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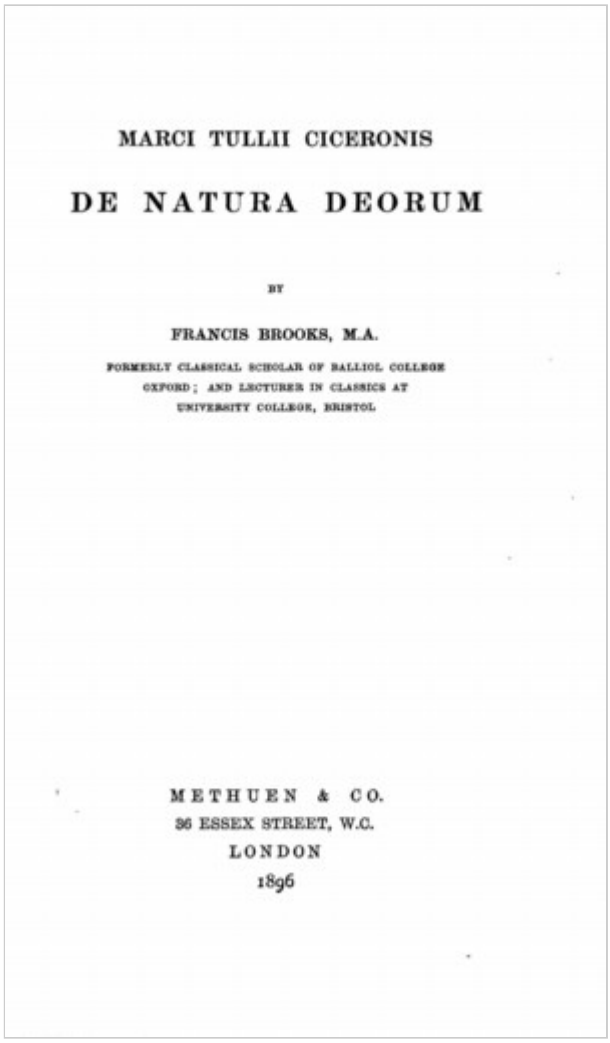

MARCI TULLII CICERONIS

DE NATURA DEORUM

BY

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Cicero's detailed discussion of the Greeks' theories of God and religion.

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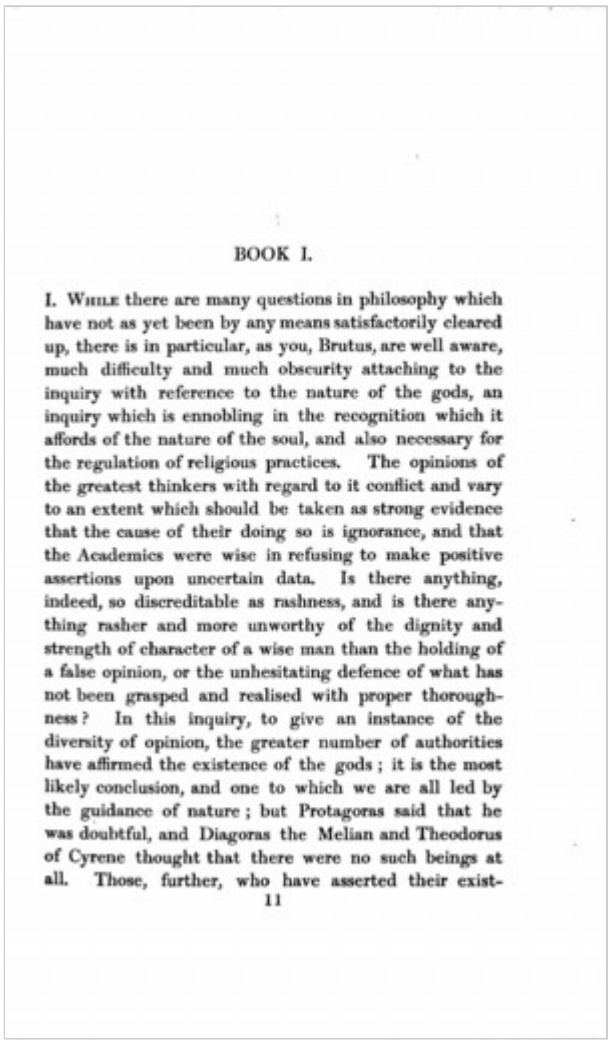

BOOK I.

I. WHILE there are many questions in philosophy which have not as yet been by any means satisfactorily cleared up, there is in particular, as you, Brutus, are well aware, much difficulty and much obscurity attaching to the inquiry with reference to the nature of the gods, an inquiry which is ennobling in the recognition which it affords of the nature of the soul, and also necessary for the regulation of religious practices. The opinions of the greatest thinkers with regard to it conflict and vary to an extent which should be taken as strong evidence that the cause of their doing so is ignorance, and that the Academics were wise in refusing to make positive assertions upon uncertain data. Is there anything, indeed, so discreditable as rashness, and is there anything rasher and more unworthy of the dignity and strength of character of a wise man than the holding of a false opinion, or the unhesitating defence of what has not been grasped and realised with proper thoroughness? In this inquiry, to give an instance of the diversity of opinion, the greater number of authorities have affirmed the existence of the gods; it is the most likely conclusion, and one to which we are all led by the guidance of nature; but Protagoras said that he was doubtful, and Diagoras the Melian and Theodorus of Cyrene thought that there were no such beings at all. Those, further, who have asserted their exist-

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PREFACE

The text made use of in this translation is that of the Rev. J. B. Mayor in the Cambridge University Press. Words bracketed in that text have not been translated. In some few cases they have been indicated in a footnote.

I should like to express very fully my great obligations to Mr. Mayor's commentary. My best thanks are also due to him for the personal kindness which he has shown in reading through my translation, and enabling me to profit by his criticisms and suggestions.

The introduction prefixed to the translation makes no pretence to originality, and is scarcely more than an abstract of the introductions in Mr. Mayor's edition, with a few additions from Zeller and Ueberweg. Both in the introduction and notes, references to passages in the *De Natura* are made by means of books and chapters.

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INTRODUCTION

Cicero's death occurred in 43 b.c., when he was almost sixty-four years old, and his philosophical works belong to the two years immediately preceding. The circumstances under which they were undertaken he indicates himself in his preface to the present work (i., 4). He was, he says, urged to them as a means of relief from the irksome political inactivity to which he was reduced by the supremacy in the state of Julius Cæsar, and he also hoped to find in them a distraction from the grief caused him by the death of his daughter Tullia. He felt, too, that for the sake of the national credit it was right that the philosophy of Greece should be brought before his countrymen in their own tongue, and in the case of the special branch of philosophy discussed in the *De Natura* he had another and more pressing motive. For it was necessary there to consider those theological questions the answers to which determined the character and even the possibility of religion, and therefore, in his opinion, of morality as well. If the very existence of divine beings were denied, as some philosophers had denied it, clearly religion, and with it morality, at once disappeared (i., 2). Nor was the case much improved if the view of the Epicureans were adopted. It was true that they had released mankind from a superstitious fear of the gods, but only by holding out deities who were absolutely regardless of the world and its affairs, who led a shadowy and undefined existence, and were for practical purposes non-existent. Religious worship as directed to such beings could only be an empty form, and it was impossible for morality to flourish upon a basis of insincerity. The Stoics gave a noble account of the divine government of the universe and care for man, but their excessive dogmatism exposed them to the criticisms of the Academy.

It is of this latter school that Cicero in i., 3 professes himself an adherent. Its original founder was Plato, but in its later development it had come to neglect the positive side of his teaching, and to base itself solely upon the negative dialectic which always played so important a part in his system. By means of this weapon Carneades (213-129 b.c.), the most important representative of the Middle or Sceptical Academy, set himself to controvert the Stoic doctrine of certain knowledge, endeavouring to show that real knowledge was impossible, and a greater or less degree of probability all that could be attained. He was also a formidable critic of the argument from design employed by the Stoics, and of their conception of God as a living, rational being. This purely negative attitude was modified by the later Academics of Cicero's own time, who formed what is called the New Academy. Philo (*ob.* about 80 b.c.) made a partial return to Stoicism, attempting a compromise on the lines indicated in i., *5, ad fin.,* between mere probability and absolute certainty. A much stronger tendency towards eclecticism was shown by his disciple Antiochus (*ob.* 68 b.c.), who thought that truth might be found in that upon which all philosophers were agreed, and tried to prove, inevitably without much success, that the Academic, Stoic and Peripatetic systems were in substantial harmony (i., 7). Cicero himself should really be ranked as an eclectic. At the close of this dialogue he declares that he finds a greater appearance of "probability" in the arguments of the Stoic disputant, and there is no doubt that though ready to adopt the standpoint of the Academics where abstract questions of metaphysics were concerned, and though in

sympathy with them as an orator because of the effective use to which their method could be put in oratory, he was of too serious a temper to apply their scepticism to beliefs which affected practical life and conduct. He was a Stoic in regarding the *consensus gentium* as valid testimony to the existence of a supreme being, and as a statesman and patriot was convinced that it was the duty of a good citizen to accept and maintain the national religion.

As a student of philosophy Cicero held a foremost place among his contemporaries. He remained in touch with it during the whole of a busy life, not only, as his letters show, as a reader, but also as a writer of translations and adaptations, of which he left a large number behind. In his youth he had known as teachers the chief representatives of three schools. In 88 b.c., when eighteen years old, he had studied at Rome under Phædrus the Epicurean and Philo the Academic; in 79 b.c., at Athens, under the Epicureans Phædrus and Zeno and the Academic Antiochus, and in the following year under Posidonius the Stoic in Rhodes. Diodotus the Stoic was for some years an inmate of his house. The Stoics most frequently quoted in this dialogue are Zeno, the founder of the school (*circ.* 342-270 b.c.), Cleanthes (331-251 b.c.) and Chrysippus (280-206 b.c.). Panætius (180-111 b.c.), who is mentioned in ii., 46, was the chief exponent of Stoicism amongst the Romans. He lived in Rome for several years as the friend of Scipio Æmilianus, and a member of the "Scipionic circle" which did so much to foster the first growth of culture in Rome. Posidonius, who died about 50 b.c., was a disciple of his. The Peripatetic school is only referred to once in the *De Natura* (i., 7). It was identical with the Lyceum, the school founded by Aristotle, and in Cicero's time was mainly occupied in the task of re-editing and commenting on Aristotle. It held a high position, but was comparatively colourless, and had nothing like the same hold on men's minds as the three other systems. Cicero himself speaks of it elsewhere with respect, but without enthusiasm.

The dialogue is supposed to take place in Rome at the house of Caius Aurelius Cotta. Cotta was born in 124 b.c., and was a member of that party in the senate which, under the leadership of Drusus, urged the extension of the Roman citizenship to the Italian allies. The murder of Drusus in 91 b.c. was followed by the insurrection of the allies, and Cotta with many others was banished as having been guilty of high treason in encouraging the revolt; he did not return to Rome until order was restored by Sulla in 82 b.c. In this dialogue he appears as pontiff, but not as consul. We know that he was made pontiff soon after 82 b.c., and consul in 75 b.c., and as Cicero, who is present at the dialogue as a listener, did not return from Athens till 77 b.c., its date is limited to some time between the years 77 and 75 b.c., when Cicero would be about thirty years of age, and Cotta about forty-eight. Cotta represents the Academics. He was a distinguished orator, and appears as one of the speakers in the *De Oratore,* where he is represented as saying (*De Orat.,* iii., 145) that he will not rest till he has mastered the Academic method as a part of his training in oratory. It is interesting to note that while an Academic in opinion, he is as pontiff the champion of orthodoxy (i., 22; iii., 2). The Epicureans are represented by Caius Velleius, and the Stoics by Quintus Lucilius Balbus, of both of whom scarcely anything is known beyond what is gathered from the dialogue itself. Cicero had also introduced Balbus as a speaker in the lost dialogue *Hortensius,* which was an appeal for the study of philosophy.

The present work is dedicated to Marcus Junius Brutus, afterwards the murderer of Cæsar. He was a man of considerable philosophical attainments, an adherent of the Stoicised Academy of Antiochus, and himself an author. Cicero, who was twenty-one years his senior, must have thought highly of him, as he dedicated to him four of his other treatises, and named after him the dialogue *De Claris Oratoribus,* in which he takes part. The *De Natura* itself was very possibly not published until after Cicero's death, and was certainly not revised by him. This is shown, apart from various obscurities and inconsistencies which occur in it, by the allusions made to the time which the dialogue occupies. It is really supposed to take up one day, but in ii., 29 it is represented as having reached its second day, and in iii., 7 its third.

In this, as in his other philosophical works, which he himself calls ?πόγρα?α, or "adaptations," Cicero borrowed largely from Greek sources. There are many points of resemblance between the Epicurean section of book i. and a religious treatise of Philodemus discovered in an imperfect state amongst the Herculanean MSS. Philodemus was a leading Epicurean, a disciple of Zeno, and a contemporary of Cicero, who mentions him with praise, and it is generally supposed that he borrowed directly from him. But Mayor points out that the divergences are even more striking, and thinks that they both copied from an earlier authority. It is a strong argument in support of this that in both cases the list of philosophers criticised stops at the middle of the second century b.c. The rest of book i., which consists of Cotta's criticism of the Epicurean position, is derived in great part from the Stoic Posidonius, who is also followed in the second book, which contains the Stoic exposition. The Academic criticism of the Stoics, which comes in book iii., is taken from the Academic Clitomachus (*circ.* 180-110 b.c.), the disciple and exponent of Carneades, who himself left no written remains.

The speech of Velleius, which opens the discussion, begins with a criticism of the Platonic and Stoic theologies (i., 8-10). The style is rather blustering, in accordance with the Epicurean reputation for arrogance and self-sufficiency, and the questions asked may in more than one case be answered out of the very writer criticised. The best points made are those which deal with the difficulty of supposing the creation of the universe to have taken place at a particular period of time, and with the question of what were the motives of the Creator in undertaking the work. These points, unfortunately, are not directly met by subsequent speakers, a fault observable through the entire work, which suffers from a want of cohesion attributable to the hasty use by Cicero of authorities who themselves wrote independently of one another. The critical section is succeeded by the historical (i., 10-15), which consists of a summary of the views of a large number of philosophers, together with criticisms upon them. It is an undeniable blot upon the book, being throughout full of inaccuracies and mis-statements, of which it is probable that Cicero himself was to a great extent unconscious; if they were intended to illustrate the ignorance, upon which the Epicureans prided themselves, of any writings besides their own, one would have expected a hint to that effect, if not a correction of blunders. Cotta, moreover, is made to compliment Velleius afterwards upon the accuracy of his sketch. The principle upon which the criticism proceeds is that the Epicurean idea of God as a perfectly happy, eternal being, possessed of reason, and in human form, is the only tenable one, and the mere statement of different opinions is regarded as a sufficient proof of their

worthlessness. There is much more positive value in the Epicurean exposition which follows (i., 16-20). The Academic criticism, which takes up the rest of the book, is flippant, amusing, often obviously unjust, but often acute and to the point. The objections to endowing God with a human form (i., 27-37) are well put, and there is real humour in the bantering to which Epicurus is subjected in i., 26.

The second book will always rank as one of the chief attempts made in ancient literature to prove the divine existence, the providential ordering of the universe, and the providential care for man. In discussing the second of these points a number of details are introduced in connection with astronomy, animal and vegetable life, and the physiology of man, which make the book important in another way as a contribution to our knowledge of ancient science. The astronomical section is extended by selections from Cicero's *Aratea,* a translation which he made in early youth of the *Phænomena* of the Stoic poet Aratus. The verses are spirited, and have received the honour of several imitations by Lucretius, but they might well have been spared in exchange for a fuller treatment of the dealings of Providence with the individual, such as would in all probability be contained in the original from which Cicero was borrowing. As it is, the problem of how to account for the presence of misery and disaster in a world providentially governed is only hurriedly touched upon at the end of the book.

Though we may be sure that Cicero would have been in sympathy with the main outlines of the Stoic exposition, we know from his other writings that he would not have agreed in the identification of heat with intelligence (ii., 10), or in ascribing life and thought to the universe and the heavenly bodies (ii., 13, 15), or in the attempts made to explain the gods of the popular religion (ii., 23-27). In this last connection chapters 25-27 are noticeable for their etymological explanations of the names of divinities.

Of the last book a large portion, probably more than one third, has been lost. This includes the whole of the section on the providential government of the universe, and part of that on the care of the gods for men. The Academic criticism here has the same general faults and merits as that in book i., but is more serious in tone. There is force in the objections brought in chapters 4-6 against the arguments in support of the divine existence which the Stoics derived from the general belief of mankind, the recorded appearances of gods, and the practice of divination. Chapter 15 is interesting as an attempt to show that virtue, as it is understood by man, is incompatible with the divine nature. The ten chapters following are devoted to a tedious and disproportionably lengthy discussion of the Stoic mythology. The arguments underlying it have a logical and philosophical value, but instances are multiplied to an inordinate extent. Chapters 21-23 contain a descriptive list of deities bearing the same name, and are designed to show that though the Stoics may wish to retain, by means of their allegorical explanations, the gods believed in by the people, it is impossible to decide out of so many claimants to a title which is the true god. The mythology in these three chapters is throughout eccentric; many of the particulars given are opposed to the ordinary account, and many are found nowhere else. At the same time it is singularly incomplete, deities so well known as Juno, Ceres, Neptune, Mars, Pluto, Hecate, and Proserpina being omitted. The original author of this part of the

mythological section was probably one of the learned antiquaries of Alexandria, of whose labour Carneades or Clitomachus availed themselves for polemical purposes.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a vigorous attack upon the Stoic doctrine of the providential care for man. Two statements in it may be noted as inconsistent with statements already made in book ii. In iii., 36 it is said that all men are agreed in considering virtue to come from oneself and not from God, but the opposite was explicitly stated in ii., 31, and in iii., 39 the Stoics are quoted as saying that the divine care does not extend to individuals, which again is contradicted by ii., 66. In both cases it is probable that the earlier Stoics did hold the beliefs in question, and the discrepancy illustrates the difficulty under which Cicero lay in answering a later Stoic treatise out of an earlier Academic one. We find that when speaking in his own person he inclines rather to the Stoic view of the misfortunes of the good and prosperity of the bad, and in ascribing a divine origin to virtue and conscience he is again at variance with the Academics. The impression sometimes produced by this third book may be seen from the statement of Arnobius (*circ.* 300 a.d.) that many of the pagans themselves were scandalised by Cicero's religious writings, and thought that they should be destroyed. On the other hand, the Stoic exposition, and passages of a similar tendency in other works, led to Christians recognising in Cicero an element of positive Christianity. Besides Arnobius, the Christian writers Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Lactantius, and Augustine were acquainted with the *De Natura,* and their arguments against polytheism are largely borrowed from it. Nor can the dialogue be regarded as without considerable claims upon our own attention. It possesses a unique historical interest as summing up, in the generation preceding the birth of Christ, the religious opinions of the chief schools of ancient thought, and though much in it has been superseded, the main topics with which it is concerned are still the subjects of inquiry and controversy in the modern world.

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BOOK I.

I.

While there are many questions in philosophy which have not as yet been by any means satisfactorily cleared up, there is in particular, as you, Brutus, are well aware, much difficulty and much obscurity attaching to the inquiry with reference to the nature of the gods, an inquiry which is ennobling in the recognition which it affords of the nature of the soul, and also necessary for the regulation of religious practices. The opinions of the greatest thinkers with regard to it conflict and vary to an extent which should be taken as strong evidence that the cause of their doing so is ignorance, and that the Academics were wise in refusing to make positive assertions upon uncertain data. Is there anything, indeed, so discreditable as rashness, and is there anything rasher and more unworthy of the dignity and strength of character of a wise man than the holding of a false opinion, or the unhesitating defence of what has not been grasped and realised with proper thoroughness? In this inquiry, to give an instance of the diversity of opinion, the greater number of authorities have affirmed the existence of the gods; it is the most likely conclusion, and one to which we are all led by the guidance of nature; but Protagoras said that he was doubtful, and Diagoras the Melian and Theodorus of Cyrene thought that there were no such beings at all. Those, further, who have asserted their existence present so much diversity and disagreement that it would be tedious to enumerate their ideas separately. For a great deal is said about the forms of the gods, and about their locality, dwelling-places, and mode of life, and these points are disputed with the utmost difference of opinion among philosophers; while upon the question in which our subject of discussion is mainly comprised, the question whether the gods do nothing, project nothing, and are free from all charge and administration of affairs, or whether, on the other hand, all things were from the beginning formed and established by them, and are throughout infinity ruled and directed by them,—on this question, especially, there are great differences of opinion, and it is inevitable, unless these are decided, that mankind should be involved in the greatest uncertainty, and in ignorance of things which are of supreme importance.

II.

For there are and have been philosophers who thought that the gods had absolutely no direction of human affairs, and if their opinion is true, what piety can there be, and what holiness, and what obligation of religion? It is right that these should be accorded, in purity and innocence of heart, to the divinity of the gods, but only if the offering is observed by them, and if something has been accorded by the immortal gods to humanity. But if they have neither the power nor the wish to aid us, if they have no care at all for us and take no notice of what we do, if there is nothing that can find its way from them to human life, what reason is there for our rendering to them any worship, or honour, or prayers? On the other hand, in an empty and artificial pretence of faith piety cannot find a place any more than the other virtues; with piety it is necessary that holiness and religious obligation should also disappear, and when

these are gone a great confusion and disturbance of life ensues; indeed, when piety towards the gods is removed, I am not so sure that good faith, and human fraternity, and justice, the chief of all the virtues, are not also removed. But there is another school of philosophers, and a great and high-minded one it is, who hold that the entire universe is ordered and ruled by the mind and the intelligence of the gods, and, more than this, that the gods also take counsel and forethought for the life of men; for they think that the crops and other produce of the earth, the variations in the weather, the succession of the seasons, and the changing phenomena of the sky, by means of which everything that the earth bears is ripened and comes to maturity, are gifts bestowed by the immortal gods upon mankind, and they adduce many instances which will be mentioned in the course of these books, and which are of such a kind as to almost make it seem that the immortal gods manufactured these precise things for the benefit of man! Against this school Carneades advanced many arguments, with the result of rousing men of intelligence to a desire for investigating the truth; for there is no question on which there is such marked disagreement, not only amongst the unlearned, but the learned as well, and the fact of their opinions being so various and so mutually opposed makes it of course possible, upon the one hand, that not one of them is true, and certainly impossible, upon the other, that more than one should be true.

III.

Now, with regard to my own works, which within a short space of time I have put forth in considerable number, I notice that a good deal of comment of different kinds has been spreading, proceeding partly from those who wondered whence I had acquired this sudden enthusiasm for philosophy, and partly from those who wished to know what definite convictions I held upon particular points. I have also been conscious that many regarded it as strange that that philosophy, rather than others, should commend itself to me, which, as they would say, robs us of the light and casts a kind of darkness over things, and that the defence of an abandoned and long-neglected system should have been unexpectedly undertaken by me. Well, upon these counts I can pacify friendly objectors and confute malignant fault-finders in a way which will make the latter repent of having taken me to task, and the former glad that they have learnt the truth, for those who admonish in a friendly spirit deserve to be instructed, while those who assail in an unfriendly spirit deserve to meet with a repulse. Now I have not turned suddenly to philosophy, and from an early period of life I have expended no little attention and care upon that study, and when I seemed least devoted to it I was in reality most so. This is shown by the frequency with which the opinions of philosophers occur in my speeches, and by my friendship with the learned, an honour which my house has always enjoyed, and by the fact of such leading men as Diodotus, Philo, Antiochus and Posidonius having been my teachers. If, moreover, all the precepts of philosophy have a bearing upon life, I consider that both in my public and private capacity I have carried out what reason and principle prescribed.

IV.

But if any one asks what considerations induced me to make, at so late a date, these contributions to letters, there is nothing I can more easily explain. It was at the time when I was feeling the languor of inaction, and the condition of the state necessitated its being directed by the will and guidance of one man, that I reflected that philosophy ought, in the first place for the state's own sake, to be brought before our fellow-countrymen. For I thought that it nearly concerned our honour and glory as a nation that so important and exalted a study should have a place in the Latin literature as well, and I regret my undertaking the less as it is easy for me to perceive how many persons' enthusiasm I have aroused, not only for learning, but also for exposition. The fact is that several who had been trained in the Greek school were kept from sharing their learning with their countrymen by a doubt whether the knowledge that they had received from the Greeks could be expressed in Latin, but in this department I seem to have been so far successful myself as not to be outdone by the Greeks even in abundance of vocabulary. A second inducement for betaking myself to these studies was my unhappiness of mind in consequence of a great and serious blow dealt me by fortune. If I could have found any greater relief for this unhappiness I would not have taken refuge in this form of it particularly, but there were no means by which I could better enjoy relief itself than by devoting myself not merely to the reading of books, but also to an examination of the whole of philosophy. And all its parts and members are most easily recognised when questions are followed out in all their bearings in writing, for there is in philosophy a notable kind of continuity and connection of subject, so that one part seems to depend upon another, and all to be fitted and joined together.

V.

As for those who ask to know my own opinion upon each point, they display more curiosity than is necessary, for in discussion it is not so much authorities as determining reasons that should be looked for. In fact the authority of those who stand forward as teachers is generally an obstacle in the way of those who wish to learn, for the latter cease to apply their own judgment, and take for granted the conclusions which they find arrived at by the teacher whom they approve. Nor am I in the habit of commending the custom of which we hear in connection with the Pythagoreans, of whom it is said that when they affirmed anything in argument, and were asked why it was so, their usual reply was "the master said it," "the master" being Pythagoras, and the force of preconceived opinion being so great as to make authority prevail even without the support of reason. To those, again, who wonder at my having followed this school in preference to others, I think that a sufficient answer has been made in the four books of the Academica. Certainly it is no abandoned and neglected system that I have undertaken to defend, for opinions do not also perish because individuals die, though it may happen that they are denied the illumination which is given by an expositor. For instance the philosophical method in question, the method of meeting every position with criticism, and upon no point delivering a straightforward judgment, which started with Socrates, and was taken up again by Arcesilas, and placed upon a firm foundation by Carneades, continued to flourish down to our own

times, and yet I see that at the present moment in Greece itself it is left almost in the condition of an orphan.1 This I think has come about not through the fault of the Academy, but as a consequence of men's dulness, for if it is a formidable matter to make oneself master of single systems, how much more so is it to make oneself master of all, as must be done by those who look forward to speaking, with a view to the discovery of truth, both for all philosophers, and also against all philosophers. To the mastery of anything so high and difficult as that I do not profess to have attained, though I do make bold to say that I have endeavoured to attain. Still it is impossible that the school which proceeds on this method should have no principle to follow. This is a point which, it is true, has been more thoroughly discussed in another work, but there are some people so dull and unreceptive as to seem to need to be reminded of it frequently. Our school, then, is not one to which nothing seems to be true, but one which says that to all true sensations there are certain false ones attached, which are so like them that the true ones can show no unmistakable mark by which to be judged and accepted as true. From this comes our conclusion that there are many sensations probably true, by which, though they do not represent full perception, the life of a wise man may be directed because they have something marked and distinct in their appearance.

VI.

But now, in order to free myself from all odium, I will bring forward the opinions of philosophers with regard to the nature of the gods, and on this matter methinks the whole world should be summoned to determine which of the opinions is the true one, and I shall only regard the Academy as presumptuous in case either all philosophers prove to be agreed, or some one is discovered who has ascertained the truth. I feel inclined, then, to exclaim in the words of the Synephebi, "By heaven, I invoke and demand, beseech and entreat, weep for and implore the protection of all our fellow-countrymen, of all young men," not in regard to some mere trifle, as the character in that play complains that "Capital crimes are being committed in the state, a light of love refuses to take money from her lover," but in order that they may be present, and make inquiry, and take cognizance as to what our convictions ought to be with regard to religious obligation, and piety, and holiness, and ceremonial rites, and honour, and an oath, and with regard to temples, and shrines, and the stated sacrifices, and those very auspices over which our college presides,—for all these questions ought to be considered as connected with our present inquiry concerning the immortal gods. Surely even those who think that they possess some certain knowledge will be forced to begin to doubt by the marked difference of opinion, amongst those of most instruction, on a matter of such great importance.

I have often noticed this difference on other occasions, but I did so most of all at the time of a remarkably thorough and careful discussion on the subject at the house of my friend Caius Cotta. I had gone there at the time of the Latin holidays, at his own request and summons, and found him sitting in a recess off the hall, engaged in discussion with Caius Velleius, a member of the senate, to whom the Epicureans assigned at that time the first place amongst our countrymen. There was also present Quintus Lucilius Balbus, who was so great a proficient in the philosophy of the Stoics as to be compared with the leading Greeks in that field. When Cotta saw me, You

come, he said, very opportunely, for a dispute is arising between me and Velleius on a subject of importance, and considering your interest in such matters it is not inappropriate that you should be present at it.

VII.

I too, I said, think that I have come, as you say, opportunely, for here you are met together as the three chief members of three schools, and if Marcus Piso[1] were present, not one of, at any rate, the most highly esteemed philosophies would be without a representative. If, replied Cotta, our excellent Antiochus speaks truth in the work which he has lately dedicated to Balbus here, there is no reason why you should regret the absence of your friend Piso, for according to Antiochus the Stoics agree with the Peripatetics in substance, and only differ from them in words. I should like to know what you think of this work, Balbus. What I think? said Balbus. I am surprised that a man of such remarkable acuteness as Antiochus should not have seen that there is a very great difference between the Stoics who separate things honourable from things advantageous not merely in title, but in their entire nature, and the Peripatetics who class them together, making them dissimilar in importance, and, as it were, gradation, but not in nature; for this is no slight difference in words, but a very considerable one in essence. However, that point let us discuss at some other time; for the present let us turn, if you have no objection, to what we had begun upon. I certainly have no objection, said Cotta; but in order that our friend here—looking at me—who came in upon us, may not be in the dark as to what is being discussed, let me explain that the subject was the nature of the gods, and that I, feeling it, as I always do, to be one of great obscurity, was inquiring from Velleius the opinion of Epicurus. So, if you do not mind, Velleius, let us have your first remarks again. I will certainly, he said, though our friend has not come as my auxiliary, but as yours, for you have both of you, he said with a smile, learnt from the same Philo to be sure of nothing. To which I replied: As for what we have learnt, that is Cotta's business, but I do not wish you to think that I have come as his adherent, but as a hearer, an unbiassed one, moreover, free to judge, and under no obligation to defend, whether I wish it or not, some fixed opinion.

VIII.

Velleius then began, displaying, as is usual with his school, no lack of confidence, and afraid, beyond all things, of seeming to be in doubt upon any point, just as though he had that moment come down from the assembly of the gods and the inter-mundane spaces[1] of Epicurus. Listen, he said, to no groundless and fanciful beliefs; no fabricator and builder of the world, like the god from Plato's Timæus; no prophetic beldame like the πρόνοια of the Stoics (whom in our own language we may call providence); no world itself, either, endowed with mind and sensation, a round and glowing and whirling deity,—the prodigies and marvels of philosophers who do not reason but dream. Why, by what manner of means could Plato, your pet authority, have beheld the construction of this great work, the construction with which he represents the world as being put together and built by God? How was so vast a fabric set about? What were the tools, and levers, and machines, and agents employed in it?

On the other hand how could air, fire, water, and earth have been obedient and submissive to the architect's will? And whence did those five forms arise[1] from which the other elements are formed, and which are so conveniently adapted for affecting the mind, and producing sensation?[2] It would be tedious to remark upon all his theories, which have more the appearance of day dreams than of ascertained results, but the prize instance is the following: he represented the world not merely as having come into existence, but as having been almost turned out by hand, and yet asserted that it would be everlasting. Now do you think that a man like this, who thinks that anything that has come into being can be eternal, has put, as the saying is, even the surface of his lips to *physiologia,* in other words, to natural philosophy? For is there any agglomeration that cannot be dissolved, or anything that, having a beginning, has not also an end? As for your πρόνοια, Lucilius, if it is the same as the power we have been discussing, I ask, as I did just now, for the agents, machines, and all the planning and ordering of the entire work. If, on the other hand, it is something different, I ask why it made the world liable to perish,[1] instead of making it everlasting, as was done by the god of Plato.

IX.

And from both of you[2] I inquire why these powers suddenly appeared as constructors of the world, and why for innumerable ages they were asleep, for it does not follow, if there was no world, that there were no ages. By ages I do not now mean those that are made up of a number of days and nights by means of the yearly revolutions, for I acknowledge that ages in that sense could not have been attained without a rotatory movement of the heavens, but from infinitely far back there has existed an eternity, the nature of which in point of extent can be conceived, though it was not measured by periods of time.[3] I ask, then, Balbus, why during that limitless extent of time your πρόνοια refrained from action. Was it labour that it shunned? But God was not affected by that, nor was there any, since all the elements, the air of heaven, the bodies composed of fire, the lands, and seas, were obedient to the divine will. What reason, again, was there why God should be desirous of decking the world, like an ædile, with figures and lights?[4] If he did so in order that he himself might be better lodged, it is clear that for an infinite amount of time previously he had been living in all the darkness of a hovel. And do we regard him as afterwards deriving pleasure from the diversity with which we see heaven and earth adorned? What delight can that be to God? And if it were a delight, he would not have been able to go without it for so long. Or was this universe, as your school is accustomed to assert, established by God for the sake of men? Does that mean for the sake of wise men? In that case it was on behalf of but a small number that so vast a work was constructed. Or was it for the sake of the foolish? In the first place there was no reason why God should do a kindness to the bad, and in the second place what did he effect, seeing that the lot of all the foolish is undoubtedly a most miserable one? The chief reason for this is the fact that they are foolish, for what can we name as being more miserable than folly? and the second is the fact that there are so many ills in life that, while the wise alleviate them by a balance of good, the foolish can neither avoid their approach nor endure their presence.

X.

As for those[1] who declared that the world itself was animate and wise, they were far from understanding to what kind of figure[2] it is possible for the quality of rational intelligence to belong, a point on which I will myself speak a little later. For the present I will not go farther than to express my astonishment at the dulness of those who represent an animate being, that is immortal and also blessed, as round, because Plato says that there is no shape more beautiful than that. Yet I find more beauty in the shape either of a cylinder, a square, a cone, or a pyramid. And what kind of life is assigned to this round divinity? Why, a kind which consists in his being whirled along at a rate of speed, the like of which cannot even be conceived, and in which I do not see where a foothold can be found for a steadfast mind and blessed life. Why, again, should not that be considered painful in the case of God, which would be painful if it were evidenced[1] to the slightest extent in our own bodies? For the earth, since it is a part of the world, is also of course a part of God. But we see vast tracts of the earth uninhabitable and uncultivated, some through being parched by the beating of the sun's rays, and others through being bound with snow and frost owing to the distance to which the sun withdraws from them; and these, if the world is God, must, since they are parts of the world, be respectively described as glowing and frozen members of God!

These, Lucilius, are the beliefs of your school, but to show what their character is I will retrace them from their farthest source in the past. Thales, then, of Miletus, who was the first to inquire into such subjects, said that water was the first principle of things, and that God was the mind that created everything from water. Now if there can be divinity without sensation, why did he mention mind in addition to water? On the other hand, if mind can exist by itself apart from matter, why did he mention water in addition to mind? Anaximander's opinion is that the gods have come into being, emerging and disappearing at far distant intervals in the form of innumerable worlds; but how can we conceive of God except as immortal? Anaximenes, who lived later, declared that air was God, that it had come into existence, and that it was unmeasured, infinite, and always in motion; as though air could be God when it is without form, especially when we consider that it is fitting that God should possess not merely some kind of form, but the most beautiful, or as though mortality did not overtake everything that has known a beginning.

XI.

Next Anaxagoras, who derived his system from Anaximenes, was the first to hold that the order and measure of all things was planned and accomplished by the power and intelligence of an infinite mind, in saying which he failed to see that there can be no activity joined with, and allied to, sensation[1] in what is infinite, and no sensation at all in anything that does not feel through its own nature being acted upon. In the next place, if he intended this mind of his to be some kind of living thing, there will be some inner part on the strength of which it may be called living; but there is no part more inward than mind; let mind, therefore, be surrounded with an outer body. Since he objects to this, what we get is pure, unbodied mind, with nothing added by means

of which it may be able to receive sensation, a state of things which seems to surpass the powers of conception possessed by man's understanding. Alcmæo of Croton, who assigned divinity to the sun, and moon, and other heavenly bodies, and also to the soul, was unaware that he was endowing the perishable[1] with immortality. As for Pythagoras, who held that the whole nature of things was traversed and permeated by a soul, from which our own souls are taken, he failed to see that by this division into human souls the divine soul was rent and lacerated, and that when the human souls experienced pain, as most of them would,[2] a portion of the divine soul also suffered, which is impossible. Why, moreover, should the human soul, if it were God, be ignorant of anything? and how, again, would this God, if he were nothing but soul, be either implanted in the universe, or infused into it? Then Xenophanes, who held that the infinite sum of things, combined with mind, constituted divinity, is subject, on the score of mind itself, to the same censure as the others, and to severer censure on the score of infinity, in which there can be no sensation and no connection with anything external.[3] As to Parmenides, he evolves an imaginary something resembling a crown (his word for it is στε?άνη), a bright ring of unbroken fire which girds the sky, and which he calls God, but in which no one can look for a divine form or for sensation. He is the parent, too, of many other extravagances, for he ranks under the head of divinity war, and strife, and desire, and the other principles of the same kind, which are liable to be brought to an end alike by illness, sleep, forgetfulness, or old age; he makes also the same claim in the case of the stars, but as that has been censured in another it need not now be dwelt upon in him.

XII.

Empedocles, in addition to many other blunders, goes most discreditably astray in his conception of the gods, for he would have the four natural elements, from which he believes that all things are compounded, to be divine, though it is clear that these come into being, and suffer extinction, and lack all sensation. Nor does Protagoras, who denies absolutely the possession of any definite conviction as to their existence, non-existence, or character, seem to have the faintest conception of the divine nature. As for Democritus, when at one moment he reckons among the number of the gods the images of things[1] and their revolutions, at another the natural power that disperses these images and sends them forth, and at another our own apprehension and intelligence, is he not involved in the greatest error? And when he further declares positively that nothing is eternal, because nothing remains perpetually in the self-same state, does he not do away with divinity with a completeness which leaves no idea of it remaining? Then again, how can air, which Diogenes of Apollonia represents as being God, possess sensation or divine form? In the inconsistency of Plato we come to a subject which it would be tedious to discuss. He says in the Timæus that the father of this world cannot be named, and also lays down in the books of the Laws that no inquiry at all ought to be made into the nature of God, and yet both in the Timæus and the Laws he attributes divinity to the world, the sky, the stars, the earth, the souls of men, and the deities that we have received from the religious system of our forefathers, views which are clearly false in themselves and in direct opposition to each other. As to his belief that God exists without a body of any kind, that he is, as the Greeks say, ?σώματος, it is impossible to conceive what such a condition could be like, for he must then be without sensation, forethought, and pleasure, all of which

qualities we embrace in our idea of God. Xenophon, too, makes in fewer words very much the same mistakes. In the record that he has given of the sayings of Socrates he represents Socrates as arguing that the form of God ought not to be made a subject of inquiry, and at the same time asserting the divinity both of the sun and of the soul, and as speaking of God at one moment in the singular, and at another in the plural, which statements are involved in pretty much the same error as those which we quoted from Plato.

XIII.

Antisthenes, again, destroys the significance and essential nature of the gods when he declares in the work entitled "On Natural Philosophy," that there are many gods believed in by the people, but only one that is known to nature. Nor is Speusippus far different; following in the steps of Plato, who was his uncle, he attempts to wrest from our minds our knowledge of the gods by describing the deity as a kind of living energy, by which all things are directed. Aristotle gives a most confused account, on the same lines as his master,1 in the third book of his treatise "On Philosophy," where at one moment he ascribes absolute divinity to mind, at another represents the world itself as divine, at another places the world under the dominion of some other power, to which he assigns the function of guiding and preserving, by means of a kind of retrograde movement, the world's motion, and at another speaks of the ethereal heaven as God, not understanding that the heaven is a part of that world to which he has himself given the title of God elsewhere. How, moreover, could the divine consciousness of the heaven be maintained when moving at such speed? and where will a place be found for the great number of other gods,1 if we also count the heaven as God? When he further declares that God is incorporeal, he deprives him of all consciousness, and also of forethought; besides, if God has no body, how can he be moved? on the other hand, if he is constantly in motion, how can he know peace and happiness? Nor is any more discernment in these matters shown by Aristotle's fellow-pupil Xenocrates, in whose books on the nature of the gods there is no description of a divine form. His account is that there are eight gods, five whom we name in naming the wandering stars, and one formed from all the fixed stars that are in the sky, as though from a number of scattered limbs, whom we are to regard as a single god; for a seventh he adds the sun, and for an eighth the moon,—but how these deities can be conscious of happiness it is impossible to conceive. Heraclides of Pontus, who also belongs to Plato's school, filled his books with childish stories, and believes at one moment in the divinity of the world, and at another in the divinity of mind; and he also assigns divinity to the wandering stars, thus depriving God of feeling and representing his form as variable, and yet again in the same book he enrols earth and sky among the gods. The inconsistency of Theophrastus is equally insufferable; in one place he ascribes sovereign divinity to mind, in another to the sky, and in another to the stars and constellations of the heavens. Nor does his pupil Strato, who is called the natural philosopher, deserve to be listened to; he holds that all divine force is resident in nature, which contains, he says, the principles of birth, increase, and decay, but which lacks, as we could remind him, all sensation and form.

XIV.

Zeno is of opinion, to come now to your school, Balbus, that the law of nature is divine, and that it fulfils its function by enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; we cannot understand, however, how he makes this law animate, which nevertheless is what we undoubtedly require God to be. He also speaks elsewhere of æther as God, if that is a conceivable God which is without feeling, and which never presents itself to us at the time of prayers, or petitions, or vows; in other works he supposes a certain reason that pervades the whole nature of things, to be endowed with divine power, and this attribute of divinity he further assigns to the stars, and also to the years, the months, and the different seasons of the year. But it is when he interprets Hesiod's θεογονία, or "birth of the gods," that he simply puts an end to the ordinary, well-apprehended ideas on the subject of the gods, for he does not include in their number either Jupiter, or Juno, or Vesta, or any one similarly addressed, but declares that these names were assigned with some sort of allegorical meaning to mute and inanimate objects. No less erroneous are the opinions of Zeno's pupil Aristo, who holds that no form of God is conceivable, and denies him sensation, and is in a state of complete uncertainty as to whether he is, or is not, animate. Cleanthes, who studied under Zeno at the same time as the last-named writer, asserts at one moment that the world itself is God, at another bestows that title upon the mind and intelligence of nature as a whole, and at another finds an undoubted God in the farthest and highest fiery element, called by him æther, which extends in a circle on every hand, surrounding and enclosing the universe on the outside. In the volumes, moreover, which contain his inditement of pleasure, he seems to take leave of his senses, for in one place he delineates a kind of divine form and aspect, in another he ascribes divinity in its fullest sense to the stars, and in another declares that there is nothing so divine as reason, the result of which is that nowhere at all is that god disclosed whom our minds make known to us, and whom we wish to make correspond with the ideal in our soul, as though with an imprinted outline of himself.

XV.

Persæus, who also was a pupil of Zeno, says that it was men who had discovered some great aid to civilisation that were regarded as gods, and that the names of divinities were also bestowed upon actual material objects of use and profit, so that he is not even content to describe these as the creations of God, but makes out that they are themselves divine. Yet what can compare with the absurdity either of endowing mean and unshapely objects with the honours of divinity, or of ranking among the gods men already cut off by death, whose worship would have had to consist entirely in mourning? We come next to Chrysippus, who is considered the most skilful exponent of the fantastic notions of the Stoics, and who gathers together a large band of deities so utterly removed from knowledge that, although our mind seems able to picture in imagination anything whatever, we cannot even form an idea of them by conjecture. For he tells us that divine power resides in reason and in the soul and mind of nature taken as a whole, and then again he declares that the world itself is God and the universal outpouring of its soul, then that it is this same world's guiding principle, operating in mind and reason, together with the common nature of things and the

totality which embraces all existence, then the foreordained might and necessity of the future, then fire and the principle of æther that we have mentioned before, then those elements whose natural state is one of flux and transition, such as water, earth, and air, then the sun, the moon, the stars, the universal existence in which all things are contained, and also those human beings who have attained immortality. He further maintains that æther is that which men call Jove, and that the air which permeates the seas is Neptune, and that the earth is what is known by the name of Ceres, and he treats in similar style the titles of the other gods. He also identifies Jove with the power of uninterrupted, eternal law, the guide of life, as it may be called, and mistress of duty, which he also describes as fore-ordained necessity and the eternal truth of the future, though none of these qualities are such as to give an appearance of divine power being resident in them. All this is in his first book on the nature of the gods; in the second his aim is to harmonise the stories of Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer with what he has himself said on the subject of the immortal gods in the first book, so that even the oldest poets, who had not so much as a conception of such things, are made to seem to have been Stoics. Diogenes of Babylon follows in his steps in the work entitled *De Minerva,* where he removes from mythology the travail of Jupiter, and birth of the maiden goddess, and transfers them to natural philosophy.

XVI.

I have been setting forth what are more like the ravings of madmen than the judgments of philosophers. In fact, there is not much more absurdity in the utterances, the very attractiveness of which has been the cause of harm, that have been poured forth by the poets, when they have introduced the gods inflamed with anger and furious with desire, and have made us behold their wars, battles, contests, and wounds, their enmities, moreover, and feuds, and discords, their births and deaths, their complaints and lamentations, their passions expending themselves in unmeasured licence, their adulteries, their imprisonments, their unions with mankind, and the generation of a mortal progeny from an immortal being. And with the mistaken notions of the poets may be classed the extravagances of the magi, the delusions entertained on the same subject by the Egyptians, and also the beliefs of the common people, which from ignorance of the truth are involved in the greatest inconsistency.

Any one who should reflect how unthinkingly and recklessly these ideas are advanced, ought to reverence Epicurus and place him among the number of those very beings that form the subject of this inquiry, for it was he alone who perceived, in the first place, the fact of the existence of the gods from the idea of them which nature herself had implanted in all men’s minds. For what nation or race of men is there that does not possess, independently of instruction, a certain preconception of them? It is this which Epicurus calls by the name of πρόληψις, that is, a certain idea of a thing formed by the mind beforehand, without which nothing can be understood, or investigated, or discussed; and we have learnt the purport and advantage of this exercise of the reason from that divine volume of his upon criterion and judgment.

XVII.

You see, then, that what constitutes the foundation of this inquiry is excellently well laid, for since the belief in question was determined by no ordinance, or custom, or law, and since a steadfast unanimity continues to prevail amongst all men without exception, it must be understood that the gods exist. For we have ideas of them implanted, or rather innate, within us, and as that upon which the nature of all men is agreed must needs be true, their existence must be acknowledged. Since their existence is pretty universally admitted not only among philosophers but also among those who are not philosophers, let us own that the following fact is also generally allowed, namely, that we possess a "preconception," to use my former word, or "previous notion" of the gods (new designations that have to be employed when the objects of designation are new, just as Epicurus himself applied the term πρόληψις to what no one had described by that name before)—we possess, I say, a preconception which makes us think of them as blessed and immortal. For nature that gave us the idea of gods as such, has also engraved in our minds the conviction that they are blessed and eternal. If that is so, there was truth in the doctrine put forward by Epicurus, that what is blessed and eternal knows no trouble itself, and causes none to others, and is therefore unaffected by anger or favour, since, as he said, anything that is so affected is marked by weakness. Enough would have now been said, if our aim were only to worship the gods with piety, and to be freed from superstition, for a divine nature of this exalted kind, being eternal and supremely blessed, would receive the pious worship of mankind (everything that is of surpassing excellence inspiring a just reverence), and also all fear arising from the violence and anger of the gods would have been dispelled, now that it is understood that anger and favour have no place in a blessed and immortal nature, and that, when those feelings have been removed, no terrors threaten us from the powers above. However, in order to confirm this belief,[1] the mind looks for form in God, and for active life, and the working of intelligence.

XVIII.

Now, with regard to form, we are partly prompted by natural instinct, and partly instructed by reason. So far as natural instinct is concerned, no one of us in any nation attributes to the gods any but a human aspect, for under what other shape do they ever present themselves to any one whether waking or asleep? We will not, however, refer everything to primary ideas, when the same declaration is made by reason itself. For since it seems appropriate that the nature which, whether as being blessed or eternal, is the most exalted, should also be the most beautiful, could any arrangement of limbs, or cast of feature, any outline or appearance be more beautiful than man's? Your school, at any rate, Lucilius,—as for my friend Cotta, his opinions vary[1] —is accustomed, when exhibiting the ingenuity of the divine handiwork, to point out how admirably everything in the human figure is contrived for purposes of beauty as well as use. Now if the human figure surpasses the form of any other animate being, and if God is animate, this figure which is the most beautiful of all, is assuredly possessed by him. Since, moreover, it is understood that the gods are supremely blessed, and since no being can be blessed without virtue, and virtue cannot exist without reason,

or reason be found anywhere except in a human form, it must be admitted that the gods have the outward aspect of man, though this is not body, but quasibody,2 and does not contain blood, but quasi-blood.

XIX.

Though these speculations of Epicurus were too acute, and their exposition too subtle, for every one to be able to appreciate them, still my confidence in your intelligence leads me to state them with less fulness than the subject requires. Well, Epicurus tells us—for he was one who could not only bring obscure and highly recondite questions before his mind's eye, but positively deals with them as though they were lying in his hands—that the essence and nature of the gods is such that, in the first place, it is perceived by mind and not by sense, and that it does not possess what we may call solidity, or maintain an unvarying self-identity, like the bodies which on account of their compactness he calls στερέμνια.1 His account is that through the images being perceived owing to their similarity and their passage before us, when an infinite series of very similar images is formed from innumerable atoms and streams towards us, our mind, intently fixed and concentrated upon these, arrives with the utmost joy at the conception of a blessed and immortal nature. And this mighty power of infinity, which so well deserves to be much and heedfully contemplated, must needs be conceived of as so constituted that each part in it is balanced by its equivalent, according to what Epicurus calls ?σονομία, or equal distribution, the result of which distribution is that for a given number of mortal beings there is a no less number of immortal, and that if the agencies which destroy are innumerable, those which preserve must be also without limit.2

And then, Balbus, it is usual with your school to inquire from us what the life of the gods is like, and how they spend their days. In a way, you may be certain, which for blessedness and abundant possession of every good cannot be excelled even in imagination. For God does nothing, is involved in no occupations, and projects no works; he rejoices in his own wisdom and virtue, and is assured that his state will always be one of the highest felicity eternally prolonged.

XX.

We should be right in describing this God as blessed, but yours as a slave to toil. For if it is the world itself that is God, what can be less restful—and nothing that is not restful is blessed—than to revolve round the celestial axis without a moment's pause and at a marvellous rate of speed? If, on the other hand, a god of some kind is resident in the world itself, who is to rule and direct it, to maintain the courses of the stars, and the changes of the seasons, and the ordered alternation of events, to have his eye upon lands and seas, and to guard the well-being and the lives of men, assuredly it is an oppressive and laborious task in which he is involved. We, on the contrary, make blessedness of life depend upon an untroubled mind, and exemption from all duties, for we were taught by him who taught us everything else, that the world was produced by the working of nature, without there having been any need for a process of manufacture, and that what your school declares to be capable of accomplishment

only by means of divine intelligence is a thing so easy that nature will produce, and is producing, and has produced worlds innumerable. It is because you do not see how nature can accomplish this without the help of some kind of mind that, like the tragic poets, in your inability to bring the plot to a smooth conclusion, you have recourse to a god. Yet you would certainly feel no need for his agency if you had before your eyes the expanse of region, unmeasured and on every side unbounded, upon which the mind may fasten and concentrate itself, and where it may wander far and wide without seeing any farthermost limit upon which to be able to rest. Now in this immensity of length and breadth and height there floats an infinite quantity of innumerable atoms which, in spite of the intervening void, nevertheless join together, and through one seizing upon one, and another upon another, form themselves into connected wholes, by which means are produced those forms and outlines of the material world which your school is of opinion cannot be produced without bellows and anvils. You have therefore placed our necks beneath the yoke of a perpetual tyrant, of whom we are to go in fear by day and night, for who would not fear a god who foresaw everything, considered everything, noted everything, and looked upon himself as concerned in everything,—a busy and prying god? From this has come, in the first place, your idea of preordained necessity, which you call ε?μαρμένη, meaning by the term that every event that occurs had its origin in eternal truth and the chain of causation—(though what is to be thought of a philosophy that holds the ignorant old crone's belief that everything happens by destiny?)—and secondly your art of μαντικ?, or *divinatio,* as it is called in Latin, which, if we were willing to listen to you, would imbue us with such superstition that we should have to pay regard to soothsayers, augurs, diviners, prophets, and interpreters of dreams. From these terrors we have been released by Epicurus, and claimed for freedom; we do not fear beings of whom we understand that they neither create trouble for themselves, nor seek it for others, and we worship, in piety and holiness, a sublime and exalted nature. My enthusiasm, I fear, has led me into too great length, but it was difficult, although my proper character was rather that of a listener than a speaker, to leave so important and lofty a subject incomplete.

XXI.

To this Cotta replied, with his usual suavity, Nay, Velleius, if you had not said something yourself, you certainly would not have been able to hear anything at any rate from me, for the reasons why a thing should be true do not present themselves to my mind so readily as the reasons why it should be false, and this feeling, which I have experienced on many occasions, I experienced just now when listening to you. If you were to ask me what I thought the nature of the gods to be like, it is possible that I should make no reply, but if you were to inquire whether I supposed it to be like what you have just described it to be, I should say that nothing appeared to me less probable. However, before I come to the arguments that you have advanced, I will tell you what my feeling is about yourself. I have, I think, often heard your friend[1] place you unhesitatingly above all our own countrymen, and compare with you only a few of the Epicureans of Greece, but as I perceived that he was very much attached to you, I used to think that there was some exaggeration in what he said, due to his friendliness. I myself, however, though I shrink from praising a man to his face, nevertheless deliver it as my opinion that you have discussed an obscure and difficult

subject with clearness, and not only with a fulness of statement, but also with more elegance of diction than is usual with your school. When I was at Athens I frequently attended the lectures of Zeno, whom our own Philo used to call the leading Epicurean; in fact I attended them at Philo's own suggestion, in order, I suppose, that I might be better able to judge how ably their tenets were refuted, when I had heard from the chief of the school the way in which they were put forth. Now Zeno did not speak as most Epicureans do, but in the same way that you did, clearly, weightily, and elegantly. Nevertheless there came to me a little while ago, when I was listening to you, the same feeling that I often had in his case, one, namely, of impatience that so much ability should have fallen, if you will forgive my saying so, into such trifling, not to say foolish, beliefs. At the same time I shall not now bring forward anything better myself, for, as I said a moment before, in almost all matters, but especially in matters of natural philosophy,[1] I should more readily say what a thing is not, than what it is.

XXII.

If you were to ask me what God is, or of what nature, I should plead the authority of Simonides, who, when this same question was put to him by the tyrant Hiero, asked for one day's deliberation; when the question was repeated on the morrow, he begged for two, and when Hiero, upon his constantly doubling the number of days, inquired wonderingly why he did so, Because, he replied, the longer I reflect, the more obscure does the matter seem to me. Now, in the case of Simonides, whom we hear of as having been not only a delightful poet, but a wise and cultivated man in other ways as well, it is my belief that it was the number of acute and subtle considerations that occurred to him which made him doubt which of them was the truest, and so despair of all truth, whereas your Epicurus, with whom rather than with yourself I prefer to carry on the discussion,—what does he say that would be worthy, I do not say of philosophy, but of ordinary intelligence?

The first question in the inquiry which deals with the nature of the gods is whether they do, or do not exist. "Denial," I shall be told, "is difficult." I grant that it would be so if the question were put in a public assembly, but in a conversational gathering of this kind it is perfectly easy. Consequently I myself, though I am pontiff, and hold that the public rites and observances ought to be most piously maintained, should nevertheless be extremely glad to be convinced on this original point of the existence of the gods, not merely as an article of faith, but in accordance with the actual truth; for many disturbing thoughts present themselves to me, so that I am sometimes of opinion that they do not exist. But mark how handsomely I will deal with you. I will not touch upon the points which, like the present, are common to your school with the rest of philosophers; for almost every one, and myself among the foremost,[1] allows the existence of the gods. I do not therefore dispute it, but I do think that the reason advanced by you is not sufficiently convincing.

XXIII.

You said that the fact of men of all races and nations being of that opinion was sufficiently good evidence to warrant us in acknowledging the existence of the gods, but the plea is not only trivial in itself, but also untrue. For in the first place how do you know that nations do hold that belief? I think myself that there are many races so barbarously savage as to be without any conception of such beings. And did not Diagoras, who was called ?θεος, and after him Theodorus, openly do away with the idea of a divine nature? As for Protagoras of Abdera whom you mentioned just now, and who was quite the most eminent sophist of that time, it was in consequence of his stating at the beginning of his work, "With regard to the gods I am unable to say either that they exist or do not exist,"1 that he was banished by a decree of the Athenians from their city and territory, and his books burnt in the public assembly. This, in my opinion, made many people less inclined to confess to unbelief, after a case in which even the expression of doubt had not been able to escape punishment. Then, what are we to say of the sacrilegious, the impious, and the perjured? "If ever," as Lucilius says, "Lucius Tubulus, or Lupus, or Carbo, true son of Neptune,"2 had believed in the existence of the gods, would they have been guilty of such perjury or impiety? Your reason, then, for establishing the conclusion that your wish is not so certainly made out as it seems, but as it is an argument common to other philosophers as well, I will for the present omit it, preferring to pass on to what is peculiar to your own school.

I grant that the gods exist; do you, then, inform me of their origin and place of abode, and of what they are like in body, mind, and life, for these are the points on which I wish for knowledge. What you do is to press into your service on all occasions the arbitrary rule of the atoms, to which you refer the composition and creation of everything that, as the saying is, "turns up". But in the first place there are no such things as atoms, for there is nothing [that can move except through a void; now a void is that] which is free from matter,1 and as every spot is encumbered with portions of matter,2 there can be no void and nothing that is indivisible.

XXIV.

These are the oracular utterances of men of science of which I am now delivering myself, whether true or false I know not, but possessing at any rate a greater air of truth than the utterances of your school. That monstrous assertion, for instance, of Democritus, or perhaps before him of Leucippus also, that there are a number of particles some smooth and others rough, some round and others angular and pyramidal, and some hook-shaped and with a kind of curve, from which the sky and earth were formed, not through the compulsion of any natural law, but through a certain accidental concourse,—that belief, Velleius, you have prolonged even to your present age, and you would be as easily diverted from the whole tenor of your life as from your acceptance of its authority. The fact is that you made up your mind that you must be an Epicurean before becoming acquainted with doctrines of that description, and you had, therefore, either to mentally assimilate these outrageous theories, or to forego the title of your adopted philosophy; for what would induce you to cease to be

an Epicurean? “For my own part,” you say, “nothing would induce me to abandon truth and the means of a happy life.” Truth, then, is contained in your system? As to happiness of life I raise no contention, for you do not think that that is possessed even by God unless he is positively languid from inactivity. But where is truth resident? In the innumerable worlds, I suppose, of which, in each briefest instant of time, some are coming into being and others perishing. Or is it in the indivisible particles which form such admirable combinations without being directed by any natural law or intelligence? But I embrace too much, forgetting the generosity which I began just now to extend to you. That all things, then, are composed of atoms I will grant, but what has that to do with the question, when it is the nature of the gods into which we are inquiring? Let them by all means be formed from atoms, they are not therefore eternal. For that which is formed from atoms came at some time into being; if so, the gods had no existence anterior to birth, and having known a beginning they must also know an end, as you were urging, a short time back, in the case of Plato’s world. Where then are your attributes of blessedness and eternity, the two words by which you indicate God? When you wish to prove them, you seek the shelter of the thickets, as was shown by your saying that there was no body in God, but quasi-body, and no blood, but quasi-blood.

XXV.

This is a common practice of yours, when you have made some improbable statement, and wish to escape being taken to task for it, to support it by something which is absolutely impossible, with the result that it would have been better to have yielded the original point in dispute than to have shown such impudence in the defence of it. Epicurus, for instance, seeing that if the atoms were carried by their own weight in a downward direction, there would be nothing left in our own power, owing to their movement being fixed and inevitable, hit upon a means for avoiding necessity which we must suppose had not occurred to Democritus: he says that the atom, though its weight and gravity incline it directly downwards, swerves slightly aside, a statement which is more discreditable than to be unable to defend the position that he wishes. He meets the logicians in the same way. They have laid down that in all disjunctive propositions in which the formula, “either is or is not,” is employed, one of the two statements is true, but he was afraid, if a proposition of the following kind, “either Epicurus will be alive to-morrow, or he will not,” were to be admitted, that one of the alternatives would become necessary, and he therefore denied the necessary nature of the whole of the formula, “either is or is not”. Could anything have been said with less intelligence? Then again, there is the question on which Arcesilas used to assail Zeno, Arcesilas himself maintaining that all impressions produced upon the senses were false, and Zeno that some were false, but not all; Epicurus, fearing that none might be true if one were false, declared that all the senses reported what was true. None of these utterances displayed overwhelming adroitness, for he was laying himself open to a heavier blow in order to ward off a lighter one. His tactics are the same with regard to the divine nature; in the effort to avoid an accretion of indivisible particles, for fear it should be overtaken by dispersion and decay, he asserts that the gods have no body, but quasi-body, and no blood, but quasi-blood.

XXVI.

It seems marvellous that one soothsayer should not laugh at the sight of another, but it is more marvellous that you Epicureans should be able to keep from laughter among yourselves. “Not body, but quasi-body.” I should understand what this meant if it were applied to figures of wax or clay, but I cannot understand the meaning of quasi-body and quasi-blood as applied to God,—nor can you either, Velleius, only you do not like to own it. You repeat, as though it were a lesson in dictation, the dreamy maunderings of Epicurus, which he accompanied, as we see in his writings, by boasts that he had had no one for his teacher. Even if he did not proclaim the fact, I should nevertheless myself readily believe him, just as I should believe the boast of the owner of a badly built house that he had had no architect, for he does not present the slightest tincture of the Academy, the Lyceum, or even of the ordinary school-boy training. It was in his power to have heard Xenocrates,—and, great heavens, what a man he was!—and some people think that he did hear him, but he himself scouts the suggestion, and there is no one whose word I take more willingly. A certain Pamphilus, a pupil of Plato, he says was heard by him in Samos, for he lived there as a youth with his father and brothers, his father Neocles having gone there as a settler; the father became, however, a school-master, I suppose because his piece of land was not sufficient for his support. But Epicurus professes the utmost contempt for this follower of Plato, so great is his fear of seeming to have ever owed anything to instruction. In the case of Nausiphanes, the disciple of Democritus, he stands convicted, but though he does not deny having heard him, he assails him at the same time with every kind of abuse. Yet if he had not heard these lectures on Democritus, what was it that he had heard? What is there in the natural philosophy of Epicurus that does not come from Democritus? Some things, certainly, he changed, as in the case of the inclination of the atoms which I mentioned just now, but the greater number he keeps the same, atoms, void, images, infinite space, a countless number of worlds which come into being and depart from it, everything almost that constitutes the subject matter of natural science. But come, what do you understand by your “quasi-body” and “quasi-blood”? That you are better acquainted with such matters than myself is a fact which I not only acknowledge, but submit to with equanimity, but when they have once been stated, what reason is there why Velleius should be able to understand them, and Cotta should not? I understand, then, what body is and what blood is, but what quasi-body is, and quasi-blood, I simply do not understand at all. And it is not that you are keeping anything from me, as Pythagoras used to do from the uninitiated, or are speaking with intentional obscurity like Heraclitus, but if the remark may be allowed between us, you do not understand any better yourself.

XXVII.

I see that your contention is that the gods possess a kind of form which has no compactness, solidity, relief, or prominence, but is without admixture, and volatile, and transparent. Well, we will say of it what we say of the Venus of Cos. That figure is not a body, but resembles a body, that diffused glow intermingled with white is not blood, but a certain semblance of blood, and similarly we will say that in the god of Epicurus there is nothing real, but only the semblances of reality. Suppose me to be

convinced of that which cannot even be understood, and acquaint me next with the forms and features of your shadowy deities.

On this question there is not wanting an abundance of arguments by means of which you would be glad to prove that the gods are of human form; firstly, because our minds have formed an idea and preconception of them which makes the human form suggest itself to a man when he thinks of God; secondly, because the divine nature, since it excels in all respects, ought also to possess the most beautiful kind of form, and there is no form more beautiful than man's; and thirdly, you bring forward the following argument,—because no other figure can be the abiding place of mind. Now I will ask you to consider the nature of each of these arguments in turn, for you seem to me to be arrogating to yourselves, as though in the exercise of a right that you possessed, an assumption that cannot by any means be allowed. Was there ever any one at all who looked upon the world with so blind an eye as not to see that these human figures of yours were attributed to the gods either designedly by wise men, in order that they might the more easily wean uninstructed minds from a degraded mode of life to the worship of the gods, or else in consequence of a superstitious desire for images, in paying homage to which men might believe that they were approaching the gods themselves? This same tendency, moreover, has been increased by the poets, painters, and workers in art, for it was not easy, in imitating other forms, to preserve the appearance of action and effort on the part of the gods. Perhaps, too, the feeling to which you referred contributed its share, man's belief, I mean, in the superior beauty of man. But do you not see, my good natural philosopher, what an insinuating go-between, and, so to speak, pander to herself dame nature is? Or do you suppose that there is any creature in land or sea that is not most pleased by a creature of its own kind? If that were not the case, why should not a bull take pleasure in union with a mare, or a horse with a cow? Do you believe that an eagle, or lion, or dolphin prefers any shape to its own? And if in the same way nature has enjoined upon man that he should think nothing more beautiful than man, is it at all strange that this feeling should be the cause of our thinking the gods to be like men? Do you not believe that, if animals possessed reason, each species would have assigned pre-eminence to itself?

XXVIII.

Yet really, if I am to express my own sentiments, though not devoid of self-complacency, I do not for all that venture to affirm that I am more beautiful than the bull that carried Europa; for we are considering at this moment outline and form, and not intelligence, or the human faculty of speech. And if it were our pleasure to invent and combine forms for ourselves, should you object to being like the Triton of the deep, who is depicted as riding upon swimming sea-creatures that are attached to a human body? I am touching on difficult ground, for the force of nature is so great that no one who is a man wishes to be like anything but a man,—no, nor an ant, I presume, like anything but an ant! Still, like what kind of man? For it is only a few who are beautiful; when I was at Athens scarcely one would be found in each division of the ephebi.[1] I understand why you smile, but nevertheless the fact is so. Besides, those of us who take pleasure, as the ancient philosophers allow us to do, in the society of youths, often find even their imperfections charming. "A mole on a boy's finger delights Alcæus." Yet it is a bodily defect. To Alcæus, however, it seemed an

ornament. Quintus Catulus, the father of the Quintus Catulus who is our contemporary, and my friend and colleague,2 had a fondness for your fellow-townsman Roscius,3 to whom he also addressed the following verses:—

I chanced to have stood doing reverence to the rising dawn, when suddenly Roscius rises on my left. Powers of heaven, with your leave may I say it, the mortal seemed to be fairer than the god.

Fairer, that is, to him, though Roscius had, as he has to-day, a most pronounced squint. However, what did that matter, if his admirer found the squint itself attractive and becoming? But I return to the consideration of the gods.

XXIX.

Do we suppose that any of them, if not so cross-eyed as Roscius, have still got something of a cast, or are marked with moles, or are snub-nosed, flap-eared, beetle-browed, or top-heavy, defects which exist amongst ourselves? Or is everything in them perfect? Let it be granted to you that the latter is the case; have they also all of them the same aspect? If not, it is necessary that the aspect of one should be more beautiful than that of another, and consequently there is some god that falls short of supreme beauty. If they all have the same aspect, the Academy must needs be the popular school in the upper world, for if there is no difference between god and god, there is no scope amongst them for perception and cognition. And what, Velleius, if your assumption that, when we think of God, the only form that suggests itself to us is that of a man, is itself wholly false? Will you still defend these absurd ideas? To us, perhaps, the suggestion is as you say, for from our childhood we have known Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Neptune, Vulcan, Apollo, and the other gods, under the aspect which painters and sculptors have laid down for us, and so with regard to their insignia, and age, and attire. But the Egyptians, the Syrians, and almost the whole of the uncivilised world have not so known them. You would find amongst them a firmer belief in certain animals than amongst us in the holiest temples and images of the gods, for many a shrine has, as we see, been plundered by our countrymen, and the images of the gods taken away from the holiest places, but no one has even so much as heard tell of a crocodile, or ibis, or cat having been dishonoured by an Egyptian. What, then, is your opinion? Is it not that Apis, the sacred ox of the Egyptians, is regarded by them as divine? Of course he is, as much as your Juno Sospita is by you, that Juno whom you never see even in your dreams without a goat-skin, a spear, a small shield, and shoes turned up at the toe. As, however, neither the Argive Juno, nor the Roman, is of that description, it follows that the goddess is known under different forms by the Argives, the Lanuvinians, and ourselves. The form, moreover, of our Jupiter of the Capitol is different from that of the Jupiter Hammon of the Africans.

XXX.

Are you not ashamed, then, as a man of science, that is, an explorer and pursuer of nature, to seek a testimony to truth in minds imbued with habit? At that rate it will be open to us to say that Jupiter is always bearded, and Apollo beardless, that Minerva has grey eyes, and Neptune blue. There is, too, at Athens a much admired statue of

Vulcan by Alcamenes, a draped, standing figure, in which a lameness which does not amount to deformity is slightly indicated. We shall, therefore, since we have received that account of Vulcan, think of the god as lame. And then do we also represent the gods as having the same names as those by which we call them? Why, in the first place, there are as many names of the gods as there are languages among men, for Vulcan has not the same name in Italy, Africa, and Spain, in the same way that you, wherever you go, remain Velleius. In the second place, even in our pontifical books the number of names is not a large one, and yet you say that the number of gods is infinite. Are they without names? So you are bound to say, for what point is there in their possessing a variety of names, when their aspect is uniform? How much more becoming it would have been, Velleius, for you to have confessed your ignorance of things of which you were ignorant, than to have ejected the nonsense which you did, and aroused your own disgust. Or do you really think that God is like me or you? Of course you do not. Well? Am I to say that the sun, or moon, or sky is God? Is he therefore also blessed? What pleasures does he enjoy to make him so? Is he wise? How can wisdom reside in a block of that kind? These are objections which your own school urges.1 If, then, as I have shown, God does not possess a human aspect, nor, as you are convinced, any aspect of the kind just mentioned, what makes you hesitate to deny the existence of the gods? You do not dare to deny it, and there is wisdom in your not daring, although on an occasion like the present it is not the people of whom you are in fear, no, you are in fear of the gods themselves. I have known Epicureans who worshipped every little image, though I am aware that some people are of opinion that Epicurus, while he retained the gods in word, in order not to fall under the displeasure of the Athenians, in reality did away with them. Thus, amongst his short, selected maxims, which you call κυρίαι δόξαι, the first, I believe, runs as follows: That which is blessed and immortal neither knows trouble, nor does it cause trouble to any.

XXXI.

There are some who think that in this maxim thus expressed Epicurus produced designedly an impression which was due simply to his awkwardness of style; they misjudge a man who is devoid of artifice.2 It is, certainly, doubtful whether his words imply that some blessed and immortal nature does exist, or that, if it existed, it would be of the kind described, but his critics fail to notice that if he has spoken ambiguously in this passage, there are many others in which both he and Metrodorus have spoken as unmistakably as you did just now. The fact is that he believes in their existence, and I have never seen any one with a greater fear of what, according to him, did not need to be feared, I mean of death and the gods. The minds of all living men, he cries, are overcome with terror at what ordinary people do not find so particularly disquieting. So many thousands commit highway robbery with the penalty of death before them, and others plunder all the shrines that they can, terrified, I suppose, respectively by the fear either of death or of religion!

Since, however, you do not dare—and I will address myself now to Epicurus himself—to deny the existence of the gods, what is there that should hinder you from reckoning amongst their number either the sun, or world, or some ever-enduring intelligence? “I have never seen,” he says, “a mind possessed of reason and fore-

thought in any but a human form." Well? Have you ever seen anything like the sun, or moon, or the five wandering stars? The sun bounds his course by the two extreme points of one circle, and accomplishes revolutions of a year's duration; the moon receives light from his rays, and completes a similar passage over this circle in the space of one month; the five stars observe the same orbit, and some at a less, some at a greater distance from the earth, traverse the same space from the same starting-point in different times. Have you seen anything like it, Epicurus? Then let there be no sun, no moon, or stars, since there can be nothing except what we have touched or seen. Have you seen God himself? Why, then, do you believe him to exist? At that rate let us reject all the fresh facts presented to us by history or science, a principle which leads inland peoples to disbelieve in the existence of the sea. What great poverty of conception this shows! You, for instance, if you had been born in Seriphus, and had never left the island in which you had been in the habit of seeing small hares and foxes, would refuse to believe, when they were described to you, in the existence of lions and panthers, and if any one were to speak of an elephant, you would think that you were being nothing short of trifled with. Can anything, to still pursue the same point, be named that would be more childish than for us to deny the existence of the different kinds of animals that are produced in the Red Sea, or in India? Why, the inquiries of even the keenest investigators do not enable them to hear of all the multitudes of creatures that exist in land and sea, in marshes and rivers; let us, then, deny their existence since we have never seen them.

Yes, and you, Velleius, exchanging your ordinary methods for those of the logicians, with whose processes you and your fraternity are absolutely unacquainted, have drawn up your argument in the form of a syllogism. You have assumed that the gods are blessed, which I allow. And that no one can be blessed without virtue.

XXXII.

I grant that too, and grant it willingly. Next you have assumed that virtue cannot exist without reason, which also must needs be admitted. And reason, you go on to say, is only to be found in a human form. Who do you think will grant you that? If it were a fact, what need would there have been for you to make your way to it step by step? You would have had a right to assume it. And what is the nature of this step by step process? I see that you have advanced by its means from beings that are blessed to virtue, and from virtue to reason, but how do you get from reason to the human form? There you take not the next step downwards, but a flying leap. Besides, I do not understand why Epicurus chose to speak of the gods as being like men, rather than of men as being like the gods. You will ask what the difference is, for if one thing, you will say, is like another, the other is like the first. I recognise that, but what I mean is that the gods did not derive their outline of form from man, for the gods have always been, and never came into being, that is, if they are to be eternal. Men, on the other hand, did come into being, and consequently the human form existed before men existed in that form which belonged to the immortal gods. It is not, therefore, the latter's form which should be called human, but ours which should be called divine. However, that shall be as you will. I now ask what extraordinary working of fortune there was, for in nature you allow nothing to have happened by design,—I ask, I say, omitting that question, what was this triumph of chance? How did there come to be so

opportune a combination of atoms as to result in the sudden creation of men in the form of the gods? Are we to suppose that the seed of the gods fell down upon the earth from above, and that in that way men were born resembling their progenitors? I should like you to say so; kinship with the gods I should acknowledge not unwillingly, but instead of anything of that kind you say that our likeness to the gods was the work of chance. And yet arguments are to be sought by which this may be refuted! I wish I could find the discovery of truth as easy as the exposure of error.

XXXIII.

How easily error can be exposed I will proceed to show. You enumerated accurately and fully, so that I was fain to wonder at the presence of such knowledge in a Roman, the opinions of philosophers, from Thales of Miletus downwards, with respect to the divine nature. Did you regard them all as madmen for deciding that God could exist without hands and feet? When you take into consideration the special usefulness and serviceableness of the limbs in a man's body, does not even that incline you to the conclusion that human limbs are not required by the gods? What need is there for feet without walking, and for hands if nothing is to be grasped, and for all the other parts of the bodily system, that system in which there is nothing idle, or undesigned, or superfluous? God, then, will possess a tongue, and will not speak; he will possess, without any use for them, teeth, and palate, and throat; the organs with which nature has supplied the body for generative purposes he will possess in vain; and so it will be not only with the outer parts, but the inner as well, the heart, the lungs, the liver, and the rest. And if the usefulness of the latter is taken away, what do they possess in the way of charm? I ask the question because it is with a view to beauty that you require the presence of these organs in God.1

Was it trusting to such dreams as these that not only Epicurus and Metrodorus and Hermarchus spoke against Pythagoras and Plato and Empedocles, but even the courtezan Leontium1 ventured to write against Theophrastus? She did so, it is true, in a neat and Attic style, but still—. Such was the licence assumed by the Garden of Epicurus, yet it is a common thing for you to complain on your own behalf, and Zeno actually went to law.2 Of Albucius it is unnecessary for me to speak. As for Phædrus, though nothing could have exceeded his refinement and urbanity, the old man used to become angry if I said anything at all trenchant, although Epicurus made a most scurrilous attack upon Aristotle, was shamefully abusive to Phædo, the disciple of Socrates, devoted whole volumes to the dissection of Timocrates, the brother of his own intimate companion Metrodorus, because he differed from him upon some point in philosophy, showed ingratitude even towards Democritus, of whom he was a follower, and bore very hardly upon his instructor Nausiphanes, from whom he never would allow that he had learnt anything.

XXXIV.

Zeno, indeed, not only used to assail his contemporaries, Apollodorus, Silus, and the rest, with abuse, but used to say of Socrates himself, the father of philosophy, that he had been the Attic *scurra*—using the Latin word—and of Chrysippus he never used to

speak except as Chrysippa.3 You yourself a little while ago, when calling over the names, so to say, of the philosophic senate, kept describing men of the utmost eminence as idiots, fools, and madmen. Yet if none of these men apprehended the truth as to the nature of the gods, it is to be feared that no such nature exists at all.

As for your own utterances, they are absolute fictions, scarcely worthy to be discussed by old women over their evening work, for you do not realise how much you would have to become liable for if you obtained our consent to an identity of form between men and the gods. All the ways of attending to and managing the body will have to be observed in the same way by God as by man,—walking, running, reclining, stooping, sitting, holding, and lastly, also, the faculty of speech and discourse. I need not discuss your division of the gods into male and female, for you see what follows from that. For my own part I cannot sufficiently wonder how it was that your founder came to entertain such ideas. But your constant cry is that the blessedness and immortality of God must be retained. Well, what prevents his being blessed, if he were something else than a biped? Or why is not this quality, whether we are to call it *beatitas* or *beatitudo*—both of them, it is true, harsh-sounding terms,1 but it is for us to make words smooth by using them—why is it not, under whatever name, attributable to the sun above, or to this world of ours, or to some ever-enduring intelligence that is without form and bodily parts? All that you say is, “I have never seen a sun or world that was blessed”. Well, have you ever seen a world besides this one? You will say no. Why did you venture to say, then, not that there were some hundreds of thousands, but a countless number of worlds? “Reason taught me.” And will not reason, considering that what is being sought is a nature of supreme excellence, which is at the same time blessed and eternal, for only a nature with those attributes is divine, teach you that just as we are surpassed by such a nature in immortality, so we are surpassed in excellence of mind, and as in excellence of mind, so also in excellence of body? Why, then, seeing that we are inferior in other respects, are we equal in the matter of form? It was the virtue of man rather than his figure that came nearest to a likeness to God.

XXXV.

But how thoroughly beside the point the argument from resemblance, with which you are so mightily charmed, is in itself. Is not a dog like a wolf? And, as Ennius says:—

How like to us is the degraded ape!

Yet the character in both cases is different. Amongst beasts there is none more sagacious than the elephant, yet what other beast is so unwieldy? I am considering animals, but amongst men themselves is not an unlike character attached to very similar exteriors, and a different exterior to the same character? Why, if we once admit that kind of argument, Velleius, mark where it leads to. You assumed that reason can only exist in the human form. Some one else will assume that it can only exist in a being of this earth, in a being that has been born, that has grown, that has received instruction, that is made up of mind and a frail and feeble body—in short, in a man and a mortal. But if in the case of all these attributes you stand your ground,1 why should the single attribute of form shake you? You have seen reason and

intelligence in man accompanied by all these attributes that I have mentioned, yet when they are taken away you say that you still recognise God if the features do but remain. This is not to weigh your utterances, but to choose them blindfold, unless, indeed, you have even failed to observe that in man and tree alike whatever is superfluous, or has no use, is better away. What an affliction it is to have one finger too many! And why? Because the five do not need another either for use or ornament. But it is not one finger that your God has in excess, it is head, throat, neck, flanks, belly, back, knees, hands, feet, thighs, and legs. If it be said that he possesses these in order to ensure his immortality, I ask how far these members, and the face itself, are important to life? The brain, the heart, the lungs, and the liver are more important, for they are the seats of life, whereas the cast of the face has nothing to do with vitality.

XXXVI.

And yet you were abusing those who, judging from results so magnificent and glorious, when they looked upon the universe itself, and upon its parts, the sky, the lands, and the seas, and upon their ornaments, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and when they marked the maturing of the seasons, and their changes and alternations, conceived the existence of a sublime, exalted power that had created these things, and moved, and controlled, and directed them. Even though they stray from the path of true conjecture, still I can understand what principles they follow; but you—come, what great and notable work, with the appearance of having been produced by divine intelligence, can you point to as a foundation for your belief in the existence of the gods? "I had," you say, "a kind of preconception of God implanted in my mind." Yes, and of a bearded Jupiter, and helmeted Minerva, but do you then suppose that they answer to that description? How much better this question is treated by the ignorant multitude, who not only assign human limbs to God, but a use for those limbs as well, for they provide bow, arrows, spear, shield, trident, and thunderbolt, and if their vision does not extend to the actions of the gods, at any rate they cannot conceive of God as inactive. Even the much ridiculed Egyptians never deified an animal except with reference to some benefit which they derived from it. For instance, the ibis, being a tall bird, with legs that do not bend, and a long beak of horn, destroys a vast number of serpents; in killing and eating the winged snakes that are brought in by the south-west wind from the Libyan desert, it preserves Egypt from plague, the snakes being thus prevented from causing harm by their bite when living, or by their smell when dead. I could speak of services rendered by the ichneumenon, the crocodile, and the cat, but I do not wish to be lengthy, and will conclude by saying that it was at least in return for benefits that animals were deified by the barbarians, whereas on the part of your gods there not only exists no beneficent action, but not even action of any kind. God has nothing to do, says Epicurus, thinking, we must suppose, like a spoilt child that there is nothing better than idleness.

XXXVII.

Yet even children, even when idle, amuse themselves with some active sport, and do we wish that God's holiday-keeping should be one of such languid inertia as to make us fear that, if he moved, it would be impossible for him to be happy? Statements of

that kind not only deprive the gods of motion and divine activity, but lead to inertness in men as well, if, that is, even God cannot be happy when engaged in action of any kind.

However, let it by all means be granted that God is, as you wish, the image and counterpart of man. What is his dwelling-place, his abode, his sphere? In the next place, what is his course of life? What are the things which make him blessed, as you require him to be? I ask because, to be blessed, one must use and enjoy one's possessions. With regard to place, even the elements that are without life have each a special place of their own, the earth occupying the lowest, the water flowing over the earth, the upper region being assigned to air, and the topmost to the fires of æther. Of animals, again, some belong to the earth, others to the water, and others with a kind of double nature live in both worlds. There are also some which are believed to be created from fire, and are often seen darting to and fro in blazing furnaces. I ask, then, first, where your God dwells? secondly, what is the cause which leads him to change his position, if indeed he ever does change it? next, what does he seek after, for it is the characteristic of animate beings to seek after something suited to their nature? lastly, to what end does he exercise mental activity and reason? and in conclusion, what is the nature of his blessedness and his immortality? Whichever of these points you touch upon, you touch a sore place, for reasoning so ill grounded as yours can arrive at no result. You were saying, for example, that the form of God is perceived by mind and not by sense, that it possesses no solidity and no unvarying self-identity, that the apprehension of it consists in its being discerned by means of the resemblance of the images and their passage before us, and in there being a never-failing addition, from amongst the countless sum of atoms, of similar images, with the result that our minds, which are intently fixed upon these images, believe the nature in question to be blessed and immortal.

XXXVIII.

Now what, in the name of those very gods of whom we are speaking, does this mean? If they can only impress the thinking faculty, and if their form possesses no solidity or relief, we might as well meditate on a Centaur as on God, for every mental conception of that kind is what other philosophers call a creation of the fancy, though you say that it results from images coming in contact with and entering the mind. In the same way, then, that I, when I seem to see Tiberius Gracchus haranguing in the Capitol, and presenting the urn that is to settle the order of voting on the question of Marcus Octavius, say that that is a creation of the fancy, while you say that the images of Gracchus and Octavius remain in existence, and that after betaking themselves[1] to the Capitol they are then carried to my mind,—so, according to you, it is with God, whose aspect constantly impinges on the mind, and who is thus recognised as blessed and eternal. But granting that there are images which impinge upon the mind, it is only some description of form that they indicate to us; do they also indicate why that form should be blessed and eternal? And what is the nature and origin of these images of yours? It is true that this fantastic notion was started by Democritus, but many have blamed him for it, you yourselves can reach no result, and the whole argument limps and totters. Is there anything, indeed, which it is so little possible to accept? Think of the images of all mankind coming before me, Homer, Archilochus, Romulus, Numa,

Pythagoras, Plato, and not coming either in the form in which they lived![1] How, then, do those characters suggest themselves to me? And whose are the images which do come? Aristotle tells us that there never existed a poet Orpheus, and it is a tradition of the Pythagoreans that the Orphic poem which we know was the work of one Cercops, yet Orpheus, that is, according to you, his image, presents himself to my mind frequently. And what do you say to the fact that different images of the same man present themselves to my mind and to yours, and that images present themselves of things which never existed at all, and could not have existed, such as Scylla and the Chimæra, and of persons, places, and cities that we have never seen, and that images appear the moment that I wish, and come without being summoned even when one is asleep? The whole thing is a delusion, Velleius, and yet not content with thrusting the images upon our eyes, you thrust them upon our minds as well. So little do you care what nonsense you talk.

XXXIX.

And how extravagant you are! "There is," you say, "a stream of phenomena constantly passing before us, the multitude of which results in one phenomenon being perceived." I should be ashamed to say that I did not understand this statement, if you who defend it understood it yourselves. For how do you prove a continuous succession of images? Or, granting that they are continuous, how are they eternal? "There exists," we are told, "a countless supply of atoms." Will that, then, make everything immortal? You take refuge in the theory of equilibrium, by which term we will, if you have no objection, render ?σονομία, and you say that since there is a mortal nature, there must also be an immortal. According to that argument, since men are mortal, some men would be immortal, and since men are born upon the earth, some men would be born upon the water. "And since there are some agencies which destroy, there are others which preserve." Let there be such by all means, but let them preserve things that are in existence, which I do not perceive your gods to be. In any case, how are all these counterparts of objects formed from indivisible particles? Even if these particles existed, which they do not, though they might perhaps be able to strike against one another, and to be set in motion amongst themselves by the impact, they would not be able to supply form, or outline, or colour, or life. In no way, then, do you prove the immortality of God.

XL.

Now let us consider his blessedness. That certainly is altogether impossible without virtue; but virtue is active, and your God does nothing; he is, therefore, without virtue, and so without blessedness either. What, then, is his life? "An abundance of goods," you say, "without any intervening ills." Well, of what kind of goods? Of pleasures, I presume, and of course of those relating to the body, for you are acquainted with no mental pleasure that does not arise from and refer back to the body. I do not look upon you, Velleius, as resembling the rest of the Epicureans in the shame which they feel at certain utterances of Epicurus, in which he avers that he has not even a conception of any good that is unconnected with voluptuous and sensual pleasures, all of which in fact he enumerates by name without a blush. Tell me, then, with what food and drink,

or with what different sounds or flowers, or with what appeals to the sense of touch and smell will you ply the gods so as to steep them in pleasures—in the same way that the poets provide banquets, and either Hebe or Ganymede serving the cups. But what will you do, Epicurus? For I do not see either where your god is to get such things from, or how he is to make use of them. Consequently, man's nature, since it enjoys a greater variety of pleasures, is better equipped for a life of blessedness than God's. You reply that you regard these as the more trivial pleasures, by which a kind of "titillation," for so Epicurus calls it, is applied to the senses. How far will you carry your trifling? Why, our own Philo was just as unable as I am to endure from the mouth of the Epicureans a repudiation of effeminate and voluptuous pleasures. He used with marvellous memory to recite, in the very words in which they had been written, a long string of the maxims of Epicurus, while from Metrodorus, who is Epicurus' colleague in wisdom, he used to quote several utterances of a more shameless kind. For Metrodorus takes his own brother Timocrates to task for hesitating to make the belly the standard in everything relating to blessedness of life, and expresses himself in that way not once only, but many times. I see that you assent, for the facts are known to you; if you denied them, I should produce the book. Nor in thus speaking am I finding fault with you for referring everything to pleasure, which is a different question; what I do urge is that your gods are without pleasure, and therefore, by your own judgment, without blessedness also.

XLI.

But they have no pain, you say. Is that enough to constitute this supremely blessed life which overflows with good? God constantly reflects, we are told, having nothing else to occupy his thoughts, upon his blessedness. Picture then in your mind, and summon before your eyes a God whose only reflection through all eternity is "Capital berth this!" and "Blessed am I!" Yet I do not see how the God who enjoys this blessedness is not afraid of perishing, seeing that he is uninterruptedly beaten and shaken by the never-ending storm of atoms, and that images are constantly emanating from himself. It is thus shown that your God is neither blessed nor eternal.

But Epicurus, it will be said, has also written books on holiness and on piety towards the gods. He has, but how does he speak in these books? In a way which would make you say that you were listening to Tiberius Coruncanius or Publius Scævola, the chief pontiffs, not to the man who did away altogether with all religion, and who overturned with his reasonings, instead of, like Xerxes, with his hands, the temples and altars of the immortal gods. For what ground have you for saying that men ought to pay regard to the gods, when the gods not only show no regard for men, but do not care for or do anything at all? You reply that they possess a nature of a supremely excellent and exalted kind which ought of itself to attract the worship of a wise man. Now can there be anything supremely excellent in a nature which luxuriates in its own well being, and which never has, never does, and never will perform an action? And what piety is owed to a being from whom you have received nothing? What in fact can be owed at all to one from whom no benefit proceeds? Piety is right dealing towards the gods, but what question of right can there be between us and them, when man has no community with God? Holiness, again, consists in the knowledge of how to worship

the gods, but why they should be worshipped when no good is either received or expected from them, I do not understand.

XLII.

And what reason is there for our reverencing the gods out of admiration for a nature in which we see nothing excellent? As for the freedom from superstition, of which you are in the habit of boasting, that is easily attained when you have deprived the gods of all their power, unless, indeed, you think it possible that Diagoras or Theodorus, who absolutely denied their existence, should have been superstitious. I do not think myself that that could have been the case even with Protagoras, who was neither satisfied that they existed, nor that they did not exist. The truth is that the opinions of all these men do away not only with superstition, which involves an irrational fear of the gods, but also with religion, which consists in the pious worship of the same. And did not those who declared that the whole belief in immortal gods was manufactured by wise men for purposes of state, in order that those who could not be led to duty by reason might be led by religion, put an end altogether to all religion? How much of it did Prodicus of Ceos leave remaining, who said that it was the things which were serviceable to human life that had been regarded as gods? Are not those, moreover, without a vestige of it who tell us that brave, or famous, or powerful men attained after death to the rank of gods, and that it is these very men whom we are accustomed to worship, and pray to, and venerate? This theory was made most use of by Euhemerus, and his chief expounder and follower has been our own countryman Ennius. Now when Euhemerus proves the death and burial of the gods, does he seem to have established religion, or to have absolutely and wholly done away with it? I will not refer to Eleusis, that august and holy city,

Where the world's farthest nations are initiated.

Nor will I stop to consider Samothrace, or those rites which at Lemnos

Are celebrated in secret with approach by night, close hid in leafy covert.

When these are explained and placed upon a basis of reason, it is rather the nature of the material universe than that of the gods with which we are made acquainted.[1]

XLIII.

To me, indeed, even that pre-eminently great man Democritus, from whose springs Epicurus watered his own little "garden,"[2] seems to waver on the question of the divine nature. At one time he declares that images endowed with divinity exist in the universal whole; at another he describes as divine the elements of mind, which are contained in the same whole; at another images possessed of life, which are accustomed either to benefit or injure us; and at another certain huge images whose size is so vast that they enclose the whole world externally, all of which statements are more worthy of the birth-place of Democritus[1] than of Democritus himself. For who can form an idea of these images? Who can admire them, and regard them as worthy of worship or observance? But it was when he deprived the immortal gods of

the attributes of help and benevolence that Epicurus tore religion from men's hearts by the roots. Although he says that the divine nature is supremely high and excellent, he nevertheless denies the existence of benevolence in God, taking away that which is the most essential characteristic of a supremely high and excellent nature, for there is nothing higher or more excellent than kindness and beneficence. When you assert that God does not possess this, you assert that no one, god or man, is dear to God, that no one is loved by him, and no one esteemed, from which it follows that the gods are not only regardless of men, but are in their own persons mutually regardless of one another.

XLIV.

What a much better account is given by the Stoics, whom you and your school take to task. Why, they maintain that one wise man is friendly to another even when he does not know him. There is, in truth, nothing more lovable than virtue, and the man who has attained to that will possess our affection in whatever part of the world he is. But what harm you yourselves do in describing friendly action and friendly feeling as due to weakness! Putting the question of the divine nature and attributes aside, do you believe that even men would have shown no beneficence and good-will, if it were not for their weakness? Is not one good man naturally dear to another? The word "dear" is in itself a term of affection (*verbum amoris*), and it is from the latter word that *amicitia,* or friendship, is derived; if we make it tend to our own advantage instead of to the good of the person to whom we are attached, it will not in that case be friendship, but a kind of self-interested traffic. To meadows and fields and herds of cattle we are attached in that way, because advantages are derived from them, but the affection and friendship of men are given freely. How much more, then, is this the case with the gods, who have no needs, and who are both attached to one another and heedful for the welfare of men. If it were not so, why do we reverence and pray to them? Why do pontiffs preside over the sacred rites, and augurs over the auspices? What is it that we hope from the immortal gods? What is the meaning of our vows?

But there is also a book by Epicurus upon holiness. He is trifling with us, not that he is a humorist so much as a man who abandons himself freely to reckless writing. For what holiness can there be if the gods have no care for human affairs? And what animate nature can there be that has no care for anything? Undoubtedly, then, there is more truth in what our common friend Posidonius urged in his fifth book on the nature of the gods, that Epicurus has no belief in their existence, and that what he said on the subject of the immortal gods he said for the sake of deprecating odium. He would not, surely, have been so foolish as to imagine a god resembling a mere mortal, with only surface features and an unsubstantial body, possessing all the limbs of a man without even the slightest use for them, a kind of attenuated, transparent being who has no consideration for any one, performs no service for any one, cares for nothing at all, and does nothing at all. In the first place the existence of such a nature is impossible, and Epicurus, seeing that, in reality does away with the gods, while verbally retaining them. In the second place, if the main characteristic of God is his emancipation from beneficence and love for man, good-bye to him! Why should I say, "May he be gracious"? He cannot be that to any one, for according to you all service and love arise from weakness.

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BOOK II.

I.

How very rash of me, said Velleius, when Cotta had finished, to have attempted to do battle with one who was at the same time an Academic and an orator! An Academic who could not speak, or an orator, however eloquent, who was a stranger to that philosophy, I should not have feared, finding nothing disconcerting either in a stream of empty words, or in exactness of argument when it is accompanied by barrenness of style. But you, Cotta, have shown yourself strong in both respects; it is only the audience and judges that have been wanting to you. However, we will consider what you have said at some other time; let us now, if he himself has no objection, hear Lucilius. For my part, replied the latter, I should have preferred to hear Cotta again, if he will only introduce the true gods with as much eloquence as he removed the false, for it is incumbent upon a philosopher and pontiff, and therefore upon Cotta, that his views with regard to the immortal gods should not shift and vary, like those of the Academics, but should be fixed and definite, like those of our own school. Now enough and to spare has been urged against Epicurus, but I want very much to hear what you, Cotta, believe yourself. Have you, answered Cotta, forgotten what I said at the outset, that I find it easier, especially on such a subject, to say what I do not believe than what I do? And if I possessed a definite conviction, I should still wish, after speaking so much myself, to listen to you in your turn.

I am at your service, said Balbus, and I will speak as briefly as I can, for now that the errors of Epicurus have been exposed, my statement has been relieved of a lengthy topic. Generally speaking, our school divides the whole of this inquiry of yours with regard to the immortal gods into four parts. They show, first, that the gods exist; secondly, of what nature they are; next, that the world is under their charge; and lastly, that they take counsel for the affairs of men. Let us, however, in this discussion take the two points that come first; the third and fourth, as being more important, I think should be deferred to another occasion. By no means, said Cotta, for our time is our own, and besides we are engaged upon a subject which ought to be allowed precedence even over business.

II.

The first point, Lucilius then said, does not seem to even need discussion, for what can be clearer and more obvious, when we have lifted our eyes to the sky, and have gazed upon the heavenly bodies, than that there exists some divine power of exalted intelligence by which these are ruled? If it were not so, how could Ennius have said in words which meet with universal assent,

Look upon yonder dazzling sky, which all address as Jove?

Yes, and not only as Jove, but as lord of the universe, and as ruling all things by his nod, and as the father, as Ennius also says, of gods and men, and as a god swift to aid and very powerful. I certainly do not see why the man who doubted this should not also be capable of doubting whether there is, or is not, a sun. In what respect is the one thing more evident than the other? We know it as the perception and conviction of our minds; otherwise the belief would not endure with such stability, it would not be strengthened by lapse of time, nor could it have become fixed as the ages and generations of men advanced. We see that length of time has made other beliefs, that were false and groundless, decay. Who supposes that a Hippocentaur or Chimæra ever existed, or what old woman can be found foolish enough to tremble at those horrors in the world of the dead which used once to be believed in? Time destroys the figments of the imagination, while confirming the judgments of nature, and that is why both in our own nation and in others the worship of the gods and the holy observances of religion are increasing daily in extent and worthiness. Nor is this a casual or accidental result; there is, in the first place, this reason for it, that the gods frequently manifest their power in actual presence. At Regillus, for instance, in the war with the Latins, when Aulus Postumius, the dictator, was engaged in battle with Octavius Mamilius of Tusculum, Castor and Pollux were seen to fight in our lines on horseback, and within more recent memory the same sons of Tyndareus brought news of the defeat of Perseus. For Publius Vatinius, the grandfather of our young contemporary of that name, when coming to Rome by night from the prefecture of Reate, was told by two young men on white horses that Perseus had that day been taken captive. He carried the news to the senate, and was at first thrown into prison on the charge of having made an unfounded declaration on a matter of state importance; but afterwards, when a despatch sent by Paulus agreed in the same day, the senate granted him land and exemption from military service. It has also been handed down to memory that when the Locrians vanquished the people of Croton in a great battle by the river Sagra, the engagement was heard of that very day at the games at Olympia. The voices of the Fauns have often been heard, and the forms of the gods been seen, forcing the man who was neither destitute of perception, nor impious, to acknowledge the presence of divinity.

III.

And then predictions and premonitions of the future, what is it that they declare if not that the future is indicated, and foreshown, and portended, and predicted to man, whence the terms indications, foreshowings, portents, and prodigies?1 If, however, we believe that the stories told of Mopsus, Tiresias, Amphiaraus, Calchas, and Helenus were invented by the licence of fable, though even fable itself would not have accepted them as augurs if the facts were absolutely opposed to it, will not even the instances in our own history teach us to acknowledge the power of the gods? Shall we remain unimpressed by the tale of the presumptuous conduct of Publius Claudius in the first Punic war, who, when the sacred chickens, on being let out of the coop, refused to feed, ordered them to be plunged into the water, that they might, as he said, drink, since they would not eat? He only ridiculed the gods in jest, but the mockery cost him many a tear (for his fleet was utterly routed), and brought a great disaster upon the Roman people. And did not his colleague Junius in the same war lose his fleet by storm after disobeying the auspices? Claudius was in consequence

condemned by the people, and Junius committed suicide. Cælius records that the disregard shown by Caius Flaminius for religion led to his overthrow at Trasimene, which entailed serious injury upon the state, and it may be understood from these men's disastrous end that it was under the leadership of those who had observed the requirements of religion that the state became great. If, moreover, we care to make a comparison between our own characteristics and those of foreign nations, while the latter will be found equal, or even superior to us in other respects, in religion, that is, in the worship of the gods, we shall be found to far excel them. Is the crooked staff of Attus Navius to be despised with which he marked out the quarters of the vineyard in order to trace his pig? I should believe so, if King Hostilius had not waged great wars under his augury. But through the system of augury having been allowed to drop owing to the carelessness of the nobles,1 the real observance of auspices has come to be despised, and only the form has been retained. Consequently the most important departments of state, including war, on which the safety of the state depends, are administered without auspices. None are observed when crossing a river, none in connection with the spear points,1 and none when the men are summoned to action, so that the practice of making wills on the eve of battle has ceased.2 Indeed, the time at which our generals begin the conduct of wars is when they have laid down the right to take the auspices.3 Amongst our ancestors, on the other hand, the influence of religion was so great that some generals even offered up their own lives to the immortal gods on behalf of their country, veiling their heads and using a set form of speech. There are many instances which I could quote from the Sibylline prophecies and the answers of soothsayers, by which to establish a truth which ought to be doubtful to no one.

IV.

But in the case of the consuls Publius Scipio and Caius Figulus, the science both of our own augurs and of the soothsayers of Etruria was confirmed by actual facts. When Tiberius Gracchus during his second consulship was presiding at their election, the first polling-clerk, as he gave in their names, suddenly died upon the spot. Gracchus nevertheless completed the election, but feeling that the incident had roused religious scruples amongst the people, reported the matter to the senate. The senate decreed that it should be referred to the customary authorities, and the soothsayers, having been introduced, made answer that the holder of the election had not been properly qualified. Upon this, as I have heard my father tell, Gracchus exclaimed in hot anger, "What! I not properly qualified who, when I presided, was both consul, and augur, and had taken the auspices? And is it Tuscans and barbarians like you who control the Roman people's system of augury, and can interpret the requirements of an election?" So he ordered them on that occasion to withdraw, but afterwards sent a letter to the college1 from his province, saying that when reading the augural books he remembered that his post of observation, which was the gardens of Scipio, had been improperly taken, because, after taking it, he had entered the city boundary line in order to preside at a meeting of the senate, and on his return, when crossing the boundary line again, had forgotten to take the auspices; there had therefore, he said, been a flaw in the election of the consuls. The augurs laid the matter before the senate, who decreed that the consuls should abdicate, which they did. What more striking instances do we seek? The wisest, and perhaps I might say the most eminent man of

his time, preferred to confess his fault, though it might have been concealed, rather than that a sense of guilt should attach itself to the state, and the consuls preferred at once to lay down the highest office rather than retain it for an instant in defiance of religion. Would not a man who had these, and innumerable instances of the same kind, before his eyes, be forced to acknowledge the existence of the gods? For beings of whom there exist interpreters, must certainly exist themselves; interpreters of the gods do exist, so let us acknowledge that the gods exist. But it may be that not everything that is predicted comes to pass. Neither do all sick men recover, and therefore, I shall be told, there is no art of healing! Signs of future events are disclosed by the gods, and whenever any one has been mistaken in these, it is not the divine nature, but human conjecture that has been to blame. And so upon the main point all men of all nations are agreed, for the existence of the gods is an idea natural to all, and engraven, as it were, upon the mind. There are different opinions as to their nature, but no one denies that they exist.

V.

Now Cleanthes, who belongs to our own school, said that ideas of the gods had been formed in men's minds owing to four causes. First he placed the cause just mentioned by me, which had had its origin in premonitions of the future; second, the one which we have found in the greatness of the advantages obtained from temperate climate, the fertility of the earth, and a plentiful number of other sources of benefit; third, the terror caused to the mind by lightning, tempest, storm-clouds, snow, hail, desert places, pestilence, the movements and frequent rumblings of the earth, showers of stones, rain-drops with the appearance of blood, landslips or sudden openings in the earth, monstrous human and animal portents, torch-like appearances in the sky, stars of the kind which the Greeks call *cometæ,* and our countrymen *cincinnatæ,*[1] which in the recent struggle with Octavius[2] were the precursors of great calamities, the phenomenon of a double sun, which I have heard from my father occurred during the consulship of Tuditanus and Aquilius, the very year in which the light of that other sun Publius Africanus was extinguished,—things which by the terror they inspired made men conceive the existence of some kind of divine and heavenly power. As the fourth and most important cause of all he names the uniformity of motion, the revolutions of the heavens, the grouping of the sun, and moon, and all the stars, their serviceableness, beauty, and order, the mere appearance of which things would be a sufficient indication that they were not the result of chance. Just as a man going into a house, or gymnasium, or market-place, would find it impossible, when he saw the plan, and scale, and arrangement of everything, to suppose that these things came into being uncaused, but would understand that there was some one who superintended and was obeyed, so in the case of such vast movements and alternations, in the orderly succession of phenomena so numerous and so mighty, in which the measureless and infinite extent of past time has never deceived expectation, it is much more inevitable that he should conclude that such great operations of nature are directed by some intelligence.

VI.

Chrysippus, again, speaks in a way which, though his own mind is a very keen one, he seems to have learnt direct from nature, rather than to have discovered himself. “For if,” he says, “there is something in nature which the mind, the reason, the strength, and the power of man would be unable to produce, surely that which does produce it is higher than man; now the heavenly bodies, and all those phenomena which observe an everlasting order, cannot be created by man; consequently that by which they are created is higher than man. And what could you say this was rather than God? For if there are no gods, there can be nothing higher in nature than man, since he alone possesses reason, and nothing can surpass reason in excellence. But that there should be a man who thinks that in the whole universe there is nothing higher than himself shows senseless arrogance. There is, then, something higher, and therefore there is assuredly a God.” Is it the fact that if you saw a large and beautiful house, you could not be persuaded, even if you did not see the master, that it had been built for the sake of mice and weasels,[1] and would you not present the appearance of downright imbecility if you supposed that all this adornment of the world, all this diversity and beauty of the heavenly bodies, all this might and amplitude of sea and land, were a dwelling-place belonging to you and not to the immortal gods? Is not even this understood by us, that everything above is better, whereas the earth is lowest, and surrounded by the thickest air? For this very reason the same thing which we see to be also characteristic of certain districts and cities, namely an extra degree of sluggishness in the minds of the inhabitants owing to the denser quality of the atmosphere, has befallen the human race, through their having been placed upon the earth, that is, in the quarter of the world where the air is thickest.[2] And yet, on the ground even of man’s intelligence, we ought to consider that there exists some mind of the universe, one that is keener than his and divine. “For whence,” as Socrates says in Xenophon, “did man get hold of the mind he has?” Why, if any one were to ask whence we derive the vital juices, the heat that is distributed through the body, even the earthy firmness of the flesh,[1] and lastly the breath we draw, the answer is clear, that we have received one element from earth, another from water, another from fire, and another from the air which we take in with our breath.

VII.

And the element which surpasses all these, I mean reason, and if we care to express it by a variety of terms, intelligence, design, reflection, foresight, where did we find, whence did we secure it? Shall the universe possess all other qualities, and not this one which is of most importance? Yet surely in all creation there is nothing nobler than the universe, nothing more excellent and more beautiful. There not only is not, but there cannot even be imagined anything nobler, and if reason and wisdom are the noblest of qualities, it is inevitable that they should exist in that which we acknowledge to be supremely noble. Again, who can help assenting to what I say when he considers the harmonious, concordant, and unbroken connection which there is in things? Would the earth be able to have one and the same time for flowering, and then again one and the same time in which it lies rough? Or could the approach and departure of the sun be known, at the time of the summer and winter solstice, by so

many objects spontaneously changing? Or the tides of the sea, and of narrow straits, be affected by the rising or setting of the moon? Or the dissimilar movements of the planets be maintained by the one revolution of the whole sky? It would be certainly impossible for these things to come to pass in this way, with such mutual harmony amongst all parts of the universe, if they were not held together by one divine and all-pervading spirit. And this position, if argued, as I intend to argue it, in a fuller and more flowing style, is better able to escape the cavilling of the Academics, whereas if expressed more briefly and concisely in syllogistic form, as it used to be by Zeno, it is more exposed to criticism. For just as it is either difficult or impossible for a running stream to be tainted, while this may easily happen to water that is confined, so the onward flow of argument sweeps away the detractions of the critic, while that which is confined within narrow limits has hard work to defend itself. These arguments, for instance, which are expanded by modern Stoics, used to be compressed by Zeno as follows:—

VIII.

"That which exercises reason is more excellent than that which does not exercise reason; there is nothing more excellent than the universe, therefore the universe exercises reason". In the same way it may be proved that the universe is wise, blessed, and eternal, for all objects that possess these qualities are more excellent than those which do not possess them, and there is nothing of greater excellence than the universe. By this means it will be proved that the universe is divine. He has also the following: "No part can be sentient where the whole is not sentient; parts of the universe are sentient, therefore the universe is sentient". He goes further and urges his point in more precise terms. "Nothing," he says, "that is inanimate and without reason can produce from itself a being that is animate and possessed of reason; the universe produces beings that are animate and possessed of reason, therefore the universe is animate and possessed of reason." He also, as his habit frequently was, stated the argument in the form of a comparison, which was to this effect: "If melodiously piping flutes sprang from the olive, would you doubt that a knowledge of flute-playing resided in the olive? And what if plane trees bore harps which gave forth rhythmical sounds? Clearly you would think in the same way that the art of music was possessed by plane trees. Why, then, seeing that the universe gives birth to beings that are animate and wise, should it not be considered animate and wise itself?"

IX.

Since, however, I have begun to treat the subject in a way different from what I announced at starting (for I said that this first part did not need discussion, as the existence of the gods was evident to all), I am now desirous that that point should nevertheless be itself confirmed by considerations of natural philosophy. The facts are these. Everything that receives nurture and increase contains within itself a principle of heat without which nurture and increase would be impossible. For everything in which heat and fire have a place is stirred and made active by a self-imparted movement; where there is nurture and increase, the movement is of a fixed and equable kind, and so long as it endures in us, so long do sensation and vitality endure,

but when the heat is cooled and extinguished, we perish and are extinguished ourselves. This fact of the great power of heat in every organism is further enforced by Cleanthes with the following arguments. No food, he says, is so heavy as not to be digested1 in a night and a day, and even in those remnants of it which nature has rejected there is heat. Moreover, the veins and arteries are perpetually throbbing with a kind of fire-like movement, and it has often been observed that the heart of a living creature, when it has been torn out, beats with a rapidity which counterfeits the quick flickering of flame. Everything, therefore, which lives, whether animal or product of the earth, does so by virtue of the heat enclosed within it, which should make it understood that this principle of heat contains in itself a vital force extending through the whole universe. We shall discern this more easily if the whole of this all-pervading element of fire is described more precisely. All the divisions, then, of the universe (I will touch upon the most important) are maintained by the support of heat, as may be perceived first in the case of the element of earth. For we see that by the striking and rubbing together of stones fire is elicited; and that after recent digging the earth is hot and smokes, and that hot water is drawn even from perennial wells, this happening most of all in winter time, because, it is supposed, a great store of heat is held in the hollows of the earth, and in winter the earth, being more compact, holds the heat that has been implanted in it more tightly.

X.

A long exposition and many arguments might be employed in showing that all the seeds which the earth receives in its bosom, and all the things which it holds that have been spontaneously generated, and are attached by means of roots, owe their birth and increase to duly regulated heat. That there has also been an admixture of heat in water is proved, in the first place, simply by the fluidity of water, which would not be turned into ice by frost, or become fixed in the shape of snow and rime, if it did not also liquefy, and break up, and dissolve at the admixture of heat. For this reason moisture solidifies beneath a north wind, and at the application of the other kinds of cold, and is in turn warmed, and softened, and melted by heat. The way, moreover, in which the seas become warm when they have been disturbed by winds makes it easy to be understood that heat has been enclosed in those vast bodies of water, for the warmth in question is not to be regarded as external and acquired, but as evoked by disturbance from the inmost parts of the sea, a principle which operates also in our own bodies when they become heated by motion and exercise. Then again, air itself, which is naturally extremely cold, is by no means without a share of heat; in fact it has received a very considerable admixture of it, for it is itself the result of exhalation from water; that is, the kind of vapour which rises from water must be regarded as constituting air, and this vapour is caused by the movement of the heat which is contained in the water. We may perceive a counterpart to this in water bubbling up when fire has been placed under it. There remains the fourth division of the universe, which is both by nature altogether fiery itself, and bestows a healthful and lifegiving heat upon all other substances. In this way the conclusion is reached that, since all the divisions of the universe are maintained by heat, the long-continued preservation of the universe itself is also due to a like and equivalent principle, all the more so as we are to understand that in the intermingling of this hot and fiery element with every organism, the power to generate, and the cause of production, are resident in that

element from which all animate things, and things whose roots are contained in the earth, necessarily derive their birth and increase.

XI.

There is, then, an element which holds together and maintains the entire universe, an element, moreover, which is not without sensation and reason. For it is necessary that every element which is not isolated or simple, but which is joined and linked with something else, should have in itself some ruling principle, as, for instance, mind in the case of man, and in the case of animals something similar to mind, which prompts their desires. In trees, and in things which spring from the earth, the ruling principle is supposed to be placed in their roots. By ruling principle I mean the principle which the Greeks call ?γεμονικόν, which cannot but hold, and which ought to hold, the highest place in each genus. Consequently the thing in which the ruling principle of the whole of nature is contained, must in the same way be the most perfect of all, and the most worthy of power and dominion over all existence. Now we see that in parts of the universe (for there is nothing in the entire universe which is not a part of the whole), sensation and reason exist. These qualities must therefore exist, and exist more vividly and to a greater extent, in that part in which the ruling principle of the universe resides. Consequently the universe must be intelligent, and the element which holds all things in its embrace must excel in perfection of reason; the universe, therefore, must be divine, and so must the element by which the whole strength of the universe is held together. This fiery glow which the universe possesses is also far purer, clearer, and nimbler, and on that account better fitted to arouse sensation, than this heat of ours, by which the objects known to us are preserved and made strong. Since, then, men and animals are maintained by this heat, and through it possess motion and sensation, it is absurd to say that the universe is without sensation, when it is maintained by a burning heat which is unmixed, and free, and pure, and at the same time in the highest degree vivid and nimble, especially considering that the heat which belongs to the universe is moved by itself and its own action, and is not stirred by anything distinct from itself, or by impact from outside. For what can be mightier than the universe, so as to act upon and set in motion the heat by which the universe is to be held together?

XII.

Let us hear Plato on this question, Plato, the god of philosophers, as he may be called. He holds that there are two kinds of motion, one self-imparted and the other derived, and that a thing which is self-moved by its own action is more divine than that which is set in motion by impact from something else. The former kind of motion he declares to exist in soul alone, and he is of opinion that it was from soul that the first principle of motion was derived. Consequently since all motion arises from the heat possessed by the universe, and since that heat is moved by its own action, and not by impact from anything else, it must of necessity be soul, by which means it is proved that the universe is possessed of soul. It may also be understood that intelligence exists in the universe, from the fact that the universe is undeniably of greater excellence than any form of being. For just as there is no part of our body which is not

less important than ourselves, so the whole universe must be more important than a part of the universe. If that is so, the universe must be intelligent, for if it were not, man, who is a part of the universe, would, as participating in reason, necessarily be of more importance than the entire universe. If, again, we wish to trace the advance from the first and rudimentary stages of being to the final and perfect, it is to a divine nature that we must come. For we observe that the first things maintained by nature are those which spring from the earth, to which nature has assigned nothing more than protection by means of nurture and development. To animals she has given sensation, movement, an impulse, combined with a certain desire, towards what is beneficial, and an avoidance of what is hurtful. To man she has given more in having added reason, which was meant to regulate the desires of the mind, at one time allowing them their way, and at another holding them in check.

XIII.

The fourth and highest stage consists of beings who are created naturally good and wise, in whom right reason in an unchanging form is innate from the beginning, that reason which must be regarded as more than human, and must be assigned to what is divine, that is, to the universe, in which this complete and perfect reason must needs exist. For it cannot be said that in any order of things there is not something final and perfect. Just as in the case of vines or cattle, we see that, unless some force interposes, nature arrives by a way of her own at perfection, and just as a certain attainment of consummate workmanship exists in painting and architecture and the other arts, so it is inevitable that in collective nature there should much more be a progress towards completion and perfection. Many external influences can prevent the other kinds of being from reaching perfection, but nothing can stand in the way of universal nature, because it itself limits and contains all kinds of being. That, therefore, must be the fourth and highest stage, which no force can come near. Now it is in that stage that universal nature has its place, and since it is the characteristic of that nature that all things should be inferior to it, and nothing able to stand in its way, it necessarily follows that the universe is intelligent, and more than that wise. Besides, what is more foolish than that the nature which embraces all things should not be declared supremely excellent, or that, being supremely excellent, it should not be in the first place animate, in the second possessed of reason and forethought, and lastly wise? In what other way can it be supremely excellent? For if it resembled plants, or even animals, it would not deserve to be considered of the highest degree of excellence, but rather of the lowest, while if it participated in reason, and yet were not wise from the beginning, the condition of the universe as compared with that of man would be the lower of the two. For man can become wise, but if the universe during the limitless course of past time has been destitute of wisdom, it will assuredly never acquire it, and will therefore be lower than man. Since that is absurd, the universe must be regarded as wise from the beginning, and as divine.

XIV.

It was, indeed, an ingenious remark of Chrysippus that just as the cover was created for the shield, and the sheath for the sword, so all other things with the exception of

the universe were created for the sake of something else, the crops and fruits, for instance, which the earth produces, for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men, as the horse for carrying, the ox for ploughing, and the dog for hunting and keeping watch. As for man himself, he was born in order to observe and imitate the universe, being in no wise perfect, but a particle, so to speak, of that which is, for it is only the universe to which nothing is wanting, and which is knit together on every side, and is perfect and complete in all its numbers and parts. Now since the universe embraces all things, and there is nothing that is not contained within it, it is perfect at every point. How, then, can that which is of most excellence be lacking to it? There is nothing more excellent than mind and reason, so it is impossible that these should be lacking to the universe. Chrysippus, therefore, is again right when he declares, adding instances, that in what is matured and perfect everything is of higher excellence, in a horse, for example, than in a colt, in a dog than in a whelp, in a man than in a boy, and in like manner that whatever is best in the whole world, must reside in something that is perfect and complete. As there is nothing more perfect than the universe, and nothing more excellent than virtue, it follows that virtue is an attribute of the universe. Human nature is not indeed perfect, yet virtue is attained in man, so how much more easily in the universe! Virtue, then, does exist in the universe, which is therefore wise, and consequently divine.

XV.

Having thus ascertained the divinity of the universe, we must attribute the same quality to the heavenly bodies, which are created from the purest and most mobile portion of æther, without being intermingled with any other element, and are throughout glowing and transparent, so that it is with entire correctness that they too are described as animate, and as possessing feeling and intelligence. That they are throughout of a fiery nature Cleanthes thinks is confirmed by the testimony of two senses, those of touch and sight. For the brightness of the sun, considering how far and wide it shines notwithstanding the immensity of the universe, is more vivid than that of any flame, and its action is such as not only to warm, but often even to consume, neither of which effects would it have unless it were of a fiery nature. “Therefore,” he says, “since the sun is of a fiery nature, and is fed by the moisture of the sea, for no fire would be able to maintain itself without some nourishment, it must either resemble the fire which we employ for purposes of use and sustenance, or that which is contained in the bodies of animate beings. But this fire of ours, which is required by the uses of life, is the destroyer and consumer of all things, and wherever it moves works universal havoc and ruin. The fire, on the other hand, belonging to the body, which is life-promoting and healthful, preserves and nourishes and increases and sustains all things, and endows them with sensation.” He says, therefore, that there is no doubt which of these two fires the sun resembles, since it too causes all things to flourish and ripen, each in its own kind. Consequently, since the fire of the sun resembles the fire which is in the bodies of animate beings, the sun also must be animate, and so indeed must the other stars, as they have their origin in the celestial glow which is called æther or heaven. Now since some forms of life are developed upon the earth, others in the water, and others in the air, it is, according to Aristotle, absurd to suppose that no animate existence is produced in that part which is best fitted for the production of what is animate. But the stars occupy the region of æther,

and since that is highly rarefied, always in motion, and of potent quality, it is inevitable that the animate existence which is produced in it should be of the keenest sensitiveness and the readiest mobility. Since, therefore, the stars are produced in that region, it follows consistently that they possess feeling and intelligence, and by this means it is proved that they ought to be ranked among the number of divine beings.

XVI.

We may, indeed, observe an intelligence more acute and quicker of comprehension in those who inhabit districts in which the air is pure and rare, than in those who breathe a thick and cloudy atmosphere; in fact it is even thought to make some difference to mental keenness, what it is that one uses as food. The stars, therefore, may be allowed to possess the highest intelligence, as they are placed in the part of the universe which belongs to æther, and are nourished by moisture from the sea and land, which the long distance between causes to rarefy. Their sentience and intelligence are, moreover, decisively declared by their order and regularity (for it would be impossible for anything to move by rule and measure without forethought), in which there is nothing random, variable, or fortuitous. Now the order of the stars and their regularity through all eternity do not point either to a working of nature,[1] for such regularity is altogether rational, or to chance, which inclines to variety and abhors constancy. It follows, therefore, that they move voluntarily of themselves, of their own consciousness and divinity. Aristotle, indeed, is entitled to praise for having laid down that everything which moves does so either by nature, necessity, or choice; the sun, he says, and moon, and all the stars move, but things which move by nature are carried either downwards by their weight or upwards by their lightness, neither of which movements belongs to the stars, since their course is directed in a circle. And it certainly cannot be said that it is some more potent necessity which makes the stars move in a way unknown to nature, for what more potent necessity can there be? It remains, therefore, to conclude that the movement of the stars is voluntary, and the man who should look upon them would be acting impiously as well as foolishly, if he denied the existence of the gods. Whether he does that, or deprives them of all superintendence and action, makes, indeed, little difference, for a being who does nothing does not seem to me to exist at all. That the gods, then, do exist is so evident that I should scarcely regard the man who denied it as being of sound mind.

XVII.

It remains for us to consider what their nature is like, a subject on which it is of the utmost difficulty to disengage the intelligence from the habitual experience of the eyes.[1] This difficulty made the general body of the uneducated, and philosophers who resembled them, unable to form any conception of the immortal gods except by assigning to them human shapes, a baseless belief which, as it has been refuted by Cotta, does not need to be discussed by me. The fact is that a firmly fixed idea gives us a preconception of god as being in the first place animate, and in the second place more exalted than anything in the whole of nature, and that being so, I see nothing by which I should sooner satisfy this preconception and idea of ours than by pronouncing, firstly, this universe itself, which nothing can surpass in excellence, to

be animate and divine. Here let Epicurus jest as he will (he is not very well suited to the part, and savours but little of his country),1 and let him declare himself unable to understand what a round and whirling deity is like: for all that he will never move me from this position, which is one that even he himself admits. For he does believe in the existence of gods on the ground that there must necessarily be some exalted nature, which nothing transcends in excellence. Now there is certainly nothing more excellent than the universe, and it is undoubted that that which is animate, and possesses feeling, and reason, and intelligence, is more excellent than that which is without these qualities. It is thus proved that the universe is animate, and that it is endowed with feeling, intelligence, and reason, and hence the conclusion that the universe is divine. These facts will, however, be recognised more easily a little later on from the actual working of the universe.

XVIII.

Meanwhile, Velleius, do not, I entreat, parade in your own person the utter ignorance of your school on matters of science. You say that a cone and cylinder and pyramid appear more beautiful to you than a sphere, which even as an ocular judgment is a strange one. However, let it be granted that merely in appearance they are more beautiful, though I do not allow even that. For what is more beautiful than the figure which alone contains all other figures within itself,1 and which it is impossible should have any unevenness of outline, any point against which to impinge, any indentation in the form of angles or curves, any projection, or any depression? And since the globe, for so I propose to render σ?α??ρα, among solid figures, and the circle or orb, which is called in Greek κύκλος, among plane figures, are the two forms of greatest excellence, it is characteristic of these two forms alone that all their parts are precisely similar, and the circumference at every point equidistant from the centre, which provides the closest possible kind of interconnection. But if you are blind to these facts through never having handled the student's dust,2 have you not even been able, as natural philosophers, to understand that this uniform motion and unchanging array of the stars could not have been maintained in connection with a different shape? Nothing, therefore, can show greater ignorance than the assertion which is commonly made by your school, your saying, I mean, that the roundness of this world itself is not beyond question, since it may possibly be of another shape, and since there are innumerable worlds in existence which differ in form. If Epicurus had learnt how much twice two was, he certainly would not speak in this way, but while he makes the palate his test of the highest good, he has not lifted his eyes to what Ennius calls "the palate of the sky".1

XIX.

For inasmuch as there are two kinds of stars, one of which moving in an unchangeable course from east to west never diverts one step of its path, while the other in the same tract and paths performs two unbroken revolutions,2 from each of these facts the rotatory movement of the universe, which would not be possible except in a body of spherical form, and the circular revolutions of the stars are recognised. Now in the first place the motion of the sun, which holds the chief place among the heavenly

bodies, is such that after filling the world with abundant light, it leaves it again, first on one side and then on the other, in shade, for it is merely the earth's shadow coming across the sun which causes night. There is the same regularity in the course of the sun by night as by day. Moreover, its alternate approach and withdrawal, through not being carried to an extreme, temper the degrees of cold and heat, for the describing of three hundred and sixty-five orbits by the sun, with about a quarter of a day added, make up the revolution of the year, and by turning its course now to the north, and now to the south, it brings about summer and winter, and the two seasons of which one has been placed after the decline of winter and the other after that of summer. From the changes of the four seasons the beginnings and causes of everything produced by land and sea are thus derived. The moon, again, in a month's course equals a year's revolution of the sun. Its nearest approach to the sun makes its light faintest, its farthest departure, in each case, fullest. Nor is it only its aspect and form which are changed, by its first waxing, and then returning by degrees of diminution to its original shape, but its quarter as well, which is at one time north and another south. There is in its course a kind of counterpart over again of the winter and summer solstice, and many influences distil and flow from it, through which living creatures obtain nurture and increase, and the things which spring from the earth grow and attain maturity.

XX.

But there is most matter for wonder in the movements of the five stars which are falsely called wandering; falsely, because nothing wanders which through all eternity preserves its forward and retrograde courses, and its other movements, constant and unaltered. And this is the more wonderful in the case of these stars of which we are speaking, as they are at one time concealed, and at another restored to view, at one time advancing, at another retreating, at one time preceding the sun, at another following it, sometimes moving with increased, sometimes with diminished speed, and sometimes not even moving at all, but remaining for a time stationary. On their dissimilar movements mathematicians have based what they call the Great Year, which is completed when the sun and moon and the five wandering stars, having accomplished their several courses, have come round again to the same relative positions. How long the revolution takes is a much disputed point, but that it is fixed and definite is a matter of necessity. For instance, the star which is farthest from the earth, which is known as the star of Saturn, and is called by the Greeks Φαίνων, accomplishes its course in about thirty years, and though in that course it does much that is wonderful, first preceding the sun, and then falling off in speed, becoming invisible at the hour of evening, and returning to view in the morning, it never through the unending ages of time makes any variation, but performs the same movements at the same times. Beneath it, and nearer to the earth, moves the planet of Jupiter, which is called in Greek Φαέθων; it completes the same round of the twelve signs in twelve years, and performs in its course the same variations as the planet of Saturn. The circle next below it is held by Πυρόεις, which is called the planet of Mars, and traverses the same round as the two planets above it in four and twenty months, all but, I think, six days. Beneath this is the planet of Mercury, which is called by the Greeks Στίλβων; it traverses the round of the zodiac in about the time of the year's revolution, and never withdraws more than one sign's distance from the sun, moving

at one time in advance of it, and at another in its rear. The lowest of the five wandering stars, and the one nearest the earth, is the planet of Venus, which is called Φωσ?όρος in Greek, and Lucifer in Latin, when it is preceding the sun, but ?σπερος when it is following it; it completes its course in a year, traversing the zodiac both latitudinally and longitudinally, as is also done by the planets above it, and on whichever side of the sun it is, it never departs more than two signs' distance from it.

XXI.

This constancy, then, among the stars, this marked agreement of times through the whole of eternity, though the movements are so various, I cannot understand as existing without mind and reason and forethought, and since we find that these qualities are possessed by the heavenly bodies, we cannot but assign to those bodies themselves their place among the number of divine beings. Nor indeed are what are called the fixed stars without indications of the same intelligence and foresight. Their revolution is a daily one, and is uniform and constant; their movement is neither caused by the æther, nor, as most writers say in their ignorance of natural science, is it bound up with the movement of the heavens. For the æther is not of such a nature as to envelop the stars and to urge them along by its own force; being rare, and transparent, and suffused with equable heat, it does not seem very well adapted for keeping them in place. The fixed stars have, then, a sphere of their own, which is distinct from the pervading æther, and free. Their movements, which are never-ending and unbroken, and marked by a wonderful and incredible harmony, make it so clear that a divine force and intelligence are resident in them, that the man who did not perceive that these very bodies are possessed of the force of divine beings would seem incapable of perceiving anything at all. In the heavens, then, there is no chance, irregularity, deviation, or falsity, but on the other hand the utmost order, reality, method, and consistency. The things which are without these qualities, phantasmal, unreal, and erratic, move in and around the earth below the moon, which is the lowest of all the heavenly bodies. Any one, therefore, who thinks that there is no intelligence in the marvellous order of the stars and in their extraordinary regularity, from which the preservation and the entire well-being of all things proceed, ought to be considered destitute of intelligence himself. Having laid this foundation, I shall not, I think, do wrong if I make the discussion of this question[1] begin with him who led the way in the investigation of truth.

XXII.

Zeno, then, defines nature by saying that it is artistically working fire, which advances by fixed methods to creation. For he maintains that it is the main function of art to create and produce, and that what the hand accomplishes in the productions of the arts which we employ, is accomplished much more artistically by nature, that is, as I said, by artistically working fire, which is the master of the other arts. Indeed, on this principle every department of nature is artistic, since it has, so to speak, a path and prescribed course to follow. But in the case of the universe itself, which encloses and contains all things in its embrace, he says that the nature which exists in that is not only artistic, but in the fullest sense an artificer, taking counsel and provision for

everything serviceable and advantageous. And just as it is by their own seeds that the other parts of nature are severally created and increased, and in their own seeds that they are contained, so all the movements which belong to universal nature, and its strivings and desires, which the Greeks call ?ρμαί, are self-imparted, and it fits these with corresponding actions in the same way that we ourselves do, who are moved by feelings and sensations. The mind of the universe being, then, of such a kind, may in consequence be rightly described either as foresight or providence, its Greek name being πρόνοια, and what it is mainly provident for, and chiefly busied with, is in the first place that the universe may be as well equipped as possible for permanence, and in the second that it may lack nothing, but may possess in the highest degree exquisite beauty and completeness of adornment.

XXIII.

We have discussed the universe as a whole, and also the stars, with the result that a multitude of divine beings is now almost apparent who are not idle, and yet perform what they do without laborious and oppressive toil. For they are not made up of veins and nerves and bones, they do not live upon such food or drink as to contract a too sharp or sluggish condition of the vital juices, and their bodies are not of a kind to make them dread a fall or a blow, or be afraid of illness as a consequence of fatiguing the limbs, possibilities the fear of which made Epicurus invent gods who existed only in outline, and did nothing. No; these gods are endowed with a form of the utmost beauty, and have their place in the purest region of the sky, and seem from their movements, and the way in which they direct their course, to have combined together for the preservation and protection of all things.

But there are many other divinities to which on account of their great services a status and a name have been given, not without reason, both by the wisest men of Greece and by our own ancestors, for they thought that whatever conferred great advantage upon the human race did not come into existence except by divine benevolence towards men. And so they used sometimes to describe the object produced by the god by the name of the god himself, as when we speak of corn as Ceres, and wine as Liber, which is the origin of the line of Terence—

Without Ceres and Liber Venus languishes.

Sometimes, again, the actual quality in which some superior potency resides is itself called by the name of god, as in the case of Faith and Mind, both of which we see to have been enshrined upon the Capitol, on the latest occasion by Marcus Æmilius Scaurus, but before that Faith had been installed by Aulus Atilius Calatinus. You see the temple of Virtue, and the temple of Honour, the latter restored by Marcus Marcellus, and dedicated not many years before in the Ligurian war by Quintus Maximus. Why should I speak of those of Plenty, Safety, Concord, Liberty, and Victory? It was because the potency of each of these qualities was too strong to be controlled except by a god[1] that the quality itself was given the title of god. Under this class the terms Cupido, Voluptas, and Venus Lubentina have been deified, qualities which, though Velleius thinks otherwise, are vicious and not according to nature; at the same time they are vices by which nature is often fiercely shaken. The

greatness of the benefits was, then, the reason why the gods who produced the different benefits received divine rank, and the power residing in each god is indicated by these titles which have just been quoted.

XXIV.

Furthermore, the life and common practice of mankind have admitted of their exalting to the realms above, as the recipients of fame and gratitude, individuals who have excelled in well-doing. To this we owe Hercules, Castor, Pollux, Æsculapius, and also Liber,—I mean by him Liber the son of Semele, not the one whom our forefathers solemnly and piously consecrated in connection with Ceres and Libera, the nature of which consecration may be understood from the mysteries. It was in consequence of *liberi* being the term that we use of our own children that the children of Ceres were named Liber and Libera, a use which is retained in the case of Libera, but not so in that of Liber. To this we also owe Romulus, who is thought to be the same as Quirinus. These men, since their souls survived and enjoyed immortality, were rightly regarded as gods, for they were of the noblest nature and also immortal.

There is, too, another method, and one moreover based upon natural science, from which a great number of gods have resulted, the clothing of whom in mortal form has supplied poets with stories, but has saturated human life with every kind of superstition. This subject has been treated by Zeno, and afterwards worked out more at length by Cleanthes and Chrysippus. For instance, a long-established belief prevailed over Greece that Cælus had been mutilated by his son Saturn, and Saturn himself bound by his son Jupiter, but in these impious stories a physical theory was contained which was not without point, for they meant that the element which holds the topmost position in the sky, the element of æther, or fire, which creates all things by its own agency, is without that part of the body which in order to generate needs the conjunction of a second part.

XXV.

By Saturn, again, they meant him who controlled the course and revolution of periods and times, the god who in Greek bears that actual name, for he is called Κρόνος, which is the same as χρόνος, that is, a period of time. And he was named Saturn because, it was supposed, he was "made full" (*saturo*) with years, for it is because time swallows up the periods of time, and is loaded, without being satisfied, with the years of the past, that Saturn is represented as having been accustomed to devour his own offspring, and it was in order that he might not have an unrestricted course, and that Jupiter might fetter him with the yoke of the stars,[1] that he is represented as having been bound by Jupiter. Jupiter himself, that is, *juvans pater,* to whom, by a change of inflections, we give the name of Jove from *juvare,* is called by the poets "father of gods and men," and by our forefathers "best and greatest," "best," indeed, that is, most beneficent, before "greatest," because it is a greater, or at any rate a more acceptable thing, to be of universal benefit than to possess great power; well, he, as I said before, is described by Ennius in the following terms:—

Look upon yonder dazzling sky, which all address as Jove,

a clearer statement than when he says elsewhere:—

Wherefore with all my might will I curse yonder shining sky, whatsoever that is.

He is defined in the same way by our augurs, when they say, "when Jove lightens and thunders".2 Euripides also made, as he often did, an admirable remark when he said:—

You behold the boundless æther diffused on high, which with soft embrace encompasses the earth: consider this the highest god, hold this as Jove.

XXVI.

Air, again, which has its place between the sea and the sky, is, as the Stoics maintain, consecrated under the name of Juno, who is the sister and wife of Jove, because it has both a likeness to æther and the very closest connection with it. Their making it feminine and assigning it to Juno was due to the fact that there is nothing softer than air. As to the name Juno, I believe it to have been derived from *juvare.* Water and earth remained, so that there might according to the legends be a division into three kingdoms. To Neptune, therefore, who is, they say, one of the two brothers of Jove, the whole of the kingdom of the sea was given, and the name Neptunus was lengthened from *nare,* like Portunus from *portus,* the first letters being slightly changed. The whole principle and element of earth, on the other hand, was dedicated to father Dis, that is, Dives, "the wealthy god," like Πλούτων1 amongst the Greeks, because all things return to the earth and proceed from it. His wife, they tell us, was Proserpina, a name which comes from the Greeks, for she is the goddess who is called in Greek Περσε?όνη; they identify her with the corn-seed, and have a fancy that when she has been concealed in the ground her mother seeks for her. The name of the mother, derived from the bearing of corn (*gerere*), is Ceres, as though Geres, and the first letter, as it happened, was changed just as it was by the Greeks, for they on their side named her Δημήτηρ as the equivalent of Γημήτηρ. Mavors, again, was so called because he was the overturner of greatness (*magna verteret*), and Minerva either because she lessened (*minueret*) or threatened (*minaretur*).

XXVII.

Since, moreover, in all things the beginning and the end are of most importance, they assigned the first place in sacrifice to Janus, whose name is derived from *ire,* to go, the word from which a through way of passage is called *janus,* and the doors at the entrance of private houses *januæ.* As for Vesta,1 her name is taken from the Greeks, for she is the goddess who is styled by them ?στία. Her functions relate to altars and hearths, and consequently, as she is the guardian of what is most closely domestic, it is with her that all prayer and sacrifice conclude. Not far different from her functions are those of the Penates, whether so called from their name being derived from *penus,* which is the word used of everything that men eat, or from the fact that they have their abode far within (*penitus*), on which account they are also called by the poets *penetrales.* The name of Apollo, in the next place, is Greek, and they hold that he is Sol, while they think that Diana is the same as Luna, Sol being so called either

because he alone (*solus*) of the heavenly bodies is of such a size, or because, when he has risen, all are obscured, and he alone is to be seen, and Luna being named from *lucere,* to shine, as appears from her other title being Lucina. Just as, therefore, among the Greeks it is Diana,2 with the added designation of Lucifera,3 that is invoked in child-birth, so among us it is Juno Lucina.1 The latter goddess is also known as Diana *omnivaga,* "the all-wandering," not from hunting, but because she is reckoned amongst the seven apparently wandering stars, and having the name of Diana because it was felt she created a kind of day (*dies*) by night. And she is summoned at births because they are completed sometimes in seven, or generally in nine revolutions of the moon, which are called *menses,* months, because they accomplish a measured space (*mensa spatia*). There is a remark of Timæus which, like many of his, shows ingenuity; after saying in his history that the temple of the Ephesian Diana had been burnt down on the same night that Alexander was born, he added that that was by no means to be wondered at, since Diana wishing to be present at the delivery of Olympias had been absent from her home. As to Venus, she was so named by our countrymen as being the goddess who came to all things (*veniret*), and the word *venustas,* loveliness, is derived from her rather than Venus from *venustas.*

XXVIII.

Do you see, then, how from the right and useful discovery of natural phenomena a passage was made in thought to imaginary and fictitious deities?—a passage which gave rise to false beliefs, and frantic errors, and superstitions worthy almost of a beldame. For we are made acquainted with the forms, age, dress, and equipment of the gods, as also with their descents, marriages, relationships, and everything in them that has been reduced to the likeness of human frailty. Thus, they are brought before us with their minds a prey to disturbance, for we hear of their desires and sorrows and angers, and they have even, as the stories relate, had experience of wars and battles, not only, as in Homer, when they protected on one side or the other two opposing armies, but they have also waged their own personal wars, as with the Titans and Giants. These are things to which it is in the highest degree foolish to give either utterance or credit, and they abound in futility and the most utter triviality. Nevertheless, while we scorn and reject these stories, we shall be able to understand the being and character of the gods who extend through the nature of each thing, Ceres through the earth, Neptune through the sea, one god through one thing, and another through another, together with the name by which custom has designated them, and it is these gods1 whom we ought to reverence and worship. And the worship of the gods which is best, and also purest, and holiest, and most full of piety, is that we should always reverence them with a mind and voice that are without stain, and guiltless, and uncorrupt; for religion has been dissociated from superstition not only by philosophers but by our own ancestors as well. I may mention as to these two terms that men who used to spend whole days in prayer and sacrifice in order that their children might survive them (*essent superstites*), were called *superstitiosus,* a title which afterwards extended more widely, while such as heedfully repeated and, as it were, "regathered" (*relegerent*) everything that formed a part of divine worship, were named *religiosus* from *relegere,* in the same way that *elegans* is derived from *eligere, diligens* from *diligere,* and *intellegens* from *intellegere,* for in all these words the force of *legere* is the same as in *religiosus.* It was in this way that with the words

superstitiosus and *religiosus* the one became the designation of a fault, the other of an excellence. I have, I think, sufficiently shown both the existence of the gods and their nature.

XXIX.

My next task is to point out that the universe is administered by divine providence. It is undeniably a wide subject, one which is debated by your school, Cotta, and it is of course with you that my whole contention is. For you Epicureans, Velleius, are less well acquainted with the meaning of one's different statements, as you read only your own literature, giving your affection to that, and condemning every one else with their case unheard. For instance, you yourself said yesterday that the Stoics put forward a prophetic beldame πρόνοια, or providence. In this you spoke mistakenly through thinking that they make providence out to be a kind of distinct deity, who guides and controls the whole universe, whereas the expression is elliptical. Just as, if any one were to say that the state of the Athenians was ruled by the Council, the words "of Areopagus" would be understood, so you must consider that when we say that the universe is administered by providence, the words "of the gods" are understood, and you must take it that the full and complete expression is "that the universe is administered by the providence of the gods". Do not, then, exhaust in ridiculing us the wit which your fraternity does not possess; in fact, if you listened to me, you would not even attempt the part, which does not become you, and has not been granted you, and of which you are incapable. Not indeed that this applies to you individually, who have been polished by our national culture and Roman grace, but it does apply to the rest of your school, and especially to the begetter of your system, a man without art or reading, who treated every one with insolence, and who had no acuteness, authority, or humour.

XXX.

I say, then, that the universe and all its parts both received their first order from divine providence, and are at all times administered by it. The discussion of this question is generally divided by our school into three parts. The first is contained in the arguments which declare the existence of the gods, for when that is granted it must be acknowledged that the universe is administered by their forethought. The second is that which shows that all existence is subject to a sentient nature[1] by which everything is most exquisitely manipulated, since if that is established it follows that this nature was generated from living first principles.[2] The third division is based upon the wonder which is felt at the phenomena of the earth and sky.

Now, in the first place, either the existence of the gods must be denied, as Democritus by introducing his phantasms, and Epicurus his images, do more or less deny it, or those who grant their existence must acknowledge that they perform some function, and that function an exalted one; but there is nothing more exalted than the administration of the universe; consequently the universe is administered by the divine fore-thought. If that is not so, there must of course be something of some description which is more excellent and endowed with greater power than god,

whether inanimate nature, or necessity speeding on with mighty force, and producing these most beautiful results which we see. The divine nature, then, if it is indeed subject to a power which, whether in the form of nature or necessity, controls the sky and sea and land, is supreme neither in might nor excellence; but there is nothing which surpasses god; the universe, therefore, must needs be controlled by him. God is not, then, obedient or subject to any natural power, consequently he controls the whole of nature himself. Indeed, if we grant that the gods are intelligent we grant that they are also provident, and provident for what is of most importance. Is it then that they are ignorant what things are of most importance, and in what way those things ought to be dealt with and cared for, or is it that they have not the strength with which to sustain and administer what is so vast? But ignorance of things is alien to the divine nature, and difficulty in sustaining a duty because of weakness is by no means consistent with the divine majesty. In this way that which we wish is proved, namely, that the universe is administered by the divine providence.

XXXI.

Now it is necessary, since the gods exist, granting, as is assuredly the case, that they do exist, that they should be animate, and not only animate but also possessed of reason, and bound together by a citizen-like unity and fellowship, ruling a single universe as though it were a corporate state and kind of city. It follows that there is the same reason in them as in the human race, the same truth in both, and the same law, which consists in the enjoining of good and the warding off of evil. From this it is understood that it was from the gods that prudence also and intelligence made their way to men, on which account intelligence, faith, virtue, and concord were, by the regulation of our ancestors, deified and publicly enshrined. How can we reasonably deny, considering that we worship the august and holy images of these qualities, that they belong to the gods? If, on the other hand, intelligence, faith, virtue, and concord exist in mankind, whence could they have descended upon the earth except from the powers above? And since forethought, and reason, and prudence do exist in us, it must needs be that the gods possess these same qualities on a greater scale, and not only possess them, but also employ them in connection with what is supremely great and excellent; but there is nothing greater or more excellent than the universe; the universe must, therefore, be administered by the forethought and providence of the gods. Lastly, since I have sufficiently shown the divinity of these objects whose signal might and brilliant appearance are before our eyes, I mean the sun, the moon, the wandering and fixed stars, the sky, the universe itself, and the multitude of things present in every part of the universe to the great profit and advantage of mankind, it is proved that everything is ruled by the divine intelligence and prudence. On the first part of the question enough has been said.

XXXII.

I have next to show that all things are subject to nature and are most exquisitely administered by it. But first it must be briefly explained what nature is itself, in order that what I wish to establish may be more easily intelligible. For some maintain that nature is a kind of irrational force producing compulsory movements in bodies, others

that it is a force possessing reason and order, advancing, as it were, methodically, and showing clearly what it does to achieve each result, and what end it follows,—a force to whose skill no art, or handiwork, or artificer can attain by imitation. For such, they say, is the potency of seed that, although it be extremely small, nevertheless, if it has fallen into a substance which receives and encloses it, and has obtained material from which it can derive nurture and increase, it contrives and effects, each in its own kind, for some things to be simply nourished by their own roots, and for others to be further capable of impressions, feelings, instincts, and the creation from themselves of beings like themselves. Others, again, give the name of nature to the whole sum of things, like Epicurus, according to whose division all existence is made up of bodies, void, and the attributes of these. As for our own school, when we say that the universe is kept together and administered by nature, we do not say so as we would of a clod, or fragment of stone, or something of that kind, in which there is no principle of cohesion, but as we would of a tree or animal, in which there is nothing fortuitous, but in which order and something like art are manifest.

XXXIII.

But if the things which the earth maintains by means of roots owe their life and vigour to the handiwork of nature, surely the earth itself is maintained by the same power, seeing that after it has been impregnated by seed it produces and puts forth from itself all things, nourishes and increases their roots by its embrace, and is in turn nourished itself by the elements above which are external to it. Its own exhalations also nourish the air, æther, and everything on high. If, then, nature upholds and invigorates the earth, there is the same principle of action in the rest of the universe. For, while roots cleave to the earth, living things are sustained by being breathed upon by air, and it is air which aids us in seeing, hearing, and producing sound, for none of these things can be done without air. In fact it even aids us in movement, since wherever we go and wherever we move, it seems, as it were, to give way and yield. The substances, moreover, which are carried towards the centre of the universe, which is its lowest part, and upwards from the centre, and by a circular revolution round the centre,[1] make the nature of the universe one and continuous. It is made continuous by the substances, of which there are four kinds, changing one into another, water being formed from earth, air from water, and æther from air, and in the reverse order again air from æther, water from air, and earth, which in position is the lowest, from water. In this way by the passage up and down, and backwards and forwards, of these elements, of which all things are composed, the connection of the parts of the universe is maintained. This connection must either be eternal, under the same form as this which we behold, or at any rate of very considerable duration, lasting on for a long and almost immeasurable time. Taking whichever view you please, it follows that the universe is administered by nature. For the sailing of a fleet, the arrangement of an army, or, to again compare the works of nature, the generating of a vine or tree, the figure, moreover, and formation of limbs of a living creature do not indicate so much skill on nature's part as the universe itself. Either, then, there is nothing which is ruled by sentient nature, or it must be acknowledged that the universe is so ruled. How, indeed, can that which contains all other forms of nature and their seeds, fail to be itself administered by nature? If any one were to say that teeth, and the hair which is a sign of puberty, were created by nature, but that the man himself, in whom they were

created, was not formed by nature, he would similarly fail to understand that the things which produce something from themselves possess a more perfect nature than the thing produced.

XXXIV.

Now of all the things which are administered by nature the universe is, so to speak, the originator, begetter, parent, rearer, and supporter, and it cherishes and contains them as members and parts of itself. But if the parts of the universe are administered by nature, the same must be the case with the universe itself; at any rate there is nothing in the administration of it which can be found fault with, for the best that could have been produced from the elements which there were has been produced. If that is denied, then let some one show that better could have been produced. But no one ever will show this, and whoever wishes to amend anything will either make it worse, or will be regretting the absence of that which could not have been attained. But if all the parts of the universe have been so ordered that they could not have been better adapted for use, or more beautiful as regards appearance, let us see whether they are the work of chance, or whether their arrangement is one in which they could not possibly have been combined except by the guidance of consciousness and the divine providence. If, then, the things achieved by nature are more excellent than those achieved by art, and if art produces nothing without making use of intelligence, nature also ought not to be considered destitute of intelligence. If at the sight of a statue or painted picture you know that art has been employed, and from the distant view of the course of a ship feel sure that it is made to move by art and intelligence, and if you understand on looking at a horologe, whether one marked out with lines,[1] or working by means of water, that the hours are indicated by art and not by chance, with what possible consistency can you suppose that the universe which contains these same products of art, and their constructors, and all things, is destitute of forethought and intelligence? Why, if any one were to carry into Scythia or Britain the globe which our friend Posidonius has lately constructed, each one of the revolutions of which brings about the same movement in the sun and moon and five wandering stars as is brought about each day and night in the heavens, no one in those barbarous countries would doubt that that globe was the work of intelligence.

XXXV.

Yet the Epicureans doubt as to whether the universe, from which all things arise and are created, was itself the result of chance or some kind of necessity, or of intelligence and the divine mind, and they think that Archimedes did more in imitating the revolutions of the sphere than nature did in producing them, although the original was wrought with far more cunning than the imitation. Now the shepherd in Accius who had never before seen a ship, when he beheld from a mountain the divinely planned and newly built bark of the Argonauts in the distance, spoke in his first wonder and alarm as follows:—

“So great a mass glides echoing from the deep with loud roar and blast. It rolls the waves before it, and raises eddies by its force, throws itself headlong, and scatters and

blows back the sea. And so you might think, now that a deep-edged thunder-cloud was rolling on, now that some rock had been uprooted and was being driven on high by winds or tempests, or that round water-spouts were rising, beaten by the warring billows, unless it be that the sea is preparing ruin for the land, or that Triton, perchance, upheaving with his trident the caves beneath their foundations, far down in the surging waters, is casting up from the depths a rocky mass to the light of heaven."

He begins by being in doubt as to what this thing is, which he sees, but does not know, and afterwards when he catches sight of the young warriors, and hears the song of the rowers, "So," he says, "do the swift eager dolphins noisily cleave a way with their snouts". Many other fancies also occur to him. "Like to the strain of Silvanus is the song and the hearing it gives to the ears." In the same way, then, that he, though thinking at the first glance that he beholds something inanimate and without consciousness, begins afterwards, upon surer indications, to suspect the nature of that upon which he had been in doubt, so ought philosophers, if the first view of the universe happened to perplex them, to have afterwards understood, when they saw its defined and uniform movements, and how everything was regulated by a settled order and unalterable fixity, that there was in this divine, celestial dwelling-place not only an inhabitant, but also a ruler, controller, and, so to speak, architect of a work and structure so vast.

XXXVI.

As it is, however, they do not seem to me to have even a conception of how wonderful are the things of earth and sky.

The earth, in the first place, which is situated in the centre of the universe, is enveloped on every side by this aerial element which we breathe, the name of which is *aer,* a Greek word, it is true, but still one which use has made intelligible to our countrymen, for it is in common employment as a Latin word. This is in its turn surrounded by the boundless æther, which consists of the highest fire. I propose that we borrow this word as well, and that *æther* be Latinised just as much as *aer,* though Pacuvius translates it:—

This that I speak of our countrymen call sky, the Greeks call æther.

Just as though it was not a Greek that was making the remark. "But he is speaking in Latin," you will say. There would be something in that if we were not listening to him in the character of a speaker of Greek. That that is so Pacuvius himself shows in another passage:—

His very speech proclaims yonder Greek.

However, let us return to what is of more importance. From æther, then, there proceed innumerable fiery stars of which the chief is the sun, which illumines all things with the brightest light, and is many times greater and larger than the whole earth, while the other stars, which are of untold magnitude, come next. And these fiery bodies, which are so great and numerous, not only do no harm to the earth and what is upon

the earth, but are beneficial in this way, that if they were moved from their place the earth would inevitably be consumed by their intense heat, when it had ceased to be controlled and moderated.

XXXVII.

Must I not here express my wonder that any one should exist who persuades himself that there are certain solid and indivisible particles carried along by their own impulse and weight, and that a universe so beautiful and so admirably arrayed is formed from the accidental concourse of those particles? I do not understand why the man who supposes that to have been possible should not also think that if a countless number of the forms of the one and twenty letters, whether in gold or any other material, were to be thrown somewhere, it would be possible, when they had been shaken out upon the ground, for the annals of Ennius to result from them so as to be able to be read consecutively,—a miracle of chance which I incline to think would be impossible even in the case of a single verse. Yet, as the Epicureans assure us, it was from minute particles possessing neither colour, nor any kind of quality (what the Greeks call ποιότης), nor sensation, but coming together by chance and accident, that the world was produced, or rather that innumerable worlds are, within each instant of time, either coming into being or departing from it. But if a concourse of atoms is able to form the universe, why cannot they form a portico, or temple, or house, or city, things which are less, far less elaborate? Really, they talk such heedless nonsense on the subject of the universe as to give me at any rate the impression that they have never looked up to yonder marvellous ordering of the heavens which forms our next topic. We can understand now the excellence of Aristotle's remark. "If," he says, "there were men who had always lived underground in fine and well-lit houses which had been adorned with statues and paintings, and equipped with all the things which those who are considered well-to-do possess in abundance, who had, however, never come forth into the upper world, but had learned by fame and hearsay of the existence of certain divine powers and natures, and had then at some time, through the jaws of the earth being opened, been able to come forth from those hidden regions, and to pass into these parts which we inhabit,—when they had suddenly obtained a sight of the land and seas and sky, and had marked the vastness of the clouds, and the force of the winds, and had beheld the sun, and had marked not only its size and beauty, but also its power, since by diffusing light over the whole sky it caused day,—and when, again, after night had overshadowed the earth, they then perceived the whole sky studded and adorned with stars, and the change in the light of the moon as it alternately waxed and waned, and the rising and setting of all these bodies, and the fixity and unchangeableness of their courses through all eternity,—when they saw those things, they would assuredly believe both that the gods existed and that these mighty works proceeded from them."

XXXVIII.

This is what Aristotle says. For our own part let us imagine a darkness as great as that which is said to have once, in consequence of an eruption of the fires of Ætna, obscured the neighbouring country to such a degree that for the space of two days no

human being recognised another, and when the sun began to shine on the third day men felt then as though they had been restored to life. But what aspect would the heavens present if this same sudden view of the light were to come to us after an eternity of darkness? Through daily repetition, however, and constant ocular experience the mind becomes used to the sight; it feels no wonder, and does not look for the reasons of things which it always sees, just as though it were the novelty rather than the importance of things which ought to urge us to inquire into their causes. Why, who would ascribe the intelligence of a man to him who when he saw such regularity in the movements of the heavens, such stability in the order of the stars, such inter-connection and mutual coherence in all things, denied the presence of any reason in these, and described as the result of chance things which are administered with a skill to which we cannot by any skill attain? Or is it that when we see anything such as a globe, or horologe, or numerous other things, moving by means of some kind of mechanism, we make no question of their being the work of intelligence, and yet are sceptical, although we see the heavens rushing on with marvellous speed, and bringing about with the utmost regularity the yearly recurring changes of the seasons by their revolution, ensuring thereby the most complete well-being and preservation of all things,—are we, I say, sceptical as to such phenomena being the result not merely of intelligence, but of an intelligence which is exalted and divine? For we may now set aside the refinements of argument, and survey, as it were, with our eyes the beauty of the things which we say were instituted by the divine providence.

XXXIX.

And in the first place let us note the earth as a whole, which is situated in the central quarter of the universe, and is solid, spherical, gathered at every point into that shape by its own gravity,1 and clothed with flowers, herbs, trees, and fruits, the incredible multitude of all these being set off by a variety which cannot tire. Add to them the cool perennial springs, the liquid transparency of the rivers, the green covering of the banks, the vast hollows of the caves, the rugged rocks, the lofty overhanging mountains, and the boundless plains; add, too, the hidden veins of gold and silver, and the limitless wealth of marble. And what tribes of animals, there are, both tame and wild, and how various! what flights and songs of birds, what grazing of cattle, what forms of woodland life! How shall I next speak of the race of men, the appointed cultivators, as it were, of the earth, who neither allow it to become the lair of savage beasts, nor to be turned into a waste by a rough undergrowth, and whose handiwork makes bright the fields and islands and coasts, dotting them with houses and cities? If we could see these things with our eyes, as we can with our mind, no one, when he gazed upon the earth in its completeness, would doubt as to the divine intelligence. How beautiful, once more, is the sea! how glorious its appearance as a whole! what a number and variety of islands! what delightful shores and coasts! how numerous and dissimilar are the tribes of sea-creatures, some keeping to the depths, some floating and swimming, and some attached by their own shells to the rocks! The sea itself yearns for the earth, and the way in which it plays upon the shore makes it seem as though the two elements had been fused into one. Next to and adjoining the sea is air,1 which shows the contrast of day and night. Sometimes it expands, and rarefies, and mounts upward, sometimes it thickens, and is gathered into cloud, and by forming moisture fertilises the earth with showers, and sometimes by streaming to and fro it

produces wind. It is, moreover, the cause of the yearly fluctuations of cold and heat, and it supports also the flight of birds, and through being inhaled with the breath nourishes and sustains the animate creation.

XL.

There remains, farthest and highest from our own dwelling place, and surrounding and enclosing all things, the belt of sky, which is also called æther,—the outermost edge and boundary of the universe, within which the fiery bodies take in so marvellous a manner their prescribed and ordered course. Of these the sun, which far exceeds the earth in size, revolves round the earth itself; by its rising and setting it causes day and night, and in its alternate approach and withdrawal it makes each year a double return in opposite directions from its extreme points; during the interval which is marked by these returns it is at one time contracting, so to speak, the earth's face with gloom, and at another turning it to gladness, so that earth and sky seem to have been made joyful together. The moon, whose area, as mathematicians show, is more than the half part of the earth's, moves over the same tract as the sun, but is sometimes drawing near to it, and sometimes turning from it; the light which it has received from the sun it sends upon the earth, and it has itself different gradations of light; at one time, moreover, when it is beneath the sun, and between it and the earth, it obscures the sun's rays and brightness, at another, when it is in opposition with the sun,1 it comes itself under the shadow of the earth, and is suddenly eclipsed owing to the barrier and interposition of the earth. The wandering stars, as we call them, move round the earth in the same tract, and rise and set in the same way; their course sometimes quickens, sometimes slackens, and is often even brought to a standstill. No sight can be more marvellous or more beautiful. Next there comes the vast multitude of the fixed stars, whose grouping has been so arranged that their resemblance to familiar objects has found them names, and the way in which their constellations have been marked out indicates the presence of divine skill in these great designs.

XLI.

At this point Balbus looked at me and said, I will make use of those verses of Aratus which were translated by you when quite a youth, and which please me so much, being in Latin, that I retain many of them in memory. Well then, as our eyes constantly inform us, without any change or variation, "the rest of the heavenly bodies glide on with rapid course, and by day and night move together with the sky". No one who wishes to mark the constancy of nature can tire of contemplating them. "And the very endmost tip of either axis is called the pole." Round it move the two Bears, which never set. "Of these one is named amongst the Greeks Cynosura,2 the other is called Helice."3 The stars of Helice, which are very bright, we see the whole night. "These our countrymen are wont to call Septentriones."1 The small Cynosura also traverses the highest part of the sky with an equal number of stars similarly grouped. "In this the Phœnicians trust as a guide by night upon the deep. But Helice shines with stars more clearly marked, and at once after nightfall is seen far and wide, whereas the Cynosura is small, and yet of service to sailors, for it revolves in a narrow circle with its course nearer to the pole."

XLII.

And to make the aspect of these stars more marvellous, "between them, like a river with rushing torrent, winds the grim Dragon, uncoiling itself above and beneath them, and forming its body into curving folds". While its appearance as a whole is remarkable, the shape of its head and the brightness of its eyes are especially worthy of note. "Not one star alone shines as the adornment of its head, but its temples are marked with a double gleam, and two glowing lights blaze from its fierce eyes, and its chin is bright with one flashing star. Its head is slanted, drawn back from the rounded neck; you would say that it bent its gaze on the tail of the Greater Bear." The rest of the Dragon's body we have in view the whole night. "Its head yonder, sinking beneath the water, hides itself for a little where its risings and settings meet at one point." Close to the Dragon's head "there revolves a weary image as of one mourning, which the Greeks call Engonasin,2 because, they say, it moves supported on its knees. In its neighbourhood is placed the brilliant light of yonder Crown." That is at its back, while by its head is Anguitenens, "whom the Greeks call Opiuchus,1 a bright-shining star. He grips the Snake with the double pressure of his hands, and remains himself bound by its coiling body, for the Snake girdles the man's waist, creeping beneath his breast. Nevertheless he plants his steps heavily, straining hard, and treads with his feet the eyes and breast of the Scorpion." The Greater Bear is followed by "Arctophylax,2 who is commonly called Bootes,3 because he drives the Bear before him as though yoked to a wain". Beneath the breast of this Bootes "there is seen fixed a star with glittering rays, Arcturus of the famous name," and underneath that moves "Virgo, lustrous in form, holding a bright ear of corn".

XLIII.

Then comes the continuation of that passage. "And beneath the Bear's head you will behold the Twins. Under the middle of the Bear is placed the Crab, and the mighty Lion, flashing from his body a quivering flame, is held by the Bear's feet." The Charioteer "will be found moving under cover of the Twins upon their left. The head of Helice with fierce gaze confronts him, the bright Goat holds the place of his left shoulder. Now the Goat has been given a great and brilliant sign, but the light which the Kids send forth for mortals is scanty." Beneath the Charioteer's feet "is the horned Bull toiling with strong body". Its head is sprinkled with a cluster of stars. "These the Greeks are wont to call Hyades." Our countrymen ignorantly call them *Suculæ,* as though they had been named from the word for pig and not from that for rain.4 Close in the rear of the Lesser Bear Cepheus follows with outstretched hands. "For he himself revolves behind the Bear Cynosura." Preceding him is "Cassiepia with stars of dim aspect. By her moves Andromeda, bright of form, avoiding sadly her mother's1 gaze. The Horse yonder, shaking his mane with a twinkling light, touches the top of Andromeda's head with his belly, and one connecting star, eager to bind their constellations in eternal union, holds their twin forms in one radiance. Next is the fixed star of the Ram with twisted horns." Near to it are "the Fish, one of which moves on a little in advance, and is visited more by the ruffling breath of the north wind".

XLIV.

At the feet of Andromeda is the figure of Perseus; “him in the topmost quarter of the sky the blasts of the north wind buffet”. By his left knee “you will see the faint light of the Pleiades. The Lyre is placed next, and in aspect is slightly arched. Next under the broad cover of the sky is the winged Bird.” Close to the Horse’s head is the right hand of Aquarius and the whole of his body in succession. “Then in the great circle comes Capricorn, half animal in form, breathing icy cold from his strong breast. When the Sun has clothed him with continuous light, then at the time of the winter solstice he turns his chariot into another course.” Here, too, is seen “how the Scorpion shows itself rising high, drawing with its strong hinder part the bent Bow. Near to it2 the Bird revolves with straining wings. The Eagle with glowing body bears itself hard by.” Next comes the Dolphin. “Then Orion pushing on with body turned sideways.” Closely following him, “the fiery Dog yonder glows with its light of stars”. The Hare comes in its rear, “its weary body never slackening its course. By the Dog’s tail Argo glides slowly on. It1 is screened by the Ram and the scaly Fish, as it touches with shining breast the banks of the River.” The River you will see gliding in a long stream. “And you will behold the long Chains which hold back the Fish, placed in the region of their tails. Then, by the sting of the bright Scorpion, you will perceive the Altar, upon which the breath of the south wind softly blows.” Hard by the Centaur “moves on, hastening to join a horse’s limbs to the under part of the Claws. He advances stretching out his right hand, in which a huge beast is held, and sternly fells it at the shining Altar. Here, from the region below, the Hydra lifts itself.” Its body spreads far. “In its centre fold the gleaming Bowl shines out; its hinder parts the Raven, straining with feathered body, smites with its beak. Here, too, just beneath the Twins, behold Antecanis, who bears the name Προκύων in Greek.” Can any sane person think that all this grouping of the stars, and this vast ordering of the heavens, could have resulted from atoms coursing to and fro fortuitously and at random? Or could, indeed, any kind of nature that was destitute of mind and intelligence have produced these results, which not only needed intelligence in order to be produced, but which cannot be understood in their nature without a very considerable amount of intelligence?

XLV.

Nor are these things only deserving of our wonder, but there is no more important fact than this, that the universe is so stable, and so closely knit together with a view to permanence, that nothing can even be imagined more compact, all its parts upon every side inclining to the centre with a uniform pressure. Now composite bodies are most permanent when they seem to be bound together by a kind of chain which encircles them, and this is how that natural principle acts which permeates the entire universe, bringing all things to pass by means of intelligence and reason, and which hurries and diverts to the centre what is on the outside. Consequently, if the universe is round, and if for that reason all its parts, which are on every side uniform, are held together by a tendency of their own, the same must necessarily be the case with the earth, so that through all its parts seeking the centre, which in a sphere is the lowest part, there is no break of continuity by which this strong pressure of gravity and

weight could be shaken. The sea in the same way, although it is above the earth, is nevertheless, in consequence of its tendency to the earth's centre, gathered at every point into a uniformly globe-like shape, and never overflows or pours forth. Air, again, which adjoins the sea, notwithstanding that it is carried upwards by its lightness, diffuses itself none the less in all directions; it is, therefore, on the one hand in immediate connection and union with the sea, and yet is carried by its own nature to the sky, whose rarity and heat temper it, and cause it to provide animate beings with healthful, life-sustaining breath. Enclosing it is the highest part of the sky, which is named from æther, and which, while it keeps its own burning heat clear and unclogged by any admixture, is at the same time in contact with the outermost edge of air.

XLVI.

In the æther revolve the stars, which are made spherical by their own gravity, and are thereby held together, while they are maintained in their movements by their actual form and outline; for they are round, and forms of that kind, as I think I said before, are least able to be injured. The stars are of a fiery nature; they are, therefore, fed by those vapours from the earth, and sea, and other waters, which are drawn forth by the sun from soil which it has warmed, and from water, and they and the whole æther, after being fed and renewed by these, pour the same back and draw them again from the same source, so that scarcely anything perishes, or only the very little which the fire of the heavenly bodies and the flame of the æther consume. It is thought by our school that in consequence of this consumption the thing which one used to be told Panætius was inclined to doubt, will come to pass, I mean the final conflagration of the whole universe; for when moisture has been exhausted the earth could not be nourished, and there would be no returning stream of air, as its creation would be impossible when the water had all been used up; nothing, therefore, they say, is left except fire as the agency, vivifying and divine, by which the universe should be renewed again, and the same external order called into being. I do not wish to seem to you unduly prolix on the subject of the stars, and especially so on the subject of what are called the wandering stars; so great is their harmony, which is obtained from the most dissimilar movements, that while the planet of Saturn, which is the highest, causes cold, and the planet of Mars, which is in the middle, causes burning heat, the planet of Jupiter, which is placed between these, has a bright and moderating influence, the two planets[1] under Mars move in obedience to the sun, the sun itself fills the whole world with its light, and the moon, which is lit up by the sun, brings pregnancy and parturition and the completed period of birth. The man who is not impressed by this connection between things, this solidarity of nature, conspiring, as it were, for the safety of the universe, has never, I am quite sure, taken any of these facts into consideration.

XLVII.

Well, to pass from the things of the sky to those of the earth, what do the latter contain in which the reason possessed by intelligent nature is not apparent? In the first place, the roots of the things which spring from the earth both give stability to what they

sustain, and draw moisture from the earth by which the things maintained by their means may be nourished, while the trunks are covered by rind or bark in order that they may be safer from cold and heat. Vines, again, take hold of the props with tendrils which act like hands, and raise themselves up as though they were endowed with life. Indeed, it is even said that if cabbages have been planted near them, the vines shrink from them as from something deadly and injurious, and come nowhere into contact with them. Then, too, how great a variety of living creatures there are, and what provision is made for their preservation in their different species! Some of them are cased in hides, others clothed with hair, and others are rough and bristly; some we see covered with feathers, and others with scales, some armed with horns, and others possessing a means of escape in wings. As for their food, nature has provided, freely and abundantly, that which was suited to each. I could show in detail what arrangement of the parts there is in the forms of animals for the purpose of receiving and disposing of this food, how skilful and elaborate it is, and how marvellously the limbs are fashioned. Such, indeed, is the nature and position of all the parts enclosed within the body that there is not one of them superfluous, and not one that is not necessary for the maintenance of life. Nature has also given to the brutes both perception and appetite, that through the latter they might have the impulse to obtain their natural food, and through the former might distinguish what is noxious from what is beneficial. Some creatures, again, seek their sustenance by walking, others by crawling, others by flying, and others by swimming; in some cases they obtain hold of their food simply by means of the teeth and the open jaws, in others they seize it by means of tenacious claws or a hooked beak; some animals suck, others browse, some swallow whole, and some chew. Some, moreover, are of such low stature as to easily reach with their mouths the food that grows upon the ground, while those that are taller, such as geese, swans, cranes, and camels, are helped by their length of neck. A trunk was added to the elephant, because, owing to its size of body, it had a difficulty in approaching its food.

XLVIII.

To creatures, on the other hand, that subsisted by feeding upon those of another species, Nature gave either strength or speed. To some a certain power of contrivance and ingenuity was also given, as in the case of spiders, some of which weave a kind of net in order that they may despatch whatever becomes entangled in it, while others lie in wait, and unexpectedly clutch anything that falls into their hiding-place, and consume it. The *pina*1 (for so it is called in Greek), which has two large shells standing open, forms a kind of partnership for obtaining food with the small pea-crab, according to which it is warned by a bite of the pea-crab when little fish have swum into the open shell, and thereupon closes the valves. In this way food is sought in common by small creatures that are quite unlike each other, and one cannot but wonder in regard to this whether they were united by coming together themselves, or were originally united by Nature herself at the time of birth. There is some further cause for wonder in the aquatic creatures that are born upon the land; crocodiles, for instance, and river tortoises, and some serpents, though they were not born in the water, seek it as soon as they are first able to crawl. Indeed, we often place the eggs of ducks under hens, and the chicks produced from these are at first reared by the hens as though they were their mothers, the hens having hatched and tended them, but

afterwards, upon the first sight that they have obtained of the water, which seems to them their natural home, they leave the hens, and run from them when they pursue them. So great is the heed for its own preservation that Nature has implanted in what is animate.

XLIX.

I have also read somewhere that there is a certain bird called the platalea, which seeks its food by flying upon birds of the diver kind, and that when these rise from the water with a fish, it continues to peck at and buffet their heads until they let go their prey, upon which it seizes itself. It is also recorded of this same bird that it is accustomed to fill itself with mussel shells, and to disgorge them after they have been digested by the heat of the stomach, and by that means[1] to pick out in them what is edible. The seafrog, again, is said to be in the habit of concealing itself in the sand and moving close by the water, killing and eating the fish when they come up to it, which they do as though to a bait.[2] Between the hawk and the crow there is a kind of natural enmity, in consequence of which they destroy each other's eggs wherever they come across them. And who can help being struck by the fact observed, like so many others, by Aristotle, that cranes, when they cross the sea on their way to warmer climes, form themselves in the shape of a triangle? With its vertical angle they meet the air directly; then the two sides gradually diverge,[3] and the course of the birds is aided by the oar-like movement of their wings, while the base of the triangle which they form is helped by the wind, when that is, so to speak, astern. Each bird places its head and neck upon the back of the one flying in front of it, and as the leader himself cannot do so, for he has nothing on which to lean, he flies to the rear, in order that he too may rest; one of those that have been resting succeeds to his place, and this change is continued during the whole course. I could bring forward many facts of that kind, but you see the main type. It is, moreover, even better known with what care animals guard themselves, looking round when they are feeding, and keeping themselves hid when they are couched.

L.

Another wonderful thing is that a dog cures itself by vomiting, and the Egyptian ibis by purging the stomach,—remedies which were discovered in more recent times by the science of physicians. We are told that panthers, which in savage countries are caught by means of poisoned meat, possess some kind of remedy by the use of which they escape death, and that wild goats in Crete, when pierced by the arrows of the hunter, seek a herb called dittany; this they taste, and the arrows then drop out of their body. Deer, moreover, shortly before giving birth, thoroughly purge themselves by means of a small herb named seseli. We see, too, how each animal defends itself against attack and threatened danger by its own weapons, bulls by their horns, boars by their tusks, and lions by their teeth; some creatures protect themselves by flight and others by hiding, the sepia by the discharge of a black fluid, the torpedo-fish by causing numbness, while many animals repel pursuit by an intolerably offensive stench.

LI.

Now in order that the world's equipment might be permanent, great pains were taken by the divine providence to ensure the continued existence of the different kinds of animals, trees, and of whatever things the earth maintains by means of roots. All the latter contain in themselves seed of such potency that from one plant several others are generated, the seed in question being enclosed in the innermost part of the fruit which is put forth by each plant; these seeds are freely consumed by man, and also serve to fill the earth with a fresh growth of plants of the same species. Need I say how much design, with a view to the constant preservation of their race, is apparent in animals? In the first place they are divided into male and female, a distinction which Nature devised with an eye to their perpetuity, and in the second place their bodily formation is extremely well adapted for procreation and conception, and there is an extraordinary desire in the male and female for intercourse. Now when the seed has established itself in the womb, it draws to itself almost all the food, and enclosed by that[1] gives shape to the embryo. As soon as the embryo has passed from the womb and detached itself, almost all the mother's food, in the case of those creatures that are reared on milk, begins to turn to milk, and the young that have just been produced seek the teats by the guidance of Nature, without being taught, and satisfy themselves from their abundant store. And that we may understand that none of these things are due to chance, but that they are all the result of the forethought and cunning of nature, a great number of teats were given to animals which, like the sow and the dog, bring forth many young at a time, whereas those which give birth to few at a time have few teats. I need not say how much love is shown by the brutes in rearing and guarding their offspring until such time as they are able to defend themselves, although fish, it is said, leave their eggs after laying them, since the eggs are easily preserved by the water, and are easily delivered in it of their contents.

LII.

We hear that tortoises and crocodiles, when they have brought forth upon the land, bury their eggs, and then depart; their young, consequently, come into being of themselves, and rear themselves. Hens and all other birds seek a quiet spot for laying, and build themselves beds and nests, which they line as softly as they can underneath, in order that there may be the greatest possible facility for the eggs being kept safe. Such is their care for the chicks, when they have hatched them from the eggs, that they cherish them with their wings, to prevent their being hurt by the cold, and shield them, if there is heat from the sun. But when the young birds are able to use their wings, which as yet are small, the mothers, though they accompany their flight, are relieved of the rest of their cares. To the preservation and safety of some animals, and of the products of the earth, human skill and diligence also contribute, for there are many beasts and plants that without the care of man cannot escape injury. Great facilities, moreover, are found in different places for human cultivation and abundant harvests. The Nile overflows Egypt, and keeps it buried and inundated the whole summer; after that it retires, leaving the fields, which it has softened and covered with mud, to be sown. The Euphrates fertilises Mesopotamia, bringing it, so to speak, fresh fields every year. The Indus, which is the greatest of all rivers, not only enriches and

softens the soil with its water, but sows it as well, for it is said to carry down a great quantity of seeds resembling corn. I could bring forward many other noteworthy phenomena occurring in other places, and many instances of lands variously fertile in different kinds of produce.

LIII.

But how great is Nature's kindness in producing things to eat in such number and variety, and of so pleasing a kind, and in not restricting them to one period of the year, so that we have the constant gratification of novelty and abundance. How timely, again, are the Etesian[1] winds which she has given, and how serviceable not only to the race of men, but of animals also, and lastly to everything that springs from the earth, for it is their breath that tempers the excessive heat, and it is they, too, which direct, swiftly and surely, the course of ships over the sea. There are many facts that must be passed by,[2] for it is impossible to enumerate the advantages of rivers, the ebb and flow of the tides of the sea, the clothed and wooded mountains, the salt-pits so far from the sea-shore, the lands so full of healing remedies, and finally the countless arts necessary for subsistence and life. The alternation, moreover, of day and night preserves animate beings by assigning one time for action, and another for rest. The conclusion is thus reached upon every hand, and from every consideration, that everything in this universe is marvellously administered by the divine intelligence and forethought with a view to the safety and preservation of all things.

But it will be asked for whose sake so vast a work was carried out. Was it for the sake of trees and herbs, which though without sensation are nevertheless sustained by Nature? No, that at any rate is absurd. Was it for the sake of animals? It is equally improbable that the gods went to such pains for beings that are dumb and without understanding. For whose sake, then, would one say that the universe was formed? For the sake, undoubtedly, of those animate beings that exercise reason. These are gods and men, whom nothing assuredly transcends in excellence, since reason is the highest of all things. It is thus credibly established that the universe and everything that is in it were made for the sake of gods and men.

LIV.

And that heed was taken by the immortal gods for men will be understood more easily if we examine the whole structure of man, and the entire human figure in its complete development. There being, then, three things by which the life of animate beings is maintained, namely, food, drink, and air, the mouth is peculiarly well adapted for the reception of all these, as owing to its connection with the nostrils it is abundantly supplied with air, while by the compression of the teeth in the mouth the food is chewed, and reduced to fragments, and ground. The front teeth divide the morsels by biting, the back ones, which are called jawteeth, masticate them, and the mastication seems to be aided by the tongue as well. The tongue ends in the gullet, to which its roots are attached, and into which what has been received by the mouth first descends. The gullet reaches upon each side to the tonsils, and is terminated by the inner extremity of the palate; it expels, after receiving it, the food which is passed down, I

might almost say, thrust down, by the working and movements of the tongue. Those of its own parts which are below what is being swallowed, expand, those which are above, contract. The rough artery,1 as it is called by physicians, has its opening near to the roots of the tongue, a little above where the latter unites with the gullet, and it extends as far as the lungs, receiving the air which is drawn in by the breath, and exhaling and giving back the same from the lungs. It is therefore covered with a kind of lid, which was given with a view to prevent the breathing being interrupted by any food accidentally falling in. The stomach is placed below the gullet, and there is much in it that is marvellously contrived, for it is the receptacle of food and drink, and air is supplied to it from without by the lungs and heart. It is composed for the most part of fibres, and has many layers and coils; all the substances which it has admitted, whether solid or liquid, it confines and holds, so that they may be able to be changed and digested; it contracts and expands alternately, and whatever it has received it combines and fuses together, in order that everything, after being digested and reduced by the abundant heat which the stomach possesses, and the crushing which the food undergoes, and also by air, may be easily distributed amongst the rest of the body.

LV.

The lungs, again, are of a loose consistency and sponge-like softness, which is admirably adapted for the drawing of breath; they alternately contract in expiration and expand in inspiration, in order that the aerial nutriment by which animate beings are mainly supported, may be constantly inhaled. The juice, in the next place, that is separated from the rest of the food, and upon which our sustenance depends, flows from the intestines to the liver through certain passages directed and carried from the middle intestine as far as what are called the gates of the liver, and these passages extend on to and connect with the liver. Thence a number of passages extend in different directions, through which the chyle1 falls on its dispersion from the liver. When the bile, and the fluid that is discharged from the kidneys, have been separated from the chyle, the rest of it turns to blood, and flows in a body to the before-mentioned gates of the liver, to which all the passages of the blood conduct; after passing through these, it is poured just at that point into what is called the hollow vein, and passes on, as finally digested and assimilated food, through that to the heart, whence it is distributed to the entire body through a vast number of veins extending to every part of the body. The mode in which the food that is left is expelled by the opening and closing of the bowels can be very easily stated, but must nevertheless be passed by, that my discourse may contain nothing offensive. Let me rather set forth the following wonderful contrivance of Nature. The air that is drawn into the lungs by the breath is made warm, in the first place, simply by being inhaled, and in the second place by contact with the lungs; part of it is returned in expiration, part is gathered in a part of the heart called the ventricle of the heart; to this another similar ventricle is attached, into which blood flows from the liver through the hollow vein, and in this way blood is diffused from these parts over the whole body through the veins, and air through the arteries. Both veins and arteries, with which the entire body is thickly and numerously threaded, bear witness to artistic, heavenly workmanship of extraordinary power. What shall I say of the bones which are placed beneath the body and which have wonderful articulations, calculated to ensure stability, and suitable for ending off

the joints and for motion and every bodily activity? To these we must add the nerves, by which the joints are kept in place, and which extend in a network over the whole body; like the veins and arteries they are drawn from, and have their starting point in the heart, and are carried through the entire frame.

LVI.

To this extremely careful and skilful provision on the part of Nature many instances can be added from which it may be understood what great and special endowments have been bestowed upon men by the gods. In the first place they made them tall and upright, raised aloft from the ground, that they might be able, through their gaze being turned upon the sky, to obtain a knowledge of the divine existence. For men are formed from the earth, not as its inhabitants and occupants, but as spectators of the things above them in the sky, the spectacle of which is afforded to no other race of animate beings. The senses, again, which act as intermediaries and reporters, have been marvellously created and placed for necessary service in the head, as though in a citadel. Thus, the eyes, like scouts, hold the highest place, from which they may behold most, and so fulfil their function; the ears, since it is their duty to receive sound, which by its nature mounts upward, have been rightly placed in the top part of the body; there is fitness also in the nostrils being high up, for all smell ascends, and it is not without reason that they have sought the neighbourhood of the mouth, for their judgment upon food and drink is a weighty one. Taste, again, since it was meant to appreciate the different kinds of things upon which we subsist, is resident in that part of the mouth where Nature has opened a passage for what is eaten and drunk. Touch, on the other hand, is distributed over the whole body alike, so that we can feel every impact, and every slightest impression both of cold and heat. Moreover, just as in a house the architect diverts from the eyes and nostrils of the master that which, as it flowed forth, would necessarily be to some extent offensive, so Nature has banished the corresponding function to a distance from the senses.

LVII.

And what artificer besides Nature, whose cunning nothing can surpass, would have been able to carry out in the senses so much detailed ingenuity? In the first place she clothed and encased the eyes with the finest membranes, which she made, first of all, transparent, so that they might be able to be seen through, and at the same time firm, that the eye might be held together; to the eyes themselves she gave the power of moving and turning, that they might both avert themselves from anything hurtful, and easily direct their gaze where they wished. The actual point of the eye, by means of which we see, and which is called the pupil, is so small as to easily avoid what might harm it; the eyelids, which are the coverings of the eyes, and extremely soft to the touch, so as not to injure the point of the eye, were most conveniently constructed both for shutting the pupils, that nothing might strike against them, and for opening them, and Nature took means to enable this to be done continually and with the greatest rapidity. The eyelids were protected by a kind of fence of lashes, by which anything falling in when the eyes were open might be stopped, and which might, as it were, muffle the eyes when they rested[1] closed in sleep, and we did not need them for

seeing. The eyes have, moreover, the advantage of being in a recess, and are enclosed on every side by prominent parts of the face. For in the first place the part above the eyes, which is covered by the eyebrow, keeps off the sweat when it runs down from the head and forehead; then the cheeks protect them on the lower side, being placed beneath them and gradually projecting, while the position of the nose gives it the appearance of having been placed between the eyes like a wall. Hearing, on the other hand, is always open, for it is a sense that we need even when sleeping, and we are actually roused from sleep when sound has been received by it. It has a winding passage in order that nothing may be able to enter, which might happen if the opening were simple and direct; care was also taken that if any tiny creature did attempt to insinuate itself, it should become fixed in the wax of the ear as though in bird-lime. On the outside there project what are called the ears, which were made for the sake of covering and protecting the sense of hearing, and to prevent the sounds that arrived from slipping off and wandering away before they had struck upon the sense. The entrance of the ear is hard and like horn, and has many windings, since it is by substances of this kind that sound is returned and heightened. This is the reason why resonance is attained in the lyre by means of tortoiseshell or horn, and why sounds are given back in greater volume from a place that winds in and out and is enclosed. In like manner the nostrils, which are always open for necessary service, have a somewhat contracted entrance, that nothing may be able to make its way into them that might injure them, and they always contain a moisture that is of use for getting rid of dust and many other things. The sense of taste is admirably protected, for it is enclosed by the mouth in a way which is suited both to its function and to the maintenance of its safety. Moreover, every sense of man far surpasses those of animals.

LVIII.

For, in the first place, in the arts upon which judgment is passed by the eyes, in forms painted, moulded, and graven, and also in the movement and action of the body, there are many things of which the eyes of a man have a subtler discernment. They judge of the beauty, and arrangement, and propriety, if I may so express it, of colours and shapes, and of other matters of more moment as well, since they recognise virtues and vices, the angry man and the good-humoured, the glad and the sorrowful, the brave and the cowardly, the bold and the timid. The ears also have a certain marvellous artistic judgment, by which in the music both of the voice, and of the flute and stringed instruments, the diversity, and intervals, and contrast of sounds are estimated, together with the many different kinds of voice, the clear and husky, the soft and rough, the deep and high, the flexible and hard, of which only the human ear is a judge. The nose also and the sense of taste deliver important judgments, and more arts even than I should wish have been discovered for the purpose of captivating these senses, and enjoying them to the full, for it is evident to what lengths the manufacture of unguents, the seasoning of food, and the meretricious adornment of the body have been carried.

LIX.

Any one, moreover, who fails to perceive that the very mind and intelligence of man, his reason, contrivance, and forethought, were the result of divine care, seems to me to be destitute of these qualities themselves. And I should be glad, Cotta, while discussing this subject, for your eloquence to be bestowed upon me, for what a description you would have given in the first place of the high degree of intelligence that there is in us, and in the second of what a power we have of connecting and including in one survey premisses and conclusions. Through this power we are able to discern what the data in each case prove; we draw the conclusion by a reasoning process, and we define each conception and enclose it within strict limits. The nature and significance of knowledge,1 than which even in God there is nothing more exalted, is thus understood. And how great a fact is that which you Academics impugn and reject, the fact that by means of the senses and intelligence we perceive and realise things external to us; by bringing these together and comparing them, we also call the arts into being, of which some are necessary for the uses of life and others for enjoyment. How glorious, again, and god-like is the power of eloquence, the mistress of things, as you orators1 are wont to call it. It enables us, in the first place, to learn that of which we are ignorant, and to teach to others that which we know, and secondly it is by means of it that we exhort, and persuade, and cheer the afflicted, turn the terrified from fear, restrain the exultant, and extinguish desire and anger; it is this that has knit us together by a common bond of justice and laws and cities, and this that has removed us from a life of savageness and barbarism. It is incredible, moreover, if we look at the facts closely, with what care nature has arranged for the exercise of speech. First of all, the windpipe extends from the lungs as far as the back of the mouth, and through it the voice, which has its origin in the mind, is received and given forth; then in the mouth there is placed the tongue, enclosed by the teeth; this manipulates and restricts the voice, which in its first gush is inarticulate, and makes the sounds distinct and precise by driving them against the teeth and other parts of the mouth. It is thus a common saying with us Stoics that the tongue is like a quill, the teeth like chords, and the nostrils like the horns2 which in playing give back the sound of the strings.

LX.

How apt, again, are the hands which nature has given to man, and to what a number of arts they minister! For the ready contraction and extension of the fingers, owing to the flexibility of the articulations and joints, remain unimpeded in every movement, and consequently, by applying the fingers, the hand is equipped for painting, moulding, carving, and for bringing out the sound of stringed instruments and flutes. These are the arts of pleasure; the following are those of necessity, I mean the cultivation of land, the building of houses, the making of coverings, woven or sewn, for the body, and all the working in brass and iron. From this we learn that it was through the application of the craftsman's hand to what had been discovered by the intelligence and observed by the senses, that we attained everything which enabled us to be sheltered, and clothed, and preserved in safety, and to possess cities, walls, dwelling-places, and sanctuaries. Then again, it is by the works, that is, by the hands, of men

that a variety and abundance of food is also obtained, for the fields produce a number of things secured by means of the hands, and meant either to be consumed at once, or to be laid aside for keeping; besides this we derive sustenance from creatures of the earth and water and from those that fly, partly by capturing, and partly by rearing them. We also, by the mastery we exercise, create a means of conveyance by four-footed creatures, whose speed and strength give speed and strength to ourselves. We place burdens upon some animals, and the yoke upon others; we turn to our own use the elephant's keenness of sense and the dog's sagacity; we extract iron, which is necessary for tilling the soil, from the hollows of the earth, we find "far hidden veins of silver, bronze, and gold," which are both suited for use and beautiful for purposes of ornament, and we cut up trees and make use of every kind of timber that is produced by cultivation or grows wild, partly in order, by providing fire, to give warmth to the body, and to temper the rawness of food, and partly in order to build, so that through having houses to shelter us we may ward off cold and heat. Timber, moreover, affords great facilities for the construction of ships, by the voyages of which all the means to life in every part are made ours; we alone, by our knowledge of seamanship, possess control over the elements of sea and wind, which nature has created full of turbulence, and we have the enjoyment and use of very many products of the sea. All dominion, too, over the resources of the earth belongs to man. We enjoy the mountains and the plains, the rivers and the lakes are ours, we sow the crops and trees, we give fertility to the land by conveying water to it, we confine the streams, we straighten or divert their course—in short, by means of our hands we endeavour to create in nature a kind of second nature.

LXI.

Then again, has not human reason reached as far as to the sky? Yes, for we alone of animate beings have learnt the risings and settings and courses of the stars; the day and month and year have been defined by man, and the nature, extent, and date of the eclipses of the sun and moon have been ascertained and foretold for all future time. By contemplation of these things the mind arrives at a knowledge of the gods, from which knowledge springs piety; with piety justice and the other virtues are bound up,[1] and from these a blessed life results, equal and similar to that of the gods, and yielding to that of the heavenly beings in nothing except immortality, which has no connection with right living. By setting forth these facts I think that I have sufficiently shown how far the nature of man surpasses that of all living creatures, and this should make it understood that neither his shape and the disposition of his limbs, nor such powers of ability and intelligence, could have been the result of chance.

It remains for me to show, and so to at length conclude, that everything that there is in this universe, everything of which men make use, was made and prepared for the sake of men.

LXII.

In the first place the universe itself was made for the sake of gods and men, and the things that are in it were prepared and devised for the advantage of men. For the

universe is, as it were, the common home of gods and men, or the city belonging to both, since they are the only beings that exercise reason, and live according to justice and law. As, then, we must suppose that Athens and Lacedæmon were established for the sake of the Athenians and Lacedæmonians, and as everything that there is in these cities is rightly described as belonging to those peoples, so whatever there is in the entire universe must be supposed to belong to the gods and to men. Moreover, the revolutions of the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies, though they also contribute to the coherence of the universe, afford, nevertheless, a spectacle at the same time to man; for there is no sight of which it is less possible to tire, none that is more beautiful, and more remarkable for reason and skill. By measuring the courses of these bodies we have learnt the culminating points, and varieties and changes, in their periods, and if these things are known to man alone, it must be concluded that they were created for the sake of man. And does the earth, teeming with crops and the different kinds of leguminous produce, which it puts forth in the utmost profusion, seem to bear these for the sake of beasts or of men? I need not speak of vines and olive-groves, whose abundant and luxuriant fruit exists altogether without reference to animals, for the brutes have no knowledge of sowing, or cultivating, or plucking fruit at the right time and gathering it in, or of storing and laying by, but the practice and charge of all those matters belong to man.

LXIII.

Just as it must be said, then, that lyres and flutes were made for the sake of those able to use them, so it must be acknowledged that the things I have spoken of were prepared only for those who make use of them, and if certain animals steal or seize anything from among them, we will not say that they were created for their sake as well. It is not for mice and ants that men store up provision, but for their own wives and children and households, which is the reason why animals, as I said, enjoy by stealth, but the master of the house openly and freely. It must, then, be admitted that this wealth of things was provided for man, unless, perhaps, it is the great abundance and variety of fruits, and the pleasantness not only of their taste, but also of their smell and appearance, that throws a doubt upon their having been bestowed by nature upon man alone! So far are they from having been also provided for the sake of animals, that we perceive the latter to have been themselves created with a view to man. What other end do sheep serve except that of clothing men with their wool, when it has been prepared and woven? Indeed, without human care and superintendence it would have been impossible for them to have been reared or kept alive, or to have yielded any profit. Then, the faithful watch that is kept by dogs, the loving way in which they fawn upon their masters, their strong dislike to strangers, their marvellous keenness of scent for following a track, their eagerness in the hunt,—what do these indicate if not that dogs were created for the convenience of men? Of oxen it is unnecessary to speak. Their very backs proclaim themselves as not having been shaped for the reception of burdens; on the other hand their necks were meant for the yoke, and the strength and breadth of their shoulders for drawing the plough along. No violence, the poets say, was used towards them by the men of the golden age, because by their means the clods were broken up, and the earth in that way subdued. “But then an offspring of iron suddenly arose, and first dared to forge the deadly sword, and to taste the steer that had been yoked and tamed by man’s hand.” So much advantage

was thought to be derived from oxen that it was considered a crime to feed upon their flesh.

LXIV.

It would be tedious to enumerate the advantages, which were undeniably provided for human use, of the mule and of the ass. As for the pig, it possesses no utility beyond that of furnishing food; in fact Chrysippus says that its very life was given it in place of salt, that it might not become rotten. Since it was well adapted for human consumption, nature made it the most prolific animal that she produced. Need I mention the numbers and the delicious taste of birds and fishes? The pleasure obtained from them is so great (and even their capture would be impossible without human intelligence and skill) that it seems sometimes as though our Stoic πρόνοια had been of the Epicurean school, although we do think that certain birds both of the flying and the note-giving kind,1 as they are called by our augurs, were created in order that auspices might be taken on questions. By hunting, again, we obtain possession of wild and savage beasts, in order to make use of them as food, to exercise ourselves in the hunt as in a kind of warlike discipline, to employ them, as for instance we do elephants, when they have been broken in and trained, and to derive from their bodies a number of remedies for diseases and wounds, just as we do from certain plants and herbs, whose useful properties we have ascertained from the practice and experiments of a long period of time. It is possible to survey with the mind's eye the whole earth and all the seas, when at the first glance you will perceive the fruitful and measureless expanse of the plains, and the dense covering of the mountains, which affords pasturage for cattle, and at the second the marvellously swift voyages of ships over the sea. Nor are useful products confined to the surface of the earth; a large number are also concealed in the darkness of its depths, and are discovered only by men for whose use they were created.

LXV.

The practice, moreover, which you will perhaps each of you seize upon for blame, Cotta because Carneades used to delight in attacking the Stoics, and Velleius because there is nothing that Epicurus so much ridicules as the prediction of the future, seems to me to be the very strongest confirmation of all that heed is taken for human affairs by the divine providence. For divination assuredly exists, showing itself, as it does, in many places and at many times, and in connection with many matters belonging both to private and still more to public life. Many things are discerned by soothsayers, many anticipated by augurs, many declared by oracles, prophecies, dreams, and portents, and by the knowledge thus obtained men have often, to their satisfaction and profit, gained many advantages and also averted many dangers. This power, then, whether in the form of inspiration, or art, or natural faculty, was undoubtedly bestowed by the immortal gods, with a view to a knowledge of the future, upon man, and upon no other being. If the foregoing arguments taken separately do not happen to impress you, still they certainly ought to have done so when viewed collectively in connection and combination with each other.

Nor is it only for mankind as a whole, but also for individuals, that the immortal gods are accustomed to take heed and forethought, since it is possible to narrow down the sum total of mankind, and reduce it gradually to a smaller number, and finally to individuals.

LXVI.

For if we believe, for the reasons previously given, that the gods take heed for all men wherever existing, on whatever shore and in whatever parts of lands remote from this tract of land which we inhabit,1 they do so for these men as well who occupy these lands with us from east to west. But if they take heed for these inhabitants of the vast island-like expanse which we call the world, they also do so for those who occupy the parts of that island,—Europe, Asia, and Africa; consequently, they also cherish the parts of the latter, such as Rome, Athens, Sparta, and Rhodes, and the individual members of those cities apart from the whole community. For instance, in the war with Pyrrhus they showed regard for Curius, Fabricius, and Coruncanius, in the first Punic war for Calatinus, Duellius, Metellus, and Lutatius, in the second for Maximus, Marcellus, and Africanus, at a later date for Paulus and Gracchus, and within the memory of our fathers for Scipio and Lælius; and many other remarkable men have been produced both by our own state and by Greece, not one of whom, we must believe, would have been what they were except by divine aid. This consideration led the poets, and especially Homer, to associate with the chief among the heroes, Ulysses, Diomed, Agamemnon, and Achilles, particular deities as the companions of their risks and dangers. The frequent appearances, moreover, such as I have recorded above, of the gods in person show that the interests both of nations and individuals are consulted by them, as indeed is also understood from the indications of future events, which are foreshadowed to men sometimes in their waking, and sometimes in their sleeping hours. We receive many further warnings from prodigies, from entrails, and a number of other phenomena, of which a long experience has been so observant as to have produced an art of divination. No great man, then, has ever been without some divine inspiration, and to him all circumstances are always good, if, that is, the writers of our own school, and Socrates, the father of philosophy, have sufficiently set forth the fulness and richness of virtue. Nor must we run counter to this by supposing, if a storm has injured any one’s crops or vineyards, or if fortune has taken away any of the good things of life, that the man to whom anything of this kind has happened, was either hateful to God or neglected by him. The gods are careful for great things, but neglect small.

LXVII.

These, or something like them, occurred to me as the remarks which I thought ought to be made on the subject of the divine nature. And you, Cotta, if you took my advice, would plead for the same cause; you would bethink yourself that you are both a leading citizen and pontiff, and since it is open to your school to argue on either side, you would choose this in preference, and bring rather to it that skill in discussion which you acquired from a training in rhetoric, and which the Academy has

developed for you. For the practice of arguing in opposition to the gods is wrong and impious, whether one does so honestly or assumes the part.

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BOOK III.

I.

After these words from Balbus, Cotta said, looking at him with a smile, You tell me too late, Balbus, what cause I am to defend, for during your discourse I was considering with myself what to say on the other side, not so much for the sake of refuting you, as in order to inquire into the points that I did not perfectly understand, and as every one must follow his own judgment, there is a difficulty in the way of my taking the view which you would wish. Velleius then said, You do not know with what eagerness I shall listen to you, Cotta, for your speech against Epicurus gave pleasure to our friend Balbus, so you will find me in turn an attentive hearer against the Stoics; for I hope that as usual you come well prepared. Indeed, Velleius, I hope so, replied Cotta, for the terms on which I meet Lucilius are not the same as those on which I met you. How so, pray? said Velleius. Because, Cotta answered, your founder Epicurus does not seem to me to make much contention on behalf of the immortal gods; he merely does not dare to deny that they exist, lest he should subject himself in any way to odium or accusation. But when he declares that the gods do nothing and care for nothing, and that they possess the limbs of a man without having any use for those limbs, he appears to be trifling, and to think it enough if he has asserted the existence of some kind of blessed and eternal nature. On the other hand, you noticed, I imagine, how much was said by Balbus, and how connected and coherent it was, even if it missed the truth. I propose, therefore, as I said, not so much to refute his speech, as to ask questions upon what I imperfectly understood, and so I leave it to you, Balbus, to decide whether you would rather reply point by point to my questions upon the things that I did not quite grasp, or hear my speech as a whole. For my part, said Balbus, I would rather answer, if you wish anything explained to you, but if your object in questioning me is not so much to understand as to refute, I will do whichever you like, either answer each of your questions at the time, or reply upon the whole when you have finished. Very good, said Cotta; then let us do as the speech itself shall guide us.

II.

But before I deal with the question I will say a few words about myself. You must know then, Balbus, that I am not a little moved by your authority, and by the closing words of your discourse urging me to remember that I am both Cotta and pontiff, which meant, I suppose, that I should defend the beliefs relating to the immortal gods that we have received from our ancestors, and the sacred rites, and ceremonies, and religious observances. Now I always will and always have defended these, and no one's utterances, be he learned or unlearned, shall ever move me from those convictions with regard to the worship of the immortal gods that I have inherited from our forefathers. But in questions of religion I follow the chief pontiffs, Tiberius Coruncanius, Publius Scipio, and Publius Scævola, and not Zeno, or Cleanthes, or Chrysippus, and in Caius Lælius, who is at the same time an augur and a philosopher,

I have an authority to whose remarks upon religion, in that famous speech of his,1 I prefer to listen rather than to any leader among the Stoics. Since, moreover, the whole religious system of the Roman people has been divided into sacred rites and auspices, with the addition of a third part consisting of the prophetic warnings derived, by the interpreters of the Sibyl or by soothsayers, from portents and prodigies, it has been my opinion that none of these observances ought ever to be treated with contempt, and I have convinced myself that it was by means of auspices and the establishment of sacred rites that Romulus and Numa respectively laid the foundations of our state, which certainly could never have been so great without the most assiduous cultivation of the good will of the immortal gods. You are in possession of my opinions, Balbus, both as an individual and as pontiff; let me now understand yours, for from you who are a philosopher I ought to receive a reasoned account of religion, whereas it is my duty to believe our ancestors even when they offer no such account.

III.

What account, then, said Balbus, do you require from me, Cotta? Your division, replied the latter, was fourfold; first you wished to establish the existence of the gods, next their nature, then that the universe is ruled by them, and lastly that they take heed for human affairs. These, if I remember rightly, were the different heads. Quite right, said Balbus, but I am waiting to hear what it is you want from me.

Let us, said Cotta, examine each point in turn, and if that of the existence of the gods comes first, upon which all but the most impious are agreed, and which cannot possibly be eradicated from my own mind, still you give me no information as to why that very thing, of which I am convinced upon the authority of our ancestors, is so. If you are convinced of it, said Balbus, what reason is there for wishing to receive information from me? Because, replied Cotta, I approach this discussion as though I had never heard and never thought about the immortal gods; take me as an uninstructed learner new to the subject, and give me information upon the points on which I want it. Tell me, then, said Balbus, what it is you want. What I want? said Cotta. In the first place I want to know why you spoke at such length upon the very point which you said in your division did not even need to be discussed, as it was evident and accepted by all. I did so, he said, because I have often noticed that you too, Cotta, when speaking in the forum, if the case only gave you the chance, brought to bear upon the judge as many arguments as you could. The same thing is done by philosophers, and so far as I was able I did it myself. As to your inquiry, it is like asking me why I look at you with both eyes and do not close one, although I could get the same sight with one.

IV.

How far that is a similar case, replied Cotta, is for you to determine. For myself, I am not in the habit, when conducting a case, of advancing proofs if a point is self-evident, so as to be generally agreed upon, since by offering proof its obviousness is lessened; nor if I did so in a law case, should I do the same in a discussion of this exactness. And there would be no reason for your closing one eye, as they both have the same

gaze, nature, whom you maintain to be wise, having decreed that we should possess two windows pierced between the mind and the eyes. The fact is that you did not feel confident about the point being so obvious as you wished, and therefore determined to enforce the existence of the gods with a number of arguments. Yet to me one would have been enough, that the belief had come down to us from our fathers. But you despise authorities, and make argument your weapon; allow me, then, to place my arguments over against yours. You bring forward all this evidence for the existence of the gods, and what in my opinion is not doubtful at all you thereby render doubtful. For I committed to memory not only the number, but also the order of your arguments. The first was that when we looked up to the sky we at once understood that there existed some divine power by which the world around us is ruled, and under this head there also came the quotation:—

Look upon yonder dazzling sky, which all address as Jove.

As though, forsooth, any one of us would apply the title of Jove to such a deity rather than to the god of the Capitol, and as though the divinity of those bodies, which Velleius and many others do not even allow to you to be possessed of life, were obvious and universally accepted. You regarded it, too, as a weighty argument that a belief in the immortal gods is both general and constantly increasing. Is it, then, thought well that our judgment on matters of such importance should be determined by the beliefs of fools, especially by your school which says that the foolish are mad?

V.

But I shall be told that we see the actual forms of the gods, as Postumius did at Regillus, and Vatinius on the Via Salaria; and there was also some story or other about the fight of the Locrians by the Sagra. Well, do you think that the Tyndaridæ, as you called them, implying that they were men, and the offspring of a man,[1] who according to Homer, who lived soon after their time, were buried at Lacedæmon, came on white nags and without grooms to meet Vatinius, and announced the victory of the Roman people to him, a mere rustic, rather than to Marcus Cato, who was then chief of the senate? Do you, then, also believe that the mark upon the rock, resembling the print of a hoof, which is to be seen to this day at Regillus, was made by the horse of Castor? Are you not more willing to believe that the souls of men of sterling worth, such as these Tyndaridæ were, are divine and eternal,[2] —a thing which may be admitted—than that any one who had once been consumed upon the pyre could have ridden and fought in line of battle? Or if you say that this could have happened, you ought to inform us how, and not bring forward old wives' fables. What! you regard them as fables? said Lucilius. Do you not see a temple dedicated in the forum to Castor and Pollux by Aulus Postumius, and a decree of the senate with regard to Vatinius? I need not speak of Sagra, for there is a proverb in common use among the Greeks themselves, who say of what they assert that it is more certain than what happened at Sagra. Ought you not, then, to be impressed when there exist such authorities as these? You meet me, Balbus, with rumours, replied Cotta, whereas I ask you for arguments.[1]

VI.

. . . The future follows upon the past, for no one can escape it. Indeed, it is often not even advantageous to know what is going to happen, for it is miserable to be tortured to no purpose, and to lose even the last, yet universal, solace of hope, all the more so as you also say that everything happens by fate, and that by fate is meant that which has always been true from all eternity. What help, then, or means of defence does it give to know that something will happen, when the fact that it is to happen is certain? Besides, what is the origin of this divination of yours? Who discovered the division of the liver? Who observed the note of the crow, and the indications given by lots? I believe in these, and I do not find it possible to despise the staff of Attus Navius, of which you were speaking, but how these signs came to be understood I ought to learn from philosophers, especially as on a great many matters your diviners prophesy wrongly. But physicians also, you said, are often deceived. I ask in reply what resemblance there is between medicine, of which I perceive the principles, and divination, the origin of which is not understood by me. You also think that the gods were propitiated by the self-sacrifice of the Decii, but was their injustice so great that they could not be made propitious to the Roman people except by the death of such men? We see in that act the device of a general, what the Greeks call a στρατήγημα, but they were generals who aimed at their country's good, and were prodigal of their own lives; for they thought that if they spurred their horses, and flung themselves upon the enemy, they would be followed by their men, which proved to be the case. As for the voice of a Faun, I have never heard it myself; if you say that you have heard it, I will believe you, though I do not at all know what a Faun is.

VII.

So far, then, as you are concerned, Balbus, I do not as yet understand that the gods exist; I believe in their existence myself, but the Stoics make me no wiser. For instance, Cleanthes, as you were saying, thinks that there were four ways in which the idea of divine beings was formed in men's minds. The first is the one derived from the premonition of future events, which I have sufficiently discussed; the second is derived from the disturbances caused by storms and from the other convulsions of Nature; the third from the serviceableness and abundance of the natural products which we enjoy, and the fourth from the order of the stars and the unchanging phenomena of the sky. The subject of premonition I have considered. As to disturbances in the heavens, and by sea and land, we cannot deny that when they occur there are many who fear them, and who think that they are caused by the immortal gods; but the question is not whether there are some who believe that the gods exist, but whether the gods do exist or not. With regard to the remaining reasons which Cleanthes brings forward, one of which is concerned with the abundance of benefits that we obtain, and the other with the order of the seasons and the uniformity of the heavenly phenomena, we will discuss these when we deal with the question of divine providence, on which you, Balbus, spoke at considerable length; and we will defer till the same point the statement you quoted from Chrysippus to the effect that since there was something in the nature of things that could not be produced by man, there existed something more excellent than man; the comparisons also that you made

between a beautiful house and the beauty of the universe, your representations of the symmetry and harmony of the entire universe, and the syllogisms of Zeno, with their conciseness and petty ingenuity, will be deferred to that part of the discourse which I have just mentioned, when, too, all your observations of a scientific kind about the energy of fire, and the heat from which you said everything was generated, will be examined in their own place. I shall also reserve for the same occasion all the reasons that you gave the day before yesterday, when you were attempting to establish the existence of the gods, for the possession of feeling and intelligence by the universe as a whole, and by the sun and moon and stars. But again and again you will hear that same question from me,—by what arguments do you satisfy yourself that the gods exist?

VIII.

For my own part, replied Balbus, I consider that I have provided arguments, but your way of refuting them is, when you seem on the point of questioning me, and I have prepared myself to answer, to change suddenly the course of your speech, and give me no opportunity of answering. Consequently, most important points connected with divination and fate have gone by undiscussed, questions on which you touch slightly, but which it is the custom of our school to treat at length. As, however, a distinction is made between those questions and our present inquiry, I will ask you, if you have no objection, not to make your treatment too comprehensive, so that we may devote this discussion to clearing up that which is the object of our search.

By all means, said Cotta. Since, then, you divided the whole question into four parts, and we have spoken of the first, let us consider the second, my impression of which is that in attempting to show the nature of the gods you showed their non-existence. For though you owned that it was extremely difficult to disengage the intelligence from the habitual experience of the eyes, you declared unhesitatingly that as there was nothing more exalted than God, and nothing in all nature more excellent than the universe, the universe was God. Perhaps so, if we could only conceive of it as animate, or rather have as clear a mental perception of this as we have an ocular one of other things! But when you say that nothing is more excellent than the universe, what do you mean by excellent? If you mean more beautiful, I agree; if you mean better adapted for our convenience, I agree to that also; but if you mean that there is nothing wiser than the universe, I disagree entirely, not because it is difficult to detach the mind from what one sees, but because, the more I do detach it, the less I am able to understand your position.

IX.

There is, you say, nothing in all nature more excellent than the universe. Nor is there anything on earth more excellent than our own city, but do you therefore suppose that it possesses reason, and reflection, and intelligence? On the other hand, do you think that a city of this beauty is to be considered, because it does not possess these qualities, inferior to the ant, since a city is not sentient, whereas the ant is not only sentient, but has also intelligence and, reason, and memory? You ought to ascertain,

Balbus, how much is conceded to you, and not assume yourself what you wish. The whole point in question, which has been expanded by later writers, was summarised long ago in the brief and, as you thought, pointed syllogism of Zeno, which he states thus: That which exercises reason is more excellent than that which does not exercise reason; there is nothing more excellent than the universe; therefore the universe exercises reason. If you accept this, you will presently make it appear that the universe is the best reader of a book, for you will be able, following in Zeno's steps, to draw up an argument in this style: That which is learned is more excellent than that which is not learned; there is nothing more excellent than the universe, therefore the universe is learned. According to that process the universe will also be eloquent, and in fact mathematical and musical, in short it will be instructed in every branch of learning, and finally it will be a philosopher. You said several times that nothing was produced except from the universe, and that nature had not the power to fashion things unlike itself; am I to allow, then, that the universe is not only animate and wise, but also a player of the lute and trumpet, since followers of those arts too are created from it? Such a conclusion shows that there is nothing in what the father of the Stoics brings forward which should make us think that the universe exercises reason, or even that it is animate. The universe, therefore, is not divine, and yet there is nothing more excellent than it, for there is nothing more beautiful, more serviceable to ourselves, more splendid in aspect, and uniform in movement. But if the universe as a whole is not divine, neither are the stars, which you were reckoning in countless hosts among the number of the gods, and with whose regular and never-ending courses you were delighted,—and quite rightly, for they are marked by a wonderful and incredible constancy. But it is not everything that has a fixed and uniform movement, Balbus, that is to be referred to a divine instead of to a natural principle.

X.

Do you think that anything can surpass the uniformity of the Chalcidic Euripus in its continual motion to and fro, or of the Straits of Sicily, or of the sea which rages in that part

Where the devouring wave parts Europe and Libya?

And cannot the ocean tides of Spain or Britain, and their approach or withdrawal at stated times, take place without divine agency? If we say that all motion, and everything that maintains its regularity by observing fixed periods, is divine, I would have you take care lest the same must not also be said of tertian and quartan fevers, for what can be more uniform than their recurrence and activity? But an explanation has to be given of all such phenomena, and when your school is unable to do that, it flies to a divine being as to an altar of refuge.

You thought, too, that there was point in the observation of Chrysippus, who was undoubtedly adroit and skilful (I use the word adroit (*versutus*) of those whose mind moves quickly (*versatur*), and skilful (*callidus*) of those whose intelligence has become skilled (*concalluit*) by practice, in the same way that the hand does by working). Well, his observation is as follows: If there is something which man could not create, he who does create it is more excellent than man; man cannot create these

things that are in the universe; therefore he who was able to create them is superior to man; but no one could be superior to man except god, who is thus shown to exist. All this is involved in the same error as the remarks quoted from Zeno, for the meaning of "more excellent," and "superior" is not defined, nor is the difference between a natural and rational principle.1 He also says that, if there are no gods, there is nothing in all nature more excellent than man, but he considers it the greatest arrogance for any man to be of opinion that there is nothing more excellent than man. Let us grant by all means that there is arrogance in thinking oneself of more account than the universe, but so far from being a sign of arrogance, it is rather a sign of good sense in a man to feel that he himself possesses consciousness and reason, and that these same qualities are not possessed by Orion and Sirius. Another of the sayings of Chrysippus is: We should infer in the case of a beautiful dwelling-place that it was built for its owners and not for mice; we ought, therefore, in the same way to regard the universe as the dwelling-place of the gods. So certainly I should regard it, if I thought that it had been built, and not, as I shall show, formed by nature.

XI.

But you will remind me that Socrates asks in Xenophon where we got mind from, if there were none resident in the universe. And I ask the same with regard to speech, and rhythm, and tune, unless, indeed, we suppose that when the sun has drawn near to the moon they hold converse together, or that the universe sings in harmony, as Pythagoras thinks. The mind and its faculties, Balbus, are products of nature, not the artistically walking1 nature of which Zeno speaks, as to the meaning of which we will inquire later, but the nature which quickens and stirs all things by its own movements and changes. I was pleased, therefore, by your remarks on the correlation and harmony of nature, which you said was at one with itself as though a common tie connected it throughout; but I did not approve of your denying that this could have been the case unless it were held together by one divine spirit. As a matter of fact it is its own power, and not that of the gods, which makes nature coherent and permanent, and there is in it that oneness of feeling, if the expression may be allowed,2 which the Greeks call συμπάθεια; but the greater nature is of itself, the less must it be thought to be the result of divine reason.

XII.

And how do you dispose of the objections which Carneades used to advance? If, he says, all bodies are liable to mortality, no body is everlasting; but no body is exempt from mortality, no body, even, is indivisible, or incapable of being broken up or torn into parts. Similarly, therefore, if every animate being3 can be severed and divided, no animate being is indivisible or eternal. Since, again, every animate being has a nature susceptible to sensation, there is none that escapes the necessity of receiving some impressions from without, that is, of enduring and suffering, as one might express it, and if every animate being is susceptible in that way, no animate being is exempt from mortality; but every animate being is so constituted as to receive and endure external influences; therefore every animate being is of necessity perishable, and liable to disruption and division. For just as, if all wax possessed the property of

changeableness, there would be nothing made of wax that could not be changed, and the same with things made of silver and brass, if the nature of silver and brass were changeable, so it follows that if the elements of which all existing things are composed are changeable, no body can be unchangeable; but in your opinion the elements of which all things are composed are changeable; therefore all bodies are changeable. But if any body were imperishable, all bodies would not be changeable; it is thus proved that all bodies are perishable. For every body is either water, air, earth, or fire, or something compounded from these or from some part of these, and there is none of these elements that does not pass away. For instance, everything of an earthy nature undergoes disintegration, and the liquid element is so yielding that it can be easily compressed and subjected to impact, while air and fire respond with the greatest readiness to every impulse, and are by nature extremely mobile and dissoluble. All these elements, moreover, pass away when they change into another element, as happens when earth changes to water, and air is created from water, and æther from air, and when the same elements return again in the reverse order. But if the elements of which every animate being is composed pass away, no animate being is everlasting.

XIII.

And if we omit these considerations it is still impossible for any animate being to be found that did not at some time come into existence, or that will always remain in existence. For every animate being has perceptions; it is conscious, therefore, of heat and cold, and of sweet things and bitter, and it cannot receive agreeable impressions through any sense without also receiving their opposites; if, then, it receives an impression of pleasure, it also receives one of pain; but that which experiences pain must also experience mortality; it must, therefore, be acknowledged that every animate being is perishable. If, again, there is anything that is not sensitive to pleasure or pain, that thing cannot be animate; but if that which is animate is necessarily sensitive to pleasure and pain, and if that which is sensitive to pleasure and pain cannot be eternal, and if every animate being is sensitive, then no animate being is eternal. Moreover, there cannot be any animate being in which there is not instinctive desire and avoidance; the things desired are those which are in accordance with its nature, the things avoided those which are opposed to it; every animate being does seek after certain things, and does shun others; but that which it shuns is contrary to its nature, and what is contrary to nature has the power of destroying; it is inevitable, therefore, that every animate being should perish. The means by which it may be proved and conclusively established that there is nothing possessing sensation that does not perish, are innumerable; for the very things that produce sensation, such as cold, heat, pleasure, pain, and the rest, are, when carried to excess, destructive; there is no animate being without sensation; therefore no animate being is eternal.

XIV.

Again, the nature of an animate being is either simple, that is, composed either of earth, fire, air, or water, though what such a being is like cannot even be conceived, or it is a compound of several elements,[1] each of which has its own sphere, one the

lowest, another the highest, and another the one between, to which it is carried by a natural tendency. These elements can cohere for a certain time, but cannot by any means do so always, for it is inevitable that each of them should be caught away to its own sphere. No animate being, therefore, is everlasting.

But your school, Balbus, is accustomed to refer all things to the energy of fire, following, I believe, Heraclitus, who is not himself interpreted by every one in the same way, and as he did not wish what he said to be understood, I propose that we do not take him into account. What you yourselves say is that all energy is fire, and that therefore animate beings perish when their heat fails, and that throughout all nature it is the thing that has heat that lives and is strong. But I do not understand how it is that bodies perish through the extinction of heat, and yet not through the loss of the watery humours or of air, especially as they also perish through a too great amount of heat. Your description, then, of heat applies also to the other elements; but let us see all the same how your position works out. You hold, I believe, that externally, in nature and the universe, there is nothing animate except fire. Why should you not just as much say that there is nothing animate except air (*anima*), seeing that the soul of animate beings as well[1] is composed of it, whence the word *animal?* And how is it that you assume, as though it were a conceded point, that soul is nothing but fire, when a more admissible explanation seems to be that soul is a certain blending of fire and air? If, again, fire is animate in itself, without the admixture of any other element, since its presence in our bodies makes us sentient, it cannot be otherwise than sentient itself. Our former argument may be repeated; for everything possessing sensation must be sensitive to pleasure and pain, and that which is visited by pain must be also visited by mortality. It follows from this that you are equally unable to prove that fire is eternal. In fact, is it not also a belief of yours that all fire needs sustenance, and cannot by any means endure unless it is fed, and that the sun, and moon, and other heavenly bodies are fed by water, some by fresh water, and some by that of the sea? Cleanthes gives this as the reason

Why the sun returns and advances no farther than the round the summer solstice,

and also no farther than the winter one, that he may not depart too far from his source of nutriment. Into all this question we will inquire by-and-by; for the present let us draw this conclusion, that that which can perish is not in its nature eternal, that fire will perish unless it is fed, and that therefore fire is not in its nature everlasting.

XV.

Then again, what kind of God can we conceive of as possessing no virtue? And yet shall we attribute sagacity to God, which consists in a knowledge of good and evil, and of what is neither good nor evil? What need has he, in whom there is not, and cannot be, any evil, to discriminate between good and evil? And what need has he of reason and apprehension, which we employ for the purpose of obtaining by means of the evident a knowledge of the obscure, whereas to God nothing can be obscure? As for justice, the virtue which assigns to each his due, how is it appropriate to the gods? For it was the product, as you maintain, of human fellowship and association. Temperance, in the next place, consists in foregoing the pleasures of the body, and if

body has a place in heaven, so also have pleasures.1 And how can God be conceived of as brave? Is he so in respect to pain, or labour, or danger, not one of which things affects him? How, then, can we conceive of a God who neither exercises reason, nor is possessed of any virtue?

I cannot, moreover, when I consider the things that are said by the Stoics, look down upon the folly of the multitude and the uninstructed. Instances of the conduct of the latter are as follows: the Syrians worship a fish; the Egyptians have deified almost every kind of animal; if we turn to Greece, they have there a number of gods who were once men, the Alabandi Alabandus, the people of Tenedos Tennes, and the whole nation Leucothea, whose mortal name was Ino, and her son Palæmon; while our own countrymen have Hercules, Æsculapius, the Tyndaridæ, Romulus, and several others, who they think were received into heaven like new citizens added to the roll.

XVI.

These, then, are the beliefs of the ignorant. And what do you philosophers do? In what respect better? (I say nothing of the belief I am going to mention, for it is a master-piece: let us by all means grant that the universe itself is divine. This, I suppose, is the meaning of the quotation—

The dazzling sky, which all address as Jove.

Then why do we add more gods? And what a multitude of them there are!1 For you reckon each single constellation as a god, and call these gods by the names either of animals, as the Goat, the Scorpion, the Bull, the Lion, or of inanimate things, as the Argo, the Altar, and the Crown.) But even if we grant this, how can what remains be, I do not say granted, but in any way understood? When we speak of corn as Ceres, and of wine as Liber, we use, it is true, a customary mode of speech, but do you think that any one is so senseless as to believe that what he is eating is the divine substance? And as for those whom you assert to have attained from the human state to the divine, it is for you to give an explanation of how that could have happened, or why it has ceased to happen, and I shall be glad to be informed. In my present mind I do not see how he2 to whose body, as Accius says, "torches were laid on Mount Oeta," made his way from that conflagration "to his sire's eternal home," and in fact Homer represents him as being met in the under world by Ulysses just as the other dead were. At the same time I should certainly like to know which Hercules in particular we are to worship, for the investigators of the more profound and recondite accounts tell us of several. The most ancient is the son of Jupiter, and, moreover, of the most ancient Jupiter (for in the early writings of the Greeks we find also more than one Jupiter); from that Jupiter, then, and Lysithoë comes the Hercules of whom we hear that he struggled with Apollo for the tripod. The second is reported to have been an Egyptian, the son of Nilus, and he, it is said, drew up the Phrygian books. The third is one of the Digiti of Ida,1 and receives funeral honours from the Coans. The fourth is the son of Jupiter and Asteria, the sister of Latona, and is worshipped principally at Tyre, the mother city, according to tradition, of Carthage. The fifth belongs to India, and is called Belus. The sixth is the one we know, born from Alcmena and begotten by

Jupiter, that is, by the third Jupiter, for, as I shall proceed to show, we are told of more than one.2

XXI.

I must therefore, Balbus, also take up my tale against those3 who say that the gods familiar to us, whom we all solemnly and devoutly worship, were not actually transferred from the world of men to the sky, but were believed to have been so. In the first place the theologists, as they are called, enumerate three Jupiters, the first and second of whom were born in Arcadia, the one being the son of Æther, and also according to them the father of Proserpine and Liber, while the other was the son of Cælus, and is said to have been father to Minerva, the goddess whom they represent as the first author and founder of war; the third was the son of Saturn and belonged to Crete, and his tomb is shown in that island. The Dioscuri similarly are known amongst the Greeks by a variety of names; there are, firstly, the three who are called at Athens, Anactes,1 the offspring of the most ancient of the Royal Jupiters and of Proserpine,—Tritopatreus, Eubuleus, and Dionysus; secondly Castor and Pollux, the offspring of the third Jupiter and Leda; in the third place some name Alco, Melampus, and Eviolus, the sons of Atreus, who was the son of Pelops. The first set of Muses, again, are four, Thelxinoe, Aœde, Arche, and Melete, daughters of the second Jupiter and . . .; the second have for parents the third Jupiter and Mnemosyne, and are nine in number; the third are the children of Pierus and Antiopa, and are commonly called by the poets Pieridæ and Pieriæ; their names and number are the same as those of the last-mentioned group. And though you say that Sol was so named because he stood alone (*solus*), what a number of these same Sols are brought forward by the theologists! The first of them is the son of Jupiter and grandson of Æther, the second the son of Hyperion, the third of Vulcan, son of Nilus (the Egyptians believe that the city called Heliopolis is his), the fourth is the one whom in the heroic age Acantho is said to have brought forth at Rhodes, the father of Ialysus, Camirus, and Lindus, and the fifth is the one who is recorded to have had for issue amongst the Colchi Æetes and Circe.

XXII.

There are also several Vulcans. The first is the son of Cælus, and from him and Minerva is said to have been born the Apollo under whose protection the old mythologists considered Athens to be; the second, called Phthas by the Egyptians, is the son of Nilus, and is regarded by the mythologists as the patron deity of Egypt; the third is the son of the third Jupiter and Juno, and is said to have had charge of the forge at Lemnos; the fourth is the son of Menelaus, and held the islands near to Sicily which were called Vulcaniæ. The first Mercury has Cælus and Dies for parents, and is represented by tradition as ithyphallic, an effect due to the sight of Proserpine; the second is the son of Valens and Phoronis, and is the deity in the world below who is also identified with Trophonius; the third is the offspring of the third Jupiter and Maia, and from him and Penelope Pan is said to have been born; the fourth, whose name the Egyptians think it wrong to utter, is the son of Nilus; the fifth is the one worshipped by the Pheneatæ, who is said to have slain Argus, and on that account to

have fled to Egypt, where he taught the inhabitants laws and letters. The Egyptians call him Theuth, and the first month of the year is known amongst them by the same name. The first Æsculapius is the son of Apollo; he is worshipped by the Arcadians, and is said to have been the first to invent the probe and to bandage wounds; the second is the brother of the second Mercury; he was struck by lightning, and is said to have been buried at Cynosuræ; the third is the son of Arsippus and Arsinoe, and according to report first introduced purging and the extraction of teeth; his tomb and grove are shown in Arcadia not far from the river Lusius.

XXIII.

The oldest Apollo is the one of whom I spoke just now as the son of Vulcan and protector of Athens; the second is the son of Corybas, and was born in Crete, and is said to have contended for that island with Jupiter himself; the third is the son of the third Jupiter and Latona, and there is a tradition that he came from the land of the Hyperboreans to Delphi; the fourth was born in Arcadia, and is called by the Arcadians Νόμιος, because, they say, they received laws[1] from him. There is also more than one Diana; first the daughter of Jupiter and Proserpine, who is said to have given birth to the winged Cupid; secondly a more famous one whom we know as the daughter of the third Jupiter and Latona, and thirdly the one of whom Upis and Glauce are recorded as the parents, and whom the Greeks often call by her father's name of Upis. We have several bearers of the name Dionysus; the first is the son of Jupiter and Proserpine; the second, who is said to have slain Nysa, is the son of Nilus; the third is the son of Cabirus; he is reported to have been king over Asia, and in his honour the Sabazia were instituted; the fourth is the son of Jupiter and Luna, and it is in connection with him that the Orphic rites are believed to be celebrated; the fifth is the offspring of Nisus and Thyone, and the supposed founder of the Trieterides. The first Venus is the daughter of Cælus and Dies, and the shrine that we have seen at Elis belongs to her; the second was created from the foam, and we are told that from her and Mercury the second Cupid was born; the third is the daughter of Jupiter and Dione, and married Vulcan, but her child Anteros is said to have been born to Mars; the fourth, who is called Astarte, was the offspring of Syria and Cyprus, and it is recorded that she married Adonis. The first Minerva is the one of whom we spoke above as the mother of Apollo; the second is the daughter of Nilus and is worshipped by the Egyptians of Sais; the third is the one whom we have already mentioned as having had Jupiter for father; the fourth is the offspring of Jupiter and Coryphe, daughter of Oceanus; the Arcadians call her Κορία, and have a tradition that she introduced the four-horsed chariot; the fifth is the daughter of Pallas, and is said to have slain her father when he offered her violence; she is represented with winged anklets. The first Cupid is said to have been the son of Mercury and the first Diana; the second of Mercury and the second Venus; and the third, who is the same as Anteros, of Mars and the third Venus. These instances, and others of the kind, have been collected from the old traditions of Greece, and though you, Balbus, are aware of the necessity of opposing them, in order that religious worship may not be disorganised, your school not only does not rebut, but positively confirms them by giving an explanation in each case of their meaning. Let us now, however, return to the point which we abandoned for this digression.

XVII.

And as the discourse has brought me upon this topic, I will show that I have learnt better how to worship the immortal gods, in accordance with pontifical ordinances and the usage of our forefathers, from the small bowls which Numa left us, to which Lælius refers in that glorious speech of his,[1] than from the reasonings of the Stoics. For if I take you as my guides, tell me what answer I am to make to any one putting this question to me: if the beings you mention are gods, are the Nymphs also divine? If they are, so also are the little Pans and Satyrs. But the latter are not divine; neither, therefore, are the Nymphs; yet temples of the Nymphs have been publicly vowed and dedicated; therefore the other beings whose temples have been dedicated are just as little divine. Take another instance. You reckon Jupiter and Neptune as gods; therefore Orcus, their brother, is also a god, and Acheron, Cocytus, and Pyriphlegethon, which are said to flow in the under world, must be considered so, together with Charon and Cerberus. But these last conclusions are untenable; therefore Orcus himself is not divine. What do you say, then, with regard to his brothers? This is how Carneades used to argue, not in order to do away with the gods (for what is less suited to a philosopher?), but to prove that the Stoics gave no adequate account of them. For this reason he used to assail their school. Come, he would say, if these brothers are comprised in the number of the gods, can the same be denied of their father Saturn, who in the parts towards the west is the general and chief object of worship? And if he is a god, his father Cælus must also be acknowledged to be one. In that case the parents of Cælus himself, Æther and Dies, must be considered so, and their brothers and sisters, who are named by the old genealogists as follows: Love, Guile, Disease, Fear, Labour, Envy, Fate, Old Age, Death, Darkness, Misery, Lamentation, Partiality, Deceit, Stubbornness, the Fates, the Hesperides, and Dreams, all of whom, they say, were born from Erebus and Night. Either, then, these extravagances must be accepted, or the claims first put forward must be withdrawn.

XVIII.

And will you say that Apollo, Vulcan, Mercury, and the rest are gods, and have doubts as to Hercules, Æsculapius, Liber, Castor, and Pollux? Yet the latter are worshipped as much as the former, and amongst some peoples to an even much greater extent. Are, then, these sons of mortal mothers to be considered gods? And will not Aristæus, the reputed discoverer of the olive, who was the son of Apollo, and Theseus, the son of Neptune, and the others whose fathers were gods, belong to the number of divine beings? And how about those whose mothers were goddesses? They, I imagine, will belong still more, for just as by civil law the son of a free mother is free, so too by natural law the son of a divine mother must be divine. This is why the inhabitants of the island Astypalæa are most devout worshippers of Achilles, and if he is a god, so are both Orpheus and Rhesus, who had a Muse for their mother, unless, perhaps, alliance with a sea deity is placed above one with a land deity. If the fact that Orpheus and Rhesus are nowhere worshipped prevents them from being gods, how is it that the others are so? Consider, then, whether it is not to the virtues of men, as you too seemed to say, Balbus,[1] rather than to their immortality, that these

honours are rendered. How, again, if you think Latona a goddess, can you refuse to think Hecate one, who is the daughter of Asteria, the sister of Latona? Or is Hecate a goddess as well? We have certainly seen her altars and shrines in Greece. But if she is, why are not the Eumenides? And if they, who have a temple at Athens, and in our own city, according to my interpretation of the name, the grove of Furina,1 are divine, then the Furies are so, I presume as being the watchers and punishers of misdeeds and crime. If, moreover, it is characteristic of the gods to take part in human affairs, Natio, to whom, when we go the round of the shrines in the Æduan territory, we are accustomed to make sacrifice, must also be considered divine; she was so named from the offspring that is born (*nascentibus*), because, it was supposed, she aids the delivery of matrons. If she is divine, so are all those whom you were mentioning, Honour, Faith, Mind, and Concord, and therefore also Hope, and Memory, and everything that we can conceive by imagination in our own minds. If this is not probable, neither is the position which leads to these results.

XIX.

And if those beings whom we worship and know by tradition are gods, what reason do you give why you should not number Serapis and Isis in the same class, or why, if we do that, we should repudiate the gods of the barbarians? We shall, then, assign to oxen, horses, ibises, hawks, asps, crocodiles, fish, wolves, cats, and a multitude of other creatures their place among the number of divine beings. If we reject these conclusions, this will involve also the rejection of the premises from which they sprang. Now for another case. Shall Ino be considered a goddess, and receive the name of Leucothea from the Greeks, and Matuta from ourselves, though she is but the daughter of Cadmus, and shall Circe and Pasiphae and Æetes, who were born from Perseis, daughter of Oceanus, and have the Sun for their father, not be included in the number of divinities? Yet Circe no less than Ino is devoutly worshipped by our colonists of Circeii. Will you, then, regard her as a goddess? And how will you meet the case of Medea, whose grandfathers, the Sun and Oceanus, were both gods, and whose father was Æetes and mother Idyia? How will you meet the case of her brother Absyrtus? (In Pacuvius he appears as Ægialeus, but the other name is commoner in the old writers.) If these are not gods, I have my fears as to how Ino may fare, for all these claims to divinity are derived from the same source. Or will Amphiaraus and Trophonius be gods? Well, when the lands in Bœotia that belonged to the immortal gods1 were exempted from taxation by the regulation of the censors, our tax-farmers declared that no one was immortal who had ever been a man. But if Amphiaraus and Trophonius are gods, unquestionably Erechtheus is one, whose shrine and priest we have seen at Athens. And if we deify him, what doubt can we have as to Codrus, or the others who have fallen fighting for the liberty of their country? If the last conclusion is not admissible, the premises also from which these conclusions are drawn ought not to be admitted. Besides, in most communities we can see that in order to foster valour, so that the noblest spirits might the more readily encounter danger on behalf of the state, the memory of brave men was hallowed with divine honours. It is for this very reason that Erechtheus and his daughters1 are included at Athens in the number of divine beings, and there is also at Athens a shrine of the daughters of Leos,2 which is called Λεωκόριον, that is, Leonaticum.3 The Alabandi, indeed, worship Alabandus, by whom the city was founded, more devoutly than they

do any of the well-known gods, and there was a remark made by Stratonicus, when in their country, which like many of his was not without humour. Some one to whom he had a dislike was maintaining the divinity of Alabandus, and denying that of Hercules. “May I, then,” he said, “experience the anger of Alabandus and you of Hercules.”

XX.

And do you not see, Balbus, how far the conclusions which you derived from the sky and the heavenly bodies extend? You inferred that the sun and moon are divine, the first of which the Greeks identify with Apollo, and the second with Diana. But if the moon is divine, then Lucifer also, and the other wandering stars, will hold rank as gods, and so, therefore, will the fixed stars as well. And why should not a thing with the goodly aspect of the rainbow be assigned its place among the number of divine beings? For there is beauty in the rainbow, and on that account, because it is considered to possess an aspect of marvellous1 fairness, Iris is represented as having been the daughter of Thaumas. If the rainbow is in its nature divine, what will you do with the clouds? For the rainbow is itself composed of clouds which have been coloured in a certain way, and one of the clouds is also said to have given birth to the Centaurs. But if you number the clouds amongst the gods, the same will certainly have to be done with the tempests, which the ritual of the Roman people has consecrated. Consequently rain, and thunder-clouds, and storms, and whirlwinds must be considered divine; indeed, it has been the custom of our generals when setting out by sea to sacrifice a victim to the waves. If, moreover, Ceres (for so you were saying), takes her name from *gerere,* to bear, the earth itself is a goddess, and is regarded as such, for what else is Tellus than the power which bears? But if the earth is divine, so too is the sea, which you identified with Neptune, and so, therefore, are the rivers and springs. That is why Maso dedicated a shrine of Fons from his Corsican spoils, and why we see the Tiber, the Spino, the Almo, the Nodinus, and other names belonging to neighbouring streams, in the litany of the augurs. Either, then, this principle will extend itself indefinitely, or we will reject every instance of the kind, and will not permit this limitless process of superstition. No instance of the kind, then, is to be admitted.

XXIV.

Do you after this think that these ideas need to be refuted by more elaborate arguments? Why, we see that mind, faith, hope, virtue, honour, victory, safety, concord, and everything else of that kind are in their nature abstractions, and not divinities; for they are either resident in ourselves, as is the case with mind, hope, faith, virtue, and concord, or they are things to be desired by us, as honour, safety, and victory. I see their usefulness, and also their images which have been consecrated, but why they have the force of divinities I shall not understand until I am informed. Fortune in particular is to be included under this head, for no one will dissociate that from caprice and accident, which are certainly unworthy of a divine being. Then again, why does this explanation of fables, and unravelling of names, possess such a charm for you? That Cælus was mutilated by his son, and Saturn in like manner

bound by his, these and other statements of the same kind you uphold in a way which gives to the men who invented them the appearance not only of sanity, but of positive wisdom. And in unravelling names the difficulties into which you get are of a pitiable kind. Saturn is so called because he makes himself full (*saturat*) with years; Mavors because he is the overturner of greatness (*magna vertit*); Minerva because she lessens (*minuo*), or threatens (*minor*); Venus because she comes to all things (*venit*); and Ceres derives her name from *gerere,* to bear. What a hazardous principle to go upon! For there are many names over which you will be brought to a stand-still. How will you treat Vejovis and Vulcan? And yet, as you think that the word Neptune was formed from *nare* (in which you seemed to me to be more at sea than Neptune himself), there will be no name of which you would not be able to trace the derivation so far as one letter is concerned.1 Great and quite unnecessary pains were taken first by Zeno, and afterwards by Cleanthes, and then by Chrysippus to provide an explanation of the legendary stories, and to set forth the reasons for the form of each proper name. Of course in doing so your school acknowledges that the facts are widely different from the popular belief, for you maintain that what are called gods are abstract qualities, and not divine persons.

XXV.

And this error extended so far that even hurtful things had not only the title of gods assigned to them, but also sacred rites instituted in their honour. We see, for instance, the shrine of Fever upon the Palatine, the shrine of Bereavement by the temple of the Lares, and the altar of Evil Fortune dedicated on the Esquiline. Let all the mistaken notions, then, be banished from philosophy which make us, when treating of the immortal gods, bring forward qualities which are unworthy of an immortal nature,—qualities as to which I am prepared with an opinion of my own, but am not prepared to agree with you. You say that Neptune is the intelligent principle which pervades the sea, and you speak in the same way of Ceres, but this intelligence either of the sea or land I am not only unable to understand, but cannot even bring within the scope of imagination. I must, therefore, apply elsewhere in order to be able to learn both that the gods exist, and of what nature they are; the nature which you assign to them . . .1

Let us consider the questions which come next, in the first place whether the universe is ruled by divine providence, and in the second whether the gods consult the interests of men. For these two parts of your division still await me, and I think, if you are willing, that they ought to receive a more elaborate treatment. For my part, said Velleius, I am perfectly willing, for I am looking forward to something more considerable, and at the same time agree heartily with what has been said. Balbus then remarked: I do not wish to interrupt you, Cotta, but we will take another time; I shall certainly make you confess. But . . .1

In no such wise shall this thing fall out; in it there is great strife contained. For is it to be thought that I would extreat them with such soft words, were it not for a gain?

XXVI.

Does she seem to fail in reasoning and in devising shameful ill for herself? Mark with what shrewd judgment this is said.

For him who wishes that his wish should be accomplished, things come to pass according to his handling.

A line which contains the germ of all wrong-doing.

He with purpose all astray has delivered to me to-day the bars2 with which I shall unloose all my wrath, and give destruction to him, and sorrow to myself, grief and ruin to him, and exile to myself.

This is the reasoning faculty which animals, forsooth, do not possess, and which you say was bestowed by divine favour upon man alone. You see, then, do you, how valuable is this gift of the gods with which we are endowed? And the same Medea, flying from her father and native land,

When that her father drew near, and was now well-nigh making ready for her to be seized, slew meanwhile the boy, and severed his limbs joint by joint, and strewed his body on every side over the fields, doing so with this intent, that while the father was picking up the scattered limbs of his son, she might in the meantime escape, that grief might hinder him from pursuing, and she might win safety for herself by the slaughter of her own kin.

There was no lack of guilt in her, and equally no lack of reason. And when Atreus is preparing the fatal banquet for his brother, does he not in his deliberations set reason to work this way and that?

I must stir up a greater coil, a greater mischief, with which to beat down and crush his cruel heart.

XXVII.

At the same time Thyestes himself must not be passed by.

Who thought it not enough to have enticed a wife to dishonour.

As to which Atreus says rightly and most truly,

A deed which in the greatest estate I think the greatest crime, that a royal mother should be defiled, the stock polluted, the race mixed with alloy.

But how great was his guile in committing that very deed, for he aimed by means of adultery at sovereign power.

To this, says Atreus, add the prodigy which the father of the gods sent me as a sign, the stay of my rule, a lamb amongst the flocks shining with golden fleece, and that Thyestes dared to steal it secretly from the palace, in which thing he made my wife his helper.

Does not Thyestes seem to you to have combined with great depravity a no less amount of reasoning power? Nor, indeed, is it only the stage that is full of these crimes, but ordinary life is much fuller of almost greater ones. In each man's house, in the law-courts, the senate-house, in the assemblies on the Campus Martius, amongst our allies, and in the provinces, it is a matter of experience how by means of reason wrong is done as well as right, the latter by a small number and seldom, and the former by a very large number and constantly, so that it would have been more advantageous for no reasoning power at all to have been given to us by the immortal gods, than for it to have been given with so much disaster attached to it. Just as it is better to use no wine whatever in the treatment of the sick, because it is rarely beneficial and very often injurious, than to rush upon evident calamity in the hope of an uncertain recovery, so, I incline to think, it would have been better for the human race that that swift movement of thought, that keenness and shrewdness which we call reason, since it is destructive to many and profitable to very few, should not have been given at all, than that it should have been given so freely and abundantly. If, then, it is supposed that the divine intelligence and will consulted the interests of men, because it bestowed reason upon them, it consulted the interests only of those whom it endowed with right reason, and we see that these are extremely few, if indeed there are any such. But it cannot be supposed that the immortal gods consulted the interests of only a few; it follows, therefore, that no one's interests were consulted by them.

XXVIII.

This position you are accustomed to meet thus. It does not, you say, follow that the best provision was not made for us by the gods, because many put their kindness to a wrong use; many men also make an ill use of their patrimony, but the kindness done them by their fathers is none the less a kindness on that account. Does any one deny it? Or what is the point of resemblance in such a comparison? Deianira did not wish to injure Hercules when she gave him the tunic which had been dipped in the blood of the Centaur, nor did the man whose sword laid open the tumour, which the physicians had been unable to cure, wish to benefit Jason of Pheræ. Many, in fact, have done good when they wished to do harm, and done harm when they wished to do good. That which is given, therefore, affords no certain indication of the purpose of the giver, and it does not follow, if the recipient makes a profitable use of that which he has received, that he who gave it did so in a friendly spirit. Then again,[1] what lust, or avarice, or crime is either embarqued upon without the exercise of forethought, or accomplished without the mental activity and reflection which constitute reason? For every belief is a manifestation of reason, of right reason, we may add, if it is true, and of wrong if it is false. But from God we have merely reason, if indeed we have that; right reason or its opposite we derive from ourselves. For the divine favour did not bestow reason upon men in the same way that a patrimony is bequeathed, since what else would the gods have given to men, if their wish had been to injure them? From

what seeds, moreover, would injustice, intemperance, and timidity spring, if these vices had not reason as their base?

XXIX.

Just now it was Medea and Atreus, heroic characters, whom we were quoting as planning their monstrous crimes by entering upon calculations and balancing results. And are the trifles of comedy always unconnected with reason? Does the character in the Eunuchus argue with any want of acuteness?

What then shall I do? . . . She has denied me entrance; she recalls me. Shall I return? No, not if she should entreat me.

As for the character in the Synephebi, he does not hesitate to bring reason into play, after the manner of the Academics, against common opinion, saying that—

When one is very much in love and very poorly off, it is a pleasure to have a father who is niggardly, churlish, and harsh to his children, who does not love you or concern himself for you.

And to this amazing sentiment he appends some trifling arguments.

You can either cheat him of his revenues, or by means of a letter intercept some debt, or strike terror into him through a slave, and lastly what you obtain from a parsimonious father you can spend with so much more zest!

He also argues that an easy, kindly father is a disadvantage to a son who is in love.

I know not at all in what way to cheat him, nor how to steal from him, nor what guile or plot to set in motion against him; so has my father's complaisance spoilt all my stratagems and guiles and tricks.

Well? Would these guiles and plots, tell me, these tricks and stratagems, have been possible without reason? Admirable gift of the gods! enabling Phormio to say:—

Send the old man this way; now have I all my plans ready in my breast.

XXX.

But let us leave the theatre and come into the law-courts. The prætor is going to take his seat. What is it that is to be tried? The question of who burnt the record-office. What crime was ever better hidden? Quintus Sosius, a Roman knight of high position from the Picene territory, confessed to the act. The next question is who falsified the public documents. That, again, was done by Lucius Alenus, who imitated the handwriting of the first six treasury clerks. What cleverness could be greater than his? Consider other judicial inquiries, the one in reference to the gold of Tolosa, and the one on the Jugurthine conspiracy. Go back to earlier instances, to the trial of Tubulus for having received a bribe to deliver judgment, and to instances later than that, to the

inquiry with regard to incontinence[1] made under the bill brought in by Peducæus. Then there are these everyday cases of murder, poisoning, and embezzlement of public money, and also, by a recent law, a permanent court dealing with the forging of wills. It is reason that gave occasion for the form of inditement, "I say that theft was committed by your aid and counsel"; reason that occasioned so many actions for breach of faith, including those in connection with guardianship and commission, those entered into in the capacity of partner, those in connection with trusts, and the other violations of good faith which are committed in buying and selling, letting and hiring; to reason is due the institution of a public process, under the Plætorian law, in a civil case,[1] and the action for fraud, that dragnet of every kind of roguery, published by my friend Caius Aquillius,[2] who considers that fraud is established when one thing has been pretended and another done. Do we think, then, that this wide sowing of evils was the work of the immortal gods? I put the question in that way because, if the gods gave reason to men, they gave roguery, which is a wily and deceitful employment of reason to do mischief, and they also gave fraud, crime, and the other forms of wrong-doing, not one of which can be either entered upon or carried out without reason. In the same way, then, that the old woman in the Medea utters the wish—

O that in the grove of Pelion the fir-tree had not fallen, smitten by the axe, to the ground!

so one would wish that the gods had not given this adroitness of intelligence to men. Very few make a good use of it, and even they are often overcome by those who make a bad use of it, while a countless number put it to evil uses, so that this heaven-sent gift of reason and forethought seems to have been bestowed upon men for purposes of deceit and not of honesty.

XXXI.

But you insist again and again that that is the fault of men, not of the gods, which is just as though a physician were to denounce the malignity of the disease, or a pilot the fury of the storm. It is true that these are mere men, though even so they would be acting absurdly, for who, it might be asked, would have employed you, if there were not those difficulties? Against God one can argue with more freedom.[1] You say that the fault is in the vices of men,—then you ought to have given them such a kind of reason as would have excluded vices and faultiness. And where was there room for error on the part of the gods? For we men leave patrimonies in the hope of bequeathing them advantageously, in which hope it is possible for us to be deceived; but how could God have been deceived? Could he have been deceived as Sol was, when he took his son Phaëthon up into his chariot, or as Neptune was, when Theseus, having received from Neptune, who was his father, the grant of three wishes, brought destruction upon Hippolytus? These are the stories of poets, whereas we wish to be philosophers, the promulgators of facts, not fables. Yet even these gods of poetry, if they had known that the things desired would prove disastrous to their sons, would be thought to have done wrong in granting the favour. Just as, if it is true, as Aristo of Chios used to say, that philosophers do harm to those hearers who put a wrong interpretation upon what was rightly set forth,—for it is possible, he said, for

profligates to result from the school of Aristippus, and misanthropes from that of Zeno,—just as it would be far preferable, if the hearers were destined to go away corrupted through misinterpreting the arguments of the philosophers, that the latter should keep silence, than that they should be the cause of harm to those who had listened to them,—so if men divert to purposes of deceit and roguery the reason which was given by the immortal gods with a good intention, it would have been better if reason, instead of being given to mankind, had been withheld. A physician would be greatly to blame if he knew that the sick man, whom he had ordered to take wine, would take it too little diluted, and that the result would be immediate death, and in the same way this providence of yours must be censured for having given reason to those of whom it knew that they would make a wrong and wicked use of it. Perhaps, however, you say that it did not know. I only wish you would, but you will not dare, for I am not ignorant of the high esteem in which you hold its name.

XXXII.

This particular question, however, may now be brought to an end. For if, by the consent of all philosophers, folly is a greater evil than all the evils of fortune and all bodily evils would be, if they were placed on the other side, and if no one attains to wisdom, then we, for whose interests, according to your school, the most admirable provision was made by the immortal gods, are all of us involved in the worst of evils. For just as it makes no difference whether no one is, or whether no one can be, in good health, so I do not see what difference it makes whether no one is, or whether no one can be, wise. We are dwelling too long on a point that is perfectly obvious, but Telamon disposes in a single verse of the whole question of why the gods must be considered to pay no heed to men.

For if they cared for them, it would be well with the good, and ill with the evil, which now is not so.

They ought to have made all men good, if, that is, they had the interests of the human race at heart. If they did not do that, they ought at any rate to have provided for the welfare of the good. Why, then, did the Carthaginians vanquish in Spain those brave and admirable men, the two Scipios? Why did Fabius Maximus carry to the grave his son who had been consul? Why did Marcellus lose his life against Hannibal? Why was Cannæ fatal to Paulus? Why was the body of Regulus exposed to the cruelty of the Carthaginians? Why did not the walls of his own house protect Africanus? But these and very many other instances belong to a remote past; let us look at more recent ones. Why is my uncle Publius Rutilius, a man of spotless integrity and at the same time of the highest culture, in exile? Why was Drusus, my intimate friend, killed in his own house? Why was the chief pontiff Quintus Scævola, that perfect example of moderation and sagacity, butchered before the image of Vesta? Why, too, at an earlier date, were so many of the chief men of the state cut off by Cinna? Why was that falsest of men Caius Marius able to command the death of one of such high eminence as Quintus Catulus? The day would be too short if I wished to enumerate the good men for whom things have turned out ill, and equally so if I were to record the bad men who have prospered. Why, for instance, had Marius the good fortune to die at an advanced age, and in his own house, and while holding his seventh

consulship? Why did Cinna, who was unsurpassed for cruelty, exercise despotic power for so long? I shall be told that he paid the penalty.

XXXIII.

It would have been better that he should have been prevented and restrained from putting so many leading men to death, than that he should have eventually paid the penalty himself. The ruthless Quintus Varius expired under torture and suffering of the most intense kind. If this was because he had removed Drusus by the sword, and Metellus by poison, it would have been better that they should have been preserved, than that Varius should have made atonement for the crime. For eight and thirty years Dionysius was tyrant of a wealthy and flourishing state, and before his time for how many years was Pisistratus tyrant in the very foremost city of Greece! It will be said that Phalaris and Apollodorus suffered retribution. They did,—after many had first been tortured and killed by them. And many robbers often pay the penalty, yet we cannot deny that more captives than robbers have been put to a cruel death. It is recorded that Anaxarchus, the follower of Democritus, was butchered by the tyrant of Cyprus, and that Zeno was tortured to death at Elea. I need not speak of Socrates, whose death, when I read Plato, is wont to move me to tears. Do you see, then, that, if the gods observe human affairs, the distinction between good men and bad has been by their ordinance done away with?

XXXIV.

It was, indeed, a common saying of Diogenes the Cynic that Harpalus, who had the reputation in that age of being a successful robber, was a standing witness against the gods, because he lived for so long in that state of good fortune. Dionysius, of whom I spoke above, when sailing to Syracuse after plundering the temple of Proserpine at Locri, said with a laugh, as he held on his way before a favourable wind, “Do you perceive, friends, how prosperous a voyage the immortal gods give to the sacrilegious?” When his keen intelligence had thoroughly and clearly realised this, he remained firm in the same conviction. At the time when he conveyed his fleet to the Peloponnese, he entered the temple of Jupiter at Olympia, and took away from the image a golden mantle of considerable weight, with which the tyrant Gelo had adorned the god out of the money obtained from the Carthaginian spoils, making it also the subject of the following jest, that a golden mantle was heavy in summer, and cold in winter, and he placed a woollen cloak upon the image, with the remark that that was suited to every season of the year. It was he, too, who ordered the golden beard of Æsculapius at Epidaurus to be removed, on the ground that it was not fitting that the son should be bearded, when in every temple the father[1] was without a beard. He also commanded the silver tables to be taken away from all the shrines, and as, according to the custom of ancient Greece, they bore the inscription, Of the Good Gods, he said that he desired to avail himself of their goodness. Besides this he used to carry off without scruple the bowls and crowns, and small golden statues of Victory, which were held in the outstretched hands of the images, saying that he did not steal, but accepted them, since it was folly, when the powers from whom we prayed for good things, held them out and gave them, to be unwilling to take them. It

is also recorded of him that after robbing the temples of these things which I have mentioned, he brought them out into the market-place and sold them by auction, and that, after calling in the money, he issued a proclamation that all who had in their possession anything from a sanctuary, should return it in each case before a fixed date to the temple to which it belonged. In this way he added injustice to men to impiety towards the gods.

XXXV.

Well, Jupiter on Olympus did not strike him with a thunder-bolt, nor was he worn away by painful and lingering disease, and despatched by Æsculapius, but he died in his own bed, and that the drama of tyranny might have a splendid end,[1] was carried to the pyre of Typanis, and as though the power which he had himself acquired by crime were just and lawful, he handed it on as an inheritance to his son. My discourse deals with this subject unwillingly, for it has the appearance of authorising wrong-doing, and that impression would be a correct one, were it not that, without any provision on the part of the gods, the weight of the mere consciousness of virtue or vice, the removal of which causes universal ruin, makes itself felt. Now just as no house or state would seem to have been arranged on any kind of plan or system, if there were in it no rewards for good actions, and no punishments for bad, so assuredly there is no such thing as a divine government of the universe, if no distinction is made in that government between the virtuous and wicked.

It will be said (for so your school argues), that the gods neglect things of small importance, and do not make a strict inquiry as to each individual person's plot of land and modest vineyard, and that if any one has suffered loss through blight or hail, the fact did not need to be noticed by Jupiter, and that in the same way a king does not pay attention to every trifle in a kingdom,—as though I had been expressing regret just now for Publius Rutilius' estate at Formiæ, and not for his loss of civic rights!

XXXVI.

Besides, all men are agreed on this point, that it is the external goods, vineyards, corn-fields, olive-groves, teeming crops and fruits, in short all the advantages and successes of life, that they obtain from the gods, whereas no one ever imputed his virtue to God. No doubt it is right not to do so, for we are deservedly praised for virtue, and rightly glory in it, which would not be the case if we possessed that endowment from God instead of from ourselves. On the other hand, when we have been increased in honours or estate, or if we have obtained any other advantage that depends on fortune, or averted any evil, then we render thanks to the gods, and consider that no addition has been made to our own merits. But did any one ever render thanks to the gods because he was good? No, but because he was rich, or honoured, or preserved from injury. And it is for those reasons that we call Jupiter best and greatest, not because he makes us just, or temperate, or wise, but because he gives us safety, and freedom from hurt, and riches, and abundant resources. No one, either, ever engaged to pay a tithe to Hercules in the event of becoming wise, although Pythagoras is said, when he had made some new discovery in geometry, to

have sacrificed an ox to the Muses; that, however, I do not believe, since he refused to sacrifice a victim even to the Delian Apollo, that he might not sprinkle the altar with blood. But, to return to the subject, it is the universal judgment of mankind that good fortune is to be sought from God, and wisdom obtained from oneself. We may dedicate temples as we will to Mind, and Virtue, and Faith, but we nevertheless see that these qualities are resident in ourselves, whereas the attainment of Hope, Safety, Wealth, and Victory has to be asked for from the gods. The prosperity, therefore, and success of the wicked refute, as Diogenes used to say, the whole idea of divine power and supremacy.

XXXVII.

It may be urged that sometimes the good come to good ends. Yes, and upon these we seize, and attribute them without any reason to the immortal gods. But when Diagoras, he who is called ?θεος, having come to Samothrace, was asked by one of his friends whether he who thought that the gods were careless of human affairs, did not perceive from so many painted tablets how many there were whose vows had enabled them to escape the fury of the storm, and to make their way safe into port, "That is so," he replied, "because there are no pictures anywhere of those who have been shipwrecked and have perished in the sea". Once also when he was on a voyage, and the passengers, alarmed and terrified by adverse storms, said to him that they deserved to fare as they did for having taken him on board the same ship, he pointed out to them several other ships struggling in the same course, and asked whether they believed that those also had a Diagoras on board. The truth is that it makes no difference, with regard to good or evil fortune, of what character one is, or how one has lived. We are told that the gods do not notice everything, and that kings do not do so either, but what is the resemblance? For a king is greatly to blame if he passes things over knowingly, whereas God is without even the excuse of ignorance.

XXXVIII.

And a pretty defence you and your school make of him, when you say that the power of the gods is such that, even if any one has escaped the penalty of his crime by death, that penalty is demanded from his children, and grandchildren, and posterity. How strange is the divine equity! Would any state listen to the proposer of a law of that kind, a law which provided that the son or grandson should be condemned, if the father or grandfather had done wrong?

What measure can be found for the destruction of the descendants of Tantalus? Or what satiety of vengeance will ever be vouchsafed to the penalties paid for the death of Myrtilus?

Whether it is the poets who have corrupted the Stoics, or the Stoics who have lent authority to the poets, I should not find it easy to say, for they both of them make wild and preposterous statements. The pain, for instance, which possessed those who had smarted under the iambics of Hipponax, or had been stung by the verses of Archilochus, was not sent upon them by God, but was derived from themselves, and when we behold the incontinence of Ægisthus or Paris, we do not look to God for the

cause, for we hear their guilt almost proclaiming itself aloud. I am of opinion, too, that many a sick man's recovery has been due to Hippocrates rather than to Æsculapius, and I will never allow that the system of the Lacedæmonians was given to Sparta by Apollo and not by Lycurgus. I say that it was Critolaus who caused the ruin of Corinth, and Hasdrubal of Carthage. It was they who exterminated the two noblest of maritime cities, they, and not some angry deity, who, according to you, is altogether incapable of anger.

XXXIX.

But at any rate he would have been capable of aiding and preserving those great and glorious cities, for it is one of your own common sayings that there is nothing which God cannot perform, and that without any labour. For just as the limbs of a man are moved without an effort by the mere force of the mind and will, so, you say, everything can be moulded, and moved, and changed by the divine purpose. And you do not say so from a feeling of old-womanish superstition, but in accordance with a consistent scientific theory, which is that the material of things, out of which and in which all things exist, is throughout ductile and plastic, so that there is nothing into which it cannot, however suddenly, be formed and changed; and the moulding and controlling power of all this material is the divine providence, which can accordingly, wherever it turns itself, bring about whatsoever it desires. Either, therefore, God is ignorant of his powers, or is indifferent to human affairs, or is unable to judge what is best. "He has no care," you say, "for individuals." It is no wonder; he has none for communities either. None for communities? Then he has just as little for nations and races. But if we find that he despises even these, is there anything wonderful in his having despised the entire human race? And how is it that you who say that the gods do not keep a strict account of everything, at the same time maintain that dreams are divided and apportioned amongst men by the immortal gods? I put this question to you, Balbus, because it is by your school that the belief as to the truth of dreams is held. You are also inconsistent enough to say that it is right to take vows upon oneself. Of course it is individuals who make vows, so that the divine intelligence does give ear even in the case of individuals. Do you perceive from what I have said that this intelligence is not so much occupied as you thought? Even supposing that it is busily employed, that it makes the heavens revolve, and has its eyes upon the earth, and sways the sea, why does it allow so many gods to do nothing and be idle? Why does it not put some of the unoccupied deities, of whom you, Balbus, brought forward an enormous number, in charge of human affairs? This is pretty much what I had to say on the subject of the divine nature, not with a view to disproving its existence, but in order that you might understand how obscure it is, and how difficult to unravel.

XL.

With these words Cotta brought his discourse to an end. Lucilius then said, Well, Cotta, you have inveighed with some warmth against that pious and well-considered doctrine which the Stoics have laid down with regard to the divine providence, but since evening is approaching, you must give us a day at some time, in order that we may meet your arguments. For my contest with you is for altar and hearth, for the

temples and shrines of the gods, and the walls of the city, those walls which you and your brother pontiffs declare to be sacred, and you encompass our city with religion more carefully than with actual ramparts; that this cause should be deserted by me, so long at least as I am able to draw breath, I regard as shameful. For my part, replied Cotta, I am anxious to be refuted; besides, I preferred discussing the points that I raised to coming to a decision, and I am sure that I can be easily overcome by you. Yes, said Velleius, Balbus must be irresistible, for he thinks that even dreams are sent to us by Jupiter, though dreams themselves are not so trifling as the utterances of the Stoics on the subject of the divine nature. After these words had passed, we separated, the result attained being that Velleius thought Cotta's arguments the truer, while I thought that those of Balbus came nearer to what appeared to be the truth.

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[1]Through the death of the Academic Philo.

[1]Representing the Peripatetics.

[1]In which Epicurus supposed the gods to reside.

[1]The reference is to the Timæus. The "five forms" are the five solids, and the "other elements" are those just mentioned, earth, air, fire, and water, which are represented in the Timæus as resulting from the impression of the figures of four of the solids upon original matter. The universe itself was the result of the application of the fifth solid.

[2]According to the explanation of sensation which is given in the Timæus, the soul and the organs of perception are themselves composed of the same elements of air, fire, etc., as the material objects of perception, so that "like is known by like".

[1]An allusion to the cyclic conflagration of the universe in which the Stoics believed.

[2]*i.e.,* Balbus and Plato.

[3]MSS. here give: *Quod ne in cogitationem quidem cadit, ut fuerit tempus aliquod, nullum cum tempus esset.* The words are bracketed in Mayor's text, but he would now restore them, accepting the rendering of A. Goethe in his German ed. (1887), "But it is impossible to conceive that there could have been a time when there was no (previous) time".

[4]A double reference to the constellations of the sky and the statues and illuminations with which the ædiles on festal occasions adorned Rome.

[1]Plato and the Stoics.

[2]*i.e.,* according to the Epicureans, the human figure.

[1]A probably impossible rendering of the MS. reading *significetur,* which Mayor obelizes. A conjecture is *sic incitetur,* “painful in our own body if it were hurried along in that way”.

[1]*i.e.,* no rationality, of which activity and sensation are the conditions.

[1]According to Epicurus the stars and the soul were composed of atoms and therefore dissoluble.

[2]Or “as most of them, he thought, did”. Mayor now prefers this rendering by which the sentiment is attributed to Pythagoras instead of, as above, to the Epicurean speaker.

[3]And therefore none with mind, because mind, like everything else, is included within infinity.

[1]*i.e.,* the replicas which, according to Democritus, material objects formed of themselves by casting off atoms in the same order and number as in the original object. Mental impressions he considered to arise from the contact of these replicas with our own bodily organisation.

[1]Plato.

[1]Referring, probably, to the many gods of the popular religion, rather than to the just-mentioned alternative deities of Aristotle, which are too few in number to be spoken of in such terms. The argument is: These gods reside in the sky as their heaven; consequently if the sky itself is God, we get the absurdity of one God being included in another.

[1]*i.e.,* in the divine existence.

[1]An allusion to the freedom from consistency which the Academics claimed for themselves.

[2]Because formed, according to Epicurus, only of the finest atoms.

[1]*i.e.,* solids.

[2]The destructive forces were supposed by the Epicureans to operate on earth, and the conservative forces in the *intermundia,* where the gods were in consequence able to reside in safety.

[1]Some MSS. insert *L. Crasso,* which Madvig takes to be merely a gloss derived from *De Orat.,* iii., 78, where Crassus speaks of Velleius as *meus familiaris.* The fact that in *De Orat.,* iii., 77, Crassus is made to disclaim any special knowledge of philosophy would make the occurrence of his name here unlikely. Madvi supposes an allusion to the Epicurean Phædrus, or else a name may have fallen from the text.

[1]This included theology, the divine nature coming under the general head of being.

[1]Cotta, that is, would give a conventional acceptance to the state religion for the sake of its utility.

[1]*Neque ut sint, neque ut non sint, habeo dicere,* a rendering of Protagoras' own words, ο?κ ?χω ε?δέναι ο?θ' ?ς ε?σ?ν ο?θ' ?ς ο?κ ε?σίν. The *ut,* which properly could only have the meaning of "how," is probably intended by Cicero to correspond, by a forced use of language, to the ?ς of the Greek in the sense of "that".

[2]A proverbial expression for a man of brutal and inhuman temperament, its opposite being *filius Jovis.*

[1]In the MSS. *nihil est enim quod vacet corpore.* For the omission which, in order to make the text intelligible, it is necessary to suppose between *enim* and *quod* Mayor suggests the context translated above.

[2]Matter being here assumed to be infinitely divisible.

[1]The youths from the age of eighteen to twenty, who were employed chiefly in garrison duty in Attica. The number in each division was about fifteen.

[2]*i.e.,* in the college of pontiffs.

[3]Both Velleius and Roscius, the famous actor, were natives of Lanuvium in Latium.

[1]*Cf.* the Epicurean criticism at the beginning of chap. 14 of this book.

[2]An ironical allusion to the little importance paid to logic and dialectic by Epicurus.

[1]*i.e.,* you implicitly require them in requiring a human form.

[1]Mistress of Epicurus and member of the Epicurean circle.

[2]With some one who had written libellously of Epicurus.

[3]The feminine termination is pointed at the prolix style of Chrysippus.

[1]Only because now for the first time coined by Cicero.

[1]*i.e.,* refuse to allow any necessary connection between reason and those other attributes in man with which it co-exists.

[1]*Pervenerint.* Mayor would now read *pervenerim,* "when I have betaken myself".

[1]The Epicurean view was that the image corresponded exactly to the original. In denying this Cotta anticipates the result of the reasoning which follows.

[1]The Eleusinian mysteries, and those of the Cabeiri, who were worshipped at Samothrace and Lemnos, received, amongst other explanations, a physical one, to

which Cicero here refers. According to it they symbolised the powers of nature, the earth, sky, etc., or the operations of agriculture.

[2]A play upon the word as used to denote the Epicurean school.

[1]Abdera in Thrace, notorious for the stupidity of its inhabitants.

[1]*Quid aliud declarant nisi hominibus ea ostendi, monstrari, portendi, prædici? ex quo illa ostenta, monstra, portenta, prodigia dicuntur. Prodigia* is apparently meant to be derived from *prodico. Ostenta* and *monstra* have in actual use a more specific meaning than the etymological one given above, the first word denoting a marvellous appearance, the second an odious and unnatural one.

[1]*i.e.,* the magistrates, who generally belonged to the class of *nobiles.* These included the old patricians and also plebeians descended from an ancestor who had held a curule office.

[1]When the spears were piled near together, the points were sometimes seen to shine, the appearance being in reality due to electricity.

[2]It was during the interval afforded by the auspices being taken that the soldiers had an opportunity of making their wills.

[3]The right belonged to consuls and prætors, and ceased with their year of office. Consequently when they went out to the provinces as proconsuls and proprætors they no longer possessed it.

[1]*i.e.,* of augurs.

[1]*i.e.,* "with curling hair," just as *cometes* (κομήτης) = "longhaired".

[2]*i.e.,* Cnæus Octavius, a partisan of Sulla. The calamities portended were the proscriptions under Marius and Sulla.

[1]These were employed as cats.

[2]The conclusion, which is not stated here, is supplied in ii., 15, *ad fin.* It is that if the lowest regions, where the air is thick, are inhabited by men, the pure regions of æther may be expected to have divine inhabitants, *viz.,* the stars.

[1]*Terrenam ipsam soliditatem,* the qualifying *ipsam* ("even") being added because the flesh presents the instance of greatest unlikeness to the original element.

[1]*i.e.,* by the heat of the stomach, *stomachi calore,* the words afterwards used in this connection in chap. 49 of this book.

[1]*i.e.,* nature as a blind, unconscious force, not in the Stoic sense. *Cf.* ii., 32 *ad init.* for a definition of nature from a non-Stoic point of view.

[1]Images of the gods in human form meeting the eye on every hand.

[1]He was born in Samos, but was the son of Athenian parents.

[1]This refers to the inscribing of the solid figures in a circle.

[2]The dust or sand in which geometrical figures were traced.

[1]So called from the arched form which is common to the sky and to the roof of the mouth.

[2]The reference is to the double movement of the planets, which are partly carried round with the fixed stars in the general movement of the heavens, and partly revolve round the earth with a movement of their own.

[1]*i.e.,* of the god-head, or, from the Stoic point of view, nature.

[1]This description is not so applicable to the abstractions of the previous clause as to those which follow. Mayor is now inclined to accept Goethe's emendation *intellegi* for *regi,* "to be understood without a god".

[1]Whose movements impose a kind of limitation upon time.

[2]Followed in the MSS. by *dicunt enim cælo fulgente, tonante,* "for they mean when the sky lightens and thunders". Mayor brackets the words as a gloss.

[1]Which was supposed to be connected with πλον?τος, wealth.

[1]Introduced here because, as the next sentence shows, corresponding to Janus as the end to the beginning.

[2]In Greek Artemis.

[3]A translation of ?ωσ?όρος.

[1]For it was Juno Lucina who was the Roman goddess of light, and in particular of the new moon, and who was as such associated with child-birth. The poets, however, commonly employ Lucina in this connection.

[1]*i.e.,* gods whom we regard as personified forces of nature.

[1]*i.e.,* the nature of the universe.

[2]*i.e.,* principles which are divine.

[1]These movements are referred by Mayor to the elements mentioned in the next sentence, the movement of earth and water being downwards, that of air upwards, and that of æther circular. The upward movement is otherwise referred to exhalations, the downward to rain, lightning, etc., and the circular to the stars.

[1]*i.e.,* a sun-dial.

[1]*i.e.,* the attraction of all its parts to the centre.

[1]For air, as has been said (ii., 10, and elsewhere), is formed from water.

[1]*E regione solis,* lit. “in a line with”. The moon is then above, and the sun beneath, the earth.

[2]Lit. “dog’s tail”.

[3]Lit. “winding”.

[1]Lit. “the seven oxen”.

[2]?νγόνασιν, “upon the knees,” the figure of a man kneeling.

[1]??ιον?χος, “snake-holder”.

[2]Lit. “Bear-watcher”.

[3]Βοώτης, “ploughman”.

[4]*i.e.,* as though ?άδες were connected with ??ς = *sus,* a pig, and not with ?ειν, to rain.

[1]Cassiepia.

[2]According to Cicero, the Bow, but the statement is not astronomically true. The proper antecedent to *quem* is contained in a portion of the original which has been omitted.

[1]*i.e.,* the Argo, but the statement is again contrary to fact, and there has been another omission of the word to which the pronoun ought to refer.

[1]*i.e.,* Venus and Mercury, whose course is almost the same as that of the sun. *Cf.* ii., 20.

[1]*i.e.,* mussel.

[1]*i.e.,* the heat of the stomach causes the shells to expand.

[2]In Ar. H. A., ix., 37, it is represented as capturing the fish by means of the filaments which hang in front of its eyes, the explanation being that these have a glittering appearance at the tip which attracts the fish.

[3]*Deinde sensim ab utroque latere cursus levatur.* Mayor suspects this use of *sensim* by itself, and thinks that some words have probably dropped out with the meaning given above.

[1]*Eoque sæptum fingit animal.* Another possible rendering of this would be "and shapes with it," *i.e.,* the food, "the enclosed embryo".

[1]Lit. "yearly" (?τος), applied more especially to the trade winds blowing from the north-west between the summer solstice and the dog-days.

[2]Followed in the MSS. by *et tamen multa dicuntur,* "and yet many are mentioned". Mayor brackets the words, regarding them as the interpolation of a wearied reader.

[1]?ρτηρία τραχε??α, the trachea or windpipe, called "rough" because it is strengthened by rings of cartilage which distinguish it from the smooth tube of a common artery.

[1]*i.e.,* the fluid mentioned in the previous sentence.

[1]Omitting *ut qui,* which Mayor obelizes.

[1]*i.e.,* the adequate knowledge which is based upon the process of syllogism and definition just referred to.

[1]Addressed to Cotta. *Cf.* ii., 1, for a similar reference to his position as an orator.

[2]The plural seems to show that the reference is to the horns which formed the two sides of the lyre, and not, as in ii., 57, to a sounding board made of horn.

[1]It was a maxim of the Stoics that the possession of one virtue nvolved the possession of all.

[1]*i.e.,* those whose flight and those whose note was significant.

[1]By this the whole earth is meant, compared in the next sentence to an island, because surrounded by the ocean. According to Posidonius, whom Cicero is following, there were three other such islands.

[1]Delivered against a proposal to transfer the elections to priesthoods from the priestly colleges to the people.

[1]Tyndaridæ having the meaning of "sons of Tyndareus".

[2]This is stated by Balbus in ii., 24, but was an advance upon the belief of the earlier Stoics. Cotta's subsequent arguments in chapters 12-14 of this book are opposed to it.

[1]The first part of the following discussion upon divination is lost.

[1]*Cf.* ii., 6, where there is a quotation from Chrysippus dealing with this point. The words of Zeno in the last chapter are also partly referred to.

[1]A parody of the opening sentence of ii., 22.

[2]*Iste quasi consensus.* Cicero's attempt at a Latin equivalent of συμπάθεια.

[3]The implied reference is to the mundane deity of the Stoics.

[1]*i.e.,* the four just mentioned. *Cf.* ii., 6, *ad fin.*

[1]*i.e.,* there is air in them as well as in the universe at large.

[1]The argument in full would be: but the idea of pleasures of sense in connection with the divine nature is ludicrous; therefore the virtue of temperance is not possessed by God.

[1]Followed in the MSS. by *mihi quidem sane multi videntur,* "to me indeed they seem very numerous". Mayor brackets the words, considering them an interpolation similar to the one noticed on ii., 53.

[2]*i.e.,* Hercules.

[1]Legendary priests of Cybele.

[2]Mayor transposes chapters 17-20 with 21-23 on the ground of the connection of subject between chapters 21 and 16, and between chapter 24 and chapters 17 and 18.

[3]*i.e.,* the Euhemerists and Stoics just referred to, who are as much open to the charge of a multiplicity of deities as the vulgar who believe in actual deification.

[1]?νακτες, "kings".

[1]*i.e.,* νόμους, from which the title is here derived. It is really connected with νομός, pasture.

[1]*i.e.,* the one mentioned in iii., 2.

[1]Balbus had really assigned both causes. *Cf.* ii., 24, *ad med.*

[1]An obscure goddess of whom little was known by the Romans themselves. Cicero connects the name with that of the Furiæ, who are identical with the Greek Eumenides.

[1]The shrines of Amphiaraus and Trophonius were in Bœotia. The tax-farmers naturally wished as little territory as possible to be exempt from taxation.

[1]They volunteered to die in order to ensure victory over the Eleusinians.

[2]Immolated by their father to avert a plague.

[3]"Belonging to the daughters of Leos."

[1]*Admirabilem,* representing Greek θαυμαστήν, with which Thaumas, "Wonder," is connected.

[1]In the case of Neptune and *nare* the letter N, and a similar method may be applied to all other names.

[1]The concluding words of the sentence have dropped out.

[1]The rest of the section on the providential government of the universe is lost. The following quotation from the Medea of Ennius forms part of the refutation of the providential care for man, and is intended to show that the gift of reason may be more of an injury than a benefit.

[2]The reference is to the permission granted to Medea by Creon to remain for one more day in Corinth.

[1]*Quæ enim libido . . . ?* It is difficult to connect the *enim* with the preceding sentences. In the re-arrangement of the whole chapter which Mayor proposes this sentence is placed after the one which at present ends the chapter. If the order of the text is adhered to, it seems only possible to regard the *enim* as referring back to the general question of reason and adding a fresh argument against it.

[1]*i.e.,* of the Vestal Virgins.

[1]*i.e.,* the cheating of young men by money-lenders. The Lex Plætoria made this a public and criminal offence, in which any one could act as prosecutor.

[2]In his edict as prætor.

[1]Because God cannot plead the excuse of human weakness. In the following sentence the deity is addressed directly.

[1]Apollo.

[1]*Ut tyrannidis fabula magnificum haberet exitum.* These words are a conjecture of Mayor's, *tyrannidis* being inferred from the doubtful *Typanidis,* which he obelizes.