of taciturnity. But since in the exchange of kind offices a perfect friendship should dwell less on what it pays than on what it may still be held to owe, I shall loosen the rein of scruple and render you the impudent homage of another letter: of course the impropriety of this is proved by the fact of your continued silence. Do I not deserve to be informed of a brother's fortunes in time of war? Are you really afraid of revealing your hopes or apprehensions to a friend who is anxious on your account? [2] Your motive in keeping your doings from me can only be that you are not quite sure of me, and fear that I might not rejoice as I ought at news of your good luck, or properly lament your adverse fortunes. May such disloyalty find no place in gentle hearts; may so miserable a suspicion be no longer a blot on |52 the candour of a true affection! For, as your Crispus says, ' to desire and reject the same things, that is the making of firm friends.'

[3] I shall be content if I can hear that you are in good case. My own mind has been depressed by the weight of a troubled conscience; a violent fever brought me almost to death's door. As you know, the cares of an august profession have been imposed on me, unworthy though I am of such an honour. And it has been misery to me to have to teach what I have never myself learned, and to preach goodness before practising it; like a barren tree, I bear no fruit of good works, but scatter idle words like leaves. [4] And now pray for me that my future life may prove it to have been worth while to come back almost from the underworld; for now a continuance in past errors would make this renewal of life the beginning of my soul's destruction. You see that I hide nothing from you, and I may fairly ask in return how things fare with you. I have done the part of friendship; it remains for you to act as you think right. But remember that by God's grace we recognize no end to a comradeship which we gave our hearts to begin; it must be like laws of Attica, graven eternally on brass. Farewell.

Book 5 — IV.

To [his kinsman] Simplicius (No indication of date) [1] YOUR failure to answer my letter I impute to a friendship not beyond reproach, but in a greater |53 degree, to an uneasy conscience. For unless I do you an injustice, your answer is withheld less from perversity than from a sense of shame. But if you continue to close and bolt your door against my communications, I shall not be sorry to oblige you with the peace which you desire. At the same time I must tell you plainly that the instigators of the wrong thus done me are to be found among those nearest to you. [2] For it is no injustice to attribute all that is hateful in your silence to the spoiled humours of your sons, who, secure in your affection, submit with impatience to my assiduity. It is incumbent on you to admonish them by your parental authority to be more amiable henceforward in their behaviour, and so sweeten to me the bitterness of their past offence. Farewell.

Book 5 — V.

To his friend Syagrius (No indication of date) [1] THOUGH you descend in the male line from an ancestor who was not only consul----that is immaterial----but also (and here is the real point) a poet, from one whose literary achievement would certainly have gained him the honour of a statue, had it not been secured for him already by his official honours,----witness the finished verse that he has left us; and though on this side of his activity his descendants have proved themselves no wise degenerate, yet here we find you picking up a knowledge of the German tongue with the greatest of ease; the feat fills me with indescribable amazement. [2] I can recall the thoroughness of your education |54 in liberal studies; I know with what a fervid eloquence you used to declaim before the rhetor. With such a training, how have you so quickly mastered the accent of a foreign speech, that after having your Virgil caned into you, and absorbing into your very system the opulent and flowing style of the varicose orator of Arpinum, you soar out like a young falcon from the ancient eyrie ?

[3] You can hardly conceive how amused we all are to hear that, when you are by, not a barbarian but fears to perpetrate a barbarism in his own language. Old Germans bowed with age are said to stand astounded when they see you interpreting their German letters; they actually choose you for arbiter and mediator in their disputes. You are a new Solon in the elucidation of Burgundian law; like a new Amphion you attune a new lyre, an instrument of but three strings. You are popular on all sides; you are sought after; your society gives universal pleasure. You are chosen as adviser and judge; as soon as you utter a decision it is received with respect. In body and mind alike these people are as stiff as stocks and very hard to form; yet they delight to find in you, and equally delight to learn, a Burgundian eloquence and a Roman spirit.

[4] Let me end with a single caution to the cleverest of men. Do not allow these talents of yours to prevent you from devoting whatever time you can spare to reading. Let your critical taste determine you to preserve a balance between the two languages, holding fast to the one to prevent us making fun of you, and practising the other that you may have the laugh of us. Farewell. |55

Book 5 — VI.

To [his kinsman] Apollinaris A.D. 474-5 [1] As soon as summer began to yield to autumn and the fears of my Arvernians were in some degree moderated by the approach of winter, I was able to make a journey to Vienne. There I found, in great tribulation, your brother Thaumastus, who alike by virtue of his age and his descent inspires me with feelings of affection and respect. Afflicted already by the recent loss of his wife, he was no less troubled on your account, fearing that the gang of barbarians and officers about the court might trump up some malicious charge against you. [2] According to his report, venomous tongues have been secretly at work, whispering in the ear of the ever-victorious Chilperic, our Master of the Soldiery,that your machinations are chiefly responsible for the attempt to win the town of Vaison for the new Emperor. If you are exposed to any suspicion on this score, inform me at once by return, that we may not lose any possible advantage which might accrue from my presence or the exertion of my interest. If in your opinion a real danger exists, I shall make it my special business either by conciliating the royal favour, to ensure your safety, or by discovering the extent of the king's anger to make you see the need for greater caution in future. Farewell. |56

Book 5 — VII.

To his [kinsman] Thaumastus A.D. 474-5 [1] AT last we have discovered who the villains are who have accused your brother before our tetrarch for siding with the partisans of the new Emperor----unless, indeed, the stealthy steps of the informers have deceived the proved sagacity of our friends. They are the wretches, as you yourself have heard me say upon the spot, whom Gaul endures with groans these many years, and who make the barbarians themselves seem merciful by comparison. They are the scoundrels whom even the formidable fear. These are the men whose peculiar province it seems to be to calumniate, to denounce, to intimidate, and to plunder. [2] These are they who in quiet times make parade of their affairs, in peace of their ample spoils, in war of their evasions, over their cups of their victories. These are the creatures who will spin out a case if they are called in, and block its progress if they are kept out; who grow offensive if reminded of their duty, and if they once pocket your fee, forget their obligation. These are the fellows who buy themselves a lawsuit to sell their mediation; who control the appointment of arbitrators, dictate their sentence, and tear it up whenever it suits them to do so; who incite litigants to sue, and hold the hearing in suspense; who hale off the convicted, and force back into the court those who would fain escape by settlement. These are the men who, asked a favour opposed by none, will promise |57 with reluctance what shame forbids them to refuse, and moan if they have to keep their word.

[3] These are they at whose appearance the world's great scoundrels would confess themselves surpassed, Narcissus, Asiaticus, Massa, Marcellus, Carus, Parthenius, Licinus, Pallas, and all their peers. These are they who grudge quiet folks their peace, the soldier his pay, the courier his fare, the merchant his market, the ambassador his gifts, the farmer of tolls his dues, the provincial his farm, the municipality its flamen's dignity, the controllers of revenue their weights, the receivers their measures, the registrars their salary, the accountants their fees, the bodyguards their presents, towns their truces, taxgatherers their taxes, the clergy the respect men pay them, the nobles their lineage, superiors their seats in council, equals equality, the official his jurisdiction, the ex-official his distinctions, scholars their schools, masters their stipends, and finished pupils their accomplishments. [4] These are the upstarts drunken with new wealth 4 (I spare you no sordid detail), who by their intemperate use betray their unfamiliarity with riches. They like to march under arms to a banquet, they will attend a funeral in white, and wear mourning at a marriage festival;

they go to church in furs, and hear a litany in beaver. No race of men, no rank, no epoch is ever to their liking. In the market they behave like Scyths; in the chamber they are vipers, at feasts buffoons. While they are harpies in exaction, in conversation you might as well talk to statues, or address a question to brute beasts. In negotiation slow as snails, they are sharp as money-lenders at a contract. In comprehension |58 they are stones, in judgement stocks; swift as flame in anger, hard as iron in forgiveness, pards in friendship, bears in humour, foxes in deceit, overbearing as bulls, fierce as Minotaurs in destruction.

[5] They believe in the unsettlement of affairs; the more troubled the time the firmer their faith in its advantage. Cowardice and a bad conscience destroy their nerves; they are lions in the palace and hares in camp; they dread treaties for fear of having to disgorge, and war for fear of having to fight. Let them but scent from afar a rusty purse, and you will see them fix on it the eyes of Argus, Briareus' hands, the Sphinx's claws; they will bring into play the perjuries of Laomedon, the subtleties of Ulysses, Sinon's wiles; they will stick to it with the staunchness of Polymestor and the loyalty of a Pygmalion. [6] Such are the morals with which they hope to crush a man both powerful and good. And what can one man do, encompassed on every side by slanderers whose venomous lips distort each word he says? What should he do when nature meant him for honest company, but fortune cast him among thieves whose evil communications would make Phalaris more bloodthirsty, Midas more covetous, Ancus vainer, Tarquin haughtier, Tiberius craftier, Gaius more dangerous, Claudius more slothful, Nero more corrupt, Galba more avaricious, Otho more reckless, Vitellius more prodigal, Domitian more ferocious?

[7] But we have one consolation in our trouble; fair Tanaquil restrains our Lucumon: she waits her chance, and rids his ears by a few coaxing words of all the poison with which the whisperers have filled them. |59 You ought to know that we owe it to her interest if up till now the mind of our common patron has not been poisoned against our brothers by these younger Cibyrates; God willing, it never will be, while the present power holds Lyons for the German race, and our present Agrippina exerts her moderating influence on her Germanicus. Farewell.

Book 5 — VIII.

To his friend Secundinus c. A.D. 477 [1] WHAT a long time it is since we used to read your masterly hexameters with outspoken admiration! Your verse was equally full of life, whether you were celebrating a wedding, or the fall of great beasts before the prowess of kings. But even you yourself would admit that you have never done anything better than your last poem in triple trochaics constructed in hendecasyllabic metre. [2] What fine malice I found in it; what style, what pungent eloquence! it was impossible for me to keep my enthusiasm to myself. As for your subjects, you were fearless; only the necessity for respecting persons seemed to check somewhat the lightning of your genius and the free course of your irony. I think the Consul Ablabius never thrust more brilliantly at the family life of Constantine with a couplet, or gave more stinging point to the famous distich secretly appended to the palace gates:

'Who wants back Saturn and his golden age? We have the diamond age----Neronian.' |60 You remember that, when this was written, Constantine had done to death his consort Fausta in a hot bath and his son Crispus with cold poison. [3] I would not have you deterred by anything from your bold and vivid use of satire. You will find the flourishing vices of our tyrant-ridden citizens a rich mine to exploit. For the folk whom we set down as fortunate according to the lights of our age or our locality comport themselves with such an arrogance that the future will not readily forget their names. The infamy of vice and the praise of virtue are both alike eternal. Farewell.

Book 5 — IX.

To his friend Aquilinus c. A.D. 477 [1] I FIND it certainly to my advantage, friend capable of every virtue, and I trust you will feel the same, that we should have as many ties to bind us as we have reasons for being united. Such ties are hereditary in our families; I do but recall the experience of the past. Let me summon as my witnesses our grandfathers Rusticus and Apollinaris, whom like fortunes and aversions united in a noble friendship. They had a similar taste in letters, their characters were alike; they had enjoyed similar dignities and undergone the same dangers. They were equally agreed in detesting the inconstancy of Constantine, the irresolution of Jovinus, the perfidy of Gerontius; both singling out the fault proper to each person, and both finding in Dardanus the sum of all existing vices. |61

[2] If we come down to the years between their time and our own, we find our fathers brought up together from their tender youth until they came to manhood. In Honorius' reign, as tribunes and secretaries, they served abroad together in such close comradeship that among all the grounds of their agreement the fact that their own fathers had been friends appeared to be the least. Under Valentinian, one of the two ruled all Gaul, the other only a region of it; even so they managed to balance their dignities with a fraternal equilibrium; the one who held the lower rank had seniority in office. [3] And now the old tradition comes down to us grandsons, whose dearest care it should be to prevent the affection of our parents and our forefathers from suffering any diminution in our persons. But there are ties of all kinds, over and above that of this hereditary friendship, which needs must bring us close together; we are linked by equality of years no less than by identity of birthplace; we played and learned together, shared the same discipline and relaxation, and were trained by the same rule. [4] So then, for what remains of life now that our years touch upon the threshold of age, let us under the providence of God be two persons with but a single mind; and let us instil into our sons the same mutual regard: let us see that the objects which they desire and refuse, pursue or shun, are the same. It would indeed crown our vows if the boys who bear the honoured names of Rusticus and Apollinaris renewed within their breasts the hearts of those illustrious ancestors. Farewell. |62

Book 5 — X.

To his friend Sapaudus (No indication of date)

[1] AMONG all the virtues of the illustrious Pragmatius, I place this first, that his enthusiasm for letters inspires him with an ardent admiration for you. He finds in you the last traces of the antique industry and accomplishment; and it is only right that he should show you favour, since few men owe a greater debt to literature than he. [2] When he was a young man his persuasive eloquence won such applause in the schools of rhetoric, that Priscus Valerianus, himself reputed for his oratorical skill, made him his son-in-law, and adopted him into his patrician family. Besides his youth, his birth and means, Pragmatius had good looks, and an engaging modesty which enlisted people's sympathy. Even at that age he was of a serious disposition and felt the shame of making his way by a handsome face when he would have been better content to attract by his qualities of mind and character. And indeed a beautiful nature is the best key to men's hearts; bodily charm is transient; as years advance and life wanes, it falls away. When Priscus Valerianus was made Prefect of the Gauls, his opinion of his adopted son remained unaltered, indeed he clung to it with pertinacity. He associated him with himself in council-chamber and court, resolved that the accomplishments which had been admitted to share his family life should also share in the enhancement of his dignity.

[3] Your own style is so admirable and lucid, that far from surpassing it, the great orators, with all their qualities, can |63 hardly attain its level----not the logical Palaemon, the austere Gallic, the opulent Delphidius, the methodical Agroecius, the virile Alcimus, the charming Adelphius, the rigid Magnus, the agreeable Victorius. It is far from my desire to cajole or flatter you with this hyperbolic list of rhetors, but in my opinion only Quintilian in his force and his intensity, or Palladius with his splendid manner, can fairly be compared with you; and even that comparison I should not urge----I should merely yield it acquiescence. [4] If after you there shall be any other adept of Roman eloquence, he will be deeply grateful to that friendship with Valerianus, and if he is half a man, will long to be admitted as a third to your society. Such a wish could never prove a source of annoyance to you, since there are now, alas! so few who have any respect for polite studies. And it is a defect rooted and fixed in human nature, to think little of the artist when you know nothing of the art. Farewell.

Book 5 — XI.

To his friend Potentinus c. A. D. 467 [1] I AM your devoted friend, and my devotion was born neither of caprice nor error. Before I linked myself to you in close friendship, I pondered well; it is my habit to choose first, and give my heart afterwards. 'But what on earth ', you will say, 'did you see to like in me?' [2] I will answer gladly and in two words: gladly, for you are my friend; briefly, because my space is small. What I respect in your career is this; you |64 do so many things that every reasonable man would like to imitate. You cultivate your estates as an expert; you build with the utmost method, you are an unerring hunter, your hospitality is perfection, your wit is of the first order, your judgements are absolutely fair; you are sincere in persuasion, very slow to wrath, very quickly appeased, very loyal after reconciliation. [3] I shall rejoice if when he grows up my young Apollinaris copies these several qualities; it shall not be for want of urging on my part if he fails. Let Christ but grant me success in my plans for his training and instruction, and it will not be my least satisfaction to have borrowed from your character the chief ensample of life which I set before him. Farewell.

Book 5 — XII.

To his friend Calminius A. D. 474 [1] It is no foolish pride of mine, but this alien dominance which makes my letters so few and far between; do not expect me to speak out; your own fears, similar to mine, explain the need for silence. One thing, however, I may freely lament, that sundered as we are by this whirlwind of warring forces, we have practically no chance of meeting one another. Alas! your harassed country never sees you except when the alien's formidable command bids you hide yourself in armour, while we on our side are covered by our ramparts. At such time you are led against your native land, an unwilling captive, to empty your quiver against |65 us while your eyes fill with tears. We bear you no ill will; we know that your prayers are otherwise directed than your missiles. [2] But as from time to time, without ratification of any treaty some semblance of a truce opens for us a casement on our darkness, bright with hope of liberation, I entreat you to let us hear from you as often as you can; for be sure that our besieged citizens preserve the kindliest thoughts of you and manage to forget the hateful part you play as their besieger. Farewell.

Book 5 — XIII.

To his friend Pannychius * A. D. 469

[1] HAVE you heard that Seronatus is coming back from Toulouse? If you have not (and I hardly think you have), learn it from these presents. Evanthius is hurrying to Clausetia, making passable the parts of the road in the contractor's hands, and clearing it wherever it is choked with fallen leaves. When he finds any part of the surface full of holes, he rushes in a panic with spadefuls of soil and fills them with his own hands; his business is to conduct his monster from the valley of the Tarn, like the pilot-fish that leads the bulky whale through shoals and rocky waters. [2] But lo! the monster, swift to wrath and slow to move by reason of his bulk, no sooner appears like a dragon uncoiling from his cave, than he makes immediate descent upon the pallid folk of Javols, whose cheeks are pale with fear. They had |66 scattered on all sides, abandoning their townships; and now he drains them dry by new and unparalleled imposts, or takes them in the mesh of calumny; even when they have paid their annual tribute more than once, he refuses to let these unhappy victims return to their homes. [3] The sure sign of his impending arrival in any district is the appearance of prisoners in troops, dragging their chains along. The anguish of these men is joy to him; their hunger is his food; and he finds his peculiar pleasure in subjecting them to ignominy before their sentence.

He compels the men to grow long hair, and off cuts the hair of the women. If here and there a prisoner receives a pardon, it is through his vanity or his corruption, and never through his mercy. Not even the prince of orators or the prince of poets could describe so dire a creature: Marcus of Arpinum and Publius of Mantua would be impotent alike. This pest (whose treasons God confound! is said to be now on his way; anticipate his onset by salutary precautions; if there is talk of suits, compound with the litigious enemy; provide yourself with guarantees against new imposts, and prevent this worst of men from compromising the affairs of worthy people by his favour or ruining them by his enmity. I will sum up in these words my opinion of Seronatus: others fear some crushing blow at the brigand's hands; to me his very benefits are suspicious. Farewell. |67

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 338; and Fertig, i. p. 20.

Book 5 — XIV.

To his friend Aper A.D. 472-3 [1] ARE you taking your ease in your sunny Baiae, where the sulphurous water rushes from hollows of the porous rock, and the baths are so beneficial to those who suffer either in the lungs or liver? Or are you 'camped among the mountain castles', looking for a place of refuge, and perhaps embarrassed by the number of strongholds you find to choose from? Whatever the cause of your delay, whether you are making holiday or going about your business, I feel sure that the thought of the forthcoming Rogations will bring you back to town. [2] It was Mamertus our father in God and bishop who first designed, arranged, and introduced the ceremonial of these prayers, setting a precedent we should all revere, and making an experiment which has proved of the utmost value. We had public prayers of a sort before, but (be it said without offence to the faithful) they were lukewarm, irregular, perfunctory, and their fervour was destroyed by frequent interruption for refreshment; and as they were chiefly for rain or for fine weather, to say the least of it, the potter and the market-gardener could never decently attend together! [3] But in the Rogations which our holy father has instituted and conferred upon us, we fast, we pray with tears, we chant the psalms. To such a feast, where penitential sighs are heard from all the congregation, where heads are humbly bowed, and forms fall prostrate, I invite you; and if I rightly gauge your spirit, you will only |68 respond the quicker because you are called in place of banquets to a festival of tears. Farewell.

Book 5 — XV.

To his friend Ruricius (No indication of date) [1] THE usual salutations over, I at once urge upon your notice the claims of our bookseller, because I have made discriminating and unbiased trial of the man, proving him to my complete satisfaction at once loyal in sentiment and alert in service to our common master----yourself. He brings in person the manuscript of the Heptateuch all written out by his own hand with the utmost neatness and rapidity, though I read it through myself, and made corrections. He also brings a volume of the Prophets; this was edited by him in my absence, and with his own hand purged of corrupt additions.The scholar who had promised him assistance in reading out from another text, was only able to perform his task in part; I fancy illness prevented him from carrying out his undertaking. [2] It remains for you by encouragement or promise of your influence to show appropriate recognition of a servant who has done his best to satisfy, and deserves to succeed; and if this is in proportion to his arduous task, he will soon begin to look for his reward. All that I ask for the moment is your benevolence towards him; it is for you to decide what he deserves, though indeed I think the good opinion of his master is far nearer to his heart than any recompense. Farewell. |69

Book 5 — XVI.

To [his wife] Papianilla* A. D. 474

[1] THE moment the Quaestor Licinianus, coming from Ravenna, had crossed the Alps and set foot on Gaulish soil, he sent a message in advance to make it known that he was bearer of imperial letters patent conferring the title of Patrician on Ecdicius. I know that your brother's honours delight you no less than my own; considering his years, he has attained this one very early; considering his deserts, very late. For he earned the dignity he is now to receive long ago, by service in the field and not by purchase; and though only a private citizen, poured into the treasury no mere contribution, but sums like spoils of war. [2] Julius Nepos, true Emperor in character no less than prowess, has done nobly in keeping the pledged word of his predecessor Anthemius that the labours of your brother should be recognized; his action is all the more laudable for the promptitude with which he has fulfilled a promise reiterated so often by another. In future the best men in the State will feel able, nay, rather, will feel bound, to spend their strength with the utmost ardour for the commonweal, assured that even should the prince who promised die, the Empire itself will be responsible, and pay the debt due to their devotion and self-sacrifice.

[3] Knowing your affectionate |70 nature, I am convinced that even in the very midst of our adversities this news will bring great consolation, and that not even the imminent dread of siege will divert your mind from the path of a joy common to us all. For I am sure you were never quite so gratified by any of my own honours, in which you legally shared; good wife as you have always been, you are the best sister that man ever had. That is why I have not lost an instant in sending my letter of congratulation on this enhancement of dignity which Christ has permitted to your family. I satisfy alike your solicitude and your brother's modesty. He will be sure to say nothing of this promotion; but even if you did not know his unassuming nature, you would not blame him for lack of brotherly feeling. [4] As far as I am concerned, I derive great satisfaction from these new distinctions which you have awaited with unconcealed impatience; but I derive a greater yet from the brotherly union which exists between Ecdicius and myself. It is my ardent wish that our children and his may live in equal harmony; and I pray in our common name that just as we of this generation were born into prefectorian families, and have been enabled by divine favour to elevate them to

patrician rank, so they in their turn may exalt the patrician to the consular dignity. [5] Little Roscia, our joint care, sends you her love;

she has the rare advantage of being brought up by her grandmother and her aunts, who temper their great indulgence with strictness, forming her character, yet not asking too much of her tender years. Farewell. |71

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 346-8.

Book 5 — XVII.

To his friend Eriphius * A. D. 461-7

[1] You are the same man still, my dear Eriphius; the pleasures of the chase, the amenities of town or country are never allowed to lure you so far that in your hour the charm of letters will not win you back. That devotion it is which bids you tolerate even me, whom you are good enough to describe as redolent of the Muses. If you were in a frivolous mood when you wrote so, you jest at my expense; if in sober earnest, your regard for me has blinded your eyes, for it needs no demonstration to prove your judgement at fault. Really, you go much too far when you use of me expressions hardly appropriate to a Homer or a Virgil. [2] I leave these kindly exaggerations, and pass to the proper subject of my letter. You bid me send you the verses which I was weak enough to compose at the request of your most distinguished father-in-law, who understands the art of so living with his fellows as to command or obey with equal ease. Blame yourself if words run away with me, and I relate an insignificant event at greater length than it deserves; you insist on a picture of the scene and all that occurred, since your illness prevented you from being with us. [3] We had assembled at the tomb of S. Justus ; the annual procession before daylight was over, attended by a vast crowd of both sexes which even that great church |72 could not hold with all its cincture of galleries.

After Vigils were ended, chanted alternately by the monks and clerics, the congregation separated; we could not go far off, as we had to be at hand for the next service at Tierce, when the priests were to celebrate the Mass. [4] We felt oppressed by the crowding in a confined space, and by the great number of lights which had been brought in. It was still almost summer, and the night was so sultry that it suffocated us, imprisoned as we were in that steaming atmosphere; only the first freshness of the autumn dawn brought some welcome relief. Groups of the different classes dispersed in various directions, the principal citizens assembling at the monument of Syagrius, which is hardly a bowshot from the church. Some of us sat down under an old vine, the stems of which were trained trellis-wise and covered with leaves and drooping fronds; others sat on the grass odorous with the scent of flowers. [5] The talk was enlivened with amusing jests and pleasantries; above all (and what a blessed thing it was!), there was not a word about officials or taxes, not an informer among us to betray, not a syllable worth betrayal. Every one was free to tell any story worth relating and

of a proper tenor; it was a most appreciative audience; the vein of gaiety was not allowed to spoil the distinct relation of each tale. After a time, we felt a certain slackness through keeping still so long, and we voted for some more active amusement.

[6] We soon split into two groups, according to our ages: one shouted for the ball, the other for the board-game, both of which were to be had. I was the leader of the ball-players; you know that book and ball are my twin companions. In the other |73 group, the chief figure was our brother Domnicius, that most engaging and attractive of men: there he was, rattling some dice which he had got hold of, as if he sounded a trumpet-call to play. The rest of us had a great game with a party of students, doing our best at the healthful exercise with limbs which sedentary occupations made much too stiff for running. [7] And now the illustrious Filimatius sturdily flung himself into the squadrons of the players, like Virgil's hero 'daring to set his hand to the task of youth' ; he had been a splendid player himself in his younger years. But over and over again he was forced from his position among the stationary players by the shock of some runner from the middle, and driven into the midfield where the ball flew past him, or was thrown over his head; and he failed to intercept or parry it. More than once he fell prone, and had to pick himself up from such collapses as best he could;

naturally he was the first to withdraw from the stress of the game in a state of internal inflammation, out of breath from exercise and suffering sharp pains in the side from the swollen fibres of his liver. [8] Thereupon I left off too. It was done from delicacy; if I stopped at the same time, my brother would be spared a feeling of mortification at being so soon exhausted. Well, while we were sitting down, he found himself in such a perspiration that he called for water to bathe his face. They brought it, with a shaggy towel which had been washed after yesterday's use, and had been swinging on a line worked by a pulley near the doors of the porter's lodge. [9] As Filimatius was leisurely drying his cheeks, he said: 'I wish you would dictate a pair |74 of couplets in honour of a cloth which has done me such a noble turn.' 'Very well,' I replied. 'But you must get my name in,' he rejoined. I said that there would be no difficulty in that. 'Dictate away, then.' I smiled; 'I would have you know', I said, 'that the Muses are upset if I frequent their company before witnesses.' At this he burst out in his explosive but delightful way (you know his ardent nature, and what an inexhaustible flow of wit he has): 'Beware, my lord Sollius!

Apollo may be still more upset if you tempt his pupils to secret interviews all alone.' You can imagine the applause aroused by a retort as neat as it was instantaneous. [10] I wasted no more time, but called up his secretary, who was at hand with his tablets, and dictated the following epigram:

'At dawn, or when the seething bath invites, or when the hot chase beads the brow, may goodly Filimatius with this cloth cherish his face till all the perspiration flows into the thirsty fleece.' Our good friend Epiphanius the secretary had hardly taken down the lines, when they came to tell us that our time was up, and that the bishop was leaving his retreat; we therefore rose to go. [11] You must not be too critical of verses written thus to order. It is another matter with the longer poem which some time ago you two asked me to write

in a hyperbolical and figured style on the man who bore good fortune ill.I shall send it off to-morrow for your private revision. If you both approve of it, you can then publish it under your auspices; if you condemn, you can tear it up and forgive me as best you can. Farewell. |75

* The greater part translated by Guizot, Hist, de la civilisation en France, ed. 1846, i. 95-7; and by Fertig, Part ii, pp. 39-40.

Book 5 — XVIII.

To his friend Attalus (No indication of date) [1] I WAS delighted to hear that you have consented to preside over the destinies of Autun. I am glad for several reasons; first, you are my friend; second, you are a just man; third, you are not to be trifled with; fourth, you will be quite near us. You will now have not only the inclination to help our people and further their affairs, but the duty and the power of doing so. In my satisfaction at seeing an old acquaintance invested with new authority, I am already looking round for objects on which you may exercise your benevolence. For understand, I feel so sure of it, that if I fail to find anything to ask for, I shall expect you to make me a suggestion yourself. Farewell.

Book 5 — XIX.

To his friend Pudens c. A. D. 472 [1] THE son of your nurse has eloped with the daughter of mine. It is a shameful action, and one which would have destroyed our friendly relations, had I not learned at once that you knew nothing of the man's intention. But though you are thus acquitted in advance, you yet do not scruple to ask that this crying offence should be allowed to go unpunished. I can only agree on one condition: that you promote the ravisher from his original servile state, by changing your relation to him |76 from that of master to that of patron. [2] The woman is already free; but she will only be regarded as a lawful wife instead of a mere concubine if our criminal, whose cause you espouse, ceases to be your dependant and becomes your client, assuming the status of a freeman in place of that of a colonus. Nothing short of these terms or these amends will in the least condone the affront. I only yield to your request and your protestation of friendship on condition that, if as ravisher he is not to be bond to Justice, Liberty shall make him a free bridegroom. Farewell.

Book 5 — XX.

To his friend Pastor A. D. 461-7

[1] YOUR absence from yesterday's business of the Municipal Council is thought by most to have been intentional; they suspect that you wished to avoid the burden of an embassy which might be laid upon your shoulders. I congratulate you on being so eligible a person as to live in constant fear of being elected. Your efficiency commands my applause, your prudence my admiration, your happy fortune my congratulations; [2] in fine, I wish no better lot than yours to every friend I love as well. Many men are possessed by a detestable thirst for popularity; you see them take the chief citizens by the hand, lead them aside from a meeting, and embrace them in a corner, promising good offices for which no one asked; you see them, in the hope of nomination as public envoys, refusing the usual |77 travelling-allowance, and insisting on going at their own charges; secretly canvassing every member in turn, so that when the council meets, they may be sure of a unanimous and public invitation. [3] The consequence is that though people are pleased enough to be served for nothing, they find it in the long run pleasanter to choose a more modest representative, even at the cost of paying all expenses; the self-assertion of the volunteer becomes too irksome, even though his tenure of office throws no burden on the town. Since, then, the intentions of our best citizens are now no secret to you, acquiesce, and meet their wishes; you have given proof enough of modesty;

test the warm feelings of those who invite you. Your failure to appear was put down to your discretion; a repetition of such conduct would expose you to the charge of indifference. [4] Remember, too, that if you do go to Arles, you will be able to greet your venerable mother and your affectionate brothers on the way; you will greet the natal soil that returns love for love, and is doubly delightful when unexpectedly revisited. Then think how convenient it will be to see your agent, and to get even a passing glimpse of your own home, your vines, your olives, your cornfields, and the house itself. Though our envoy, you will yet be travelling for your own pleasure; altogether, this journey on city business should suit you admirably, and you will be able to thank the community for an excellent chance of getting a sight of your own people. Farewell. |78

Book 5 — XXI.

To his friends Sacerdos and Justinus (No indication of date) YOUR uncle Victorius, whose varied learning and eminence we so revered, always wrote with power, especially when he wrote verse. As you know, I too have been the servant of the Muses from my youth up. You are your uncle's heirs no less in merit than in law. But by right of poetry I am as much his kin as you by right of blood; we ought all of us, therefore, to share in the succession according to our several affinities. So keep the property for yourselves, but hand the poems over to me. Farewell.

Book 6 — I.

To the Lord Bishop Lupus* A. D. 472

[1] BLESSED be the Holy Spirit and Father of Almighty God that we have you, father of fathers, bishop of bishops and the second James of your age, to look down upon every member of the Church from the eminence of your charity, as it were from another Jerusalem exalted high as the first; you, the consoler of all the feeble, the counsellor of all men, whose trust you so well deserve. And what answer can I make to one thus venerated, I who am as vile dust foul with sin? [2] Suffering deep need of your salutary converse, yet standing in great awe, I am driven by the memory of my guilty life to cry to you, as once that great colleague of yours cried to the Lord: 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' But if my dread is not tempered by love, I fear that I may be abandoned like the Gerasenes, and that you may go forth from my borders. Rather, for my greater profit, will I seek to bind you with the conditional prayer of that other leper: 'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;' in which words he both declared his need and published abroad his faith. [3] For though you are beyond |80 all doubt first of all bishops in the wide world; though even the throng of your colleagues submits to the prerogative which you enjoy, and trembles at your adverse judgement;

though the hearts of the oldest among them are as the hearts of little children compared with yours; though your hard vigils in the spiritual warfare at Lerins,and the nine lustres passed in your apostolic see have made you a veteran honoured in the camps of the Church, and the captain of our vanguard whom every soldier acclaims----yet you never hesitate to leave the first line awhile and those who fight before it; you do not despise camp-follower and servant, but to the meanest of the baggage-train, who for their ignorant simplicity still sit beside the loads of the flesh, you carry the standard of the cross which you have borne so long, and to their stricken souls extend the Word, as it were a hand of rescue. [4] They say, dear veteran leader, that you gather to you even the enemy's wounded, sounding the retreat from Sin to Christ after the manner of a consummate trumpeter, and like the Shepherd of the Gospel feel more joy over those who abandon the way of despair than over those who have never left the path of safety. O norm of all right conduct, column of all virtues, and (if a sinful man may dare to praise) fount of sweetness, truest because most holy, you did not shrink from touching with the finger of exhortation the sores of a most despicable worm;

you did not grudge the food of admonition to a soul frail and fasting, or from the store-house of your deep love refuse me the measure of the humility I am now to pursue. [5] Pray for me, that I may know at length how vast the burden is that weighs upon my shoulders. Wretched man that I am, by the |81 continuance of my transgressions brought to such a pass, that I must now intercede for the sins of the people ---- I for whom their own supplications, more innocent than mine, should hardly obtain the divine mercy. How shall a sick man give others medicine? How shall one in a fever presume to feel a pulse that beats more strongly than his own? What deserter has the right to sing the praise of military science? What lover of high living is fit to read a lecture to the abstemious? Yet I, the unworthiest of men, must preach what I cannot practise. Condemned out of my own mouth when I do not fulfil my own injunctions, I must daily pronounce sentence upon myself. But if like a new Moses, not less, but of a later age, you intercede before Our Lord, with whom you are daily crucified, for all the multitude of my sins, I shall not living descend further into hell, nor longer, inflamed by the incentives of carnal sin, light alien flame on the altar of the Lord. For one guilty as I, there can be no glory to weigh down the scale;

how abundantly shall I then rejoice if your prayers avail to restore my inward man, not indeed to perfect health and its reward, but to the healing of the heart's wounds, and pardon. Deign to keep me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

* Translated by Chaix, i. 449; and Germain, p. 103 f.

Book 6 — II.

To the Lord Bishop Pragmatius A. D. 472

[1] THE venerable matron Eutropia, known to me as a woman of the most exemplary merit, is in the greatest trouble. Frugality and charity dispute her days; her |82 fastings feed the poor; so watchful is she in Christ's service, that sin is all in her which she allows to slumber. But as if the sorrow of her widowhood were not enough, she now finds herself threatened with a lawsuit. Her first instinct in her two-fold affliction is to obtain the perfect remedy of your consolation; if you only see her, she will be equally grateful, whether you regard her coming as a short journey or as a lasting proof of her respect. [2] Now Eutropia is being harassed by the subtleties, to use no harsher word, of our venerable brother the presbyter Agrippinus. He is taking advantage of her woman's inexperience, and continually troubling the serene surface of her spiritual nature by windy gusts of worldliness. And all the while this poor woman is bleeding from two fresh wounds which time has added to the old deep wound of widowhood; for her son was first taken from her, and very soon afterwards her grandson also. [3] I did my best to compose this matter; a friendship of long standing gave me an old claim to be heard, and my sacred calling a new one; I let them know what I thought; I used persuasion where I could, and entreaty at every turn.

You may be surprised to learn that throughout the woman and not the man was the first to accept suggestions for agreement. And though the father boasts that in his paternal quality he is in the best position to serve his daughter's interests, the daughter herself prefers her mother-in-law's most generous proposals. [4] The dispute, only half appeased, is now to be carried before you. Pacify the adversaries by your episcopal authority, show their suspicious souls the truth, and bring about a reconciliation. You |83 may take my word for it that the holy Eutropia will count it almost victory if even at the cost of heavy sacrifices she can escape from litigation. Though two families are parties to the quarrel, I fancy you will soon decide which of them deserves the name of quarrelsome. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — III.

To the Lord Bishop Leontius A. D. 472 [1] You have not yet seen fit to encourage my first steps in our sacred profession, or to pour the rain of heavenly doctrine on the drought of my worldly ignorance; but I do not so far forget myself as to expect an equipoise in the courtesies which we render to each other. I am of small account; you are easily above me in years, in seniority, in the precedence enjoyed by your see, in your wide learning, in the treasure of your righteousness; if I expected you to notice every letter, I should deserve no notice at all. [2] I therefore make no imputation against your silence; these lines merely introduce the bearer, and give me the excuse for sending them. If on this journey he can only have the assurance of your prompt favour, a broad harbour of safety will be open to his affairs. His business relates to a will. He does not know the importance of his own documents; the object of his expedition is to get the advice of skilled counsel. He will think it the next best thing to winning his case if it is proved to be lost on its merits; his one desire is to avoid the charge of negligence, and of not sufficiently |84 protecting family interests. My request on his behalf is simply this, that if the lawyers will not deign to give him proper advice, you should exert the authority of your sacred office to extract it from them without delay. Deign to keep me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — IV.

To the Lord Bishop Lupus c. A. D. 472

[1] I RENDER you the observance always due to the incomparable eminence of your apostolic life, still always due, however regularly paid. But I have a further object, to commend to your notice a long-standing trouble of the bearers, in whose case I have recently become interested. They have journeyed a great distance into Auvergne at this unfavourable season, and the journey has been undertaken in vain. A female relative of theirs was carried off during a raid of the Vargi, as the local bandits are styled. They received trustworthy information, and following an old but reliable clue, discovered that some years ago she had been brought here before being removed elsewhere. [2] As a matter of fact, the unfortunate woman had been sold in open market before their arrival, and is now actually under the roof and the control of my man of affairs. A certain Prudens, rumoured to be now resident in Troyes, had attested the contract for the vendors, whose names are unknown to us; his signature is to be seen on the deed of purchase as that of a suitable witness of the transaction. By the fortunate fact of your presence, you |85 will be able, if you think fit, to see the parties confronted, and use your personal influence to investigate the whole course of the outrage. I gather from what the bearers say, that the offence is aggravated by the death of a man upon the road as a sequel to the abduction.

[3] But as the aggrieved parties who wish to bring this scandalous affair to light are anxious for the remedy of your judgement and for your neighbourly aid, it seems to me that it would no less become your character than your position to bring about an equitable arrangement, thus affording the one side some comfort in affliction, and saving the other from an impending danger. Such a qualified decision would be most beneficial to all concerned; it would diminish the misery of one party and the guilt of the other, while it would give both of them a greater feeling of security. Otherwise, in regions and times like these of ours, the last state of the dispute may well prove no better than the beginning. Deign to keep me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — V.

To the Lord Bishop Theoplastus (No indication of date) WHOEVER bears a letter of introduction from me to you unconsciously does my business; by conveying my dutiful regards at the proper moment, he renders me a service at least as great as that which he considers himself to receive. This is the case with the venerable Donidius, who is deservedly to be numbered among the |86 most admirable of mankind. I now recommend to you his client and servants, who have undertaken this journey for the benefit of their patron and master. Pray take the weary travellers under your protection; do all you can to help them by your support, your hospitality, and your intercession. And if our good friend, through inexperience and unfamiliarity with public affairs, should in any matter betray his inefficiency, consider the cause of an absent man, rather than the personality of his representative. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — VI.

To the Lord Bishop Eutropius A. D. 472 [1] As soon as I learned that the treaty-breaking nation had withdrawn within its borders, and that travellers were in no further danger of insidious attack, I held it a disgrace to delay the presentation of my respects, for fear your friendship might grow rusty from my neglect, like a sword which is not properly kept bright. My sole object in sending this letter is to satisfy my anxiety as to your health and the success of your affairs; it is my hope that neither the distance which divides us nor the long intervals between our meetings may ever diminish the friendship once accorded me; it is the homes of men which the Creator confines within narrow limits, not their mutual affections. [2] And now I hope your Beatitude will feed my starving ignorance with sharp |87 and salutary discourse; your exhortations have a way of causing mystic increase and spiritual growth in the emaciated inward man. Deign to hold me in your remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — VII.

To the Lord Bishop Fonteius A. D. 472 [1] IF a previous friendship between the older members of two families helps the younger in their turn to know each other better, then indeed by virtue of such preexisting ties I enjoy a great advantage in now seeking your Lordship's more intimate acquaintance. I well remember how powerful a patron in Christ you always were to my family, so that I regard myself less as making a new acquaintance, than as renewing an old one. I will add that the title of bishop imposed on my extreme unworthiness compels me to seek the covert of your intercession, that the gaping wounds of a seared conscience may at least be closed by your healing prayers. [2] While, therefore, I commend to you myself and those who are dear to me, at the same time apologizing for not writing sooner, I implore you to sustain my first steps as a novice in this office by those availing supplications for which you are so widely renowned. So shall I owe all to your mediation, if the immutable mercy of God deign but to change the wickedness of this heart of mine. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |88

Book 6 — VIII.

To the Lord Bishop Graecus c. A. D. 472 [1] THE bearer of this is one who ekes out a bare living by commerce; he gains no profit or other advantage from any handicraft or employment, nor does he make anything from the cultivation of land. He has come to be favourably known as an agent and trader; but a good name is all he gets; the pecuniary advantage goes to others. Though his means are small, the general confidence in him is so great that if he wants to raise money for the purchase of a cargo, people are confiding enough to trust him on no greater security than their experience of his good faith. It is true that I only learned these facts while actually writing these lines, but that does not make me hesitate to assert them with some assurance, for the sources of the information are common acquaintances of his and mine. I recommend him to you, then, on the ground of his youth and the arduous life he has led. As his name is now entered in the roll as Reader, you will see that I have had to give him in addition to an ordinary introduction as citizen, a canonical letter as a clerk. I think I am right in looking forward to his brilliant success as a merchant if he is quick to take advantage of your patronage; but he must definitely prefer the fount of commerce to the icy springs of a municipal career.* Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |89

* The passage is corrupt.

Book 6 — IX.

To the Lord Bishop Lupus c. A. D. 472 [1] THE bearer Gallus, made an honest man by returning at once to his wife as he was bidden, conveys my greeting in this letter, and by doing so proves the efficacy of your own. For when I opened your missive in his presence, he was seized with instant compunction, and saw in it not so much a communication for me as a condemnation of himself. The result was that he immediately promised to go back, made his preparations at once, and was off without delay. At sight of so rapid a repentance, I could not confine myself altogether to rebuke; I gave him a few words of consolation, for so spontaneous an amendment is the next best thing to unbroken innocence. [2] A man with a perfect conscience could hardly have done more, always supposing him to keep within the range of your admonishment; for even such words of gentle censure as I read out to him are in themselves a most powerful incentive to reform. What, indeed, could be more valuable than a reprimand aiding the sick mind to discover within itself a remedy which the sharp reproach of others could never find? [3] It remains for me to ask a place in those frequent prayers by which you so mightily triumph over every kind of vice; that as the Wise Men of the Gospel returned to their own country by a different way, so by a new way of life you may lead me home to the land of the blessed. I had almost forgotten to mention the point which I |90 could least have afforded to omit. Convey my thanks to the respected Innocentius for so promptly obeying your injunctions. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — X.

To the Lord Bishop Censorius* A.D. 473 THE bearer is one privileged to hold the rank of deacon. Flying with his family from the whirlwind of the Gothic devastations, he was carried, as it were by the sheer momentum of his flight, into your territory. Immigrant and destitute as he was, he hurriedly sowed a half-tilled plot on Church lands in your holiness's diocese, and now begs permission to take the whole harvest for himself. The poor fellow is a stranger whose means are as narrow as his outlook; but if you treat him with the indulgence often granted to the humbler among the faithful, that is, if you remit him the glebe dues, he will think he has done as well as if he were yet at work upon his native soil. If only you show him the liberality usually accorded to the faithful, and abandon your strictly lawful claim on his most exiguous crop, he will be full of gratitude, and set off home royally furnished for the road. Should you take the opportunity of his return to send me one of your usual gracious letters, all the brethren, and I myself, will regard it almost as a letter fallen from heaven. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |91

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 371.

Book 6 — XI.

To the Lord Bishop Eleutherius c. A.D. 472 [1] I HEREWITH commend a Jew to you, not because I approve a sect pernicious to those involved in its toils, but because we ought to regard none of that creed as wholly lost so long as life remains to them. For while there is any possibility of converting them, there is always a hope of their redemption. [2] The nature of his business will be best explained by himself when admitted to your presence; for it would be imprudent to allow discursive talk to exceed the brevity proper to a letter. In the transactions and the disputes of this present world, a Jew has often as good a cause as any one; however much you may attack his heresy, you can fairly defend him as a man. Deign to hold us in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 6 — XII.

To the Lord Bishop Patiens* A.D. 474

[1] ONE man deems happiness to consist in one thing, a second in another; my own belief is that he lives most to his own advantage who lives for others, and does heaven's work on earth by pitying the poverty and misfortune of the faithful. You may wonder at what I aim in these remarks. At yourself, most blessed father, for my sentiments refer especially to you, |92 who are not content to succour only the distress which lies within your cognizance, but push your inquiries to the very frontiers of Gaul, and without respect of persons, consider each case of want upon its merits. [2] Does poverty or infirmity prevent a man from making his way to you in person? He loses nothing; your free hand anticipates the needs of those whose feet are unable to bring them to you. Your watchful eye ranges over other provinces than your own; the spreading tide of your benevolence bears consolation to the straitened, however far away. And so it happens that you often wipe tears from eyes which you have never seen, because the reserve of the absent touches you no less than the plaints of those near at hand. [3] I say nothing of your daily labour to relieve the need of your impoverished fellow countrymen, of your unceasing vigils, your prayers, your charity. I pass over the tact with which you combine the hospitable and the ascetic virtues, so that the king is never tired of praising your breakfasts and the queen your fasts.

I omit your embellishment of the church committed to your care until the spectator hardly knows which to admire most, the new fabric which you erect, or the old which you restore. [4] I do not mention the churches that rise in so many districts under your auspices, or the rich additions to their ornaments. I dismiss the fact that under your administration the faithful are increased and multiplied, while heretics alone diminish. I shall not tell how your apostolic chase for souls involves the wild Photinians in the spiritual mesh of homily; or how barbarians once converted by your eloquence pursue your track until, like a thrice-fortunate fisher of men, you |93 draw them up at last out of the profound gulfs of error. [5] It may be true that some of these good deeds are not peculiar to you, and are shared by colleagues; but there is one which is yours, as lawyers say, as a first charge, and which even your modesty cannot deny; it is this, that when the Gothic ravages were over, and the crops were all destroyed by fire, you distributed corn to the destitute throughout all the ruined land of Gaul at your own expense, though it would have been relief enough to our starving

peoples if the grain had come to them, not as a free gift, but by the usual paths of commerce. We saw the roads encumbered with your grain-carts. Along the Saône and Rhone we saw more than one granary which you had entirely filled.

[6] The legends of the heathen are eclipsed; Triptolemus must yield his pride of place, whom his fatherland of Greece deified for his discovery of corn; Greece, famed for her architects, her sculptors and her artists, who consecrated temples, and fashioned statues, and painted effigies in his honour. A doubtful story fables that this son of Ceres came wandering among peoples savage and acorn-fed, and that from two ships, to which poetry later assigned the form of dragons, he distributed the unknown seed. But you brought supplies from either Mediterranean shore, and, if need were, you would have sought them among the cities of the Tyrrhenian sea; your granaries filled not two paltry ships, but the basins of two great rivers. [7] If you disapprove, as unsuited to your profession, a comparison drawn from the Achaean superstition of Eleusis, I will recall instead the historic prescience of the patriarch Joseph, who by his foresight provided a remedy for the famine which had to follow the seven lean years; I omit |94 for the moment his mystic and typical significance.But I hold that man morally as great, who copes with a similar disaster without any warning in advance. [8] I cannot exactly tell the sum of gratitude which all the people owe you, inhabitants of Arles and Riez, Avignon, Orange, Viviers, Valence, and Trois Châteaux ; it is beyond my power to count the total thanks of men who were fed without having to count out a penny.

But for the city of Clermont I can speak, and in its name I give you endless thanks; all the more, that your help had no obvious inducement; we did not belong to your province; no convenient waterway led to us, we had no money to offer. [9] Measureless gratitude I give you on their behalf; they owe it to the abundant largess of your grain that they have now their own sufficiency once more. If now I have properly fulfilled the duty entrusted to me, I will cease to be the mouthpiece of others, and speak out of my own knowledge. I would have you know that your glory travels over all Aquitaine; all pray for your welfare, their hearts go out to you in love and praise, in longing and loyal devotion. In these evil times you have proved yourself a good priest, a good father, and as good as a good year to men who would have deemed it worth while to risk starvation if there had been no other means of discovering the measure of your generosity. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

* Partly translated by Fertig, Part ii, p. 24.

Book 7 — I.

To the Lord Bishop Mamertus A.D. 474

[1] RUMOUR has it that the Goths have occupied Roman soil; our unhappy Auvergne is always their gateway on every such incursion. It is our fate to furnish fuel to the fire of a peculiar hatred, for, by Christ's aid, we are the sole obstacle to the fulfilment of their ambition to extend their frontiers to the Rhone, and so hold all the country between that river, the Atlantic, and the Loire. Their menacing power has long pressed us hard; it has already swallowed up whole tracts of territory round us, and threatens to swallow more. [2] We mean to resist with spirit, though we know our peril and the risks which we incur. But our trust is not in our poor walls impaired by fire, or in our rotting palisades, or in our ramparts worn by the breasts of the sentries, as they lean on them in continual watch. Our only present help we find in those Rogations which you introduced; and this is the reason why the people of Clermont refuse to recede, though terrors surge about them on every side. By inauguration and institution of these prayers we are already new initiates; and if so far we have effected less than you have, our hearts are affected equally with yours. [3] For it is not unknown to us by what portents and |96 alarms the city entrusted to you by God was laid desolate at the time when first you ordained this form of prayer. Now it was earthquake, shattering the outer palace walls with frequent shocks;

now fire, piling mounds of glowing ash upon proud houses fallen in ruin; now, amazing spectacle! wild deer grown ominously tame, making their lairs in the very forum. You saw the city being emptied of its inhabitants, rich and poor taking to flight. But you resorted in our latter day to the example shown of old in Nineveh, that you at least might not discredit the divine warning by the spectacle of your despair. [4] And, indeed, you of all men had been least justified in distrusting the providence of God, after the proof of it vouchsafed to your own virtues. Once, in a sudden conflagration, your faith burned stronger than the flames. In full sight of the trembling crowd, you stood forth all alone to stay them, and lo! the fire leapt back before you, a sinuous beaten fugitive. It was miracle, a formidable thing, unseen before and unexampled; the element which naturally shrinks from nothing, retired in awe at your approach. [5] You therefore first enjoined a fast upon a few members of our sacred order, denouncing gross offences, announcing punishment, promising relief. You made it clear that if the penalty of sin was nigh, so also was the pardon; you proclaimed that by

frequent prayer the menace of coming desolation might be removed. You taught that it was by water of tears rather than water of rivers that the obstinate and raging fire could best be extinguished, and by firm faith the threatening shock of earthquake stayed.

[6] The multitude of the lowly forthwith followed your counsel, and this |97 influenced persons of higher rank, who had not scrupled to abandon the town, and now were not ashamed to return to it. By this devotion God was appeased, who sees into all hearts; your fervent prayers were counted to you for salvation; they became an ensample for your fellow citizens, and a defence about you all, for after those days there were neither portents to alarm, nor visitations to bring disaster.

We of Clermont know that all these ills befell your people of Vienne before the Rogations, and have not befallen them since; and therefore it is that we are eager to follow the lead of so holy a guide, beseeching your Beatitude from your own pious lips to give us the advocacy of those prayers now known to us by the examples which you have transmitted. [7] Since the Confessor Ambrose discovered the remains of Gervasius and Protasius, it has been granted to you alone in the West to translate the relics of two martyrs----all the holy body of Ferreolus, and the head of our martyr Julian„ which once the executioner's gory hand brought to the raging persecutor from the place of testimony. It is only fair, then, in compensation for the loss of this hallowed relic, that some part of your patronage should come to us from Vienne, since a part of our patronal saint has migrated thither. Deign to hold us in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |98

Book 7 — II.

To the Lord Bishop Graecus* c. A. D. 472 [1] You overwhelm me, most consummate of all bishops, by the praises showered on any unpolished lines which I happen to write. Short though my first letter was, I wish I could acquit myself of blame for having told you a whole string of things irreconcilable with fact; the truth is that a crafty traveller imposed upon my innocence. Ostensibly a trader, he persuaded me to give him a canonical letter as Reader; and this ought certainly to have contained some statement of his indebtedness to others. For it appeared, on subsequent inquiry, that by the generosity of the people of Marseilles, he set out better equipped than one so moderately favoured in birth and fortune had reason to expect. [2] It makes quite a good story, if I only wielded a pen able to do justice to its humours. But as you have asked me for a long and diverting letter, permit me to relate the manner in which this messenger of ours exploited the hospitality of your city. It shall be told in a light vein, but I shall be careful to say nothing to offend the severity of your ears. You will see that on this occasion I really do know the man whom I introduce to your notice for the second time. Usage permits a writer to find his subject-matter wherever he can; why, then, should I go far afield, when the man who is to bear my letter can himself provide the theme of it? |99

[3] The bearer, then, is a native of Clermont, born of humble but free parents, people who made no pretence of social standing, but were above all fear of degradation to the servile state, and satisfied with means, moderate indeed, but unencumbered and amply sufficient for their needs; it was a family which had chiefly held offices under the Church, and had not entered the public service. The father was a most estimable man, but not free-handed with his children; he preferred to serve his son's advantage, instead of ensuring him pleasant times in his youth. The result was, that the prisoner escaped to you a little too lightly equipped; and this was no small impediment at the outset of his adventure, for a light purse is the heaviest encumbrance on a journey. [4] Nevertheless he made his first entry into your city under the most favourable auspices. Your predecessor St.Eustachius received him with a twofold blessing in word and deed. He wanted a lodging; one was forthcoming without difficulty on the prelate's commendation. He rented the rooms in due form, entering on his tenancy without delay, and at once set about making the acquaintance of his neighbours by saluting them as often as possible and being civilly greeted in return. He treated all as befitted their several ages; respectful to the old, he was always obliging those of his own

years. [5] He was consistently temperate and moral, showing qualities as admirable as they are rare at his time of life.

He was assiduous in paying court to your chief personages, and even to the Count of the city himself; alive to every chance, he began by receiving nods, went on to acquaintance, and ended in intimacy. By this systematic cultivation of important friendships, he |100 rapidly got on in the world; the best people competed for his company. Every one wished him well; there were plenty to offer him good advice. Private individuals made him presents, officials helped him by their influence. In short, his prospects and his resources rose by leaps and bounds. [6] It chanced that near the house where he lodged there resided a lady whose disposition and income were all that he could have desired; she had a daughter, not quite marriageable, but no longer a child. He began to attract the girl by pleasant greetings, and by giving her (as, at her age, he quite properly could) the various trifles and trinkets which delight a maiden's fancy; by such light links he succeeded in closely attaching her heart to his own. [7] Time passed; she reached the age of marriage. You already guess what happened. This young man, without visible relations or substance, a foreigner, a minor who had left home without his father's leave or knowledge, demands the hand of a girl equal to himself in birth, and superior in fortune. He demands, and, what is more, he obtains; he is recognized as suitor. For the bishop actively supported his Reader, and the Count encouraged his client;

the future mother-in-law did not trouble to investigate his means; the bride approved his person. The marriage contract was executed, and some little suburban plot or other at Clermont was put into settlement and read out with much theatrical parade. [8] This legal trick and solemn swindle once over, the pauper lover carried off the wealthy bride. He promptly went into all his wife's father's affairs, and got together some nice little pickings for himself, aided all through the imposture by |101 the credulity of his easy-going and free-handed mother-in-law; then, and not till then, this incomparable charlatan sounds the retreat and vanishes into Auvergne. After he had gone, the mother thought of bringing an action against him for the absurd exaggerations in the contract. But it was rather late for her to begin lamenting the exiguity of his settlement, when she was already rejoicing at the prospect of a wealth of little grandchildren. It was with the object of appeasing her that our Hippolytus went to Marseilles when he brought you my first letter of introduction.

[9] That is the story of this accomplished young man, as good in its way as any out of Attic Comedy or Milesian fable. Excuse the excessive length of my letter; I have dwelt upon every detail that you might be fully informed in regard to the person whom your generosity has made a citizen of your town; and besides, one naturally has a kindly feeling for those in whom one has taken active interest. You will prove yourself in everything the worthy successor of Eustachius if you expend upon his clients the personal interest he would like to have been able to bequeath them, as you have already paid his relations the legacies mentioned in his will. [10] And now I have obeyed your commands to the full, and talked to the limit of my obligation; remember that one who imposes on a man of small descriptive

powers a subject calling for great detail, must not complain if the response betrays the gossip rather than the skilled narrator. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |102

* The greater part translated by Hodgkin, ii. 328-30. Cf. VI, viii above,

Book 7 — III.

To the Lord Bishop Megethius After A.D. 472 [1] I HAVE considered long and carefully whether I ought to send you those short treatises of mine, for which you ask. It required thought, though my affectionate desire to please you strongly prompted me at once to comply; but at last I have decided in your favour, and forward what you want. Is not this a great proof of docility? great indeed; but of impudence a yet greater. It is almost as bad as bringing water to a river, or wood to a forest; as audacious as offering a pencil to Apelles, a chisel to Phidias, or a mallet to Polyclitus. [2] I beg you, therefore, venerable friend, you whose sanctity is only equalled by your eloquence, to pardon the presumption which submits to your critical judgement these products of an irrepressible pen. I am always writing, though I publish very little; much as a dog will keep on snarling, though he may never break into an open bark. Deign to keep me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 7 — IV.

To the Lord Bishop Fonteius After A.D. 472

[1] I AM getting quite afraid of introducing people to you, for whereas I only give them words, you give them presents, as if it were not already the height of privilege for a man to leave my sinful company for a conversation |103 so holy as yours. I cite in evidence my friend Vindicius, who is so laden with your generous gifts that he has returned by slower stages than he went, proclaiming everywhere that high as your repute may be, supreme as your position, your true title to praise lies less in your high office than in the voluntary respect of men. [2] He dilates upon your piety, upon the sweetness and affable charm of a familiarity never too familiar; he declares that your episcopal dignity in no way suffers, and that in you the priestly character, like a tall tree, may bend but is never broken. After hearing all these eulogies I shall never be quite happy until God suffers me to clasp in my close presumptuous embrace a heart so wholly stayed upon Him. [3] For I will make you a small confession. I can admire a man of an austere nature, and because I am very conscious of my own weakness can even tolerate harsh treatment from him; but I feel that one only submits to people of such temperament, one cannot really like them. In my opinion, the ml a who is always stern to those about him had best be very sure that his conscience is good enough to justify his pride;

and for myself, I prefer to take as my model one who knows how to attract the devotion even of those who live leagues away. [4] Great as your other good deeds have been, nothing that I have heard delights me more than the news that the stream of your episcopal favour flows, with your unceasing prayers, towards the true lords of my heart, Simplicius and Apollinaris. If this be true, I pray that your kind deeds may never have an end; if false, that they may have immediate beginning. I commend the bearer to your notice. A troublesome business has |104 arisen for him at Vaison, which the weight of your revered authority can doubtless bring to a favourable issue. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 7 — V.

To the Lord Bishop Agroeclus A. D. 472

[1] A PUBLIC resolution of the citizens has called me to Bourges. The reason for the summons is the tottering condition of the Church, which has just been widowed of her bishop; members of both orders have been intriguing for the vacant see, just as if some bugle had sounded for the fray. The people are excited, and divided into factions; while only a few are ready to propose others, there are many who do not so much propose as impose themselves. To a man determined, as far as in him lies, to obey God and keep fast the truth, everything here seems frivolous, unstable, and sophisticated; one might say that the only genuine thing left is impudence. [2] You may think these laments exaggerated; but I scarcely hesitate to affirm that there are many here who harbour thoughts so rash and ruinous that they are ready to offer ready money for this holy see and all its dignity; the sale might before now have been effected in open market if the greed of the would-be purchasers had found response in vendors equal in audacity. I entreat you, therefore, to crown my hopes by giving me the honour of your presence under the same roof, and lending my diffidence, my |105 embarrassment, and my inexperience the shelter of your high protection. [3] At a time of such perplexity, do not refuse your help in healing the dissensions of the people of Aquitaine; it is true that you are at the head of the Sénonais, but that is of small consequence;

though we live in different provinces, we are bound by a single religious bond. Besides, Clermont is the last of all the cities in Aquitanica Prima which the fortune of war has left to Rome; the number of provincial bishops is therefore inadequate to the election of a new prelate at Bourges, unless we have the support of the metropolitans. [4] Rest assured that I have in no way encroached on your prerogatives. As yet I have neither nominated, summoned, nor preferred a candidate; I have left the matter absolutely intact for your decision. All that I take upon myself is to invite you hither, to await your good pleasure, to acquiesce in your opinion, and when the throne is filled, to render the proper deference to your commands. 5. I do not for a moment suspect that any bad adviser will dissuade you from acceding to this request; but should that prove to be the case, you will hardly acquit yourself of blame, though it is easy to find reasonable excuses for not undertaking so long a journey. On the other hand, your coming will prove that though there may be limits to your diocese,

your brotherly love is without bounds. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.
|106

Book 7 — VI.

To the Lord Bishop Basilius A.D. 472-3

[1] GOD has permitted us to give this generation a new example of what old friendship means; ours indeed is an attachment of long duration, and equal strength upon both sides. But our respective positions are by no means equal: you are the patron and I the client; perhaps, indeed, I presume too far in saying even so much. For so great is my unworthiness, that even the proven efficacy of your intercession can hardly make good my backsliding. [2] Because you are doubly my lord and master, firstly as my protector, secondly as my friend; because I so well remember (was I not by? the flow of your eloquence, springing from that fervent zeal of yours, when you pierced with the point of your spiritual testimonies Modaharius the Goth as he brandished the darts of Arian heresy against you; because of all this, I need fear no charge of disrespect towards other pontiffs when I pour into your ears my grief at the ravages of the great wolf of our times, who ranges about the ecclesiastical fold battening upon lost souls, and biting right and left by stealth and undetected. [3] For that old enemy begins by threatening the shepherds' throats, knowing it the best way to ensure his triumph over the bleating and abandoned sheep. I am not so far oblivious of my own career as to ignore that I am one whose conscience has yet to be washed clean by many tears;

but by God's grace my foulness shall at last be cleared away |107 with the mystic rake of your intercession. But since consideration for the public safety must come before everything, even a man's sense of his own unworthiness, I shall not hesitate to proclaim the cause of truth, disregarding all insinuations about my vanity, or doubts as to the sincerity of my faith. [4] Neither a saint like you can fitly here discuss, nor a sinner like myself indict, the action of Euric the Gothic king in breaking and bearing down an ancient treaty to defend, or rather extend by armed force the frontiers of his kingdom. It is the rule here below, for Dives to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and for Lazarus to bear the lash of sores and poverty. So long as we walk in this allegoric land of Egypt, it is the rule that Pharaoh shall go with a diadem on his head, and the Israelite with the carrier's basket. It is the rule that while we are burned in the furnace of this symbolic Babylon we must sigh and groan like Jeremiah for the spiritual Jerusalem, while Assur thunders in his royal pomp and treads the Holy of Holies beneath his feet. [5] Yet when I compare the transient joys of this world

with those which are to come, I find it easier to endure calamities which no mortal may escape. For, firstly, when I consider my own demerits, all possible troubles seem lighter than those which I deserve;

and then know well that the best of cures for the inward man is for the outward man to be threshed by the flails of suffering. [6] I must confess that formidable as the mighty Goth may be, I dread him less as the assailant of our walls than as the subverter of our Christian laws. They say that the mere mention of the name of Catholic so embitters his countenance and heart |108 that one might take him for the chief priest of his Arian sect rather than for the monarch of his nation. Omnipotent in arms, keen-witted, and in the full vigour of life, he yet makes this single mistake----he attributes his success in his designs and enterprises to the orthodoxy of his belief, whereas the real cause lies in mere earthly fortune. [7] For these reasons I would have you consider the secret malady of the Catholic Church that you may hasten to apply an open remedy. Bordeaux, Périgueux, Rodez, Limoges, Javols, Eauze, Bazas, Comminges, Auch, and many another city are all like bodies which have lost their heads through the death of their respective bishops. No successors have been appointed to fill their places, and maintain the ministry in the lower orders of the Church; the boundaries of spiritual desolation are extended far and wide. Every day the ruin spreads by the death of more fathers in God;

so pitiful is her state, that the very heresiarchs of former times, to say nothing of contemporary heretics, might well have looked with pity on peoples orphaned of their pontiffs and oppressed by desperation at this catastrophe of their faith. [8] Diocese and parish lie waste without ministers. You may see the rotten roofs of churches fallen in, the doors unhinged and blocked by growing brambles. More grievous still, you may see the cattle not only lying in the half-ruined porticoes, but grazing beside altars green with weeds. And this desolation is not found in country parishes alone; even the congregations of urban churches begin to fall away. [9] What comfort remains to the faithful, when not only the teaching of the clergy perishes, but their very memory |109 is lost out of mind? When a priest departs this life, not merely the holder of the sacred office dies, but the office itself dies with him, unless with his failing breath he gives his blessing to a successor. What hope remains when the term of a man's life implies the end of religion in his parish? If you examine more closely the ills of the body spiritual, you will soon perceive that for every bishop snatched from our midst, the faith of a population is imperilled. I need not mention your colleagues Crocus and Simplicius, removed alike from their thrones and suffering a common exile, if different punishments. For one of them laments that he cannot see whither he is to return;

the other that he sees only too clearly where he is to return no more. [10] You for your part have about you the most holy bishops Faustus, Leontius, and Graecus, environed by the city, your order and their fraternal love. To you these miserable treaties are submitted, the pacts and agreements of two kingdoms pass through your hands. Do your best, as far as the royal condescension suffers you, to obtain for our bishops the right of ordination in those parts of Gaul now included within the Gothic boundaries, that if we cannot keep them by

treaty for the Roman State, we may at least hold them by religion for the Roman Church. Deign to bear me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |110

Book 7 — VII.

To the Lord Bishop Graecus* A.D. 474-5

[1] HERE is Amantius , the usual bearer of my trifles; off once more to his Marseilles, to bring home a little profit out of the city, if he is fortunate in his business at the port. I could use the opportunity of his journey to gossip gaily on, if a mind that bears a load of sorrow could at the same time think of cheerful things. For the state of our unhappy region is miserable indeed. Every one declares that things were better in war-time than they are now after peace has been concluded. [2] Our enslavement was made the price of security for a third party; the enslavement, ah! the shame of it! of those Arvernians who by old tradition claimed brotherhood with Latium and descent from the sons of Troy; who in our own time stood forth alone to stay the advance of the common enemy; who even when closely beset so little feared the Goth that they sallied out against his leaguer, and put the fear of their valour into his heart. These are the men whose common soldiers were as good as captains, but who never reaped the benefit of their victories: that was handed over for your consolation, while all the crushing burden of defeat they had to bear themselves. These are the patriots who did not fear to bring to justice the infamous Seronatus, betrayer of imperial provinces to the barbarian, while the State for which they risked |111so much had hardly the courage on his conviction to carry out the capital sentence.

[3] And this is to be our reward for braving destitution, fire, sword, and pestilence, for fleshing our swords in the enemy's blood and going ourselves starved into battle. This, then, is the famous peace we dreamed of, when we tore the grass from the crannies in the walls to eat; when in our ignorance we often by mistake ate poisonous weeds, indiscriminately plucking them with livid hands of starvation, hardly less green than they. For all these proofs of our devotion, it would seem that we are to be made a sacrifice. [4] If it be so, may you live to blush for a peace without either honour or advantage. For you are the channel through which negotiations are conducted. When the king is absent, you not only see the terms of peace, but new proposals are brought before you. I ask your pardon for telling you hard truths; my distress must take all colour of abuse from what I say. You think too little of the general good; when you meet in council, you are less concerned to relieve public perils than to advance private fortunes. By the long repetition of such acts you begin to be regarded as the last instead of the first among your fellow provincials. [5] But how long are

these feats of yours to last? Our ancestors will cease to glory in the name of Rome if they have no longer descendants to bear their memory. Oh, break this infamous peace at any cost; there are pretexts enough to your hand.

We are ready, if needs must, to continue the struggle and to undergo more sieges and starvations. But if we are to be betrayed, we whom force failed to conquer, we shall know beyond |112 a doubt that a barbarous and cowardly transaction was inspired by you.

[6] But it little avails to give the rein to passionate sorrow; you must make allowance for us in our affliction, nor too nicely weigh the language of despair. The other conquered regions have only servitude to expect; Auvergne must prepare for punishment. If you can hold out no help in our extremity, seek to obtain of Heaven by your unceasing prayers that though our liberty be doomed, our race at least may live. Provide land for the exile, prepare a ransom for the captive, make provision for the emigrant. If our own walls must offer an open breach to the enemy, let yours be never shut against your friends. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. * Partly translated by Fertig, Part ii, p. 16.

Book 7 — VIII.

To the Lord Bishop Euphronius A. D. 472

[1] I AM now held in the bonds of my clerical duty, but I should regard my undistinguished position as a veritable blessing if only the walls of our cities were as near as the borders of their territories. If that might only be, I should consult your holiness on all things small and great; my activities would flow like a placid and untroubled stream, could they but rise from your converse as from a life-giving spring. They should never know the froth of vain conceit, or the turbid course of pride, or the muddiness of a bad conscience, or the falls of headstrong youth; if defilement and corruption were found in them, they should |113 be washed clean by the clear vein of your counsel. [2] But alas! the distance that divides us prevents the fulfilment of these desires; I therefore beg you to send a representative to advise on a perplexing question which has arisen here. The inhabitants of Bourges demand the consecration of the admirable Simplicius as their bishop; I want your decision in the matter. Your consideration for me, and your authority over others, are such that you need never press your views; you have simply to indicate your will, which is sure to coincide with justice. [3] I must tell you that of Simplicius all good is spoken, and by the best men in the city. At first I was inclined to view this testimony with little favour; it seemed to me to suggest favouritism.

But when I observed that his rivals could find nothing better to do than to hold their tongues, especially those of the Arian persuasion; when I saw that no irregularity could be alleged to his discredit, though he is only a candidate and not yet in orders, I came to the conclusion that a man against whom the bad citizen could say nothing and on whose behalf the good could never say enough must be regarded as almost a perfect character. [4] But how foolish I am to make these comments, as if I were giving advice in place of asking it! The clergy will act in accordance with the decision contained in your letter; the people will acclaim it in the same spirit. We are not altogether irrational; we should not have decided to secure, if possible, your present aid, or if not, your advice, unless we had made up our minds to follow your counsel in all things. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |114

Book 7 — IX.

To the Lord Bishop Perpetuus* A. D. 472 [1] YOUR ardour for religious books has given you a most intimate acquaintance with everything written for the Catholic faith, whether by the Canonical authors or by the controversialists. You are even curious about productions unworthy the honour of your attention; for instance, you now wish me to send a copy of my public address delivered in the church at Bourges, an oration without the orthodox rhetorical divisions, or emphasis, or figures of speech to lend it a proper style and dignity. [2] It has none of the qualities of a finished eloquence; the weight of historical allusion, the enrichment of poetical quotation, the sparkling points of dialectic had all to be abandoned. I was distracted by the rancorous intrigues of the various factions; my mission occupied all my time; the abuses before my eyes were the one and only subject for my pen. So great was the company of the competitors, that two benches would not have held the candidates for the single vacant throne. And every one of these was as pleased with himself as he was critical of all his rivals. [3] If the people had not grown reasonable, and subordinated their judgement to that of the bishops, there would have been little chance of effecting anything. As it was, one saw small groups of priests whispering together in corners, though not a word was uttered |115 openly, most of them being just as afraid of their own order as of every other. The result was that every one was suspicious of his neighbour; all were induced to hear our proposals without too much difficulty, and afterwards to explain them in their turn to others.

[4] Here, then, I append the address. It was written in two vigils of a single summer night, under no eyes but those of Christ; my haste is, I fear, too obvious from internal evidence for you to need my assurance that it existed. ADDRESS.*

[5] Secular history relates, beloved brethren, that a certain philosopher used to teach new pupils the discipline of keeping silence before the art of speaking. They had to sit through five mute years listening to the disputations of their fellow students echoing all round them, and not even the quickest brains were allowed to anticipate the proper hour of recognition. When, after that long repression these pupils spoke at last, the audience could not repress applause; for until the mind is steeped with knowledge there is less credit in displaying what you know than in holding your peace on things of which you are ignorant. [6] Far other is the position of the indifferent orator who now addresses you. While he yet walked among

lamentable pitfalls and wallowing-places of sin, the heavy charge of the sacred calling was laid upon him; and without ever having himself rendered a disciple's duty to a master of repute, he has himself to play the teacher of other men. That task is in itself impossible enough; it is made heavier by the diffidence |116 which I feel at having been selected by your decretal letter to choose you a bishop, while all the time I see before me a saintly prelate worthy of the highest of pontifical thrones, one who stands at the head of his province, and is my superior in everything, in experience, in training, in eloquence, in prestige, in seniority, and in years.

Speaking thus as a junior and provincial bishop, before one metropolitan on the election of another, I am doubly embarrassed by my lack of qualification, and by the odium of presumption which I may well incur. [7] The responsibility, however, rests on you, since you have been rash enough to impose upon one deficient in wisdom the task of finding you, with God's aid, a bishop wiser than himself, and combining in a single person a host of different virtues: you must be well aware that honourable though the task may be, it is yet more clearly onerous. I would have you in the first instance reflect to what a crushing burden of criticism you subject me, requiring a perfected judgement from a beginner, and right guidance from one who hitherto has shown you nothing but his fallibility. Since, however, this has been your will, I entreat your prayers, that I may really become all that you now suppose me to be, and that if I am to be exalted to the skies, it may be not by your plaudits but by your supplications.

[8] But first you ought to know on what Scylla-rocks of slander, on what barking mouths (alas! that they should be human) I have been driven by the tempestuous fury of those who seek to bring you into discredit. Evil manners have this power: they allow the offences of the few to disfigure the innocence of the multitude, |117 whereas the good are too rare to communicate their virtues to the many, and so to palliate their crimes.

[9] If I name a monk to you, were his austerities to rival those of a Paul, an Antony, a Hilarion, or a Macarius, my ears will at once be deafened by the confused outcries of ignoble pygmies who will object in these terms: 'The man you nominate is trained not for a bishop's but for an abbot's work, and better fitted to intercede for souls before the celestial Judge than for their bodies before the judges of this world.' Now who could keep his patience, hearing singleness of heart besmirched by such imputation of imaginary defects? [10] If we choose one distinguished for humility, he will be called an abject; if, on the other hand, we propose a man with self-respect, he will be set down as arrogant; if our choice be one of small learning, his ignorance will make him fair game; if he be erudite, he will be declared conceited. If he is austere, all will shrink from an inhuman creature; if indulgent, they will blame his lenience. If he is simple, he will be an oaf; if clever, a sly fellow. Is he diligent? he must be superstitious. Is he easy-going? he stands convicted of negligence. Does he love a quiet life? he is a coward. If our candidate is abstemious, he becomes a skinflint; if charitable with hospitality, a glutton; if with fasting, one vain of his austerities. [11] A free manner will argue vice; a modest one contemptible rusticity. They mislike the stern man for his severity,

and depreciate the affable for making himself cheap. And so, whichever of two virtues may adorn his life, he will be caught on the two-barbed hook of the malicious tongues whose points pierce all good qualities. Besides |118 all this, the people in their perversity, and the clergy in their love of licence, are equally averse from the idea of monastic discipline.

[12] If, instead of a monk, I take a member of the secular clergy, his juniors will be consumed with a jealousy which his seniors will openly express. For among the clergy there are not a few----I may say this without offence to the rest----in whose eyes seniority counts before merit; they would like us to consider age alone and disregard efficiency, as if mere length of life were the one qualification for the highest office in the priesthood, and the prerogative, the amenity and charm of personal accomplishments were to count for nothing. On this principle a few individuals strive to direct the Church, though they are so old that they will soon need direction themselves----persons remiss in ministration, prompt in obloquy, indolent in affairs, busy in faction, weak in charity, sturdy in intrigue, steady in feud, vacillating in judgement. [13] Enough: I will not stigmatize the many for the machinations of a few; I only add this, that I shall mention no names. Whoever looks aggrieved proclaims his own discomfiture. I may freely admit that the multitude surrounding me to-day includes many of episcopal ability. But then, all cannot be bishops. Every man of them may be satisfied with his own particular gifts, but none has gifts to satisfy us all.

[14] Suppose I were to nominate one who had followed an administrative career, I can imagine the storm of disapproval: 'Sidonius was transferred to the Church out of the great world, and because of this is reluctant to accept a cleric as metropolitan; he looks down on |119 every one from the height of his distinguished birth and the great offices he has held; he despises Christ's poor.' [15] Now therefore, in fulfilment of the trust imposed upon me, not so much through the esteem of the well disposed as through the suspicions of the slanderous (Almighty God liveth, the Holy Spirit, who by the voice of Peter condemned Simon Magus for thinking to buy for gold the glory of the blessing), I testify that in the man whom I have chosen as suited for your needs I have considered neither money nor influence; I have weighed to the last scruple every circumstance affecting his own person; the times in which we live, the respective needs of city and province, and I decide that the man most fitted for this office is he whose career I shall now briefly relate.

[16] He is Simplicius, on whom a blessing already rests. Hitherto a member of your order, but henceforth of ours, if God approve him through your voices, he answers by conduct and profession, so well satisfying the claims of both, that the State will find in him one to admire and the Church one to love. [17] If birth is still to command respect, as the Evangelist teaches (for St. Luke, beginning his eulogy of St. John, considers it of the highest moment that he sprang from a line of priestly tradition, and exalts the importance of his family before celebrating the nobility of his life), I will recall the fact that his relatives have presided alike over the Church and the tribunal. His family has been distinguished in either career by many bishops and prefects; it had become almost their hereditary privilege to administer the divine and human laws. [18] If we scrutinize rather more narrowly his

personal qualifications, we shall |120 find him conspicuous among the most respected. You may say that the illustrious Eucherius and Pannychius stand higher; they may have been so regarded, but on the present occasion they are excluded by the canon, because each of them has married again. Turning to his age, we find that he has at once the vigour of youth and the caution of maturity; comparing his talents with his acquirements, we see nature and learning rivalling each other.

[19] If we ask whether he is given to hospitality, we find him generous to a fault, lavishing his substance on all men small and great, whether they are clerics, laymen, or strangers, and entertaining those most of all who are least likely to return his kindness. When an embassy had to be undertaken, more than once he has represented his city before barbaric kings in furs, or Roman emperors in purple. If you ask from what master he learned the rudiments of the faith, I will make the proverbial response: 'the source of knowledge flowed for him at home.' [20] Lastly, let us not forget, beloved brethren, that this is he whom the barbarians held in darkness and duresse, and for whom God flung wide the prison gates with all their bolts and bars. This is the man whom, if report be true, you yourselves once with a single voice called to the priesthood before his father-in-law or father; but he returned home covered with glory because he preferred to be honoured in his parents' dignity rather than in his own. [21] I had almost overlooked a point which should under no circumstances have been omitted.

In the days of old time, as the Psalmist tells, all Israel heaped offerings at the feet of Bezaleel in the desert for the erection of the Tabernacle of the Covenant. |121 Afterwards Solomon, to build his temple in Jerusalem, exhausted the whole strength of his people, though he had not merely the riches of Palestine and the tribute of surrounding kingdoms, but in addition the treasures of the Queen of Sheba at his command. But Simplicius built a church alone out of his own slender resources, when he was still a young official under paternal control, and already burdened with the expenses of a family. Neither consideration of his young children nor the steady opposition of his parents could divert him from the fulfilment of his vow; it was his way to do good works, and hold his peace about them. [22] For unless I misread his character, he is one to whom all popularity is abhorrent; he does not court every man's good opinion, only that of the worthiest; it is not his custom to make himself common by undiscriminating familiarity, but rather to enhance his value by according his friendship only after the most careful thought. His is a manly nature which would rather help than please a rival, comparable in this to that of the stern father, who thinks more of his children's real advantage than of their present comfort. He is a man constant in adversity, loyal in danger, unassuming in prosperity;

of simple tastes in dress, affable in conversation, never putting himself forward among his friends, but in discussion easily the first. A friendship of which he knows the worth he will pursue with ardour, hold with constancy, and never abandon; on the other hand, a declared hostility he pursues with honourable frankness, not believing in it till the last moment, and laying it down at the earliest. Extremely accessible just because he seeks nothing for |122

himself, he desired not so much to assume the priest-hood as to prove himself worthy to hold it. [23] But some one will say: 'How did you learn so much about him in so short a time?' My answer is that I made acquaintance with men of Bourges long before I knew their city. I have travelled with some and served with others; many I have met in affairs of business or in debate; many when either they or I were away from our several countries. Moreover, a short cut to knowledge of a man is given by the general opinion about him, since nature does not confine our reputations within such narrow limits as our abodes. If, then, a city is to be judged less by the circumference of its walls than by the merit of its inhabitants, I could not fail to discover, before your town was known to me, not only what manner of men you are, but where you stand in the world as well.

[24] The wife of Simplicius belongs to the Palladian family, which alike in the schools and in the Church has occupied the chief seats with the approbation of its own order. To speak of a woman's life demands both delicacy and reticence; I will only say here that this lady has shown herself worthy of the ecclesiastical dignity enjoyed by her two families, both that in which she was born, and that into which she married. She is associated with her husband in the education of their sons on sound and careful principles; so that the father, comparing them with himself, is all the happier for the discovery that he is already being surpassed. [25] You have sworn to abide by my humble advice in this election; the spoken binds no less fast than the written word. I pronounce, then, in the name of the |123 Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that Simplicius is the man whom you are to choose as the head of the Church in your city, and as Metropolitan of our province. If you agree with this my new pronouncement, give it the applause which your old promise demands.

* Partly translated by Guizot, Histoire de la civilisation en France, ed. 1846, pp. 84 ff. * Translated by Chaix, ii. 26 ff.

Book 7 — X. (XI)

To the Lord Bishop Graecus A.D. 474 [1] I ENVY the fortune of my habitual messenger who has the chance of seeing you so often. Nor do I confine my envy to Amantius; I am jealous of the very letters opened by the hands, and perused by the eyes which I so much revere. Alas! penned as I am within the narrow enclosure of half-burned and ruinous walls, with the terror of war at the gates, I am never allowed to satisfy my longing to greet you again. Would that the state and prospects of Clermont were such as to make our excuses for not meeting less excusable! [2] It is the hardest stroke of all that the very punishment of our old lapses from justice should become our justification. My salutations rendered, I now earnestly beg you to release me from my duty of paying you a visit; I must discharge the debt as well as I can by letter. If peace ever makes the roads secure again, your only fear need be that I shall present myself so often as to become in future a mere nuisance. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |124

Book 7 — XI. (X)

To the Lord Bishop Auspicius A.D. 473 [1] IF the state of our country and our times allowed me freedom, I should not keep up my friendships by the poor expedient of correspondence. But since the storms aroused by the shock of kingdoms confound all hopes of fraternal peace and quiet, let us retain in separation that constant exchange of letters so long ago devised for the solace of absent friends, and approved by the example of antiquity. You must forgive one who so reveres you the rarity of his visits; but the unbroken enjoyment of your sainted converse is denied him by the menace of formidable neighbours and by the delicacy of his relations with his own protectors. On these points I need say no more: I have already said too much. [2] This letter introduces to you the bearer Peter, a man of tribunician rank; he personally pressed for the introduction, and will be better able to explain his business orally. I beg that the sight of this page from me may secure him your support, in so far as may be consistent with justice; it is not my custom to urge even my friends' claims unfairly. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 7 — XII.

To his friend [Tonantius] Ferreolus c. A.D. 479

[1] IF, disregarding our friendship and relations, I had considered only your rank and position, your name |125 would have taken its proper place at the beginning of this small work, and the dedication would have been yours. My pen should have recounted the curule chairs of your ancestors and the infulae of their patrician dignity; it should not have omitted the twice repeated prefecture, or refused to herald with due praise your great Syagrius for three times changing the heralds of his office. It should have proceeded to celebrate your father and your uncles, whom it were impossible, indeed, to pass in silence; [2] and however worn by transcribing the long roll of your ancestral triumphs, it should not have been so spent by the unfolding of your genealogy as to grow too blunt for the record of your own achievements. Why even if the recital of your ancestral glories had dulled it, that of your great personal qualities would lend it a new point. In place of all this, it is determined to pay you here conspicuous homage and, leaving your past career to speak for itself, to consider rather what you are to-day. [3] It has passed over your administration of the Gauls when they were still at their greatest extent. It has been silent on the efficacy of your measures against Attila the enemy on the Rhine and Thorismond the guest of the Rhone, and on your support of Aetius the Liberator of the Loire.

It has not related the dragging of your chariot by cheering provincials, whose fervent applause proclaimed their gratitude for the prudence and the foresight with which you handled the reins of power; since you ruled the Gauls with such wisdom that the exhausted proprietor was relieved from the unbearable yoke of taxes. It passed over the address with which you influenced the savage Gothic king |126 by a language blending grace with gravity and astuteness, a language unfamiliar in his ears, causing him to withdraw from the gates of Arles by a banquet, where Aetius could not have succeeded by force of arms. [4] All this it forbore to dwell upon because it was my hope that you might more fitly find a place among the bishops than the senators; I deemed it more appropriate that your name should be found among the perfect of the Lord than among the prefects of Valentinian. Malice need not misconstrue your insertion among the priests; only great ignorance can hold that a man could lose rank thereby. Just as at a public banquet the last guest at the first table takes precedence of the first guest at the second, so in the opinion of all reasonable men the least

of the religious is beyond dispute above the holder of the highest office. I ask your prayers on my behalf.

Book 7 — XIII.

To his friend Sulpicius c. A. D. 470

[1] YOUR son Himerius the priest, of whom I had hitherto seen little but heard much, his reputation being wide, came to Lyons not long ago from Troyes, and there I had a hurried opportunity of forming an opinion of him. In character he reminds me of the sainted Lupus, the foremost of our Gallic bishops, master of his sacred profession, and author of his rank within it. [2] Just God! how charming is his way of enouncing his views, whether he is urging or debating any given course of action! With what point he speaks when |127 asked his advice, with what sweetness when he has resort to that of others! He is an enthusiast for letters, above all for sacred literature, in which he ever avoids the froth of verbiage and chooses the substantial marrow. The end of his every action is Christ's service; if he accelerates or delays, it is for that. It is a thing at once wonderful and admirable, that although he is always tranquil he does nothing idle. [3] Fasts are a joy to him, yet he does not abjure the social board; the way of the cross keeps him faithful to the first, love of his kind inclines him sometimes to the last. In either case he uses the utmost moderation; when he dines, he mortifies his appetite; when he fasts, it is without vainglory. On others he showers favours, but is reluctant to accept theirs; and when his turn to receive an equivalent comes, prefers that the debt should remain unpaid.

[4] It is his way to give his inferiors precedence at table, or in council, or when travelling; this makes his superiors in rank delight to follow his example, and place themselves below him when they can. In intercourse with others he shows the utmost tact. The stranger is put at his ease; the feelings of a friend are never hurt. The over-credulous are not placed in false positions, nor are the curious rebuffed. Suspicion he meets without malice; he does not say hard things of knowledge, or treat ignorance with contempt. In the Church he has the simplicity of the dove, in the world the wisdom of the serpent. In his dealings with the good he has a name for prudence, with the bad for caution; but with neither does he resort to guile. [5] Enough: he seemed to me your second self, reproducing in the most charming manner all your moderation, your piety, your |128 frankness, your modesty, the supreme purity of a sensitive and delicate mind. So that in future you can enjoy your privacy, and retire from the world as much as ever you like, since my brother Himerius with his grandsire's name, his father's looks, and the sage qualities of both will always be at my disposal. Farewell.

Book 7 — XIV.

To his friend Philagrius c. A. D. 470

[1] A SHORT while since at a large gathering of the principal persons here, some one mentioned your name. All were unanimous in sounding your praises, though one esteemed you for one quality and a second for another. Then certain individuals took on themselves to claim a more intimate acquaintance, on the ground that they saw you frequently. That made me flare up; I could not for a moment allow it to be said that one distinguished in all kinds of letters is better known by his countrified neighbours than by men of culture living a great distance away. [2] The discussion was carried further; some present argued the point with obstinacy, for it is characteristic of stupid people that they are easily proved wrong, but very hard to silence. I stood my ground, and maintained that it might indeed be trying for such a man's cultured friends to be deprived of his society, but that all the same it was endurable; their brains and their pens gave them access to the remotest province where the need of Culture was felt, while the unlettered fellow citizen was always a stranger within the gates. It was matter | 129 of frequent experience, I said, for men of education, separated by wide distances, to conceive for each other an esteem as great as any which can be produced by the most assiduous of personal relations. That being so, they had better leave off exaggerating the effect of unavoidable separations, for they only showed that they thought more of face than character.

[3] People may argue, if they like, that matter, not mind, makes the man, but I am at a loss to find anything to wonder at in the human race, viewed corporeally, for its limits are so narrow, however wide its range of action; by the conditions of its birth, it is the most miserable and helpless of all that sees the light. The ox has his hairy coat, the boar his bristles, the bird its feathers; and in addition, these creatures have arms for offence and for defence in their horns and tusks and claws. But man's limbs are such poor things that they seem to have been flung at random into the world, not brought into it by intelligible laws. For other animals broad-bosomed Nature, like a true mother, provides all manner of protection; the human body she just casts forth, to give it thenceforward the stepmother's indifferent usage. [4] To me, who hold that your mind is greater than your body, the contrary supposition is untenable; it would be ridiculous, on that hypothesis, that man should be differentiated by possession of a reasoning mind from beasts unable to distinguish the true

from the false. I should like to ask those who so absurdly judge friends by appearances instead of investigation, what remains when they have even in the slightest degree impaired the dignity of the human soul, what after that they find so eminent and admirable |130 in man? [5] Is it height? that, is often a quality more appropriate in a beam. Is it strength?

that reigns more mightily in the lion's sinewy neck. Grace of feature? the clay of the statue and the wax of the portrait hold its impress better. Is it speed? for that, dogs are more justly famed than we. Vigilance? for that prize the owl competes. Is it strength of voice? the ass's bray is loudest. Industry? therein, on its tiny scale, the ant fears no comparison. [6] Do they allege keenness of sight? how absurd! as if the eagle's vision were not far above that of man. Keenness of hearing? as if the coarse-skinned swine were not his rival. Keenness of scent? as if in that the vulture were not supreme. Discernment of taste? as if there we were not far behind the monkey. I need hardly trouble to speak of touch, our fifth sense; the philosopher shares it with the worm. Why speak of the carnal appetites? the man's lust is satisfied in the same way as that of the brute. [7] And this poor thing is the humanity, paraded and tricked out by fools who give themselves airs and flout me because they know you more or less by sight! But I have always before my eyes a Philagrius other than theirs, a Philagrius who would not be himself if I saw him and he did not speak.

The whole argument recalls to me a certain well-known remark, made on a different kind of occasion, it is true, but nevertheless to our point: 'The son of Marcus Cicero was speaking, and Rome did not even know who he was.' For accomplishments of mind bring with them dignity, worth, and the pre-eminence recognized by universal consent, and by their means alone man gradually attains the heights of merit. [8] First you have the animal frame, |131 which by virtue of its form excels formless matter. Above that comes the body, possessing intelligence. And above the intelligence of beasts rises the mind of man. For as mere flesh is below life, so mere life is below reason, of which the Creator has made our substance alone capable, and not the substance of animals. Yet how variously conditioned is the human mind! There are souls which are rational indeed, but by reason of slowness and dull wits are spurned by others which see further and more clearly. In like manner, there are souls which, having only a natural understanding, accept the superiority of those more enlightened than themselves. [9] When I consider these gradations I always have before my mind's eye the Philagrius whom a similarity of tastes has made, potentially at least, my friend. However popular you may be, with the worthiest among us, no man has a clearer insight into your inner nature than he who strives outwardly to imitate you.

And how closely I for my own part try to follow you in your inclinations, the rest of this letter shall reveal. [10] They say you like quiet people; I go further, and like the idle. You shun barbarians because of the bad name they bear; I avoid them even when they bear a good one. You are ardent in study; I do not suffer a natural indolence to hold me back. You act up to your religion; I only seem to do so. You do not covet your neighbour's goods; I hold it sufficient gain not to lose my own. [11] You love the society of the learned; to me the bigger the crowd of the unlettered, the vaster is the solitude. You are said to be of a

cheerful countenance; I hold that every tear shed on earth except in prayer is vain. You are reported to |132 be given to hospitality; my poor table, like the cave of Polyphemus, rejects no possible guest. You are indulgent with your servants; it is no torture to me that mine are not tortured for each trivial fault committed. [12] Is it your view that a man should fast on alternate days? I am with you. That he should dine? I am not ashamed to anticipate you there. If Providence would grant me a sight of you, I should be as delighted as only he can be to whom even your smaller traits are familiar; with your greater qualities I am of course thoroughly acquainted.

So that if I ever do manage to see you face to face, I shall hardly know you any better than I do now, though I may gain a new pleasure in existence. Farewell.

Book 7 — XV.

To his friend Salonius c. A. D. 470 [1] EVERY time I go to Vienne, I would give a great deal if you and your brother stayed more frequently in the town, for we three are all united not only by the ties of friendship but by those of a common literary interest. But your brother eludes my reproaches by pretending the visits he has constantly to make to his suburban property, so that he is never present to stand on his own defence; you in your turn find a similar excuse, as one possessed by a newly-acquired possession. [2] Be all this as it may, come this time, and I will let you go on condition that you both promise to come again, either in turn, or [together?] at some later time. You may live in the country and be model cultivators; | 133 but not till you give more labour yet to the Church which you love, will you bring increase to the true land of your souls. Farewell.

Book 7 — XVI.

To Abbot Chariobaudus A.D. 477 [1] IN alleviating by a letter of condolence the trouble of an absent friend, O my one patron in Christ, you have acted like your benevolent self. May your thoughts ever turn to me thus; may this interminable chain of anxieties which your exhortations have worn down be finally broken by your prayers. [2] I think your freedmen have concluded the business on which you sent them, and are on their way home; they have done everything with such energy that they never required any assistance. I send you by them a cowl for nightwear, though I admit that the end of winter, with summer in sight, is not quite the right time to send you woollens. When you are exhausted by long fasting, it shall give you proper protection as you pass from your bed to Vigils and back again. Farewell.

Book 7 — XVII.

To his brother Volusianus A.D. 477 [1] You ask me, my lord brother, by the law of friendship which none may infringe, to set my long inactive fingers to the old forge. I am to write a sad funeral |134 dirge for the sainted Abraham, newly departed this life. I shall not fail to obey, moved alike by your authority, and even more by the devotion of the noble Count Victorius, my patron according to the world, my son according to the Church, whom I honour as a client, and love as a father. He gave abundant proof of his ardent solicitude for the servants of Christ, when by the sick priest's couch he humbled his dignity and bent his body low above the dying, his own face sympathetically paling with that already colourless by the approach of death; while his tears betrayed his deep feeling for the friend he was to lose. [2] He has insisted on taking the funeral almost entirely upon himself and defraying all the expenses required for the due obsequies of a priest; to complete the honour due to the memory of the departed, I can only contribute these few words, confining my pen to a plain testimony of a mutual affection.

*'Abraham, worthy to stand beside the celestial patrons whom I shall not fear to call thy colleagues, since they are gone before on the path which thou shalt follow; a share in the martyr's glory gives a share in the kingdom of heaven. Born by Euphrates, for Christ thou didst endure the prison, chains, and hunger for five long years. From the cruel King of Susa thou didst fly, escaping alone to the distant land of the West. Marvels born of his holiness followed the steps of the confessor; thyself a fugitive, thou didst put to flight the spirits of evil. Wherever thy footsteps passed, the throng of Lemures cried surrender; the exile's voice bade the demons go forth into banishment. All sought |135 thee, yet didst thou yield to no vain ambition; the honours acceptable in thy sight were those that brought the heaviest burdens. Thou didst shun the tumult of Rome and of Byzantium, and the walls of the city that warlike Titus breached. Not Alexandria held thee, not Antioch; thou spurnedst Byrsa, the famed home of Dido. Thou didst contemn the populous lands of Ravenna by the marshes, and the city named from the woolly swine. But this corner of earth was pleasing to thee, this poor retreat, this hut roofed with reeds. Here didst thou rear a sacred house to God, thou whose own frame was already itself His temple. Here ended thy wanderings, here thy life's course; now thy labours are rewarded by a twofold crown. Now dost thou stand in Paradise amid the thousands of the Saints, with Abraham for thy fellow wanderer.

Now art thou entered into thine own land, from which Adam fell; now lies thy way clear to the sources of thy native stream.'

[3] With these lines I have paid, as you desired, the last observance due to him who is now laid to rest. But if it is the duty of those who yet live, of brothers, friends and comrades, to obey the commands of brotherly affection, I shall make you a request in my turn: I would beg you to use the principles with which you are so eminently endowed for the consolation of the dead man's followers, confirm by the discipline of Lerins or of Grigny the shaken rule of a brotherhood now cast adrift without a leader. If you find any insubordinate, see to it in person that they are punished; if any obedient, give them praise from your own lips. The holy Auxanius is presumed to be their head; but he, as |136 you well know, is too infirm of body and of too diffident a character, and more fitted to obey than to command. He himself insists that you should be called in, that in succeeding to the headship of the house, he may have the support of your overheadship; for if any of the younger monks should treat him with disrespect, as one lacking alike in courage and experience, thanks to you, a joint rule would not be slighted with impunity. I say no more. If you would have my wishes in a few words, they are these; I desire brother Auxanius to be abbot over the rest, and you yourself to be above the abbot. Farewell.

* The verses are translated by Fertig, Part ii, p. 45.

Book 7 — XVIII.

To his friend Constantius c. A. D. 479 [1] 'WITH you my work began, with you it shall end.'I send the volume for which you asked, but the choice of letters has been rather hurried. I could only find comparatively few; I had not preserved any number, never having contemplated their appearance in this form. Few and trivial as they are, I was soon done with them; though when I had once started, I found the love of scribbling by no means dead within me, and that I was keen to balance any deficiency in their number by an addition to their length. [2] At the same time, I thought that if it was to attract so fine a critic, the book would be handier and need less apology if you had a smaller weight of parchment to deal with, since in parts there was a certain | 137 lightness of style and subject which might give you cause of offence. I therefore submit to your judgement these manifold emotions of my heart, well aware that a book as surely reflects a man's mind as a mirror his face. A few of the letters preach, a number congratulate; some offer advice, others consolation; not a few are humorous.

[3] If here and there you find that I show unexpected heat, I would have you know that while Christ is my defender I will never suffer my judgement to be enslaved; I know as well as any one that with regard to this side of my character there are two opinions: the timid call me rash, the resolute a lover of freedom; I myself strongly feel that the man who has to hide his real opinions cuts a very abject figure. [4] To return to my original subject. If you ever allow yourself a rest from your unending studies in religious literature, these trivialities should afford you innocent distraction. There is here no interminable theme to weary you; each subject ends with its containing letter; you can see where you are at a glance, and have done before the inclination to read has died within you. Farewell.

Book 8 — I.

To his friend Petronius c. A. D. 480 [1] A MAN who makes it a principle, whenever he can, to encourage his friends along the path of glory deserves the gratitude of all good men everywhere: the practice is your honourable distinction; be true to it always. To no other cause can I ascribe this new request that I should turn out my cases at Clermont in the search for further letters. I should have thought the examples already published would have satisfied you; but I must needs obey, though I shall merely append a few at the end to supplement the original series, and crown the completed volume, as it were, by a marginal addition. [2] I shall now have fresh reason to be on my guard against malignant critics, for adding in this way to a book which has already seen the light. How, indeed, could I hope to escape the edged tongues of the spiteful-born, when even a Demosthenes and a Cicero for all their masterly periods and their perfected eloquence were not permitted to go free? The first found his detractor in Demades, the second in Antonius, carpers both, whose malice was as clear as their diction was obscure, and who have come down to posterity simply through their hate of excellence. [3] But since the command has gone forth, I set my sail to the old winds; I have navigated oceans, and shall I not cross this quiet |139 water? I have always been convinced that a man should give of his best in anything he writes, and then tranquilly face all criticism. There is no middle course; one must either care no jot for what the malignant say, or else hold one's peace altogether. Farewell.

Book 8 — II.

To his friend Johannes A. D. 478 [1] I SHOULD hold myself guilty of something like a crime against polite learning, most accomplished of friends, were I for a moment to defer congratulation on your own success in deferring the decease of Literature. One might almost speak of her as dead and buried; it is your glory to have revived, supported and championed her, and in this tempest of war which has wrecked the Roman power, you are the sole master in Gaul who has brought the Latin tongue safely into port. [2] Our contemporaries and our successors should all with one accord and fervent gratitude dedicate statues or portraits to you, as to a new Demosthenes or Tully; by your example they were formed and educated, and they shall preserve in the very midst of an invincible but alien race this evidence of their ancient birthright. Since old grades of rank are now abolished which once distinguished the high from the low, in future culture must afford the sole criterion of nobility. None is more deeply indebted to your learning than I; for like all authors professed, who write for posterity, I shall owe to your school and your teaching the certainty of an understanding audience. Farewell. | 140

Book 8 — III.

To his friend Leo A. D. 478

[1] I SEND you, at your request, the Life of Apollonius the Pythagorean, not in the transcription by Nicomachus the Elder, from Philostratus, but in that from Nicomachus himself by Tascius Victorianus. I was so eager to fulfil your wish, that the result is a makeshift of a copy, obscure and over-hurried, and rough as any version could be. Yet the work took me longer than I expected, and for this you must not blame me, for all the time I was a captive within the walls of Livia, release from which I owe, next to Christ, to you. My mind was sick with care and really unable to fulfil my task even in the most desultory manner; all kinds of hindrances prevented me----various obligations by day, my utter misery at night. [2] When the evening hour brought me at last to my quarters, ready to drop with fatigue, my heavy eyelids knew small repose; there were two old Gothic women established quite close to the window of my chamber, who at once began their chatter----quarrelsome, drunken, and disgusting creatures, whose like will not easily be seen again. As soon as my restoration to my own home gave me a little leisure, I dispatched the book with all its faults upon it, uncorrected, ill-digested, as you might say, an immature wine; in doing so, I thought more of your anxiety to have it, than of my own responsibilities. [3] Now that your wish is gratified, forsake awhile Apollo's bays and the fount of Hippocrene;

forget the measures of which you alone |141 are absolute master, and which, in those who have only your learning without your eloquence, seem not so much to rise from a well-spring as to drip painfully from fevered brows. Stay the renowned stream of an eloquence peculiar to your race and line, which, flowing from your ancestor the great Fronto through successive generations, has now passed in due course into your breast. Lay aside awhile the universally applauded speeches composed for the royal lips, those famed deliverances with which the glorious monarch from his exalted place strikes terror into the hearts of tribes beyond the seas, or binds a treaty on the necks of barbarians trembling by the Waal, or throughout his newly extended realm curbs force itself by law as once he curbed his foes by force. [4] Shake off the burden of your endless cares and steal a little leisure from the affairs and agitations of the court. Not till you surrender yourself wholly to this book, and in imagination voyage with our Tyaneus to Caucasus and Ind, among the Gymnosophists of Ethiopia and the Brahmins of Hindostan, not till then shall you know the story you desired in its right hour

and as it should be known. [5] Read, then, the life of a man who, but for his paganism, in many points resembled you, as one who did not pursue riches, but was pursued by the rich; who loved knowledge and did not covet money;

who was abstemious among the feasters and went in coarse linen among princes robed in purple; who was grave amid luxurious follies; whose hair was matted, whose face was rough and hirsute among smooth, anointed peoples; who was conspicuous in the dignity of his squalor among satraps of crowned monarchs exquisite in person |142 and drenched with nard and myrrh; who abstained from animal flesh and would not clothe himself in wool,----for such abstinence, indeed, held more in honour than contempt in the Eastern kingdoms which he traversed. When royal treasures were placed at his disposal, he asked only the gifts he liked to offer others and would not keep himself. [6] Why pursue the subject further? Unless I am much at fault, it may be doubted whether our ancestors' days produced a biographer fit to write so great a life; but of this there is no doubt at all, that in your person our own times have produced a student worthy to peruse it. Farewell.

Book 8 — IV.

To his friend Consentius c. A. D. 478

[1] WILL Providence ever allow us to meet once more, honoured lord, on your estate of Octaviana----I call it yours, but it seems really to belong to your friends just as much as to you. Situated as it is near town and sea and river, it offers continual hospitality to all comers, and to yourself a regular succession of guests. How charming, too, is its first aspect, with its walls so cleverly designed in perfect architectural symmetry! how brilliant is the gleam of chapel colonnade and baths conspicuous near and far! Then there is the amenity of its fields and waters, its vines and olives, its approach, its beauty of hill and plain. Well stocked and furnished with abundance, it has also a large and copious library; |143 when the master is there, dividing his interests between pen and plough, one might be in doubt whether his mind or his estate enjoys the finer culture. [2] No wonder this was the chosen place (unless my memory deceives me) where you have produced the swift iambics, the pointed elegiacs, the rounded hendecasyllables, and all the other verses fragrant with thyme and flowers of poesy to be sung by every one at Béziers and Narbonne! These poems, no less remarkable for speed of composition than for charm of style, make you beloved of your contemporaries and must increase your fame among those who shall come after us.

I have always been convinced of it myself every time a new poem of yours has been brought me, as it were hot from the composer's anvil, and though I may be an indifferent writer, I am no such despicable critic. [3] My earlier life might not improperly find time for such pursuits, and in fact it did so. But now I only read and write of serious things, for now it is high time to think rather of eternal life than of posthumous renown, and to remember that after death our good works, and not our literary work, will be weighed in the balance. [4] I am far from implying by this that you do not excel in both, or that the lively style which you still affect is inconsistent with gravity of judgement; but since by Christ's grace you are already a saint in secret, I would have you openly submit to His salutary yoke a head and heart alike devoted to His service, your tongue unwearying in prayer and praise, your mind filled with pious thoughts, your hand ever open in benefaction. Especially would I insist upon the open hand, for all that you cast abroad |144 among the churches is really gathered in for yourself. Let this reflection above all incite you to the exercise of generosity, that whatever

be our opportunities in respect of the things which the foolish call this world's goods, all that we give in charity remains our own, all that we keep is really lost to us. Farewell.

Book 8 — V.

To his friend Fortunalis c. A. D. 480 [1] You too shall figure in my pages, dear Fortunalis, column of friendship, bright ornament of your Spanish country. Your own acquaintance with letters is not, after all, so slight as to deprive you of any immortality which they can confer. The glory of your name shall live; yes, it shall survive into after ages. [2] If my writings win any favour or respect, if they command any confidence among men, I will have posterity know that none were more stout of heart than you; that none were goodlier to see or more equitable in judgement, none more patient, none weightier in council, gayer in company, or more charming in conversation. Last, and not least, it shall learn that these praises have been enhanced by your misfortunes. For it is more likely to hold you great, as one proved in the hard day of adversity, than as one who lay hidden in the bosom of kind fortune. Farewell. |145

Book 8 — VI.

To his friend Namatius* c. A. D. 480

[1] CAIUS JULIUS CAESAR, reputed the greatest master of strategy who ever lived, was a great reader and a great writer also. Though he was the first man of his age, and the arts of war and rhetoric disputed his genius with equally glorious results, yet he never considered himself to have attained the summit in either branch of knowledge until your orator of Arpinum proclaimed him without a rival among men. [2] To compare small things with great, it has been the same in my own case, however vast my inferiority. No one should know this better than yourself, concerned as you have always been for my success and for my modesty in bearing it. I learn that Flavius Nicetius, distinguished above all his countrymen by his birth, his rank, his merit, his prudence, his wise knowledge of the world, has accorded my small work unlimited praise. He has gone further and declared that while yet in the prime of life I have surpassed in the two fields of literature and war the great number of our young men and not a few of the older among us. [3] If I may say it without vanity, I derive real satisfaction from the approval of so eminent a judge. If he is right, his weight counts for much; if partial, I have a fresh proof of his friendship; though nowadays every man of us is but a sluggard in deed, and in word an infant in comparison with his |146 forefathers.

To the men of earlier ages the ruler of all ages granted supreme excellence in these arts; but now the world waxes old, the quickening seed is exhausted, the marrow lost; and if in our time aught of admirable or memorable appears, it is manifest in exceeding few. [4] Nicetius may lead all learning and all letters, but I fear that our intimacy may have led him to exaggerate my merit through the bias natural to friendship. And were it so, I will not deny that in the past I used often to attend the delivery of his luminous speeches, and however fleeting or imperfect my memories, I may properly recall some of them in the present place, even at the risk of being thought to join a game of mutual admiration.

[5] I heard him speak when I was growing to manhood and had just left boyhood behind me; at that time my father was praetorian prefect presiding over the tribunals of Gaul, and in his term of office Astyrius assumed the trabea and in a propitious hour inaugurated his consulship. On that day I hardly stirred from the curule chair; my age gave me no right to a seat, but my rank allowed me to keep in the foreground; so I stood next to the censor's men who in their official mantles stood nearest to the consul. As soon as the largess had been

distributed (and that took little time though it was no little one), as soon as the diptychs had been bestowed, the representative advocates of the province who had come in from every district asked with one consent that the assumption of the consul's office might be celebrated in a panegyric. The ceremonies had anticipated the day, and there was yet some time before the late dawn, which otherwise would have been passed in |147 silence. [6] All eyes turned at once towards Nicetius, the first men present were the first to look his way; the assembly called upon him not by a voice here or there, but by general acclamation; he reddened, and cast down his eyes, giving us such an earnest of his modest nature as gained him hardly fewer bravos than the eloquence he subsequently displayed. He spoke with method, with gravity, with fire;

if his ardour was great, his fluency was yet greater, and his science greatest of all; his coloured and golden language seemed to enhance the splendour of the consul's palm-embroidered robe, steeped though it was in Sarranian dyes and rich with applied strips that rustled at every movement of the wearer. [7] About that time (to speak like a decemvir) was promulgated the statute of limitations which decreed in summary terms that all cases protracted to thirty years should automatically lapse. It was our orator who first introduced this law, as yet unknown in Gaul; he advocated it at the tribunal; he expounded it to the various parties; and he finally saw it added to the statute-book, before a great audience whose members mostly kept their feet in their excitement and only interrupted by applause. [8] I had many other occasions of observing his intellectual capacity, myself unobserved, and therefore in the best of all positions to see the real man; for though my father governed the province, it was to Nicetius that he went for advice. It must suffice to say that I never heard of a single action of which I did not like to hear, and which I did not admire.

[9] The union in his person of all these fine qualities naturally makes me proud to receive the suffrage of a critic so high in the public esteem. Whatever his |148 opinion, it must have great influence; if rumour is true, he is on my side, and I shall have just as good reason to be reassured as I should have had to feel uneasy had his vote gone the other way. In any case, I am determined, as soon as I know for certain what he thinks, either to give silence a loose rein, or curb my facility according to the verdict. For if he supports me I shall be inclined to go on talking like an Athenian; if he condemns, no citizen of Amyclae shall hold his tongue like me.

[10] But no more of myself or of my friend: how does the world go with you? I am every whit as eager to hear your news as to give you mine. Are you hunting, or building, or playing the country gentleman? Are you indulging one only of these pursuits or each in turn, or all together? As for Vitruvius and Columella, you do well to study either one or both, for you are competent to deal with either admirably, as one who is equally at home in agriculture and in building. [11] With sport the case is different, and I beg you not to plume yourself upon your prowess. It is useless to invite the boar to meet your spears, so long as you take the field alone with those exceedingly merciful hounds of yours; you just rouse the quarry,

but not enough to make him run. It is excusable enough that your dogs should dread close quarters with such formidable beasts as boars; but what apology can you make when they hunt poor helpless kids and timid does, head high and spirits prone, stinting the pace but prodigal of music? [12] You will find it more profitable to net in the rough rocks and likely coverts, and cry the dogs on from a chosen post; if you have any self-respect left, you will give up galloping over the open country and lying in wait for the leverets of Oléron. |149 Indeed it is hardly worth while to worry them on rare occasions by unleashing the hounds in the open, unless our good Apollinaris comes to help you and your father, and gives you a better run.

[13] But, joking apart, do let me know how things go with you and your household. Just as I was on the point of ending a letter which had rambled on long enough, lo and behold! a courier from Saintonges. I whiled away some time talking with him about you; and he was very positive that you had weighed anchor, and in fulfilment of those half military, half naval duties of yours were coasting the western shores on the look-out for curved ships; the ships of the Saxons, in whose every oarsman you think to detect an arch-pirate. Captains and crews alike, to a man they teach or learn the art of brigandage; therefore let me urgently caution you to be ever on the alert. [14] For the Saxon is the most ferocious of all foes. He comes on you without warning; when you expect his attack he makes away. Resistance only moves him to contempt; a rash opponent is soon down. If he pursues he overtakes; if he flies himself, he is never caught. Shipwrecks to him are no terror, but only so much training. His is no mere acquaintance with the perils of the sea; he knows them as he knows himself. A storm puts his enemies off their guard, preventing his preparations from being seen; the chance of taking the foe by surprise makes him gladly face every hazard of rough waters and broken rocks.

[15] Moreover, when the Saxons are setting sail from the continent, and are about to drag their firm-holding anchors from an enemy's shore, it is their usage, |150 thus homeward bound, to abandon every tenth captive to the slow agony of a watery end, casting lots with perfect equity among the doomed crowd in execution of this iniquitous sentence of death. This custom is all the more deplorable in that it is prompted by honest superstition. These men are bound by vows which have to be paid in victims, they conceive it a religious act to perpetrate this horrible slaughter, and to take anguish from the prisoner in place of ransom; this polluting sacrilege is in their eyes an absolving sacrifice. [16] I am full of anxiety and apprehension about these dangers, though on the other hand there are factors which encourage me mightily. Firstly, the standards under which you sail are those of an ever-victorious nation. Secondly, men of prudence, among whose number you may fairly be included, are not in the habit of leaving anything to chance. Thirdly, very intimate friends who live far from each other are apt to feel alarm without due cause, because it is natural to be apprehensive of events at once incalculable and occurring very far away. [17] You will perhaps argue that the cause of my uneasiness need not be taken so seriously. That may be true; but it is also true that we are most timid in regard to those whom we love best. So take the first opportunity of relieving the fears which your situation has aroused by a

good account of your fortunes. I am incorrigible on this head, and shall always fear the worst for friends abroad until they contradict it themselves, especially those harassed by the watchword or the signal for attack.

[18] In accordance with your request, I send you the Libri Logistorici of Varro and the Chronology of Eusebius.If these models reach you safely, and you find a little |151 leisure from the watches and the duties of the camp, you will be able, your arms once furbished, to apply another kind of polish to an eloquence which must be getting rusty. Farewell. * The latter part translated by Hodgkin (ii. 366-8), who also refers to the episode of Nicetius' oration (ibid. 306-7).

Book 8 — VII.

To his friend Audax A. D. 474

[1] I WISH you would tell me into what corner of the world the folk are crept who used to be so proud of wealth amassed, and heaps of tarnished family plate.Where, too, are the men who on mere grounds of seniority thought to overbear those whose one sin it was to be younger? Where are the people gone whose real affinities come out in nothing so clearly as in their capacity for hatred? [2] As soon as ever merit found recognition, as soon as ever weight of character, and not weight of coin, began to tell in the scales of imperial opinion, these worthies were left in the cold with their insolent claim to precedence by simple right of property. Brooding over their money-bags, and, I may add, their vices, they want to brand those who rise in the world as vain upstarts, while they would be shocked at the suggestion that they owe their own riches to greed. Athletes in this arena of defamation, they rub in the poisonous juice of spite in place of oil, and so reduce their weight. [3] But all hail to you, whose way is the opposite of theirs. You have now the honour of prefectorian rank, and though the prestige of high descent was always yours, you have if anything laboured rather the more on that account to shed a new |152 lustre upon your posterity.

To an enlightened mind, none seems nobler than he who steadily devotes all his power, his intellect, and his resources to the single end of excelling his forefathers. [4] Well, it shall be my prayer that your sons may equal you, or even (a better prayer still) leave you behind; and that if there is any envious soul who cannot bear to see you advanced above him, he may just endure the seething torment of his own spite, and never having had the chance of patronizing you, have now the fullest reason for his jealousy. It is only justice that under a just prince he should come at the bottom who is personally nothing and only important in personalty; a starveling spirit, and counting only for his money. Farewell.

Book 8 — VIII.

To his friend Syagrius A. D. 474 (?) [1] TELL me, fine flower of our Gallic youth, how much longer your ardour for country labours will bid you scorn the town? How long shall rustic implements unrightfully usurp the hands only worn before by throwing dice? How much longer is your estate of Taionnacus to weary your patrician limbs with a peasant's toil? How much longer, O cavalier turned ploughman, will you go on burying in the winter fallows the spoil of the waving meadows? how much longer ply your blunt and heavy hoe along the interminable vine-rows? [2] Why, professed rival of Serranus and Camillus, do you guide the plough, yet renounce the embroidered toga? |153 Give up this rustic folly; cease to disgrace your birth. Who cultivates in moderation is lord of his land, who does too much is slave of it. Return to your fatherland, return to your father, return to all the loyal friends who can justly claim a place in your affections. Or, if the life of Cincinnatus the Dictator attracts you so, first wed a Racilia to yoke your oxen for you. [3] I don't suggest that a man of sense should neglect his domestic affairs; but he should use moderation and think not merely of what he ought to have but what he ought to be. If you renounce all higher interests, if your one motive in life is the increase of your property, then, what can it avail you to descend from a line of consuls and see every day their ivory curule chairs with applied ornament of gold and their calendars enriched with purple? Your plodding and obscure career will bring you rather burdens from the revenue officials than honour from the censor. Farewell.

Book 8 — IX.

To his friend Lampridius * A. D. 478 [1] ON my arrival at Bordeaux, your messenger brought me a letter from you full of nectar, rich with blooms and pearls. You arraign my silence, and ask me for some of my poems, in a few of those verses of yours which your cadenced voice so often sends echoing from your melodious palate, like music poured from |154 a flute of many stops. In this you take mean advantage of your royal munificence; you have sent your gift; you feel impregnable. Perhaps you have forgotten one satirist's remark about another: 'When Horace says "Evohe", he has plenteously dined.'

[2] Enough! You are right to send a command from your place of ease, bidding me sing because you are in the mood to dance. In any case I must obey; and far from acknowledging compulsion, I yield of my own free will; but spare me, if you can, the criticism of your proud Catonian brow. You know well enough what manner of thing a poet's gladness is; his spirit is entangled in grief as the fish in nets; if sorrow or affliction comes, his sensitive soul does not so lightly work free from the bonds of anguish: I am still unsuccessful in obtaining a decision about my mother-in-law's estate, even provisionally, though I have offered a third part of it as ransom. [3] You must see whether the theme of my verses is such as to please you; but my cares forbid me to live in one mood and write in another. It would be unfair to me were you to institute a comparison between our two poems. I am harassed; you are happy. I am in exile; you enjoy your rights of citizenship. I cannot attain your level; I want of you verse like my own, but receive something infinitely better. [4] But if by any chance these trifles composed in the midst of much mental tribulation obtain indulgence at your hands, I will let you persuade me that they are like the swan's notes, whose song is more harmonious just before his death;

or that they are like lyre-strings tensely drawn, which make the |155 sweeter music the tighter they are strained. But if verses without suggestion of gaiety or ease can never really please, you will find nothing satisfactory in the enclosed. [5] Do not forget, moreover, a second point which tells against me, namely that a piece which you only read and cannot hear recited is robbed of all the advantage which delivery by the author lends it. His manuscript once dispatched, the most musical of poets has no further resource; distance does not allow him to do for himself what mimics do by their accompaniment----make bad verse acceptable by dint of fine delivery.

* 'Lampridius, glory of our Thalia, why urge me now to sing of Cirrha, or the Boeotian Muses, or Helicon's poetic stream called by neighing Pegasus to life at a stroke of his hoof? Why would you make me write as if I had received the Delphic insignia from your Delian god, and, myself a new Apollo, possessed the hangings, and the tripods, the lyre, the quivers, the bows, and gryphons, or tossed from my brow the laurel and the ivy? You, O happy Tityrus, have won your lands again; you may wander through the groves of plane and myrtle, and strike a lyre with which your voice makes perfect harmony. Wondrous is the music of string and tone and measure.

Twice has the moon risen upon me prisoned here; and but once have I been received into the presence. For scant leisure has the King even for himself, since all the subjugated earth awaits his nod. We see in his courts the blue-eyed Saxon, lord of the seas, but |156 a timid landsman here. The razor's keen blade, content no more to hold its usual course round the head's extremity, with clean strokes shearing to the skin, drives the margin of the hair back from his brow, till the head looks smaller and the visage longer. We see thee, aged Sygambrian warrior, the back of thy head shaven in sign of thy defeat; but now thou guidest the new-grown locks to the old neck again. Here strolls the Herulian with his glaucous cheeks, inhabitant of Ocean's furthest shore, and of one complexion with its weedy deeps. Here the Burgundian bends his seven feet of stature on suppliant knee, imploring peace. Here the Ostrogoth finds a powerful patron, and crushing the Hun beyond his border, triumphs at home only through his homage to this mighty patron. And here, O Roman, thou also seekest thy protection; if the Great Bear menaces commotion, and the Scythian hordes advance, the strong arm of Euric is invoked, that Garonne, drawing power from the Mars who loves his banks, may bring defence to the dwindled stream of Tiber. Here the Parthian Arsacid himself asks grace to hold, a tributary, his high hall of Susa. He perceives in the regions of the Bosphorus dread war arise with all its enginery, nor hopes that Persia, dismayed at the mere sound of conflict, shall avail to guard alone Euphrates' bank. He who boasts himself kin with stars and near allied to Phoebus, even he becomes a simple mortal, and descends to lowly supplication.

At such a court my days go by in vain. But do you, O Tityrus, refrain, nor invite me more to song. I envy thee no longer; I can but marvel at thy fortune. |157 For myself, I effect nothing; I utter fruitless prayers, and so become another Meliboeus.' [6] There is the poem. Read it at your leisure, and like a charioteer already crowned, look down from the balcony to the arena where I struggle still in the sweat and dust of contest. Do not expect me to do the like again, whatever pleasure you derive from this present effort, until the happy day arrives when I can turn my mind once more from dark vaticinations to the service of the Muse. Farewell. * The poem partly translated by A. Thierry, Lettres sur l'histoire de France, p. 103. * Translated into verse by Fertig, Part ii, p. 23; and into prose by Chaix, ii. 229.

Book 8 — X.

To his friend Ruricius A.D. 479

[1] I AM indeed delighted that you derive from letters at once a benefit and a pleasure. But I should be freer to extol the fire and fluency of your style, were it not that while assiduously praising me yourself you forbid me to return the compliment with interest. Your letter had all the sweetness of affection, all the grace of natural eloquence, all the mastery of style; it failed only in one respect----the choice of subject, and even there you have the credit of good intention, an error of judgement forms its only fault. You cover me with immense laudation. But you should have spared my blushes, and recalled betimes the saying of Symmachus: 'True praise adorns, false praise lashes.' [2] But unless I misjudge your genius you have not only shown sincere affection, but also remarkable dexterity. The really eloquent love to |158 show the stuff they are made of by choosing a subject full of difficulty; they drive the accomplished pen as if it were the plough of fertile speech through matter sterile as dry and barren soil. Life abounds with examples of skill similarly applied. The hopeless case proves the great doctor, the tempest proves the steersman; for both, the perils traversed enhance reputation; their talent wastes unseen until it finds a proper scope. [3] In the same manner the great orator proves his ample genius most effectively in strait places. Thus Marcus Tullius, who always surpassed his rivals, in his speech for Aulus Cluentius surpassed even himself.

Marcus Fronto stood head and shoulders above others in all his pleadings, but in that against Pelops he rose above his own high level. Gaius Plinius won greater fame for his defence of Attia Viriola from the centumvirs' tribune than for the panegyric which almost matched the matchless Trajan. [4] You have followed these great examples; confident in your powers, you have not feared to take so miserable a subject as myself. But let me rather have the succour of your prayers in my depression; do not lure me with a cozening eloquence, or crush my frail and ailing soul by the weight of an illusory renown. Your diction indeed is fine, but your life finer; and I think you will serve me better by your orisons than by your perorations. Farewell. |159

Book 8 — XI.

To his friend Lupus* c. A. D. 480 [1] TELL me about your folk of Périgueux and Agen, whose competing claims upon you are ever a source of pious emulation? You are bound to the people of the one place by your own property, to those of the other by your wife's family connexions; your birth tells in favour of the first, your marriage speaks for the second; and the best of it is that each place has good ground for its contention. God has verily marked you for happiness, when the privilege of securing you and keeping you longest becomes an object of ambition to two rival communities. [2] You grant the favour of your presence to each in regular alternation, restoring to one its Drepanius, to the other its Anthedius; if rhetoric be the object of their desire, neither need regret a Paulinus and an Alcimus as long as you are with them.All this makes me marvel more that you should care to ask for any old poems of mine when any day you like you have the rummaging of so representative a library as your own. I cannot refuse you, though this is a time of mourning, and the revival of the old jests is somewhat out of place.

[3] It is but recently that the news reached me of Lampridius the rhetor's murder. He was my very dear friend; and even if no violent death had snatched him from our midst, his end would have smitten me with profound affliction. In the days that are gone, |160 we had our jokes together, as intimates will; I was Phoebus, he the Odrysian bard. So much it was necessary to premise, or the use of these fanciful epithets would have obscured the sense of the following poem. You must know that once upon a time, when about to visit Bordeaux, I wrote him a letter of inquiry as to quarters, sent with the Muse in advance. Sad though the present occasion is, I feel less constraint in sending these verses, than if I had forwarded some mournful composition on our loss; anything of that sort I should have written ill, while the subject would have been no less painful to yourself.

'Orders of Phoebus to his own beloved Thalia. Dear pupil, lay aside the lyre awhile; bind up your flowing hair with a verdant wreath, and let a zone of ivy gird the up-bound folds of your full-bosomed robe. See you put no soccus on, plunge not the foot deep, as your custom is, in the loose cothurnus; but bind on such sandals as did Harpalyce, or she who felled her wooers with victorious sword. You shall go the swifter, you shall leap and fly along, if your toes are left uncovered to guide your sandalled feet with quick firm steps, and if the chain of laces, with their converging loops, is brought up through a great loop to the leg. So

equipped for speed, see that you find my Orpheus, who daily by his sweet and tuneful art softens rocks and trees, aye, and the hardest hearts; my Orpheus, whose style the sonorous tongue of the Arpinate enriches, and the pen of Maro, or thine, Horace, which gladdens the heart of Latium. As lyric bard he excels the great Alcaeus; he is skilled to indite the high strain of tragedy, or the humours of the comic |161 Muse; he can flame out in satire, and arraign the raging tyrant with resounding voice. To this Orpheus say: "Phoebus comes; he has left the road, his oars now smite the bosom of Garonne, white with sails. He bids you meet him, but first be swift to prepare him hospitable welcome.

And to Leontius whom Livia bare, she of the old Senatorial line, say this: "He is almost here. Then go to Rusticus, whose wit belies his name. But if they say they have no room, and that their houses are full, go next to the bishop's gate; kiss the holy Gallicinus' hand, and ask the freedom of his lowly dwelling lest, rejected on all sides, I am driven to turn sadly to some sodden tavern, where I should soon need to hold my nose and inveigh against the reeking kitchen with its ruddy sausages which hang in two rows, exhaling odours from thymy pots, while jars and hissing plates send up clouds of steam together. Even there, when the feast-day rouses the hoarse song, and the parasite in the ecstasy of his grumbling makes the air resound, yes, even there and even then, my voice incited by the muse of a thirsty host, I, worse barbarian than all, shall whisper verses more worthy of your praise.'

[4] Alas for the abject necessity of being born, alas for the miserable necessity of living, alas for the hard compulsion of death! to these things we are borne round on the voluble wheel of human life. I liked the dead man well; he had his failings, which were venial enough, blending with his virtues qualities of less worth. The slightest cause would excite him, but his wrath was also slight; I always tried to persuade his other friends that these were defects of temperament, |162 and nowise due to malice; I suggested other points in his favour, as that his passion was a physical tyranny, dominating his nature; I tried to clear him of the blot of cruelty by lending it the colour of mere severity. Though before his mind was made up he was weak, he was most resolute when once convinced. Like all credulous men, he was reckless; like all those who mean no harm, he suspected none in others. He hated no one enough to abuse him, and liked no one enough to resist the pleasure of sometimes breaking out against him. Though a very conspicuous figure, he was not ready of access; he had to be borne with, but he was bearable.

[5] If one were to attempt an estimate of him as orator, one would say that he was at once terse and copious, concise and ample; if as poet, that he had feeling, that he was a master of measure, and a consummate literary craftsman. He had the gift of writing verse of extreme finish, and wonderfully varied alike in metre and in metaphor. His hendecasyllables were easy and fluent, his hexameters stately and sonorous; in elegiacs he could handle the 'echoing' or the 'recurrent' line, and could link end with beginning by ingenious repetitions. [6] He could adapt his style to person, place or occasion as the subject required, and that too, not with commonplaces, but by chosen terms replete with dignity and beauty. In controversy he was a power, and wielded a strong arm; in satire alert and mordant. If his subject

was tragic, he could command terror and pathos; if comic, he was polished and infinite in resource. In Fescennines his diction was of a vernal freshness and ardent in vows; his bucolics were terse, alert, and |163 musical. In georgics he could strike the perfect rustic note, though he had no touch of rusticity about him. [7] In epigram he shunned diffuseness and aimed at point; he would always write at least two lines, but never exceeded four; there was often a sting in the words, more often still some graceful turn, and, without exception, wit. Horace was his model in lyrics; his iambics went with a swing, his choriambics with a fine gravity; his Alcaics had a supple grace, and his Sapphics were inspired. In short, his work was so fine, so accomplished, so happy in expression, that one might fairly think of him as a bird of glorious wing, following next after the Horatian and Pindaric swans.

[8] His interest in different amusements was very unequal. Hazard was a weariness, the ball game a delight. He liked to chaff his friends; and it was a nice feature in him that he liked being chaffed himself still better. He wrote a great deal, but was always longing to write more. He read the ancients with perseverance and reverent admiration, the moderns without jealousy; he would give ungrudging praise to talent, perhaps the most difficult form of generosity on earth. [9] Unfortunately he had the indefensible, I might say the fatal, fault of superstition. He was curious as to the manner of his death, and consulted those African astrologers whose nature is as fiery as their native clime. They considered the position of the stars when he was born, and told him his climacteric year, month, and day----I use the astrological terms----as men to whom the scheme of his nativity was revealed in all its sinister conditions. It seemed that in the year of his birth, all the planets which rose favourably in the zodiac sank |164 with blood-red fires; whether it was that Mercury made them baleful, asyndetic upon the diameter, or Saturn retrograde upon the tetragon, or Mars returning to his old position upon the centre. [10] Beliefs like these, whatever their precise form, are false, and cannot but delude;

if we are to discuss them openly, and at length, we must wait until we meet, for you too are deep in the science of numbers, and with your wonted diligence study Vertacus, Thrasybulus, and Saturninus from end to end: yours is a mind always intent on things lofty and arcane. It must be admitted that in the present case there was neither appearance of mere conjecture nor deliberate ambiguity: death enmeshed our reckless inquirer into the future exactly when and how it had been foretold; all his shifts to evade it were in vain. [11] He was strangled by his own slaves in his own house; choked and throttled he died the death of Scipio of Numantia, if not quite that of Lentulus, Jugurtha, and Sejanus. The one relieving feature in the cruel business was the discovery of crime and criminal as soon as the day broke. The first sight of the body was enough to show a fool or a blind man that death had come by violence. [12] The livid hue, the protruding eyes, the distorted features with their look of mingled fury and anguish, all were so many proofs of what had happened. The floor was wet about his lips, because the scoundrels had turned him with his face to the ground when the deed was done, as if to suggest that life had left him with a sudden haemorrhage. The source, inciter, and ringleader of the conspiracy was first captured;

next his accomplices were seized and separately confined till the terror of torture drew the |165 truth from their unwilling breasts. [13] Would we could say that our friend had not deserved his end by his rash and ill-advised resort to vain advisers. But I fear that he who presumes to probe forbidden secrets sets himself beyond the pale of the Catholic faith; he deserves the lot of all who put unlawful questions and receive replies that point to doom. His death was avenged, it is true, but only the survivors gain by that, for the execution of a murderer cannot mend the mischief; it only affords a certain satisfaction of revenge.

[14] My attachment to the dead man has led me to write at too great length; such a grief I could not vent in silence. I will end by begging you to give me any news you can, if only a line or two, to relieve the burden of my melancholy. For the relation of this sad story with all its horror has naturally troubled me, and filled my mind with mournful thoughts; indeed, for the time being I can neither think, speak, nor write on any other subject. Farewell. * An abridged translation is given by Hodgkin, ii. 331 ff.

Book 8 — XII.

To his friend Trygetius A. D. 461-7 [1] HAS Bazas, built on dust in place of good green earth, such charms, have lands sandy as Syrtes, and moving soil and dunes bandied by retorting winds such hold upon you, that neither earnest prayers of invitation, nor force of friendships, nor even the most succulent oysters of our pools, suffice to bring you this trifling distance in to Bordeaux, where we have been |166 expecting you all these days? Is it that the hardships of a winter journey deter you? those wild winds of Bigorre will often obliterate the soft tracks, and perhaps you dread a kind of shipwreck upon land? [2] If so, your memory is short; how long ago was it that Gibraltar was conquered by your bold foot? or that your camp was pitched on the uttermost shores of Cadiz? or the last goal of great wanderings reached, common to Hercules and to my Trygetius? Are you grown such a traitor to your proper nature as to abandon yourself wholly to sloth, you who once ranged the lands of mystery and fable, you whose limbs might fail, but never your indefatigable purpose? [3] Yet with such a record, you come down to Langon harbour crawling with no less reluctance than one bound for the Danube to resist the all-invading Massagetae, or for the dull flood of Nile with all its awful crocodiles. If a bare twelve miles can so delay you, what would you have done had you been with Marcus Cato on his marches through the deserts of Leptis?

[4] You shiver, it seems, at the mere name of the winter months; but I can assure you we enjoy the gentlest, mildest, and clearest skies, where the lightest breezes serve as winds; so nominal a winter season should less deter than the temperate reality attract. But if my letter of invitation leaves you still obdurate, you shall not resist the verses which in two days' time shall go forth to the attack, more insidious in persuasion, yet I trust none the less strenuous agents of my wishes. [5] My friend Leontius, first of all our Aquitanians, with Paulinus, worthy son of worthy sire, are to meet you with the falling tide on the Garonne at the appointed |167 place; so that not only the boats, but the very river itself shall come out with them to greet you. The oarsmen at the thwarts, the steersmen on the poops, shall tune their chants to sing your praises. They shall pile high for you a couch of cushions, there shall be a board set with men of two colours; the dice shall await you, ready to be thrown and thrown again from the ivory steps of the boxes. A pine-wood grating shall be fixed across the bottom of the boat so that the bilge flowing to and fro shall never wet your dangling foot; a wicker screen above shall protect you from the treacherous winter sun. [6] What more

could the most pampered of the indolent expect than to find himself at his destination before he seemed well under weigh?

A truce to your objections and delays; I could swear that the snail with his house on his back would easily outstrip you. And to think that there is a store-room at your command crammed with piles of the most exquisite delicacies and only wanting an enterprise to do it justice! [7] Come, then, to be entertained or to entertain; or, best of all, to do both; come with all your armoury of Mediterranean fare to crush and subjugate the finely equipped gourmets of Médoc. On our battle-ground let us see the fish of Adour triumph over the mullets of Garonne, and our coarse crew of crabs fall back before the lobster-armies of Bayonne. Join battle after this wise with the rest of us; but if you value my opinion, take a veteran's advice as a wise man should, and leave my senatorial host out of the contest; if you once come beneath his hospitable roof, you will feast as if you enjoyed continual feasts or the banquets of a Cleopatra. His |168 own and his country's honour will be involved in the competition; and it is generally agreed that he surpasses all his rivals just as far as his city leaves all other cities behind. Farewell.

Book 8 — XIII.

To the Lord Bishop Nunechius A.D. 472-4 [1] No one, most blessed father, rejoices more than I over the number and variety of virtues with which you are so richly endowed by Heaven. You are described as a man of birth who is never arrogant, a man of influence who makes a blameless use of power, a man of piety untouched by superstition. You are praised as one who is learned without airs and serious without fatuity; one whose wit is never rehearsed, who is courteous, but knows his mind, and sociable without any love of popularity. [2] And not content with allowing you these qualities, Fame crowns them with another of yet higher degree, the supreme gift of charity----Fame who, however she may sing your praises, must leave the greater part unsung. For though she can explain to distant friends the aim of your good deeds, their number is beyond the powers of her relation. The tale of them fires me now to make you a first advance, as a conscious inferior should. I therefore proceed to pay my homage; hitherto I might so justly have been accused of backwardness, that I have no apprehension now of being considered forward.

[3] I commend to your kindness the bearer Promotus, |169 whom you already know, and whom your prayers have now made my fellow penitent. Though by birth a Jew, he has preferred to be numbered with those chosen by faith rather than blood; he has sought the franchise of the heavenly city; by grace of the Spirit which makes alive he has rejected the letter that kills. Considering, on the one hand, the rewards laid up for the just, on the other the punishment, endless as eternity, awaiting him who dares not desert the Circumcision for the camp of Christ, he has made up his mind to be accounted no longer a citizen of the Solyma on earth, but a son of the Holy Jerusalem which is above. [4] Which thing perceiving, let now the spiritual Sara take to her maternal arms the truer son of Abram; for he ceased to belong to the handmaid Hagar when he exchanged the servitude of conformity according to law for the freedom which comes of grace. The special reason for his journey you will more conveniently learn from his own lips. To me he will always be very dear for the cause above related; I have dwelled upon it because the most effective introduction of all is that which simply sets forth a man's indisputable claim to be well received. Deign to hold us in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 8 — XIV.

To the Lord Bishop Principius A. D. 472-4

[1] THOUGH I have never seen your face, venerable father, for a long time I have seen the effect of your activities. The praise of such saintliness as yours is widely spread; |170 it overleaps mere bounds of space; and just as the influence of a great character knows no bound, so no term is set to the range of a noble reputation. [2] You will put this all down as my exaggeration unless I adduce in support of my statement some competent witness. I therefore cite a revered member of the famous brotherhood at Lerins, a contemporary there with Maximus and Lupus, one who went such lengths in renunciation that he might claim to rival the archimandrites of Memphis or the Holy Land. I mean Bishop Antiolus, who was the first to tell me about your father and brothers, and the high example which both of you set in the exercise of your exalted functions in the Church; his account of you first kindled in me the desire to know a story, familiarity with which has ever since been my delight. [3] One might almost compare your father to Aaron the High Priest of old, whom his brother, the Lawgiver, first anointed with the oil of sanctification in the midst of the people in the wilderness, calling next his sons to the same sacred office. But Aaron's happiness in Ithamar and Eleazar was marred when Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by lightning;

they were cut off and punished in the flesh, but we may believe that in the spirit they had absolution. [4] I never heard that you offer strange fire when you come to lay your hands upon the altar; rather with the censer of the heart you burn a glowing incense, offering the sacrifices of chastity and love. As often as with the cords of exhortation you bind the yoke of the law upon the necks of the proud, so often in spirit do you sacrifice bulls to the Lord. As often as with the goad of your rebuke you drive sinners polluted by the rankness of |171 sensual indulgence to the sweet savour of a modest life, so often do you offer rank goats in the sight of Christ. [5] As often as your rebuke leads the soul to sigh in penance and compunction over the committed fault, who shall doubt that you present in mystic sacrifice the pair of turtle-doves and the two young pigeons which by their number and their plaints symbolize the twofold nature of man? As often as your warning voice moves the glutton to parch by fire of frequent fastings his gross body and heaving swollen stomach, who shall doubt that you consecrate, as it were, the finest flour in the pan of continence?

[6] Every time that you persuade a sinner to renounce the vanities of misbelief, to profess right doctrine, to hold the faith, to keep the way, or to hope for eternal life, who doubts that in the making of a convert triply freed from heresy, hypocrisy, and schism, you dedicate the purest shewbread with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? [7] Who, in fine, is not aware that the corporeal sacrifice slain as type under the Law is more than replaced by the spiritual sacrifice which you offer under grace? That is why I give abundant thanks to God for your letter, from which I perceive that although the aforesaid prelate told me great things of you, there were greater things which he left unsaid. I am persuaded that you who seem so admirable in other men's description, and more admirable yet in your own letter, will prove best of all seen face to face.

[8] The clerk, Megethius, who brought your message, has satisfactorily concluded his affairs, and carries back my respects. I fear I may be of little practical use to him, but if good wishes avail, he has mine. Through |172 him I urgently entreat your brother and yourself frequently to quench my thirst with a stream of your most literary letters, and you must write the oftener of the two. If the difficulties of the road and the distance between us prove an obstacle to my desires, at least pray sometimes for those who ask your prayers. Honoured though I should be by your regular correspondence, your occasional prayers promise me something more than honours, they promise me salvation. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 8 — XV.

To the Lord Bishop Prosper A. D.478 (?) [1] You wished me to celebrate the glory of the holy Annianus, the greatest and most perfect of prelates, equal to Lupus, and no unworthy rival of Germanus; you would fain see graven on the hearts of all the faithful the memory of a character so fine, so eminent, so richly endowed with so many virtues and so many merits, to which I myself should like to add this, that he made way for such a successor as yourself. You exacted a promise from me at the same time that I would hand down for the benefit of those who come after us the history of the war with Attila, with the whole tale of the siege and assault of Orleans when the city was attacked and breached, but never laid in ruins, and the bishop's celebrated prophecy was divinely answered from above. [2] I actually set to work upon the book; but when I grasped the extent of my undertaking I repented of |173 having ever begun; I therefore suffered no one else to hear a work which my own judgement already condemned. But to the first part of your request I can return a different answer: your wishes, and the merit of that great bishop make it my duty to enhance his fame without delay by every means within my power. I only ask you, as a fair creditor, to treat with laudable indulgence this promise of your reckless debtor, and in that other matter to refrain from asking what I must refrain from attempting to do. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 8 — XVI.

To his friend Constantius c. A. D. 478 [1] I PROMISED the illustrious Petronius to conclude this little book in a few letters; but in endeavouring to spare you, I have been very hard on him. He was to have the drudgery of revision, you the honour of the issue; the responsibility of conveying the volume to you was to be his, the pleasure of paying the homage mine. I have carried out my intention; if you will cast your practised eye over the numerous superscriptions I think you will be struck by the manner in which the pages are filled. I have reached the very margins near the umbilicus; as the Satirist says, it is time to finish my Orestes , even if I have to write on the other side of the parchment. [2] In this work I have not been classical, or enlisted in my service a fabulous Terpsichore, nor have I led |174 my pen by dewy banks and mossy rocks to the well-spring of Aganippe. I only hope that what I have written may not prove rambling pointless stuff, and full of trivial commonplaces. For an accomplished reader like yourself can take no pleasure in an invertebrate, soft and enervated style; what he requires is something nervous and masculine in the antique manner. Those qualities must be left to a greater talent than mine; enough for me, if you forgive me for keeping you waiting so long.

[3] It is fortunate that our illustrious friend requested no further additions; that would have involved me in long delays, for not a single cabinet or case contains anything more worth production. This will show you that although my time of silence is still to come, I have certainly begun to think of it, and that for two reasons. If I win approval, I shall give my readers pleasure at the smallest cost to themselves; if, on the other hand, I am disapproved, their weariness will soon be over. For my style has no polished graces; it is of a positively heathen bluntness. [4] What use should I have, indeed, for an austere archaic manner, or for far-fetched terms of Salii or Sibyls, or the old Sabine Cures? Such things the masters for the most part avoid; they are for some flamen to expound, or some antiquated reader of the law's conundrums. My diction is dry and jejune; mine is a vocabulary of common words in too general use to claim distinction, too ready to every one's hand to find acceptance with the critical. [5] If my writing lacks eloquence and force, I can confidently say that it contains nothing which is not genuine and absolutely true to fact. Why should I insist upon the point? |175 If my style pleases my friends, it is good enough for me. I am content with either kind of verdict: they may either be critical and tell me the truth, or partial and

deceive themselves. All I shall ask of Providence in future is that posterity may judge or be deceived in the same manner. Farewell.

Book 9 — I.

To his friend Firminus After A. D. 480 [1] You insist, my honoured Son, that I should exceed the existing limit of my collected letters; that I should adventure further, and refuse to content myself with the present total. Your reason in favour of adding a ninth volume is that Pliny, in whose steps you deem me to follow in this work, assigns the same term to his own collection. [2] I may yield to your desire; but all the same, this friendly invitation raises difficulties, and is far from promising advantage to such poor reputation as I already possess. In the first place, it is very late in the day to append this new addition to the volume already issued. Secondly, I do not know the umpire who would not hold it indecent in an author to give a single work three supplements. [3] Nor, having definitely announced the work done, should I know what excuse to make for not curbing my incorrigible loquacity, unless indeed it were this, that one cannot constrain one's friendships as one can limit one's page. For these reasons, I think you ought to stand on guard before my reputation, and make my motives clear to the inquisitive; I should like you to send me regular intelligence of the views expressed by those whose opinions I should value. [4] If |177 after forcing me to chatter on, you yourself persevere in silence, you will have no fair ground for complaint if I pay you out in your own coin. It is incumbent on you above all others to be lenient in judging my endeavour to fulfil the task and obligation imposed upon me. Meanwhile, I will at once insert in the margin of the eighth book any fresh letter which comes into my hands.

[5] Apollinaris, all ardour in most pursuits, is utterly remiss in one; study has but a faint attraction for him, whether he reads by his own choice or by compulsion. At least, that is how it appears to me, since I count myself one of those fathers who are so eager, so ambitious, and so apprehensive about the progress of their sons that they hardly ever find anything to commend, or if they do, are hardly ever satisfied. Farewell.

Book 9 — II.

To the Lord Bishop Euphronius c. A. D. 472 [1] THE missive with your saintly greeting has been delivered by the priest Albiso and the Levite Proculus, whom I may accept as my masters in conduct, since they have proved themselves your worthy pupils. The letter does me a great honour, but it imposes a yet greater burden. Although your benediction delights me, the accompanying injunction fills me with dismay. Indeed, I am so perturbed that I cannot think even of a partial obedience. You bid me attempt too intricate a task, and much too far beyond my capacity. At a time when my powers wane towards their end, I am to essay |178 a work which I should be mad to begin and could never hope to finish. [2] If I know your loyal heart aright, your real aim was rather to give me proof of your affection than to see my completed labours. But I shall take good care that while from Jerome, the master of exegesis, Augustine, the master of dialectic, and Origen, the master of allegory, you reap full ears of spiritual emotion and a harvest of saving doctrine, that no dry stubble shall rustle in your ears from this parched tongue of mine. As well blend the hoarse cry of the goose with the swan's music, or the sparrow's impudent chirp with the tuneful plaint of nightingales. [3] Should I not show a certain effrontery and want of proper feeling were I to approach so formidable a task----I, a novice in the Church, but a veteran, alas! in transgression----I, light in learning, but weighed down by a heavy conscience? If I were to send what I had written to be seen by other eyes, I should become the laughing-stock even of critics who never set eyes on me.

I entreat you, therefore, my Lord Bishop, not to insist on spoiling a modesty which would fain avoid publicity, or tempt me into so rash an adventure. Such is the envy of the backbiters, that a mere beginning is more sure of their censure than a successful conclusion of their applause. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |179

Book 9 — III.

To the Lord Bishop Faustus c. A.D. 477 [1] YOUR old loyalty to a friend, and your old mastery of diction are both unchanged; I admire equally the heartiness of your letters, and the perfect manner of their expression. But I think, and I am sure that you will concur with me, that at the present juncture, when the roads are no longer secure owing to the movements of the peoples, the only prudent and safe course is to abandon for the present any regular exchange of messages; we must be less assiduous correspondents; we must learn the art of keeping silence. This is a bitter deprivation, and hard to bear when a friendship is as close as ours; it is imposed upon us not by casual circumstance, but by causes at once definite, inevitable, and diverse in their origin.

[2] First among them 1 must set the examination of all letter-carriers upon the highways. Messengers may run small personal risk, since nothing can be alleged against them; but they have to put up with endless annoyance, while some vigilant official subjects them to an inquisitorial search. At the first sign of faltering in reply to questions, they are suspected of carrying in their heads instructions which cannot be found upon their persons. The sender of a letter is thus placed in an awkward position, and the bearer is liable to rough usage, especially at a time like this, when fresh disputes between rival nationalities have destroyed a treaty of long duration. [3] In the second place I set the soreness of |180 my heart over my own private troubles, for I was taken from home with a show of great consideration, but really removed by compulsion to this distant spot, where I am broken by every kind of mental anguish, enduring all the hardships of an exile and the losses of a proscript. It is therefore by no means the right moment to ask me for finished letters, and were I to attempt them, it would be impertinence, for the exchange of a lively or elaborate correspondence should be confined to happy people; to me it seems little less than a barbarism for a man to write gaily when his spirit is vexed within him.

[4] How much better it would be for you to give the benefit of your unremitting orisons to a soul conscious of its guilt and trembling as often as it recalls the debts of a sinful career! For you are versed in the prayers of the Island brotherhood, which you transferred from the wrestling-place of the hermit congregation, and from the assembly of the monks of Lerins, to the city over whose church you preside, for all your episcopal rank, an abbot still in spirit, and refusing to make your new dignity a pretext for any relaxation in the rigour of the

ancient discipline. Obtain for me, then, by your most potent intercession that my portion may be in the Lord; that enrolled from henceforth among the companies of my tribesmen the Levites, I may cease to be of the earth earthly, I to whom not a yard of earth remains;and that I may begin to estrange myself from the guilt of this world, as I am already estranged from its riches.

[5] In the third place, and perhaps this after all is the chief reason why I have given up writing to you, I have a boundless admiration for your tropical figurative style, and for that consummately varied and perfected diction | 181 of which your last letter affords such ample evidence. Many years ago I sat a hoarse demonstrative listener when you preached either extempore, or, if occasion demanded, after careful preparation. I especially remember the week's festival of the dedication of the church at Lyons, when you were called upon by the general desire of your venerable colleagues to deliver an oration. On that occasion you proved yourself a master both of forensic and religious eloquence, and held the balance between them with such perfection that we hung upon your words with ears strained and roused emotions; you cared less to indulge our simple predilections because you knew that you had wholly satisfied our reason.

[6] There you have the cause of my present and my future silence; I could not refuse a few words without disobedience, but henceforward I shall hold my peace and learn in silence. In future the word lies with you, my Lord Bishop. It is yours to devote yourself to the teaching of sound and perfect doctrine in works destined to live; for not a man hears you in argument or exposition who does not learn to deserve the praise of others in deed no less than word. Forgive my simple letter, which has at least the virtue of conforming to your desires; I have myself to admit that, by comparison with yours, my style is inarticulate as a child's. [7] But there is little point in all this heavy repetition; the most foolish thing in the world is to be always deprecating one's own follies. Judgement rests with you, and if you put things to a thorough test, you will find much to laugh at, and even more to censure. I shall welcome it if your notorious kindness of heart allows you for once to abandon your dislike of | 182 being critical, and condemn such points as need correction. Only if you strike out passages here and there, shall I have the satisfaction of feeling that you approve what you leave intact. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — IV.

To the Lord Bishop Graecus A. D. 473 (?) [1] OUR traveller and bearer of mutual salutations treads a path of which he knows every yard from having to traverse over and over again the roads and tracts between our several cities. We ourselves must keep to the ideal set before us; we ought, indeed, to be more intent on it than ever, and redouble our zeal now that so many messengers are constantly upon the way, and above all, Amantius. If we fail in this, it will look as if we corresponded just because he regularly calls for letters, and not because we really wish to write them. You must think more often of the friends among whose number I venture to count myself; all of us feel no less elated by your good, than depressed by your adverse fortune. [2] Were we not moved to sympathetic tears by the mournful story of your anguish at the fate of certain brethren? Flower of the priesthood, jewel among pontiffs, mighty in learning, in righteousness mightier yet, spurn from you the threatening waves of earthly storms, for we have often heard from your own lips that the way to the promised feasts of patriarchs and the celestial nectar lies through the bitter cups of earthly |183 sorrows. Whether he will or no, each follower of the Mediator who endured the world's contempt must follow his Lord's example. Whatever draughts of trouble the affliction of this present life sets to our lips, we shall perceive how small our burden is if we will but remember what He who calls us to His heaven once drank upon the tree. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — V.

To the Lord Bishop Julianus c. A.D. 477 [1] THOUGH we dwell further apart than either of us could wish, the distance dividing us has had less to do with the interruption of our intercourse than the fact that we live under different laws; national disagreements born of opposing interests have hindered our frequent correspondence. But now that a peace has been concluded, and the two peoples are to become trusty allies, our letters will be able to pass in greater numbers since they will arouse no more suspicion. [2] Unite your prayers, then, with those of your reverend brothers, that Christ may deign to prosper our handiwork, restraining the quarrels of our princes, making their wars to cease, granting to them the gift of good intention, to us peace, and to all security. Deign to hold us in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |184

Book 9 — VI.

To the Lord Bishop Ambrose After A. D. 472

[1] YOUR holiness has interceded before Christ with effect on behalf of our well-beloved friend (I will not mention his name----you will know whom I mean), the laxity of whose youth you used sometimes to lament before a few chosen witnesses of your sorrow, sometimes to bemoan in silence and alone. For he has suddenly broken off his relations with the shameless slave-girl to whose low fascination he had utterly abandoned his life; by this prompt reformation he has taken a great step in the interests of his estate, of his descendants, and of himself. [2] He dissipated his inheritance until his coffers were empty; but when he once began to consider his position, and understood how much of his patrimony the extravagance of his domestic Charybdis had swallowed up, not a moment too soon he took the bit in his teeth, shook his head, and stopping his ears, as one might say, with Ulysses' wax, he was deaf to the voice of evil, and escaped the shipwreck that follows meretricious lures. He has led to the altar a maid of high birth and ample fortune, and for that we must give him credit. [3] It would of course have been a greater glory to have abandoned the voluptuous life without taking to himself a wife; but few of, those who forsake error at the call of virtue can begin upon the highest level, and after indulging themselves in everything, cut off all indulgence at one stroke.

[4] It is now your part by assiduous prayer to obtain for |185 the newly married couple good hope of issue; and then, when they have one or two children (perhaps even in that we concede too much), to see to it that this stealer of unlawful joys shall abstain thereafter even from lawful pleasures. At present the conduct of this bride and bridegroom is so seemly that to see them once together is enough to reveal the gulf between the honourable love of a wife and the feigned endearments of the concubine. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — VII.

To the Lord Bishop Remigius A.D. 472-4(?)

[1] ONE of our citizens of Clermont (I know the man, but forget his business, which is immaterial) went recently on a journey to Belgic Gaul, and while at Rheims so won your copyist or your bookseller by the charms of his manner or of his purse that he wormed out of him, without your consent, a complete set of your Declamations. After his triumphant return with such a splendid spoil of volumes, he insisted on presenting the whole series to us as his fellow townsmen, though we were quite ready to purchase them----a rather graceful act. All of us here who are devoted to literature were properly desirous of reading the books, and we at once began to transcribe the whole, committing to memory as much as we were able. [2] It was the universal opinion that there were few men living who could write as you do. There are few or none who before even beginning to write could arrange their subjects so well, so calculate the position of syllables, or the |186 juxtaposition of consonant and vowel; and besides, there is none whose illustrations are so apposite, whose statements are so trustworthy, whose epithets are so appropriate, whose allusions so full of charm, whose arguments are so sound, whose sentiments carry such weight, whose diction has such a flow, whose periods come to so fulminant a conclusion. [3] The framework is always stout and firm, bound with many a delightful transition, and close caesura, but withal quite easy and smooth, and rounded to perfection;

it helps the reader's tongue to pass without obstacle, so as never to be troubled by rough divisions, or roll in stammering accents on the palate. All is fluent and ductile; it is as when the finger glides lightly over a surface of polished crystal or onyx, where there is not the slightest crack or fissure to stay its passage. [4] I have said enough. There is no orator alive whom your masterful skill would not enable you easily to surpass and leave far behind. I almost dare to suspect (forgive my audacity) that a flow of eloquence so copious and so far beyond my powers of description must sometimes make you vain. But do not think that because you shine with the twofold brilliance of your holy life and your consummate style you can therefore disregard our opinion; remember that though our authorship may be worth little, our criticism may count for much. [5] In future, then, cease to evade our judgement, from which you have nothing either mordant or aggressive to fear. For I must warn you that if you leave our barrenness unenriched by the stream of your eloquence, we

shall take our revenge by engaging the services of burglars, whose clever hands will soon despoil your roll-cases |187 with our connivance and support. If you are imperturbable before a friendly request to-day, you will soon learn what perturbation means to-morrow, when the thieves have cleared your shelves. Deign to keep me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — VIII.

To the Lord Bishop Principius A.D. 472-474 [1] I WAS longing for a line from you when quite unexpectedly our old messenger brought me your answer; his efficiency in the present case proves him a fit and proper person to be entrusted with our further correspondence. Your second letter is a gift, or rather blessing, which I repay with my further greetings: the account is now numerically but far from qualitatively equal. [2] And since we live in spiritual communion, while our homes are remote, so that we are debarred by our situation from the pleasure of meeting, pray for me, that I may be released from the burden and travail of this present life by a holy death such as my heart desires, and that when the day of Judgement dawns and the dead are raised, I may join your throng a servitor, were it even on the terms of the Gibeonites . For in accordance with the divine promise, the sons of God shall come together from every nation, and if pardon be given to my grievous sin, however diverse my deserts, I shall not be separated far from the place where glory awaits you among the saints. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |188

Book 9 — IX.

To the Lord Bishop Faustus After A. D. 475 [1] You have lamented our long silence, venerable father, but while I recognize and applaud your desire that it should at last be broken, I cannot admit that any blame attaches to me. When you bade me some time back give you my news, I wrote before receiving your last communication, and my letter actually reached Riez; but though you were at Apt, you aptly escaped its perusal. I was most anxious, both to receive my due credit for having written, and to escape too severe a criticism when you read the missive. [2] But on this point I need say no more at present, especially as you again ask me for a letter, and one as voluminous as I can make it. I long to satisfy you; the goodwill is there, but unfortunately I have no subject for my pen.Greetings should take up little space, unless they introduce some matter of real interest; to spin them out with mere verbiage, is to deflect from the path defined by Sallust when he said that Catiline had words enough but little wisdom. So my vale will have to follow my ave at an exceedingly short interval. I beseech your prayers for me.

[3] What a stroke of luck! Just as I was on the point of folding up my letter, something has occurred for me to write about, and if either the pleasure or the annoyance of the event delays my protest a single moment, I will own myself deserving of the indignity to which I have been exposed. You have fallen into my hands, Great Master, |189 I do more than triumph; I have you at my mercy, and in my captive I find one of no less stature than the anticipations of years had led me to expect. I cannot say whether you are caught against your will, but it looks like it. For if you did not mean your books to pass me without my knowledge, you certainly did nothing to prevent the passage. It aggravates the offence that in traversing Auvergne they not merely went close under my walls but almost grazed my person. [4] Were you afraid that I should be jealous? Thank God, I am less open to the charge of envy than any other; and were it otherwise, were I as guilty of this as of other defects, the hopelessness of a successful rivalry would be enough to purge me of emulation. Did you fear the frown of so severe and difficult a critic as your servant? What critic so swollen or so opinionated as not to kindle at your least ardent passages! [5] Was it your low estimate of a junior that led you to ignore and to disdain me? I hardly think it.

Was it that you thought me ignorant? I could put up with that if you mean ignorant of the art of writing, not ignorant in appreciation. I must remind you that only those who

have taken part in the games presume to pass judgement on the racing chariots. Was there any casual disagreement between us, leading you to suppose that I might decry your work? Thanks be to God, my worst enemies cannot make me out a lukewarm friend. Why waste these words? you ask. [6] Well, I will now let you have the whole story of this secretiveness which so incensed me, and of the discovery which has put me in such high spirits again. I had read those works of yours which Riochatus the priest and monk, and |190 thus twice a stranger and pilgrim in this world, was taking back for you to your Bretons; for you, who may well be called Faustus to-day, since you cannot grow old, since you will always live in the mouths of men, and after your bodily death, attain immortality by your works. The venerable man made some stay in our city, waiting till the agitated main of peoples should calm down, for at that time the vast whirlwind of wars rose dreadful against us on this side and on that. All your other good gifts he freely produced; but managed to keep back, always with the most exquisite courtesy, the chief treasure he conveyed, unwilling perhaps to let me feel the contrast between your roses and my brambles.

[7] After rather more than two months, he hurriedly left us, a rumour having got abroad that he and his company had with them mysterious things of great price, carefully wrapped up from view. I went after him with horses swift enough easily to cancel the day's start he had gained; I came up with my felon, I leapt at his throat with a kiss, laughing like a man but pouncing like a wild beast; I resembled a robbed tigress that with winged feet springs like a flash upon the neck of the Parthian hunter to dash her stolen cub from his grasp. [8] To cut the story short, I embraced the knees of my captive friend; I stopped the horses, tied the bridles, opened his baggage, discovered the volume I sought, dragged it forth in triumph, and began reading away and dismembering it by making lengthy excerpts from the important chapters. I dictated as fast as I could, and the skill of my secretaries yet further abbreviated my task, for they were able to skip letters wholesale, using a system of substituted signs. The story of our parting would be |191 an overlong tale, and after all of no great interest; our cheeks were wet with tears; we embraced and embraced again, hardly able to tear ourselves away. My exultation was justified by my safe return, laden with the spoils of loving-kindness and master of great riches for the soul.

[9] And now for my opinion of this booty. I should rather like to hold it back, in order to keep you in suspense; judgement withheld were vengeance more complete. But I despair of taking down your pride; for you are conscious of so masterly an eloquence that sheer delight in what they read wrings eulogy from your readers, whether they wish to withstand the charm or not. Listen, then, to the sentence which an injured friend now passes on your book. [10] It is a work of the most fruitful labour, varied, ardent, sublime, excellent in classification, rich in apt examples, well balanced by its form as dialogue, and by the fourfold division of its subject. There is much that is inspiring, much that is grand; here I find simplicity without clumsiness, there point not too far-fetched; grave matters are handled with ripe judgement, deep matters with proper caution; on debatable ground you take firm stand; in controversy your argument is always ready. Now persuasive, now severe, always intent to edify, you write with eloquence, with force, and with exquisite discrimination.

[11] Following you over the whole wide field traversed in so many manners, I find you easily superior to all other writers alike in conception and in execution. You must appreciate my sincerity in this the more, when you remember that I pronounce my opinion under the smart |192 of your affront. I think your work could only be improved by one thing----your presence in person to read it, when something might yet be added by the author's own voice, his gesture, his restrained art of physical expression. [12] Endowed thus with all these intellectual and literary gifts, you have united yourself with a fair woman according to the precept of Deuteronomy. You saw her among the hostile squadrons; and then and there you loved her as she stood in the forefront of the adversary's battle; through all the resistance of the foe, you bore her off in the strong arm of passion. Her name is Philosophy, she it is whom you snatched by force from among the impious arts; and having shorn the locks betokening a false faith, with the eyebrows arched with pride of earthly learning, and cut away the folds of her ancient vesture, which are the folds of sad dialectic, veiling perverse and unlawful conversation, you purified her and joined her to you in a close and mystical embrace. [13] She has been your faithful follower from your early years; she was ever at your side, whether you practised your skill in the arena of the crowded city, or subdued the flesh in remote solitudes;

in the Athenaeum she was with you, and in the monastery; with you she abjured the wisdom of the world, with you proclaims that which is from above. Whoever provokes you as her lawful spouse shall soon perceive the noble range of your philosophy, and find himself confronted by the Platonic Academy of the Church of Christ. [14] He shall hear you first declare the ineffable omniscience of God and the eternity of the Holy Spirit. He shall not see you grow long hair or flaunt the pallium or staff as insignia |193 of the philosophic state. He shall not see you pride yourself in nice apparel, indulging the exquisite's pretension, or making squalor your boast. He shall not see you betray your envy when in the gymnasia, or the Schools of the Areopagus; Speusippus is pictured for admiring eyes with bowed head, Aratus with open countenance; Zeno with contracted brows, Epicurus with unwrinkled skin, Diogenes with hirsute beard, Socrates with failing hair, Aristotle with arm freed from the mantle, Xenocrates with his contracted leg, Heraclitus with his eyes closed by tears, Democritus with lips parted in a laugh, Chrysippus counting with clenched fingers, Euclid measuring with open hands, Cleanthes biting his nails over problems both of space and number. [15] Far from all this, whoever challenges you shall see the Stoic, the Cynic, the Peripatetic, the Heresiarch all beaten with their own weapons and crushed by their own devices.

Their followers who dare resist Christian faith and dogma to venture a bout with you shall soon be bound hand and foot and fall headlong into the toils of their own nets. The barbed syllogisms of your logic shall hook these voluble tongues even while they seek escape; you shall noose their slippery problems in categoric coils after the fashion of the clever doctor, who, if need be, will prepare his antidote for poison from the very venom of the serpent. [16] I have said enough for the moment on your spiritual insight and on the soundness of your learning. For no one can follow in your footsteps with an equal stride, since to no other is

it given to speak better than the masters who taught him, and to make his actions better than his words. Not without reason shall you be called by those qualified to judge, |194 most blessed above all in our generation, as one who in deed and word enjoys a great and twofold glory; who after numbering years to be counted on the right hand,after being the model of this century and the desire of every other, shall die honoured for his excellence in every field, leaving his possessions to his own folk, and himself to the nations of the world. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — X.

To the Lord Bishop Aprunculus After A.D. 475 (?) [1] MY letter was delivered to you by a messenger who ought to have brought me back a reply; for our brother Celestius, on his return recently from Béziers, extracted from me a document of surrender relating to my [clerk] Injuriosus. I wrote it urged by the compelling force of your modesty rather than by any inclination of my own; the least that I could do, confronted with such an attitude was to meet you halfway upon the swift feet of my respect. [2] Regard him, then, as yours by my deliberate act, but use him with generosity; indeed, I am sure you proposed nothing but the solace of your kindness. I have no further resentment against him, and write this rather as an introduction to you than as a formal dimissal for him. But I should like it to be a condition that he is to render you obedient service and assistance, and that if he stays with you he shall be regarded as neither yours nor mine; but that if he leaves you, it shall be open to both of us to treat him as a fugitive.Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop. |195

Book 9 — XI.

To the Lord Bishop Lupus A.D. 478 (?)

[1] THAT unfortunate book which you regard as sent not so much to you as through you, has inspired a letter which I in my turn regard as written not so much to me as against me. I cannot reply to your reproaches with an eloquence equal to yours; I rely only on the justice of my cause; how indeed am I to plead 'not guilty' when you imply the opposite? At the very outset, therefore, I frankly ask your pardon for my offence, such as it is; but I confess only to an error born of diffidence and by no means of improper pride. [2] The strictness of your judgement is no less formidable to me in literary than in moral questions, but I must admit that when I opened the volume it was the thought of the friendship you profess for me which oppressed me most. And that I think is natural; for it is human nature for a friend who suspects an injury to be severer than any one else. [3] It is true enough, as you point out, that my book is a medley packed and piled with multifarious subjects, episodes and personal facts; it would have been outrageous had I been so infatuated with my work as to imagine that no part of it would displease you.

Whatever your judgement might prove to be, it was evident that I should derogate from my loyalty, if I failed to give you at least the first sight of the volume, even though I might not formally present it. If I were lucky enough to meet with your approval, you could not accuse me of having arrogantly neglected you; if on the |196 other hand I were less fortunate, you could not say that I had forced my work upon your notice. [4] Nor did I expect to find it very difficult to excuse the motive which saved me from possibly having to blush for myself. I imagined you to be as well aware as I myself that modesty becomes the writer of a new book better than assurance, and that timidity is far more likely to win the vote of the severe critic than a provocative spirit. On the other hand, if a man boldly announces a volume on a fresh subject, however much he may really have done to satisfy the legitimate expectation of the public, he will soon find that he will be expected to do more. Whatever strictures you may pass on the tenor of this reply, I prefer to make a clean breast of it rather than resort to disingenuous evasions. [5] Any one but myself would probably have argued somewhat after this wise: 'I never gave any one the advantage over you; no one else had received a special letter from me.

The man whom you believed to be preferred before you had to be content with one letter to his credit, and that, too, having no relation to the present matter. You on the other hand, for all your complaints at being overlooked, must have been simply exhausted by the three garrulous sheets you received; you must have been sickened by so long an immersion in empty and dull verbiage. Moreover you may not have observed that, even so, your position and your high deserts have received ample consideration; your name appears in the first superscription of the book, as befits that of the primate among our bishops. His name, on the contrary, only occurs once in a letter addressed to himself; yours is so mentioned more than once, and you are cited |197 besides in letters addressed to other persons. [6] Remember, too, that where there is a subject likely to please you, I have encouraged you to read it, whereas the person in question can only do so by your kindness; he is probably so embarrassed by your attitude to my little gift that I should be surprised if even now he has had a real chance of perusal, while you long ago reached the stage of transcribing. I expect he will hardly regard as my holograph a copy over which you have glanced; for to an example revised by you he can never impute either excess of barbarisms or defects in punctuation.

In fine, it might appear that all rights in the book had been handed over to you, seeing that you have the use of it while you please, and can dispose of it for so long that you may be said to keep it rather in your memory than in your bookcase.' [7] Such arguments, with more of the same kind, might readily be adduced. I, however, shall waive them all, and prefer frankly to seek your pardon instead of making excuses for a problematical offence. I make even less excuse for the carelessness of the present letter, first, because I have no longer the art of fine writing, even if I attempt it; second, because, when one has got a book off one's mind, one is longing for a holiday and cannot bring oneself to elaborate what one does not care to make public.

[8] But as I rightly make a point of giving way to you in everything-----for where, indeed, is your equal to be found?----and as for ten whole lustres, as often as a comparison has been instituted, you have been preferred to all priests that have ever been, whether in our own time or before it, I would have you understand, that though your lamentations may shake the |198 stars, though you call the glowing ashes of your fathers to witness my outrage to the laws of friendship, yet if there is to be any contest in mutual affection, my foot shall stand firm against yours, were it for no other reason than that to be beaten in anything is bad, but to be vanquished in loyalty an abomination. Whether you approve or no, I have right on my side in replying by this open declaration to reproaches, which for all their bitterness, are yet more to me than all the honeyed flatteries of others.

[9] I have given you as communicative a letter as you could desire. But all my correspondence with you is that; no letters of any writer-could be more so. For you have the gift of encouraging men to write with confidence. I say no more of myself; but there is not a literate, however retiring, whom you do not know how to draw out, just as the sun's rays by their absorbent power extract the moisture hidden in the bowels of the earth. So sharp are those rays, that they can penetrate not the fine sand or surface soil alone, but if there be

a concealed spring deep under some massive mountain, there too the ardent nature of the mysterious powers of heaven reveals the secret of the liquid element. In like manner, venerated father, your lucid eloquence knows admirably how to influence and draw into the light, by its subtle address, all the studious who from love of quiet, or from modesty, lie in the obscurity of dark corners, their fame yet unawakened. [10] Enough: I come back to the point; I have talked endlessly and at large, but since I have surrendered and confessed my fault, I entreat you to be placable and give me the benefit of your clemency and forgiveness. Such are your holy cheerfulness and love of others that |199 you will derive a greater pleasure from this my written apology than you would from any positive act of reparation. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

Book 9 — XII.

To his friend Oresius c. A. D. 484

[1] I HAVE just received your letter, which I may compare to the salt mined in the hills of Tarragona. The reader finds it sharp and lucid, yet none the less of a bland savour. The phraseology is charming, but the matter is also full of point. Taking small account of my present state of life, it asks me for a new poem, and this demand brings me no less trouble of mind than the admirable diction delight. At the very outset of my religious career, the art of versifying was the first thing that I renounced; gravity of deed was now my business, and if I occupied myself with such frivolous things as verses, I might well be accused of levity. [2] Besides, it is a matter of universal experience that a pursuit which has been intermitted for any time is only resumed with difficulty. Every one knows that both art and artist achieve their highest by constant practice; if the usual exercise be forgone, arm and intellect alike will grow inert. The later or the more seldom the bow is used, the more refractory it is under the hand; it is the same with the ox under his yoke and the horse with his bridle. Moreover, disinclination is not my only motive; it is accompanied by a certain timidity. After three whole Olympiads of silence, to |200 begin rhyming again would be no less embarrassing than irksome. [3] But it seems almost a crime to refuse you even the most difficult things;

your warm heart is quite unused to be denied, and it would be a shame to deceive you of your confident hope. I shall therefore choose a middle path: I will compose nothing new; but if I can find any of my former letters containing poems, written before the pressure of my present duties, you shall have them. I shall merely ask you not to be unfair, and set me down as an incurable poetaster. I shall pride myself just as much on your good opinion if you deign to think of me rather as a modest than as an accomplished man. Farewell.

Book 9 — XIII.

To his friend Tonantius c. A. D. 481 [1] I MUST admit that your judgement on my verses has long been too flattering and appreciative: I must admit that you rank me among the elect of poets and even above many of their number. I might be inclined to listen, were not your critical acumen influenced by your friendship. Praises born of partiality, though uttered in perfect good faith, are really based on error. [2] You ask me now to send you some Asclepiads forged on the Horatian anvil, that you may keep yourself in practice by declaiming them at table. I do so, though never in my life have I been so busily engaged in writing prose.

'Long time, with hand well worn by the pen, have I written smooth hendecasyllables which you might |201 sing more easily than choriambics, dancing on lighter foot to freer measure. But you will that our way should henceforth run by the Calabrian road, where, with reins of mighty music, Flaccus guided his lyric steeds to the melody of Pindar, while the strings were struck to the Glyconian rhythm, to the Alcaic also and the Pherecratian, the Lesbian and the anapaestic; in the freshness of his varied song he went, with words like violets of diverse hue about him. Hard was it for bards of old, hard for me to-day to see that the tongue, essaying the various music of verse, trips not by reason of too many written letters, and their male style which forbids luxuriant graces. Hardly may Leo himself attempt it, king of the Castalian choir; hardly he who most nearly follows him, Lampridius, though he professes prose and verse alike before his students of Bordeaux. Yet this it is which I must try for you: spare me, then, your jests. Suffer your poet to keep to the close his pledge of modesty; for nothing is less excellent than this, to end with laxity where the beginning was with rigour.'

[3] I should personally much prefer that when you divert yourself at the banquet you should confine yourself to pious histories; recite them often among your friends, and let an eager audience encourage their repetition. And if (for you are yet young) these salutary distractions but faintly appeal to you, then borrow from the Platonist of Madaura his formulae of festal questions; and to master them more fully, practise answering them when others propound, or yourself propound them for solution; make this your study |202 even in leisure. [4] But as festive occasions have been mentioned, and you insist upon a poem, even one composed on another theme and for another person, I cannot hesitate to produce one longer. Take, therefore, with what grace you may, one written in Majorian's reign, when a number

of us were invited to a banquet by a common acquaintance, and I had to produce something extempore on a book by Petrus, the emperor's secretary, which was just out, the master of the feast delaying the first course awhile for the occasion. My friends Domnulus, Severianus, and Lampridius, summoned from their several homes to a single city, had also been invited, and had to write as I did. That sounds presumptuous; they wrote, of course, far better. [5] We were only granted just time for the allotting of the metres; for we had agreed, as honourable members of the poetical fraternity, that though the subject should be the same for all, the verses of each should be in a different measure, so that the unsuccessful competitors might be spared immediate mortification and subsequent jealousy of the victor. For if all is composed in the same metre, inequality of talent is much more easily detected. I recommend the enclosed to your approval, preferably at some hour of perfect relaxation. It would hardly be fair to subject it to a severe criticism when your friend was never able to give his whole mind to the composition.

* 'Come, flower of youth, called happily together. The place, the hour, the festal board, the theme, bid you extol to the skies the book which you now hear |203 recited, now yourselves recite. It is the book of Petrus, master alike of prose and verse. Brothers, let us celebrate the pious festival of letters. Let all things ministering to delight usher out the day which now moves to its close, fair cheer, and wine and the dance. Bring out hangings of fine linen ruddy of hue; bring purple steeped with Meliboean dye in brazen vessels to enrich the fleece with purest stain. Let the fabric from a far land display the heights of Ctesiphon and of Niphates, and the wild beasts racing over the field, driven to madness by wounds skilfully feigned in red, from which a blood which is no blood seems to issue, as though a real dart had pierced their sides. There the Parthian fierce of mien and adroit in the backward gaze vanishes on swift steed and turns again to launch a second dart, now flying, now putting in turn to flight the wild beasts' counterfeited forms.

Let the round table be spread with linen purer than snow, and covered with laurel, with ivy and the green growths of the vine. Pile great baskets high with cytisus and crocus, starwort and cassia, privet and marigold; let sideboard and couch be gay with garlands of sweet scent. Let some hand perfumed with balsam smooth your disordered hair; let frankincense of Araby smoke to the lofty roof. Come the dark, let many a light be hung from the glittering ceiling, high in the chamber's upper space; innocent of oil and clammy grease, let each lamp's bowl yield flame from Eastern balms alone. Let servitors bear in on laden shoulders viands fit for kings, their necks bowed under silver richly chased. |204 In patera and bowl and cauldron let nard mingle with Falernian wine; let wreaths of roses crown tripod and cup. For we shall tread where garlands sway from many an unguent-vase; in mazy rounds our languid limbs shall know disport; by step, by garb, by voice, each shall play the quivering Maenad. From her seat between two seas let Corinth send her players of the cithara trained in the best of schools to mimetic dance and song; let their tuneful lingers accompany their melodious voices, the plectrum cast aside, and deftly ply the wires that leap to life beneath their touch.

Give us, too, the bronze pipe loved of the nude Satyr; give us deep-sounding flute-players for our chorus, who from cavernous mouth and full-blown cheek shall chant the loud wind into the tubes. Give us songs for the tragic buskin, for the comic soccus songs; give us eloquence of rhetors and melody of poets, of each in his several part, the best. Give us all these, yet Petrus shall surpass them all. In our hands is his book woven of prose and verse, faring swift over roughest paths and labyrinthine ways. In every kind he makes essay, in every kind approved; from this side and from that he bears the palm; even learned lips must celebrate his praise. Away with the well of Hippocrene, away with Aganippe's fount; avaunt! Apollo, maker of sweet song, with all thy train of Muses; avaunt! Minerva, arbitress of melody. Away with all the names of legend; one God alone has dowered him with these gifts.

When this man raised his voice, all sat dumb----emperor and senator, warrior, knight, and all the folk |205 of Romulus. And still their acclamations roll through forum, temple, camp, and country, while Po and Liguria's loyal cities add their loud plaudits to the chorus. Like greetings echo through the towns of Rhone, even the wild Iberian shall imitate the Gaul. Nor shall the sound die in this region of earth; it shall press onward to the lands where Eurus reigns; Zephyr, Aquilo, and Auster shall bear it on their wings.' [6] Seeking a song for your lips, I have found one of my own. These trifles I drag into the light from the bottom of my desk, where for well-nigh twenty years they have lain for the rats and mice to gnaw: such verses as Ulysses might have found when he came home from Troy. I pray you give me gracious pardon for this distraction of an idle hour; it is surely neither false modesty nor impudence which begs you to bow before the force of precedent, and judge my small performance in the spirit with which I judged the whole book of my friend. Farewell.

* The poem is translated into German rhymed decasyllabics by Fertig, i, p. 13.

Book 9 — XIV.

To his friend Burgundio (No indication of date)

[1] IT doubles my own pain to learn that you too are driven to keep your bed. No fate is so hard to bear as the separation of friends through sickness, when they are quite close to each other. Unless they share one room, they cannot exchange a word of mutual comfort or offer a prayer together. Each has burden of anxiety |206 enough on his own account, but a greater for his friend. However ill a man may be, his fears for himself vanish before the knowledge of his friend's danger. [2] But God, most affectionate son, has relieved me of my worst disquietude, since you begin to regain strength. They say you even want to get up, and what I long even more to hear, that you are strong enough to do so. I really think you must be, or you would not have begun to ask my advice again, and set me literary problems with the ardour of one perfectly recovered. Though you are only a convalescent, you seem far more inclined for some ethical discourse of Socrates, than any physical treatise of Hippocrates. Verily you deserve, if ever man did, the encouragement of Rome's applauding hands, the thunder of the Athenaeum hailing you master, till the seats shake with the clamour through every tier. [3] And were but peace ours, and the roads free, these triumphs you would attain, given the opportunity of forming yourself in the society of our senatorial youth. Of such fame and such distinction I judge you capable from the becoming speech you recently made; you delivered extempore the matter of a written discourse, with the result that the kindly acclaimed you, the supercilious marvelled, the most accomplished had no fault to find. But I ought not to embarrass your modesty by impertinent excess of praise; my eulogies are better made to third persons than to yourself. I will proceed to the real subject of my letter.

[4] The inquiry which your messenger brings is: what do I mean by recurrent verses? you want an immediate answer, with a concrete illustration. A recurrent verse is one which reads the same backwards and forwards |207 without changing the position of a single letter, or making any alteration in the metre. Here is the classic example: Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor. [Here is another: Sole medere pede, ede perede melos.] [5] There is another kind in which, though the metre is unchanged, only the words are read backwards, not the several letters. A distich of my own shall illustrate the point, though I am sure I have met with many others in the course of my reading. I amused myself by composing it

about a brook which had been filled by sudden rain storms, crossing the highway with a noisy rush of waters, and overflowing all the tilled lands below.

[6] It was merely a passing flood, swollen with transient rains, and not sustained by any perennial flow from spring above. I happened to arrive by the road, and while I waited for the banks to reappear, for the moment giving up the ford, I amused myself by writing the following two verses, on the feet of which, if not on my own, I crossed the foaming torrent. 'Praecipiti modo quod decurrit tramite flumen, Tempore consumptum iam cito deficiet.' You see that, inverting the order, you get the following: 'Deficiet cito iam consumptum tempore flumen, Tramite decurrit quod modo praecipiti.' |208

Of course the merit all lies in the arrangement of the words; elegance you must not expect, for there is none. The example sufficiently explains, I think, what you wanted to know. [7] It now falls to you to oblige me in a similar way by following my lead, and sending me something which I in my turn request. An ideal chance is yours in the near future of speaking in public on the most notable of subjects, the glory of that Julius Caesar in praise of whom you have already written. The theme is so great that even the most exuberant of orators might doubt his power of rising to the occasion. Even if we leave out of the account all that the historian of Padua has written on the fame of the invincible dictator, who could hope to challenge with the living word the work of Suetonius, or Juventius Martialis,or the Ephemerides of Balbus? Be the enterprise reserved for your hand. [8] My friendly care it shall rather be to see that the benches are well filled with auditors, and to prepare men's ears for the coming bursts of applause.While you exalt the virtues of another, it shall be my part to celebrate yours. Have no fear that I shall bring an audience of ignorant or spiteful Catos, ready to cloak either defect under a pretence of critical severity. One can make allowance for honest lack of culture, but people sly enough to detect good work, and at the same time grudge it credit, are detected and discredited themselves by every man of honour.

[9] Do not, then, be apprehensive on this account; every one will lend a favouring ear and a fostering support; we shall all enjoy together the refreshing pleasure which your recitation will give us. Some will extol your fluency, more your talent, all of us your freedom from conceit. |209 For it is laudable indeed, when a young man, I might almost say a boy, can stand forth in the open arena and be adjudged the prize on the double ground of character and talent. Farewell.

Book 9 — XV.

To his friend Gelasius c. A. D. 481 [1] You prove my offence against you, and I do not defend myself on the charge. In so far as no letter in this collection bears your name, I have indeed offended. But you write that you will regard the fault as venial, provided I send you something for recital at table, like the letter in prose and verse which I sent not long ago to my friend Tonantius for a similar purpose. You conclude by deploring that when I drop into poetry I never write anything but hendecasyllables, preferring that in the present case I should substitute for this trochaic facility something composed in verses of six feet. I acquiesce, only hoping that the enclosed will please you, whether you style it ode or eclogue. The composition was hard work, for when one is out of practice in a given metre, to write in it is far from easy. 'You wish, dear friend, the fierce iambic to echo through my pages with impetuous rhythm, as hitherto the trochee; the spondee with its two slow feet and its time of four, to hold the flighty dactyl in check awhile; you wish that other swiftest of all feet to resound with these, named fitly from the Pyrrhic dance, and always to be placed at the conclusion; you wish next the anapaest to bound the beginning or the end of the verse, |210 which only in strictness deserves its name when a third long syllable follows upon two short.

An ordinary poet----for such, you know, your Sollius is----has not the skill to manage all these measures. My note is uncertain, my wandering tongue has no art to unroll from echoing mouth the long-drawn epic. That skill is rather Leo's, or his who in Latin song follows in Leo's steps, and in the Greek stands first, who descends from the Sire of the Consentii; who with lyre and tone and measure has sung, men say, by the ford of Pegasus in every form we know, and in the Greek tongue has held the high stars by Pindar's side, and ranged victorious the twin-peaked hill, second to none among the caves of Delphi. But if either bard forsake the Doric speech, and sing to the poet's lyre a Latian strain, then, Flaccus, all too feebly shalt thou wield the plectrum of Venusia, and thou, O vanquished swan of Aufidus, shalt bow thy white and tuneful neck, moaning to hear the music of the swans of Atax.

Nor these alone are skilled, albeit than the common skilled more skilful. For the rhetor Severianus had sung with a more transcending voice, and Domnulus, the subtle bard of Africa, with more elegance, and the learned Petrus with more harmonious strength, whose

love of writing letters would never have stayed him from composing marvellous verse. And ever more masterly had been the melodious music of Proculus, him of Ligurian home and race, so finishing his graceful poems as to make his country rival in men's love Mantua of the Venetian land, and himself arise the peer of Homer in his glory, or drive abreast with Maro's car. |211 But I, whose thought and style merit contempt, how should I raise my babbling voice among these, even for your pleasure, without proof of babbling unashamed and achievement falling ever short of my ambition? Yet if even this shame suffice not to deter me, how shall I deny you? Love knows not fear: 'tis therefore I obey.'

[2] Do not, now, be critical with one who picks up a lost thread; all I ask is some indulgence for an art I rarely practise. If in future you make more such demands, you will have to smooth the path of my obedience, by giving me either a subject for my Muse, or a dance to put me in the comic vein. Farewell.

Book 9 — XVI.

To his friend Firminus c. A. D. 484 [1] You may remember, honoured Son, asking me to add a ninth book, specially composed for you, to the eight already issued: those addressed to Constantius, whose great qualities are known to you, his eminent capacity, his sanity in counsel, his pre-eminent gift of eloquence, by which, in the discussion of public affairs, he eclipses all other speakers on his own or on the opposite side. Herewith I fulfil my promise with punctuality, if not strictly as proposed. [2] For on my return after my diocesan visitation, I began going through all my mouldering old papers for any chance drafts of letters that might be among them; I worked as fast and as hard as I could, and then had them out and transcribed them with |212 all speed. I did not allow the wintry season to interfere with my resolve of fulfilling your desire, though the copyist was hindered by the cold which prevented the ink drying on the page; the drops froze harder than the pen, and as the hand pressed the point on the page, they seemed to break from it rather than to flow. I have done my best to acquit my obligation before the mild Favonian breeze brings his natal showers to fertilize our twelfth month, which you call the month of Numa. [3] I must now ask you not to require of me the two incompatible virtues of perfection and rapidity; for when a book is written, as it were, to order, the author may perhaps expect credit for punctual delivery but hardly for the quality of his work.

As you profess delight with the iambics I recently sent to our very genial friend Gelasius, you too shall have your present in the shape of these little slaves of Mytilene. * 'Now has my bark steered its bold course on the twin seas of prose and verse, nor have I feared to ply the tiller on their sundered tides. I have lowered the yards, furled the great sails, and laid down the oar; my thwarts have run alongside, I have leapt ashore to kiss the dear-loved sands. The jealous chorus of my foes makes muttering; they snarl like furious dogs; but openly they dare say nothing; they fear the public approval which is mine. Hissings of evil tongues beat upon the poop, and shake the keel, and toss the curved sides of my boat; they fly about the mast. |213 For I, having recked nought of the heaving storms, with the steersman's guardian art have held my prow straight and come safe to port, winner of a twofold crown. One the Roman people granted, and the purple-robed senate assigned, and with a single voice the company of the lettered, what time Nerva Trajan's forum saw arise a lasting statue to my honour, set up between the founders of the two Libraries. The other

was mine wellnigh two lustres after, when I received the honour of that high office which now alone maintains the rights of people and of senate.

Heroic verse I have written, and much have I woven in lighter vein; elegiacs in six feet I have turned with twin caesura. Now, trained to ride my course in lines of eleven syllables I have gloried in a swift way; singing many a time in Sapphic metre, rarely in the impetuous iambic. Nor can I now call to mind all that once I wrote in the ardour of past youth; would that the mass of it might be buried away and withdrawn into silence! For as we come to our last years, and the goal of old age draws nearer, the deeper grows our shame, remembering the levities of our callow youth. In the dread of that remembrance, I transferred all my care to the epistolary style, that though guilty of foolishness in song I might be innocent in deed; nor be esteemed one all dissolved in pretty phrases, filling my page with tropes and idle trappings, by which the poet's empty fame might stain the austerity of the priest.

Henceforth I plunge no more into any kind of verse; be the measure light or grave, I shall not readily be drawn to produce a song again; |214 Unless it be to sing the trials of men persecuted for the faith, and martyrs worthy of heaven, who have bought by death the reward of eternal life. First my chant should celebrate the prelate who held the throne of Toulouse, whom they flung headlong down from the highest steps of the Capitol. Who denied Jove and Minerva, and confessed the blessing of Christ's cross, and therefore was bound by a raging mob to the wild bull's back. That when the beast was driven to full speed over the height, his rent body was flung to earth, and the rock reddened with the pulp of his reeking brain. And after Saturninus my lyre should sing all those other guardian saints who through many tribulations have proved my helpers at need.

Their several names my pious song may not rehearse; but though they sound not from the strings, they shall ever find echo in my heart.' [4] Let me at the end drop verse for prose, and so conform to the scheme originally proposed for my book. If I closed an unmetrical work with rhyme, I should break the rule of Horace, and turn out as common pot what began as amphora. Farewell. * Translated into German verse by Fertig, Part iii, pp. 23-4.

Source. English translation: an out-of-copyright translation as transcribed, or commissioned and given to the public domain, by Roger Pearse for his collection ***Early Church Fathers – Additional Texts*** (tertullian.org/fathers). SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes are left out, and Greek or Latin words, square brackets and any transcription error are as the source prints them. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.

Licence. published 1915.