

## THE PANEGYRICUS OF PLINIUS SECUNDUS DELIVERED TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN

1. OUR ancestors in their wisdom, Conscript Fathers, laid down the excellent rule that a speech no less than a course of action should take its start from prayers: thinking that nothing could be properly and prudently begun by mortal men without the aid and counsel of the immortal gods and the honour due to them. Who should duly observe this custom if not the consul? And what occasion could be more appropriate for doing so than the day when by the Senate's command we are called on to express thanks in the name of our country to the best of emperors? For what gift of the gods could be greater and more glorious than a prince whose purity and virtue make him their own equal? If it were still in doubt whether the rulers of the earth were given us by the hazards of chance or by some heavenly power, it would be evident that our emperor at least was divinely chosen for his task; for it was no blind act of fate but Jupiter himself who chose and revealed him in the sight and hearing of us all, among the many altars of the Capitol, in the very place where the god makes his presence as clearly felt as in the heavens and stars. Wherefore, mighty Jupiter, once the founder and now the

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preserver of our realm, it is my right and proper duty to address my prayers to you: grant, I pray you, that my speech prove worthy of consul, Senate and prince, that independence, truth, and sincerity mark my every word, and my vote of thanks be as far removed from a semblance of flattery as it is from constraint.

2. It is my view that not only the consul but every citizen alike should endeavour to say nothing about our ruler which could have been said of any of his predecessors. Away, then, with expressions formerly prompted by fear: I will have none of them. The sufferings of the past are over: let us then have done with the words which belong to them. An open tribute to our Emperor demands a new form, now that the wording of our private talk has changed. Times are different, and our speeches must show this; from the very nature of our thanks both the recipient and the occasion must be made clear to all. Nowhere should we flatter him as a divinity and a god;<sup>1</sup> we are talking of a fellow-citizen, not a tyrant, one who is our father not our over-lord. He is one of us—and his special virtue lies in his thinking so, as also in his never forgetting that he is a man himself while a ruler of men. Let us then appreciate our good fortune and prove our worth by our use of it, and at the same time remember that there can be no merit if greater deference is paid to rulers who delight in the servitude of their subjects than to those who value their liberty. The

*dominus* was retained by the emperors, but without the suggestion of tyranny: it is always used by Pliny in addressing Trajan, except in *Epp.* X. 1, 4 and 14.

people must have their own ways of distinguishing between their rulers. They all give the same acclamation now to one for his valour as another had a short time ago for his good looks,<sup>1</sup> and the cries which greeted the voice and attitudes of one of his predecessors<sup>2</sup> now serve to praise their present emperor's devotion to duty, his clemency and restraint. What about us? Is it the divine nature of our prince or his humanity, his moderation and his courtesy which joy and affection prompt us to celebrate in a single voice? Surely nothing could reveal him as citizen and senator more appropriately than the title bestowed on him of *Optimus*,<sup>3</sup> Best, one which by contrast with the insolence of some of his predecessors he can claim as his individual right. One and all and all alike we acclaim his good fortune, and with it our own, and beg him to "continue thus" or again, "to hear our prayers," as if forming our requests in the sure knowledge that he will grant these. For his part, he listens with tears in his eyes, and his blushes show his awareness that he is addressed not as the holder of his title of prince but as himself.

3. This moderation, then, which we have all maintained in the sudden surge of our affection, we must individually try to keep in our more studied tributes, remembering that there is no more sincere nor welcome kind of thanks than that which most resembles the spontaneous acclamation which has no time for artifice. For my own part, I shall strive to make my

coins (S. 34-8), and from July 114 he took *optimus* as an *agnomen* in inscriptions. Cf. Dio, LXVIII. 23. 1: S. 99-101, and Durry, *Panegyrique*, Appendix 1.

speech conform with the modesty and moderation of my prince, and while paying due tribute to his merits shall remind myself of what his ears can endure to hear. And indeed it does him honour of no ordinary kind if in thanking him my fears are not that he will think I say too little in his praise but that I say too much. This is my sole anxiety, the only difficulty in my path; for it is easy, Conscript Fathers, to render thanks where they are due. There is no danger that in my references to his humanity he will see a reproach for arrogance; that he will suppose I mean extravagance by modest expenditure, and cruelty by forbearance; that I think him covetous and capricious when I call him generous and kind, profligate and idle instead of self-controlled and active, or that I judge him a coward when I speak of him as a brave man. I do not even fear that my gratitude or lack of it will be judged in accordance with the adequacy of my words, for I have noted that the gods themselves delight in the innocence and purity of their worshippers rather than in the elaborate preparation of the prayers they offer, and prefer the man who brings a chaste and sinless heart to their shrines to one who comes with a studied invocation.

4. But now I must bow to the decree of the Senate<sup>1</sup> which in the public interest has declared that under the form of a vote of thanks delivered by the voice of the consul, good rulers should recognize their own deeds and bad ones learn what theirs

III. 18. 1; II. 1. 5 (Verginius Rufus). The *Panegyricus* is greatly enlarged from the original *gratiarum actio*. Cf. III. 13. 1 and note.

PANEGYRICUS, 4. 2-6

should be. That is the more necessary and solemn duty today because our Father has banned and forbidden private expressions of thanks, and would intervene against public speeches also if he allowed himself to oppose the Senate's will. Both these actions, Caesar Augustus—your refusal of thanks elsewhere and your acceptance here—are proof of your moderation, for you do honour thereby not to yourself but to those who would thank you. You yield to our feelings of affection; and no necessity constrains us to proclaim your good deeds, whereas you have bound yourself to listen to them.

I often used to wonder, Conscript Fathers, what great gifts should be proper to the man whose word or gesture of command could rule land and sea and determine peace or war; but when I tried to picture to myself a ruler worthy of power equalling that of the immortal gods, even in my fondest hopes I never conceived the like of him whom we see before us today. One man may have shone in war, but his glory has grown dim in time of peace, while another has distinguished himself in civil life but not in arms. Some have won respect through men's fear, while others in courting popularity have sunk low. Sometimes the honour gained at home has been thrown away outside it, while at others a public reputation has been lost in private life. In fact there has been no one up till now whose virtues have remained unsullied by the close proximity of his faults. Contrast our prince, in whose person all the merits which win our admiration are found in complete and happy harmony! His essential seriousness and authority lose nothing through his candour and good humour;

he can show humanity but remain a sovereign power. In addition, his splendid bearing and tall stature, his fine head and noble countenance, to say nothing of the firm strength of his maturity and the premature signs of advancing age with which the gods have seen fit to mark his hair and so enhance his look of majesty—are these not sufficient signs to proclaim him far and wide for what he is: our prince?

5. And rightly so: for he was not created by civil wars and a country racked by the arms of battle, but given to our land in peace, through adoption,<sup>1</sup> by heavenly powers at long last moved by prayer. How could any man-made emperor ever be permitted to rank equal with the chosen of the gods? Indeed, their choice of you, Caesar Augustus, and their divine favour were made manifest at the very moment of your setting out to join your army<sup>2</sup> by an omen without precedent. The names of all your predecessors were revealed to those who sought the oracles either by a gush of blood from the victims or a flight of birds on the left; but in your case, as you mounted the Capitol, following due precedent, the citizens gathered there for other reasons hailed you with a shout as if you were already emperor: for when the doors of the temple opened for your entry, the entire crowd assembled at the threshold cried *Imperator!* At the time it was thought that they were addressing Jupiter,<sup>3</sup> but events have proved that the title was intended for you, and the omen was thus interpreted by all. You alone were un-

Cincinnatus (Livy VI. 29. 8). This must have been destroyed in the fire of 83 B.C., but this passage shows it had been replaced.

willing to accept it, for you were reluctant to assume imperial power, a sure sign that you would use it well. So then you had to be pressed. Even then you could only be persuaded because you saw your country in peril and the whole realm tottering to a fall;<sup>1</sup> for you were resolved only to take up the burden of supreme power when it was threatened with destruction. This, I fancy, explains the rioting and mutiny which had broken out in the army; it was to provide the widespread violence and terror which were needed to overcome your diffidence. Just as a period of calm in sky and sea is welcomed by contrast with storm and tempest, similarly, I think, that earlier season of unrest was designed to increase our appreciation of the peace we owe to you. Such are the vicissitudes of our mortal lot: misfortune is born of prosperity, and good fortune of ill-luck. God conceals their origins in both cases, and the causes of good and evil are hidden for the most part, each behind the other's mask.

6. The great blot on our age, the deadly wound inflicted on our realm, was the time when an emperor and Father of the human race was besieged in his palace, arrested and confined; from the kindest of elderly men was snatched his authority to preserve mankind, from a prince was removed the greatest blessing of princely power, the knowledge that he cannot be forced against his will. Yet if this were the only means whereby you were to be brought to steer the ship of state, I am still ready to declare that the price was not too high. Army discipline broke down so that you could come to correct and improve it; a shocking example was set

## PANEGYRICUS, 6. 2-7. 2

so that you could counter it with a better; finally, a ruler was forced to put men to death against his will<sup>1</sup> in order to provide one on whom force should never prevail. Your merits did indeed call for your adoption as successor long ago; but had you been adopted then, we should never have known the empire's debt to you. We had to wait for the moment which would show you not so much the beneficiary as the benefactor. The country reeled under its blows to take refuge in your embrace; the empire which was falling with its emperor was put into your hands at the emperor's word; for it was through your adoption that you yielded to entreaties and allowed yourself to be recalled, like the great generals of the past who were summoned from distant wars abroad to bring aid to their homeland.<sup>2</sup> Thus it was that, father and son together, at one and the same moment you bestowed on each other the greatest of all gifts: he gave you supreme power and you returned it to him. You alone in our time have made proper return for such a gift, simply by your acceptance of it; nay, rather, you put the giver in your debt, for the sharing of authority increased your responsibilities while lessening his cares.

7. This is indeed a novel route to the principate, unheard of hitherto!<sup>3</sup> No ambition of yours, no fears inspired by you, but another's interests and another's terrors have made you prince. It may appear that you have won the highest honour among men, and yet a greater happiness lay in what you renounced, namely, your position as subject under

<sup>3</sup> But cf. Galba's speech on adopting Piso (*Tac. Hist. I.* 15-16), a speech with many verbal affinities with *Pan* 7-8.

PANEGYRICUS, 7. 2-7. 7

a good ruler. You were called upon to share his toils and troubles, nor was it the pleasures and successes of his position which compelled you, but its difficulties and pains. You assumed authority only after he wished to be rid of it. No tie of kinship or relationship bound adopted and adopter; your only bond was that of mutual excellence, rendering you worthy either to choose or to be chosen. Thus you were adopted not as others have been hitherto, in order to gratify a wife;<sup>1</sup> no stepfather made you his son, but one who was your prince, and the divine Nerva became your father in the same sense that he was father of us all. This is the only fitting way to adopt a son if the adopter is an emperor; for when it is a case of transferring the Senate and people of Rome, armies, provinces, and allies to a single successor, would you look to a wife to provide him, or seek no further than the four walls of your home? No indeed, you would search through all your subjects, and judge him the closest and dearest to you whom you find to be the noblest and nearest to the gods. If he is destined to rule the people, one and all, he must be chosen from among them all, for no law of succession can satisfy you when you are not appointing an overlord for your household of cheap slaves, but a prince and emperor for the citizens of Rome. Not to adopt the one man who in the eyes of all could have proved himself a ruler even without adoption would indicate the wanton tyranny of power. Thus Nerva made his choice, realizing that unless sons are adopted with more judgement than they are begotten there is little difference between a son born and a son chosen—but for the fact that men

PANEGYRICUS, 7. 7-8. 5

will more readily forgive a ruler for a son who proves unworthy than for a successor who was a bad choice.

8. He took pains, then, to avoid such a disaster, seeking counsel from gods and men alike; and thus the adoption took place<sup>1</sup> not in his bedroom and by his marriage-bed but in the temple before the couch of Jupiter Best and Highest, the adoption<sup>2</sup> which was to be the basis of no servitude for us, but of security, happiness, and freedom. The gods have claimed the credit for this, since it was carried out at their command. Nerva was no more than their minister, no less obedient as adopter than you who were adopted. Laurels had been brought from Pannonia,<sup>3</sup> at the gods' behest, for the symbol of victory to mark the rise of a ruler who would never know defeat. Nerva laid them in the lap of Jupiter and straightway rose up, taller and nobler than was his wont; before the gathered assembly of gods and men he chose you as his son, his sole support in time of crisis. From that moment onwards he delighted in the happiness and honour he derived from what might be termed his resignation—for there is little to choose between resigning and sharing power, except that the latter is more difficult—leaning on you as if you were there by his side, resting the burden of his person and his country on your shoulders, drawing strength from your youth and vigour. Every disturbance died away at once; though this

adoption (Suet. *Aug.* 65. 1). Contrast Piso's adoption (Tac. *Hist.* I. 16. 9).

<sup>3</sup> Not Trajan's own victory, as he was in Germany. Laurels were sent with bulletins announcing victory (Pliny *N.H.* XV. 133-4).

was the effect not so much of the adoption as the nature of the man adopted, sure indication that Nerva would have been foolish had he chosen otherwise. It is not so long since there was an adoption which failed to check an outbreak of rebellion,<sup>1</sup> and indeed was its occasion; have we forgotten this? Yours too would have inflamed angry feelings and set a torch to insurrection if the choice had not fallen on you. Can it be doubted that if an emperor who had forfeited men's regard was able to bestow the imperial power, it could only be because of the personality of the recipient? At one moment then, you became son and Caesar; soon you were emperor with a share in the tribune's powers, to hold immediately and simultaneously all the titles which in recent times were conferred by an emperor on one only of the sons he had fathered.<sup>2</sup>

9. It is sure proof of your moderation that you have found favour not only as successor to the imperial power but as associate and colleague. A man must have a successor, whether he wants him or not; he need not take a colleague unless he chooses. Posterity may find it hard to believe that one whose father was of noble birth and consular rank and won a triumph,<sup>3</sup> who was himself in command of a mighty army<sup>4</sup> of brave soldiers devoted to their general, could be made emperor but not by them; and receive from Rome the title of *Germanicus*<sup>5</sup> when governor of Germany, and yet take no steps himself to become

<sup>4</sup> Both Upper and Lower Germany had three legions.

<sup>5</sup> The title was assumed by Nerva and Trajan either at the end of 97 or in 98, after Vestricius Spinna's negotiations with the Bructeri (cf. *Ep.* II. 7. 2).

emperor and do nothing in fact except serve as a soldier and obey. Yes, Caesar, you obeyed, and it was your obedience which raised you to the principate; nothing is better proof of your sense of discipline than the fact that you started your reign with these splendid titles of *Caesar*, *Imperator*, and *Germanicus* granted you when you were far from Rome and unaware of your future, yet still in your own heart remained a loyal subject. I should be thought to exaggerate if I said that you did not know you would be emperor; in fact, you *were* emperor, but did not know it. And when the news came of your good fortune, you would have preferred, I think, to remain as you had been; but you were not free to decide. You were subject, legate and son: your duty lay in obedience to your ruler, your general and your father; else where would military discipline be, and the tradition of centuries of accepting readily, without question, whatever charges your general imposed? He could have assigned you province after province, sent you on campaign after campaign, for clearly he was exercising the same authority in recalling you to assume the imperial power as he did when he sent you out to command your army. An order is an order, whether it means a departure as legate or a return as prince, though there may be greater glory in obedience where the desire to obey is less.

10. This order was the more authoritative for you simply because authority was in grave peril; you thought that obedience was all the more necessary from you since it was lacking in others. Furthermore, you were told that the Senate and people

approved, and this choice and decision were not Nerva's alone, but the heart-felt prayer of the whole country. He did no more than exercise his prerogative as Leader of the State, and anticipate what everyone would have liked to do, nor would his action have been so universally popular if it had not been previously approved. Power and advancement were yours, but heaven may bear witness to the moderate use you made of them. Inscriptions, portraits<sup>1</sup> and the army's standards proclaimed you *Imperator*, but in your self-effacement, activity and vigilance you were soldier, officer and commander in the field; striding ahead of the standards and eagles which were now your own, you claimed no benefit from your adoption but the right to show the obedience and devotion of a son, and sought long life and lasting glory only for the name you now bore. The gods in their wisdom had already raised you to the supreme position, but your desire was still to take the second place and grow old there; you felt yourself to be no more than a simple citizen as long as another emperor reigned with you. Your prayers were heard, but only so long as this served the interests of that august and venerable ruler; for the gods claimed him to take his place in the heavens, thinking that nothing merely mortal should follow his godlike and immortal act and that the honour proper to a noble deed was for this deed to be the last of its author, who should then be deified at once so that one day posterity might wonder whether he was already god when his last deed was done. Thus his highest claim to be the Father of his country was his being father to you; and this was his greatest

glory and renown: once he had had ample proof that the Empire rested securely on your shoulders he left the world to you and you to the world, beloved and regretted by all for that very act of foresight intended to ensure that there need be no regrets.<sup>1</sup>

11. He received the proper honours from you, first the tears which every son should shed, then the temples<sup>2</sup> you raised to him. Others have done the same, but with different intent; Tiberius deified Augustus,<sup>3</sup> but his purpose was to introduce the charge of high treason; Nero had done the same for Claudius<sup>4</sup> in a spirit of mockery; Titus had similarly honoured Vespasian and Domitian Titus, but only for one to be thought the son and the other the brother of a god.<sup>5</sup> You gave your father his place among the stars with no thought of terrorizing your subjects, of bringing the gods into disrepute, or of gaining reflected glory, but simply because you thought he *was* a god. This is an honour which means less when it is paid by men who believe themselves to be equally divine; unlike you, who set up his cult with altars, couches and a priest, yet created and proved his godhead still more by being the man you are. For there is no more certain proof of divinity in a ruler who has chosen his successor before he met his end than the worthiness of his choice. Consequently, it is inconceivable that knowledge of your father's immortality would ever make you proud; you would not take your example from recent times, when sovereigns have grown insolent and idle just because their parents are divine, instead of from the rulers of the past who . . . their empire

<sup>5</sup> Suetonius, *Dom.* 2. Martial IX. 101. 22.

...<sup>1</sup> an emperor gave no surer proof of his humiliation and defeat than at the very moment of his triumph. Thus our enemies had lifted up their heads and shaken off the yoke; they fought against us, not for their liberty but to enslave us all, accepting no truce save on equal terms, no law before they had made their own.

12. Now once more terror is in their midst; our enemies are afraid, and crave permission to obey commands. They see that Rome has a leader who ranks with her heroes of old, whose title of *Imperator* was won on seas stained with the bloodshed of victory and on battlefields piled high with the bodies of the dead. Today, therefore, we are receiving hostages, not paying for them; huge losses and vast sums of money are no longer needed to buy terms of peace which shall name us as the conquerors. The prayers and entreaties are on the other side,<sup>2</sup> for us to grant or refuse at will, so long as we promise our country's sovereign power. They show their gratitude when we will listen, but if we are deaf to their pleas, dare not complain—how could they, when they know how you encamped confronting a dangerous enemy at the very time which was best for them and least favourable to us: when the Danube is bridged by ice from bank to bank and can carry vast preparations for war across its frozen surface, so that its savage peoples can enjoy the double protection of their own arms and the winter weather of their native climate? Once you were on the spot, the seasons might have been reversed; the enemy were through the Danube regions on his way from Upper Germany to Rome.

stopped up inside their lairs, while our armies were eager to cross the river and, if you permitted, exploit the enemy's opportunity and launch a winter campaign on them unprovoked.

13. Thus your enemies bowed before your reputation. What shall I say now of the admiration which you won from your own men? They saw how you shared their hunger and thirst on field manoeuvres and how their commander's sweat and dust was mingled with their own; with nothing to mark you out save your height and physique, in open battle you launched your spears at close quarters or received those aimed at you; you delighted in the courage of your soldiers and rejoiced whenever a heavier blow struck you on shield or helmet, praising your assailants and urging them on to greater deeds of daring—which they at once performed. Nothing escaped your direction or your observant eye; it was you who assigned the men their arms before the start of operations, and tested the spears so that when one seemed too heavy for a man you could wield it yourself. Again, it was you who comforted the weary and attended to the sick, for it was your habit to inspect your comrades' tents before you retired to your own; the last man must go off duty before you would take a rest yourself. Such were the great generals of the past, bred in the homes of Fabricius, Scipio, and Camillus;<sup>1</sup> if they have a lesser claim upon my admiration it is because in their day

<sup>1</sup> Notably, Gaius Fabricius, hero of the war against Pyrrhus; the Scipios, father and son, who fought against Hannibal in the Second Punic War; and M. Furius Camillus, the saviour of Rome after the Gallic invasion in 387 B.C.

a man could be inspired by keen rivalry with his betters. But now that interest in arms is displayed in spectacle instead of personal skill, and has become an amusement instead of a discipline, when exercises are no longer directed by a veteran crowned by the mural or civic crown,<sup>1</sup> but by some petty Greek trainer, it is good to find one single man to delight in the traditions and the valour of our fathers, who can strive with none but himself for rival, press on with only his own example before him, and since he is to wield authority alone, will prove that he alone is worthy!

14. Now, Caesar, let us turn to the very cradle and starting point of your career. You were scarcely more than a boy when your successes in Parthia helped to win fame for your father,<sup>2</sup> when you already deserved the name of *Germanicus*,<sup>3</sup> when the mere sound of your approach struck terror into the proud hearts of savage Parthians, when Rhine and Euphrates were united in their admiration for you. Your fame travelled the world ahead of your person, yet always proved less than reality among those who knew you later. And still you were not yet Emperor, not yet the son of a god. Spain and Germany were still divided by the barrier of countless peoples and an almost endless waste of intervening country, to say nothing of the Pyrenees and Alps, and other mountains which seem enormous, though not comparable with these. Throughout the entire journey,

but his part in winning the *ornamenta triumphalia* for his father is not known.

<sup>3</sup> Probably a reference to the part played by Trajan in the revolt of Saturninus, 1 January 89.

as you led, or rather, hurried along your legions<sup>1</sup> in your urgent haste, you never thought of horse or carriage. Your charger followed, unmounted, more for propriety's sake than to help you on your way: you made use of it only at the rest camps, raising the dust as you worked off your energy galloping over the countryside. Which am I to admire more, the start of your undertaking or its end? It was a great thing to carry it out, but even greater to have had no doubts that you could do so. This much is certain of the man who had called you from Spain to be his surest support during those very German wars, unwilling as he was to bestir himself and jealous<sup>2</sup> of another's virtues even when he was in dire need of them: you must have filled him with the same admiration (not unmixed with fear) as Jupiter's great son inspired in his king<sup>3</sup> when he remained forever unwearied and undaunted after the cruel labours demanded by the latter's harsh commands; for after that journey he judged you worthy to conduct a series of campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

15. Indeed, as tribune in the army and still of tender age, you had served and proved your manhood at the far-flung boundaries of the empire, for even then Fortune set you to study closely, without haste, the lessons which later you would have to

Hercules in 82. 7. Coins of 100 show "Hercules Gaditanus." and the cult was a special interest of Trajan's, perhaps because he had also come from S. Spain.

<sup>4</sup> Nothing is known of Trajan's military activities between 89 and 96, nor is there any mention of a consulship or proconsular post. Either Pliny glosses over his employment by the hated Domitian, or he prefers to imply that Trajan's career—like his own—was retarded (cf. 95. 3).

teach. A distant look at a camp, a stroll through a short term of service was not enough for you; your time as tribune must qualify you for immediate command, with nothing left to learn when the moment came for passing on your knowledge. Ten years of service<sup>1</sup> taught you customs of peoples, locality of countries, lie of the land, and accustomed you to enduring every kind of river and weather as if these were the springs and climate of your native land. Many were the times when you changed your mount and the arms worn out with service! The day will come when posterity will clamour to see and show their youngers the earth which was soaked in your sweat, the trees and rocks which sheltered your moments of sleep and repose, the roof which gave hospitality to your noble person, as in your time you were shown the cherished traces left by the great generals of the past. But this is for the future; meanwhile, any soldier who is not too young can gain glory from having served with you. How many do you suppose there are who did not know you as comrade in arms before you were their emperor? Thus you can call nearly all your soldiers by name, and relate the deeds of bravery of each one, while they need not recount the wounds they received in their country's service, since you were there to witness and applaud.

16. But nurtured though you were on the glories of war, you have remained a lover of peace, and for this your moderation commands our greater praise. Your own father had been granted triumphal

and holding the quaestorship at 25. The normal age for the *laticlavus* was 19-20.

honours, and on the day of your adoption laurels were dedicated to Capitoline Jupiter, but you did not seek opportunity for triumphs of your own. You have neither fear of war, nor any desire to cause one. How magnificent it was, august Emperor, to stand on the Danube's bank<sup>1</sup> knowing that a triumph was certain did you but cross, and yet have no urge to press on against a foe who refused battle, proof alike of valour and of moderation, the one denying battle to the enemy wanting it, the other denying battle to yourself. And so the day will come<sup>2</sup> when the Capitol shall see no masquerade of triumph,<sup>3</sup> the chariots and sham trappings of false victory, but an emperor coming home with true and genuine honour, bringing peace and the end of strife, and the submission of his enemies so evident that none shall be left to conquer. Here is an achievement which is nobler than any triumph! For hitherto our victories have been won only after our sovereignty has been slighted; but now, if some native king<sup>4</sup> shall presume so far in his folly as to call down your just wrath and indignation on his head, though he be defended by the seas between, the mighty rivers or sheer mountains, he will surely find that all these barriers yield and fall away before your prowess, and will fancy that the mountains have subsided, the rivers dried up and the sea drained off, while his country falls a victim not only to our fleets<sup>5</sup> but to the natural forces of the earth!

<sup>4</sup> Decebalus, king of Dacia.

<sup>5</sup> The Danube fleet, consisting of the *classis Pannonica* and *classis Moesica*.

17. Already I seem to see before me a triumph<sup>1</sup> piled high not with the spoils of plundered provinces and gold wrung from our allies, but with our enemies' arms and the chains of captured kings. I can recognise the high-sounding titles of chieftains whose persons are not unworthy of such names, and watch the wagons pass with their loads to show the fearful ventures of the savage foe, each prisoner following, hands bound, the scene of his own deeds;<sup>2</sup> then, close behind the conquered nations your own self standing high in your chariot, before which are the shields pierced by your own hand. The spoils of supreme honour would be yours if any king would dare to match himself against you, shuddering with terror though the whole field of battle and army might lie between, when confronted not only by your weapons but by a glance from your threatening eye. And your recent moderation has ensured that whenever you are compelled to war, offensive or defensive, for the honour of your realm, you will be known to win triumph through victory, not to seek victory in order to triumph.

18. How wonderful it was of you (for one idea suggests another) to rekindle the dying flame of military discipline by destroying the indifference, insolence and contempt for obedience, those evils of the preceding regime!<sup>3</sup> Today it is safe to earn respect and affection, and no one in command need fear to be unpopular—or popular—with his men. Thus freed from the anxiety alike of incurring favour or giving offence, he can press on with construction

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ep.* VIII. 14. 7; X. 29. 1.

works, conduct manoeuvres, make all arrangements for fortifications, weapons and his men. For ours is not a prince who sees in preparations against his enemies a threat directed at himself, after the fashion of his predecessors, who feared to fall victim to the hostilities they mounted and so were glad to see a falling off of interest in the soldier's life, slack training and lowered morale, while swords grew dull and blunted through disuse. Thus our generals had less to fear from foreign foes than from their masters' treachery, and more from the swords their own men held than from their enemies'.

19. In the heavens it is natural that the smaller and weaker stars should be overshadowed by the rising of the greater ones, and in the same way an emperor's legates can feel their prestige dimmed when he appears.<sup>1</sup> But you could be greater than all without anyone's suffering from your majesty; no one lost in your presence the authority he had enjoyed before you came, and many found men's regard for them the greater because you shared it too. So you were beloved by all, the highest and the lowest; the emperor and the comrade-in-arms so combined in your person that you could fire men's ardour and endurance by your supervision, while relieving their hardships by sharing the common lot. Happy those whose zeal and loyalty were known to you not at second-hand, by word of mouth, but through the first-hand evidence of your own eyes!

tion of the troops on the Rhine and in Pannonia. The legates are either the governors of the imperial provinces (*legati Augusti propraetore*) or the commanders of the legions (*legati Augusti legionis*).

It was also their good fortune that when you were not with them you trusted no man's judgement of them but your own.

20. But now your people's prayers were calling you home; affection for your country heard them, and love of army life had to stand aside. Your journey was quiet and undemanding, truly that of one returning from a settled peace. It is not for me to call it a virtue in you if neither father nor husband dreaded your approach; others have made a point of cultivating moral purity, but in you it is natural and inborn, and not something to be counted to your credit. Carriages were requisitioned without fuss, no difficulties were raised over lodgings, rations were the same for all, and your staff was alert and disciplined. It might have been some great general, most likely yourself, travelling to join his army,<sup>1</sup> for there was no difference, or practically none, between the high authority you held then and what it was to be. It was not long since another Emperor had passed that way<sup>2</sup> in very different fashion, and his progress was better called a plundering foray, when houses were forcibly emptied to provide lodgings, and right and left the land was burnt and trampled as if struck by some disaster or the very barbarian hordes from whom he fled. The provinces had to be convinced it was only Domitian, and not every emperor who travelled in this fashion, and so you published a statement contrasting his expenditure with your own. Here your chief concern was the public interest and not your reputation, for an emperor must

<sup>2</sup> Domitian, returning from the Suebian-Sarmatic war, in December 92.

learn to balance accounts with his empire, to go abroad and return with the knowledge that he must publish his expenses and account for his movements, so that he will not spend what he is ashamed to make known to all. Moreover your successors will be obliged willy-nilly to know the cost of your respective journeys<sup>1</sup> and with both examples before them must realize that they will be judged according to which they elect to follow.

21. Although your many outstanding merits surely called for you to assume some new title and honour, you refused the title of Father of your country,<sup>2</sup> and it was only after a prolonged struggle between us and your modesty that in the end you were persuaded. Others<sup>3</sup> accepted that title from the start along with that of Emperor and Caesar, on the first day of their principate, but you waved it away until even in your own grudging estimate of your services, you had to admit it was your due. Thus you alone have been Father of the country in fact before you were in name. In our hearts, in our minds we knew you as this; the title made no difference to the devotion of your people, except for our feeling of ingratitude if we addressed you only as Emperor and Caesar when we felt we had a Father in you. And now that you bear the name, how kind and considerate you show yourself, living with your subjects as a father with his children! You left us as an ordinary citizen, you return as emperor, knowing your subjects as you are known to them; in your thoughts we have not changed, nor in ours have you; you are one among us all, the greatest of us simply because you are the best.

PANEGYRICUS, 22. 1-23. 1

22. Now first of all, think of the day when you entered your city,<sup>1</sup> so long awaited and so much desired! The very method of your entry won delight and surprise, for your predecessors chose to be borne, or carried in, not satisfied even to be drawn by four white horses in a triumphal carriage, but lifted up on human shoulders in their overbearing pride. You towered above us only because of your own splendid physique; your triumph did not rest on our humiliation, won as it was over imperial arrogance. Thus neither age, health nor sex held your subjects back from feasting their eyes on this unexpected sight: small children learned who you were, young people pointed you out, old men admired: even the sick disregarded their doctors' orders and dragged themselves out for a glimpse of you as if this could restore their health. There were some who cried that they had lived long enough now they had seen and welcomed you, others that this was a reason for longer life. Women rejoiced as never before to bear children now that they knew they had brought forth citizens and soldiers to live and serve under your rule and command. Roofs could be seen sagging under the crowds they bore, not a vacant inch of ground was visible except what gave a precarious and shaky foothold, streets were packed on both sides leaving only a narrow passage for you, on every side the excited populace, cheers and rejoicing everywhere. All felt the same joy at your coming, when you were coming to be the same for all, joy which could still grow as you moved forward, and (one might say) swell with every step.

23. There was general delight when you embraced

the members of the Senate, as they had embraced you when you went away, when you singled out the leading knights for the honour of being greeted by name without an official intermediary, when you not only took the first step in greeting your clients but added some touches of friendliness, and still greater delight when you moved slowly and quietly forward where the crowds of spectators fell back, letting yourself be jostled as one of the people, though in fact the crowds pressed thickest where you were. On that very first day you made yourself accessible to all, for no party of satellites attended you; you moved in the midst of the élite of the senators or knights, as the numbers of either party prevailed as they gathered round you, and your lictors quietly and courteously cleared your path. As for the soldiers present, they differed from the civilians in neither dress, propriety, nor discipline. But when you proceeded to mount the Capitol, how gladly everyone remembered your adoption,<sup>1</sup> and what special joy it was for those who had first hailed you as *Imperator* in that very place! But the greatest pleasure of all, I fancy, was that of the god who was your father in his own creation. Above all, as you trod in the same steps as your father when he prepared to reveal the mighty secret of the gods, how the crowd rejoiced with fresh outbursts of cheering, as this day recalled that other which had brought it into being! Everywhere there were altars, but still not enough for their victims; everyone's prayers were for your safety alone, since each man knew they would be answered for himself and his children if they were granted for you.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 8.

Then you walked to the palace, with the same modest demeanour as if it had been a private house, and everyone returned home to repeat the sincere expression of a happiness which was wholly spontaneous.

24. Such an entry would have overwhelmed another; but you became daily more admirable, more perfect, such a prince in fact as others can only promise to be. You alone have gained and grown in reputation through passage of time, for you have two extremes combined and blended in your person, a beginner's modesty and the assurance of one long accustomed to command. You do not direct your subjects to grovel at your feet, returning a kiss with no more than a proffered hand; your lips keep their old courtesy now you are emperor, your hand respects its proper use. You used to go on foot before, you still do now; you delighted in hard work, and still delight; though fortune has changed all around you, she changed nothing in yourself. When the prince moves among his subjects they are free to stand still or approach him, to accompany him or pass ahead, for you do not walk in our midst to confer a benefit by your presence, nor put us in your debt if we enjoy your company. Anyone who approaches you can stay at your side, and conversation lasts till it is ended by his discretion, not by any loftiness of yours. We are ruled by you and subject to you, but no more than we are to the laws, for these too must regulate our desires and passions, always with us and among us. You shine out in splendour like Honour, like Sovereignty, for these are always above mortal men and yet inseparable from them. Previous

rulers in their scorn for us, and, it may be, through fear of being brought down to our level, had lost the use of their legs; carried on the shoulders and bowed backs of slaves they rose above our heads. But you are borne aloft by your own renown and glory, by freedom and your subjects' love, far above those self-same rulers; you are lifted to the heavens by the very ground we all tread, where your imperial footsteps are mingled with our own.

25. I am not afraid of seeming long-winded, Conscript Fathers, since nothing is more desirable than that we should have much to offer thanks for to our prince. And rather than run quickly through a selection of his merits, we should show more respect if we left everything unspoken and implicit in our hearts: for what is left untouched is more likely to be judged at its true worth. Nevertheless, I should like to say a word about his gifts to enrich the urban population,<sup>1</sup> the largess distributed to civilians in its entirety, whereas the military received only half of their bonus.<sup>2</sup> This is sure indication of no ordinary spirit—to make a donation to those who could more easily have been refused—though in spite of this distinction, the rule of parity was not neglected, and the army was put on the same footing as the civilians in that it received its half-donation first, while the people who had the whole at once took second place. How generous

the "Veleian Table"); perhaps this was still being reorganized when the speech was delivered.

<sup>2</sup> The *donativum* to each soldier, paid in cash. Nerva had evidently paid it in full on his accession, or Pliny would not make much of Trajan's policy.

you were in your distribution, and what care you took to include everyone in your bounty! It was bestowed even on those whose names were listed after your edict, in place of some crossed off, while others ranked equal with the rest though not eligible at first. One man might be delayed by illness or his personal affairs, another held up by rivers or sea, but his share awaited him, to ensure that no one was left out for being sick, or too busy, or too far away. Everyone was to come when he wished or when he could. It was your special distinction, Caesar, to join, as it were, far distant lands by the ingenuity of your generosity, to contract vast spaces in the exercise of your liberality, to overcome hazards and oppose fortune, to use all your resources, in fact, to ensure that as regards your bounty every humble Roman should feel he was born a citizen as much as a man.

26. On the day for the distribution it had been the custom for swarms of children, the populace of the future, to watch for the emperor's public appearance and line his path. Every parent's concern was to show his little ones mounted on his shoulders, to teach them flattering words and fawning phrases, while they repeated their lessons, their vain pleas mostly falling on the emperor's deaf ears, to be brushed aside in their ignorance of what they asked and what was refused, until the day would come when they would understand all too well. You, however, would permit no requests. Though your eyes might be gladdened by the sight of the rising generation of Rome, you gave orders that every child must be admitted and enrolled before seeing or approaching you, so that henceforward reared on your bounty

from their earliest days, all should know you as the Father of the people; they should grow at your expense while they were growing up to serve you, pass from a child's allowance at your hands to a soldier's pay, each owing as much to you as to his own parents. You were right, Caesar, to cherish at your expense the future of the name of Rome. No expenditure is so worthy of a great prince destined for immortality as what is disbursed for posterity. The rich are encouraged to rear children by high rewards and comparable penalties:<sup>1</sup> the poor have only one inducement—a good prince. Unless he makes generous provision for the children born through his people's confidence in him, unless he cherishes them with loving care, he hastens the downfall of empire and realm; if he neglects his poorer subjects he protects in vain his leading citizens, who will become a head cut from a body, top-heavy, soon to fall. It is easy to imagine your pleasure when the cheers of fathers and children, old and young, rang in your ears—the first you heard of your youngest subjects, on whom you had bestowed something even greater than their allowance: the right to receive it unasked.

27. Above all, you are a prince whose reign makes it both pleasure and profit to rear children. No father now need fear more for his son than the hazards of human frailty—among fatal illnesses he need not count his emperor's wrath. There is indeed great encouragement to have children in the promise of allowances and donations, but greater still when there is hope of security and freedom from fear. It may be that a ruler gives nothing, supports no one, but so long as he neither takes nor destroys he will

not lack subjects who desire sons. On the other hand, if he gives and then takes away, supports and then destroys, all too soon he will make men regret they had children, regret even that they had parents and are alive themselves. And so nothing in your generosity commands my admiration so much as the fact that these donations and allowances are paid from your own purse, so that the nation's children are not fed like wild beasts' cubs on blood and slaughter; and what is most welcome to the recipient is his knowledge that no one has been robbed to provide for him, that there is one alone who is the poorer for so many thus enriched—his prince. And perhaps not even he—for anyone with a share in a common wealth is as rich or as poor as the whole.

28. Your many claims for recognition beckon me elsewhere—but no; I have not paid admiring homage to the fact that you poured out these generous sums in no consciousness of crime committed, no desire to avert notoriety's pursuit, nor to provide more cheerful topics to divert grim suspicions from men's tongues. No fault in you had to be redeemed by your donation, no act of cruelty bought off by allowances; your benefactions were not inspired by hope of impunity for your misdeeds. By this expenditure you sought the affection, not the forgiveness of your subjects; the people of Rome heard no entreaties at the tribunal, but stepped down conscious only of their debt to you. For your donation was gladly offered and as gladly received, without apprehension on either side; what your predecessors had thrown as a sop to the surging anger of the populace, to appease the general hatred of them—

selves, you gave freely to the people, as innocent in your giving as they were in receiving. Nearly five thousand free-born children, Conscript Fathers, were sought out and found, to be entered on the lists through the generosity of their prince, to safeguard the state in war and adorn it in peace, supported by their country while they learn to love her not only as their homeland but as a nurse. The army and citizen body will be completed by their numbers, and they will have children one day whom they will support themselves without any need of allowances. Let the gods only grant you, Caesar, the long life which you deserve and preserve the spirit you owe to them, and the lists of children entered at your bidding will ever multiply! These grow increasingly day by day, not so much because parents care more for children, as because every citizen is cared for by his prince. Go on with subsidies and allowances if it is your wish; but the true reason for these births lies in yourself.

29. Now for the corn-supply, equivalent in its generosity, I believe, to a perpetual subsidy. Nothing so much as this<sup>1</sup> once brought Pompey such great honour, though he swept bribery from elections, rid the high seas of pirates, and strode in triumph across East and West. Herein he proved himself no finer citizen than our Father, who in his wisdom and authority and devotion to his people has opened roads, built harbours, created routes overland, let the sea into the shore and moved the shore out to sea,<sup>2</sup>

Pontine marshes from Forum Appii to Terracina. Pliny, however, speaks here only in general terms. Cf. *Ep.* X. 18. 3 and note.

and linked far distant peoples by trade so that natural products in any place now seem to belong to all. It is plain to see that every year can abundantly supply our needs—and without harm to anyone. Harvests are not snatched as if from enemy soil to perish in our granaries, carried off from allies who lament in vain; instead, these bring of their own accord the produce of their soil, the year's harvest nurtured by their climate; unburdened by fresh impositions<sup>1</sup> they can meet long-standing obligations, and the imperial exchequer pays openly for its purchases. Hence these provisions and the corn-supply, with prices agreed between buyer and seller; hence, without causing starvation elsewhere, we have plenty here in Rome.

30. It was once Egypt's<sup>2</sup> boast that she owed nothing to rain and weather to nurture and mature the seeds in her soil; watered as she always was by her own river and accustomed to a fertility dependent only on the water flowing through her, she was clad in crops so rich that she could rival the most fertile lands with never a thought that this could cease. Then she was struck by sudden disaster, dried and burnt up, left well-nigh barren, when the Nile turned lazy, sluggish and reluctant to stir out of its bed, so that though still one of the world's great rivers it could not now be thought incomparable. Thus a great area of land which used to be flooded and refreshed by the river became a scorching furnace of thick dust. All in vain the native Egyptian prayed for rain-clouds and watched the heavens, now that the author of productiveness had shrunk and dwindled and confined the fertile regions within the

narrow limits of its own fullness. For not only did the Nile (which normally spreads far afield) stop short of and fall below the level it usually occupied in the hills, but even on level ground which should have retained them, its waters rapidly retreated instead of maintaining their usual even, gentle flow; and the soil was left insufficiently soaked, to be added to the parched areas. Therefore the country, denied the flood which is its fertility, looked to Caesar for aid instead of to their river; and no sooner had he heard their appeal than their troubles were at an end. So prompt is your power, Caesar, so prepared and ready for all alike your goodness of heart, that if any of your subjects suffers misfortune he has only to tell you to find help and security in you.

31. It is of course my own prayer that every nation shall enjoy fruitful seasons and fertile soil, but I should like to think that Fortune chose Egypt's plight to test your resources and witness your vigilance. Though you deserve prosperity everywhere, in everything, chance adversity clearly provides a field of opportunity for your gifts and talents; for prosperity proves men to be fortunate, while it is adversity which makes them great. For long it was generally believed that Rome could only be fed and maintained with Egyptian aid, so that this vain and presumptuous nation used to boast that they must still feed their conquerors, that their river and their ships ensured our plenty or our want. Now we have returned the Nile its riches, sent back the corn we received; it has had to take home the harvests it used to dispatch across the sea. Let this be a lesson to Egypt; let her learn by experience that her

business is not to allow us food but to pay a proper tribute; let her realize that she is not indispensable to the people of Rome although she is their servant. Henceforth, if it wishes, the Nile can stick to its bed and content itself with a river's proper form—it will make no difference to Rome, nor to Egypt either, except that ships will leave her country cargoless and empty, as once they used to return, while from Rome they will sail filled with the cargo they once brought to us. The sea's function thus reversed, it will be from here that a following wind and a shortened voyage are the object of the sailors' prayer. It might seem a miracle, Caesar, that the city's corn-supply had been unaffected by Egypt's shortcomings and the defection of the Nile, but thanks to your vigilance and bounty it has been dispensed so freely that two points are proved: we have no need of Egypt, but Egypt must always need us. It would have been the end of that most productive country, had she been free. Humiliated by her strange sterility she blushed for her famine as much as she suffered thereby, when your intervention not only answered her needs but also pricked her self-esteem. Her farmers stared in amazement at granaries filled by other hands than theirs: what fields had produced such a harvest? Where in Egypt was there another river? Thus by your gracious aid the earth has not begrudged her fruits, and if the Nile has often shown itself more propitious to Egypt, it has never flowed more generously for our glory.

32. What a benefit it is for every province to have come under our rule and protection when we are blessed with a prince who could switch earth's bounty

here and there, as occasion and necessity require, bringing aid and nourishment to a nation cut off by the sea as if its people were numbered among the humbler citizens of Rome! Even the heavens can never prove so kind as to enrich and favour every land alike; but he can banish everywhere the hardships if not the condition of sterility, and introduce the benefits of fertility, if not fertility itself. He can so join East and West by convoys that those peoples who offer and those who need supplies can learn and appreciate in their turn, after experiencing licence and discord, how much they gain from having one master to serve. Divide a common property, and each individual must bear his own losses; but where everything is jointly held, no one suffers personal loss and all share in the common wealth. Yet if there be divinities in earth and spirit-powers in streams, this is my plea to the soil and river of Egypt: ask no more of our prince's generosity, take the seed sowed in your soft embrace and return it multiplied. We ask no interest, but remember that you have a debt to repay; redeem the broken promise of a single year in all the years and all the centuries to come, the more so as we are making no demands.

33. Citizens and allies alike had had their needs supplied. Next came a public entertainment—nothing lax or dissolute to weaken and destroy the manly spirit of his subjects, but one to inspire them to face honourable wounds and look scorn on death, by exhibiting love of glory and desire for victory even in the persons of criminals and slaves. What generosity went to provide this spectacle! and what

impartiality the Emperor showed, unmoved as he was by personal feelings or else superior to them. Requests were granted, unspoken wishes were anticipated, and he did not hesitate to press us urgently to make fresh demands; yet still there was something new to surpass our dreams. How freely too the spectators could express their enthusiasm and show their preferences without fear! No one risked the old charge of impiety if he disliked a particular gladiator; no spectator found himself turned spectacle, dragged off by the hook to satisfy grim pleasures, or else cast to the flames! He<sup>1</sup> was a madman, blind to the true meaning of his position, who used the arena for collecting charges of high treason, who felt himself slighted and scorned if we failed to pay homage to his gladiators, taking any criticism of them to himself and seeing insults to his own godhead and divinity; who deemed himself the equal of the gods yet raised his gladiators to be his equal.

34. But what a splendid spectacle *you* showed us, Caesar, by contrast with that hateful scene! There we saw the informers marched in, like a band of robbers or brigands—only their haunts had not been at the roadside or in lonely spots, but in temple<sup>2</sup> and forum. No will was safe from them, no position secure; to be childless or a parent was equally of no avail. It had been a growing evil, partly through . . .,<sup>3</sup> partly through greed. Then you turned your attention to it, and peace was restored

<sup>2</sup> Possibly the Temple of Saturn is meant, *i.e.* the treasury. Cf. 36. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Some word is needed to express Domitian's fear or suspicion.

to the forum as it had been to the army-camps. You cut out the canker in our midst; your stern providence ensured that a state founded on laws should not appear to perish through the laws' abuse. So although your high estate and generosity enabled you to present the spectacle we saw, first men whose spirit matched their mighty physique, then animals in their natural state of savagery and also tamed in unexpected degree, then the riches hitherto kept hidden in secret and now, in your reign, to be shared by all; yet nothing was so popular, nothing so fitting for our times as the opportunity we enjoyed of looking down at the informers at our feet, their heads forced back and faces upturned to meet our gaze. We knew them and rejoiced; like victims chosen to atone for the sufferings of their country, treading in the blood of the criminals before them, they were led to long-lasting punishment and more fearful retribution. Ships were hastily produced, and they were crowded on board and abandoned to the hazard of wind and weather. Well, let them go, and flee from the lands their informing had left desolate; and if the stormy sea casts anyone alive on the rocks, let him eke out a wretched existence on the bare crags of a hostile shore, and suffer in the knowledge that by his departure the entire human race is relieved of its cares.

35. The sight was unforgettable: a whole fleet of informers thrown on the mercy of every wind, forced to spread sail before the tempests, driven by the fury of the waves on to the rocks in their course. What joy for us to watch the ships scattered as soon as they left harbour, and on the very water's edge to render

thanks to our ruler who in his unfailing mercy had preferred to entrust vengeance over men on earth to the gods of the sea! Then indeed we knew how times had changed; the real criminals were nailed to the very rocks which had been the cross of many an innocent man; the islands where senators were exiled were crowded with the informers<sup>1</sup> whose power you had broken for all time, not merely for a day, held fast as they were in the meshes of punishments untold. They set out to rob other men of money: now let them lose their own. They sought to evict men from their homes: let them be homeless too. Let them stop presenting a brazen and unblushing front, unmarked by any disgrace, stop laughing off all reproaches. Now they can expect losses in proportion to their rewards, and know apprehension to match their former hopes; now they can feel the fear they once inspired.

It is true that the divine Titus<sup>2</sup> in the nobility of his spirit had taken measures for our security and need for vengeance, and because of this was placed among the gods; but how much more will you one day deserve your seat in heaven, for all your additions to those measures for which we recognized his godhead! And your achievement was the more difficult because the Emperor Nerva,<sup>3</sup> worthy as he was of you as his son and successor, had himself made notable additions to Titus's edict, so that it seemed that nothing was left—except for you, whose ideas were so many that nothing might have been thought of before. Had you dispensed these favours singly

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius, *Titus* 8. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Dio, LXVIII. 1. 2.

our gratitude would be immense; instead, you chose to pour them out together, like the light of day or the sun, shining not partially on one man or another, but instantly as a bright whole over all alike.

36. It is a pleasure to see peace and quiet restored to the treasury, to see it as it was before the days of informers. Now it is a real temple and sanctuary of a god, not a mortuary of citizens and a grim depository for blood-soaked spoils, no longer the one place left in the world where even under an excellent ruler the good were still at the mercy of the wicked. The laws still command respect, and public utility is in no way diminished; but a new vengeance is added to existing penalties, and the sole innovation lies in the fact that men no longer go in fear of informers: instead, they fear the law. It may be thought that you are less strict in your control of the imperial exchequer than of the treasury, but in fact you are all the stricter through believing that you have a freer hand to deal with your own money than with the public's. Anyone may call your procurator or his agent to justice, to appear in court—for an emperor's court<sup>1</sup> is set up which differs from the rest only in the eminence of the person concerned in its workings. Lots drawn from the urn assign the exchequer its magistrate, who can be rejected at any one's protest: "Not him, he's weak and out of touch with the spirit of the age—that's the man, independent and loyal subject of Caesar!" The same court serves the principate and the cause of liberty; and nothing brings you greater honour than the fact that it is the exchequer which often loses its case—for only under an honest ruler is defeat possible.

And there is even greater merit in your choice of procurators, the sort of men whom most of your subjects choose to try their cases in preference to anyone else, although they are free to take these to any court they wish. For you lay no one under obligation to use the amenities you provide, being well aware that a prince's benefactions reach their highest point when he permits his subjects to dispense with them at will.

37. The burdens of empire have necessitated the introduction of several taxes, at the expense of the individual in order to benefit the country as a whole. Among these is the five per cent inheritance tax,<sup>1</sup> one which is more readily acceptable when it is confined to distant heirs, but which weighs heavily on direct heirs within the family. And so hitherto it was applied to the former cases and remitted in the latter, doubtless because it was obvious how hardly men would accept—or rather, not accept—any reduction and diminution of the property assured them through ties of blood and kinship and the bond of family rites, something which they had never considered as an expectation from another's hands but as their own permanent possession, to be passed on one day to their nearest relative in their turn. This legal concession was reserved for citizens of long standing; recent ones, whether they had been granted citizenship after holding Latin rights<sup>2</sup> or

to a colourful account of beneficial changes, but as an ex-treasury official he could well have been more precise.

<sup>2</sup> *Ius Latii* was normally an intermediate stage in the promotion to full citizenship. For imperial gifts of citizenship cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* XI. 23-4 (Claudius and the Aedui).

through gift of the Emperor, unless at the same time they had received rights of kinship,<sup>1</sup> were treated as a wholly different category from those with whom they had the closest ties. As a result, what should have been a considerable benefit turned into a grave injustice, and Roman citizenship came to stand for hatred, dissension, and deprivation, since it parted relatives who were dear to each other, regardless of their ties of affection. Even so, people were found for whom the name of Roman meant so much that it seemed adequate compensation not only for a five per cent tax but even for the wrong done their kindred; though the value they put on citizenship gave them the best claim to enjoy it tax-free.

Consequently, your father<sup>2</sup> decreed that any property passing from a mother to her children, or from children to their mother, even in the absence of kindred rights, provided that they were citizens, should be exempt from the five per cent tax. He extended the same exemption to a son in respect of his father's property, provided that he was still under his father's authority, thinking that it was excessive, unprecedented, and might even be called impious for a tax-collector's name to be associated with theirs; and that it was positively sacrilegious for a relationship so sacred to be severed by the intervention of an inheritance tax. Indeed, he thought that no tax was worth the cost of estranging parents and children.

38. That was as far as he went; a perfect ruler might possibly have been more generous, but not a perfect father; for it was his intention to adopt you, and he gave indication of his parental indulgence by

doing no more than touch on or outline what was needed while leaving to his son free and ample opportunity for doing good. Accordingly, without delay, your generosity built on his foundations by extending the immunity enjoyed by a son in regard to his father's property to a father on inheriting his son's, so that the loss of his status of fatherhood should not end its privileges. It was nobly done, Caesar, to refuse to tax a father's tears—a father should take possession of his son's property without forfeiture, and not have to share his inheritance with those who cannot share his grief. No one should demand accounts from one suffering from the recent shock of bereavement, nor compel a father to estimate what he has been left by his own son. And I can emphasize the generosity of our prince's gift, Conscript Fathers, by pointing out that it was thoughtfully planned; for without thought there is no true generosity, only extravagance, ostentation, and the desire to please. It was, then, an act worthy of your clemency to soften the pangs of bereavement and not to permit further sorrows to add to the grief of losing a son. It is grief enough already for a father to outlive his son as his sole heir; what if he has to share the inheritance with another not of his son's choosing? Besides, when the divine Nerva decreed that children should be exempt from the five per cent tax on their father's property it was only logical that the immunity should be extended to fathers with regard to the property of their children. Why should the younger generation be held in higher honour than the older one? And why should justice not equally apply to old and young

alike? You also removed the clause "provided that he was still under his father's authority", in the belief, I imagine, that there is a natural law compelling children always to be obedient to their fathers, one which does not reduce the human race to the level of the animal world, where power and authority go to the stronger.

39. Nor was he satisfied with removing the tax from the first degree of kinship; he also exempted the second degree, and granted immunity to brothers and sisters in respect of each others' property, and to grandparents and grandchildren in the same way. Furthermore, he granted the same concession to those who had gained Roman citizenship through their Latin rights, while at a single stroke to all alike were granted according to Nature's law the rights of kinship which his predecessors had preferred to leave for individual petitions, though not so much with the intention of granting these as of dismissing them with a refusal. Here is clear proof of his imagination and his benevolence—to gather up and reunite the torn and scattered members of a family, to breathe into it new life, to concede what was hitherto refused, and grant to all what individuals had often failed to obtain: in short, to deny himself so many chances of showing himself a benefactor, so many opportunities for gaining credit and putting his subjects in his debt. No doubt he thought it unsuitable that a man should have to ask for what the gods had bestowed. You are brother and sister, grandparent and grandchild; what need is there to ask permission to be what you are? You are blessed with a ruler who with his usual forbearance finds it

no less distasteful to have to permit enjoyment of an inheritance than to appropriate it. You can accordingly seek office and welcome citizenship without misgivings, confident that these new obligations will leave no one broken and desolate, like a tree shorn of its boughs. All may delight in their family ties as before, while enjoying increase of status.

Moreover, even in cases of remoter degrees of kinship, where ties are correspondingly weaker, there will no longer be the same liability as before to the inheritance tax on any and every sum. 40. The amount which shall be subject to taxation has been fixed by the common Father of us all. Small estates,<sup>1</sup> with no large sums involved, will be exempt from the tax; if the grateful heir so wishes, he can devote everything to the costs of funeral rites and a tomb—no one will stand over him to witness and censure what he does. Anyone then who inherits a modest sum will be able to enjoy it without care or anxiety. Since wealth alone is affected under the express terms of the inheritance law, the unequal burden of taxation has become a source of congratulations and its hardships to be desired: every heir positively hopes to be liable to tax. A further clause allows exemption to all who were liable under the old law but only up to the day of the new act, and have not yet paid.<sup>2</sup> Even the gods lack the power to remedy the past; yet this is precisely what you have done, in providing for the cancellation of debts which would cease to exist in future; thanks to you, we might never have had

<sup>2</sup> Two reliefs from the Forum show the burning of registers, which may illustrate this.

the evil emperors before you. In this spirit, had it been possible, how gladly would you have restored their life-blood and their fortunes to so many victims of butchery and spoliation! You forbade the collection of debts contracted before your reign; but another would have suspected a refusal to submit, vented his anger accordingly, and punished delay in payment by exacting twice or four times the amount. You find the same iniquity in exacting payment of debts which should never have been contracted and their imposition.

41. You will bear with my anxieties, Caesar, my concern as consul. Your refusal to accept gifts of money, your distribution of the military bonus and civilian largess, dismissal of informers and reduction of taxes—the thought of all this makes me feel I should ask you whether you have given due thought to the Empire's revenues. Are there sufficient resources to support the Emperor's economy and enable it to bear unaided the cost of paying out such sums? Others were robbers on a large scale and kept their ill-gotten gains, yet they might have taken and kept nothing, for they were always penniless; whereas you have given so much and taken nothing; but always have enough and to spare as if you had given nothing and taken all. What is the explanation? Our rulers have always had people at their side who were all too ready to keep a stern and unremitting eye on the needs of the exchequer. There were even emperors whose personal cupidity and greed for gain needed no teaching, though in most cases instruction—to our own detriment—has come from us. But to your ears the approach is

closed for insinuating counsel of every kind, and especially that of avarice. It dries up and falls silent, for where there is no one to hear advice, soon there is none to proffer it. Consequently we are deeply in your debt, and doubly so—for your own character, and even more for the improvement it has made in our own.

42. Both exchequer and treasury used to be enriched not so much by the Voconian<sup>1</sup> and Julian laws as from the charges of high treason, the unique and only way of incriminating men who had committed no crime. You completely removed our dread of this, content to show the nobility which none had lacked so much as those who used to pretend to majesty. Loyalty is restored among friends, a sense of duty to freedmen and obedience to slaves—who can now respect and obey and keep their masters. Henceforth it is we who are the Emperor's friends, not our slaves, and the Father of our country puts his own subjects' affection above that of persons held in bondage to other men. You have freed us all from the accuser in our homes, and by raising the standard of public safety have effectively suppressed what might be called a servile war—thereby doing a service to slaves by making them better men as well as to their masters in ridding us of our fears. You seek no praise for this, and perhaps it should not be offered, but how welcome it is for those of us who remember that emperor who suborned slaves against the very lives of their masters<sup>2</sup> and told them the charges he proposed to punish before their information was laid—an evil as fearful as it was unavoidable.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* I. 2. 6.

from which there was no escape as long as there was nothing to choose between emperor and slave.

43. In the same category must be placed the new security for wills. No longer can a single heir inherit all, sometimes under the pretext that his name is there in writing, sometimes that it is not.<sup>1</sup> Your own name is not invoked to support forged and unjust documents, nor can anyone make you the excuse for his anger, folly, or neglect of duty. You are not named as heir because someone else has given offence, but on your own merits, set down by your personal friends and passed over by strangers. The only difference in fact between your former private life and your present supreme position lies in the greater number of those who love you, as your own affections are more widely spread. Only continue on this course, Caesar, and experience will show whether the reputation and the purse alike of a prince are not better enriched when his subjects make him their heir at their death from choice rather than from compulsion. Your father was generous with his gifts, and you have been equally generous. If someone dies now without showing gratitude, still he leaves heirs to his property, and nothing comes to you but an increase in reputation: for generosity may be more fortunate when it receives recognition, but is more glorious when it does not. Yet who before you chose this distinction in preference to additional wealth? How many emperors refused (like you) to consider as theirs even that portion of our patrimony which originally came from them? Is it not true to say that the gifts of emperors like those of kings used to resemble baited hooks or hidden snares, so that

once entangled with private fortunes they drew out with them whatever they touched?

44. What an advantage it is to have attained success through adversity! You shared our lives, our dangers, our fears, the common lot at that time of all innocent men. You know from experience how bad rulers come to be hated even by those who have corrupted them. You can remember how you joined in our prayers and protests—witness the fact that your sentiments have remained those of a citizen since you become prince, while your merits have proved greater than anything you could have prayed for in another. You have inspired us not to be satisfied with less than perfection in our ruler, whereas hitherto we prayed only for someone who would prove better than the worst. Consequently everyone knows you—and himself—too well to covet your position after you; a willing successor might even be harder to find than a capable one, for who would voluntarily shoulder your burden of responsibility or readily stand comparison with you? Experience has taught you how difficult it is to succeed a good emperor—and you could plead the fact of your adoption. No one could imagine it easy for any comer to repeat a situation where no one need purchase security by disgrace, where everyone's life is safe and safe with honour, where foresight and prudence no longer prompt men to spend a lifetime keeping out of sight. The rewards of virtue are now the same under an emperor as they were in times of liberty, and good deeds win more solid recognition than the mere consciousness of having performed them.<sup>1</sup> You value enterprise in your subjects, you

foster and encourage signs of character and spirit, instead of forcing them into subjection as your predecessors did. People find that honesty pays, now that it is more than enough if it does them no harm—indeed, it brings them honours, priesthoods, provinces from your hands, and they flourish in your friendship and favour. This payment for application and integrity spurs on others like them, while encouraging men of different character to mend their ways; for it is the rewards for vice and virtue which make men bad or good. Not many people have a strong enough character to pursue or shun good or evil with no thought of advantage; for the rest, when they see the reward for effort, activity and thrift going to idleness, torpor and extravagance, set about gaining similar advantages by the same devices as they see others use. Their one wish is to resemble such men, be one of them, until their wishing makes them so.

45. Previous emperors, with the exception of your father and one or two more (and that is saying too much), did in fact take more pleasure in the vices of their subjects than in their virtues, first because everyone likes a man after his own heart, then because they supposed that slavery would be more acceptable to people unfitted to be anything but slaves. Such men gathered up all the favours, open-armed; while honest citizens who were forced to bury themselves in retirement were neglected and only saw the light of day at their trials for treason. By contrast, you choose your friends from the best of your subjects, and quite rightly, the affection of a good prince lit on the very men most hated by a bad

one. Tyranny and the principate are diametrically opposed; knowing this, you realize how a true prince is most welcome to those who can least endure a tyrant. These then are the men you promote and show as a typical example of the way of life and kind of man you prefer; and if you have not yet assumed the censorship and superintendence of our morals, it is because you would rather test our character by benefits than correctives. Besides, I fancy that a ruler may do more for the morals of his country by permitting good conduct than by compelling it. We are easily led wherever he takes us, following (as it were) in his steps; now we see before us one whose affection and approval we all seek to win, in a way those unlike him can never hope to do; so that by the firmness of our allegiance we are reaching the point when we shall all conform with the ways of a single man. (We are surely not so wrong-headed that we can only copy a bad ruler and not a good one.) You need only continue as you are, Caesar, and the principles of your conduct will have the same effective power as a censorship. Indeed, an emperor's life *is* a censorship, and a true perpetual one;<sup>1</sup> this is what guides and directs us, for example is what we need more than command. Fear is unreliable as a teacher of morals. Men learn better from examples, which have the great merit of proving that their advice is practicable.

46. Could any terror have had the power to effect what has been accomplished through our regard for you? Someone did indeed succeed in suppressing

<sup>1</sup> Domitian was *censor perpetuus* from the end of 85.

the mimes<sup>1</sup> and persuading the Roman people to put up with this, though he did not succeed in making them willing to do so. But in your case, the people asked you to take the measures which the other had imposed, seeing them now as a public benefit and not an enforced necessity, as unanimous in their demand for you to do away with the mimes as they had been for your father to restore them. They were right in both cases—it was necessary to restore what a bad emperor had suppressed, and once restored, equally necessary to suppress it, for the rule to follow when good deeds are done by bad men is to make it clear that the agent deserves censure, not the act. And so the same populace which once watched and applauded the performances of an actor-emperor<sup>2</sup> has now even turned against the professional mimes, and damns their perverted art as a taste unworthy of our age. This shows that even the vulgar crowd can take a lesson from its rulers, since a reform so sweeping, if once started by an individual, can spread to all. All honour to your noble wisdom, Caesar, for this has enabled you to see an accepted custom take the place of what used to be an arbitrary decree! Of their own accord men who deserved correction have corrected their own faults and proved themselves reformers though previously needing reform. Consequently no one complains of your severity though complaint is open to all. It is always the way that fewest complaints are made about a ruler who allows most freedom to make them, and under your regime there is nothing which can fail to give joy and happiness

<sup>2</sup> Nero. Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* XVI. 4.

to every kind of man. The honest find advancement, while the dishonest are neither feared nor unduly fearful, sure proof of the peace and stability of the realm. You wait for repentance of vice, you remedy faults only at the plea of transgressors, and all whom you have made better men are granted the additional merit of not appearing to owe anything to enforced guidance from you.

47. As for the lives and characters of the young—how you are forming them in true princely fashion! And the teachers of rhetoric and professors of philosophy—how you hold them in honour! Under you the liberal arts are restored, to breathe and live in their own country—the learning which the barbarity of the past punished with exile, when an emperor acquainted with all the vices sought to banish everything hostile to vice, motivated less by hatred for learning as by fear for its authority.<sup>1</sup> But you embrace these very arts, opening arms, eyes and ears to them, a living example of their precepts, as much their lover as the subject of their regard. Every lover of culture must applaud all your actions, while reserving his highest praise for your readiness to give audiences. Your father had shown his magnanimity by giving the title of “open house” to what (before your time or his) had been a stronghold of tyranny<sup>2</sup>—yet this would have been an empty formula had he not adopted a son capable of living in the public eye. Between your habits and that inscription there is perfect accord; every action of yours suggests you might have set it there yourself. No forum, no temple is so free of access: not even the Capitol and the very site of your adoption are more public and

open to all. There are no obstacles, no grades of entry to cause humiliation,<sup>1</sup> nor a thousand doors to be opened only to find still more obstacles barring the way. No, everything is peaceful before reaching you and on leaving you and above all, in your presence; such deep silence, such great reverence, that from the prince's house an example of calm and moderation returns to every humble hearth and modest home.

48. And you yourself—awaiting and receiving everyone in person—devote a large part of every day to so many cares of State, while preserving the unhurried atmosphere of a life of leisure. So we gather round you, no longer pale and terrified, slow of step as if in peril of our lives, but carefree and happy, coming when it suits us. And having gained audience, we may at times have something which seems urgent to keep us at home; we are always excused by you, without having to find excuses. Knowing as you do how eager we all are to see and frequent you, you are all the readier to make easy opportunities in advance for this pleasure. Moreover, when our respects are paid, there is no immediate flight to leave the hall empty—we stay behind to linger on as if in a home we share, though this is the place where recently that fearful monster built his defences with untold terrors, where lurking in his den he licked up the blood of his murdered relatives<sup>2</sup> or emerged to plot the massacre and destruction of his most distinguished subjects.<sup>3</sup> Menaces and horror were the sentinels at his doors, and the fears alike

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Dom.* 10. 2; Tac. *Ag.* 45; Dio LXVII. 13; Pliny, *Ep.* I. 5. 3, III. 11. 3.

of admission and rejection; then himself in person, dreadful to see and to meet, with arrogance on his brow and fury in his eye, a womanish pallor spread over his body but a deep flush to match the shameless expression on his face.<sup>1</sup> None dared approach him, none dared speak; always he sought darkness and mystery, and only emerged from the desert of his solitude to create another.

49. Yet though he thought to protect his life behind walls and masonry, locked in with him were treachery, conspiracy, and the god of retribution for his crimes. Vengeance pushed aside his guards, broke through and burst in by the narrow passages and their barriers, as if the doors stood open and thresholds called her in.<sup>2</sup> Nothing availed him then—not his divinity, nor those secret chambers, those cruel haunts whither he was driven by his fear and pride and hatred of mankind. How much safer is that same dwelling today, and how much happier, now that its master finds protection in popularity instead of cruelty, and seeks the thronging crowds of his subjects instead of solitude behind locked doors! What is the lesson for us? Experience shows that the one guard which a prince can wholly trust is his own innocence. The sole citadel without access, the only defences which can never be breached are—never to need them. It is useless for a man to be armed with terror if he lacks the protection of love; for arms only call out more arms.

Nor is it only the working hours of your day which you spend in our midst for all to see; your leisure hours are marked by the same numbers and friendliness. Your meals are always taken in public and

your table open to all, the repast and its pleasures are there for us to share, while you encourage our conversation and join in it. As for the length of your banquets, polite manners prolong what frugality<sup>1</sup> might cut short. You do not arrive already gorged with a solitary feast before midday, to sit menacingly over your guests, watching and marking all they do, nor when they are fasting and hungry do you belch from a full stomach and present or rather throw at them the food you disdain to touch, and after a pretence at enduring this insulting mockery of a banquet take yourself back to secret gluttony and private excesses. And so it is not the plate of gold and silver, nor the ingenuity of the dishes served which command our admiration so much as your own courtesy and charm, of which we can never have too much, for all is genuine and sincere and conducted with true dignity. The Emperor has rid his tables of the ministrants of an oriental superstition<sup>2</sup> and the indecent antics of impudent buffoons; in their place is warm hospitality, love of culture and civilized wit. Then afterwards your sleep is short and sparing, for in your love of us there is no period of your time so short as that you spend alone.

50. Yet while we enjoy your possessions as if we had a share in them, our personal property is truly our own. You do not dispossess existing owners in order to add to your vast domains every marsh and lake, and even pasture-land; rivers, mountains and seas are no longer reserved for the eyes of one man

temples of Cybele and Serapis; cf. Dio LXVII. 9. For Pliny's dislike of such entertainment, cf. *Ep.* IX. 17.

alone. The Emperor no longer feels the need to own whatever he sees, and at long last the land subject to his sovereign rights extends farther than his personal property;<sup>1</sup> many of his inherited estates (which his predecessors held not for their own pleasure so much as to deny them to anyone else) are being restored to the State. Thus into the seats and homes of the nobility step new masters equal to the old, and the houses of the great no longer fall to pieces in the hands of a slave for occupant, collapsing in hideous decay. Instead, we may see splendid mansions, extended and flourishing, the dust all swept away: a noble service you render, Caesar, not only to man but to the very buildings, for in checking ruin, banishing neglect, and saving great edifices from destruction, you show the same imaginative spirit as those who built them. And indeed, those dumb inanimate stones seem to sense the happiness of being restored to splendour and frequented once again, now that at last they have a master who appreciates their worth. Under the name of Caesar is published a long list of possessions for sale,<sup>2</sup> which shows up as the more abominable the cupidity of that emperor who possessed far more than he needed, but always wanted more.<sup>3</sup> In those days it was fatal for anyone about him to own a spacious house or attractive property; today our prince looks for owners for those very places, and introduces them

augment the treasury; cf. Suetonius, *Cal.* 38-9; Dio LXVIII. 2 (Nerva).

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Dom.* 12. 1 ascribes this to his need for money. But Syme (*JRS* XX) points out that Domitian's motive in attacking senators was political, not financial.

himself. Even the gardens outside Rome which had once been owned by a famous general<sup>1</sup> and had always been in the imperial family are ours; we can make an offer, buy and occupy them. Such is our prince's goodness of heart, such the security of our times, that he believes us worthy of princely possessions and we have no fears about seeming so. Nor do you give your subjects the opportunity only to purchase—you have bestowed on us as a gift some of the loveliest properties, making over to us the very inheritance for which you were chosen and adopted, which was made yours by a reasoned decision; for you hold that ownership is best enjoyed through the persons of your friends.

51. Your interest in preserving what exists is matched by your restraint over further building. The walls and roofs in the city have stopped shuddering as they did at the passage of huge blocks of stone; our houses stand safe and secure, and the temples are no longer threatened with collapse. There is enough, and more, for you, since your predecessor was so careful in his expenditure, and it is splendid too to have cut down and retrenched even on what he thought was necessary; especially as in his case he was denying himself personal enjoyment of what the hazards of empire had brought him, whereas your self-denial is applied to what came from him. But when it comes to public building, you do it on the grand scale. Here stands a colonnade, there a shrine, rising as if by magic, so rapidly as to seem remodelled rather than fresh-built. Elsewhere the vast façade of the Circus<sup>2</sup> rivals the beauty of the temples, a fitting place for a nation which has

conquered the world, a sight to be seen on its own account as well as for the spectacles there to be displayed: to be seen indeed for its beauty, and still more for the way in which prince and people alike are seated on the same level. From one end to the other is a uniform plan, a continuous line, and Caesar as spectator shares the public seats as he does the spectacle. Thus your subjects will be able to look on you in their turn; they will be permitted to see not just the Emperor's box, but their emperor himself, seated among his people—the people to whom you have given an additional five thousand seats.<sup>1</sup> For you had already increased their number by the liberality of your largess, and had encouraged it to be further increased in future on the guarantee of your generosity.

52. If another had boasted a single one of these achievements he would long since have worn a nimbus round his head; a seat of honour wrought in gold or ivory would have been placed for him among the gods, and prayers offered in his name with major victims on the holiest of altars. But you enter the sanctuaries only to offer your own prayers—for you the highest honour is to have your statues placed outside the temples, on guard before the doors. This is why the gods have set you on the pinnacle of human power: they know that you do not covet their own. Of your statues, only one or two are to be seen in the vestibule of the temple of Jupiter Best and Highest, and these are made of bronze; whereas only recently every approach and step, every inch of the precinct was gleaming with silver and gold, or rather, was casting pollution, since the

figures of the gods were defiled by having statues of an incestuous emperor in their midst.<sup>1</sup> And so your few statues of bronze stand and will stand as long as the temple itself, whereas those innumerable golden images, as a sacrifice to public rejoicing, lie broken and destroyed. It was our delight to dash those proud faces to the ground, to smite them with the sword and savage them with the axe, as if blood and agony could follow from every blow. Our transports of joy—so long deferred—were unrestrained; all sought a form of vengeance in beholding those bodies mutilated, limbs hacked in pieces, and finally that baleful, fearsome visage cast into fire, to be melted down, so that from such menacing terror something for man's use and enjoyment should rise out of the flames.

With the same reverence for the gods, Caesar, you will not allow public thanks for your benevolence to be addressed to your genius, but direct them to the godhead of Jupiter Best and Highest; to him, you say, we owe whatever we owe you, and your benefactions are the gift of him who gave you to us. Yet previously the vast herds of victims were often stopped on the Capitoline Way and large numbers forced to turn aside, for in honour of that grim statue of a brutal tyrant<sup>2</sup> the blood of victims had to flow as freely as the human blood he shed.

53. All that I say and have said, Conscript Fathers, about previous emperors is intended to show how

authorized marriage between uncle and niece: Suet. *Claud.* 26. 3; Tac. *Ann.* XII. 5.)

<sup>2</sup> The equestrian statue set up in 89 at the west end of the Forum; cf. Statius, *Silvae* I. 1.

our Father is amending and reforming the character of the principate which had become debased by a long period of corruption. Indeed, eulogy is best expressed through comparison, and, moreover, the first duty of grateful subjects towards a perfect emperor is to attack those who are least like him: for no one can properly appreciate a good prince who does not sufficiently hate a bad one. Furthermore, no service of our emperor's has spread so far in its effects as the freedom he allows us to criticize bad rulers with impunity. Have we already forgotten in our troubles how Nero was but lately avenged?<sup>1</sup> Can you imagine that *he* would have allowed the breath of criticism to fall on Nero's life and reputation, when he avenged his death? Would he not guess that anything said against one so like himself could be applied to him? And so in your case, Caesar, alongside all your other benefits and above many of them, I set our freedom to avenge ourselves daily on the evil emperors of the past, and to warn by example all future ones that there will be neither time nor place for the shades of disastrous rulers to rest in peace from the execrations of posterity. With all the more assurance, Conscript Fathers, can we therefore reveal our griefs and joys, happy in our present good fortune and sighing over our sufferings of the past, for both are equally our duty under the rule of a good prince. This then must we make the subject of our private talk, our public conversation

<sup>1</sup> In 95 Domitian condemned to death Epaphroditus, who had helped his master Nero to commit suicide (Suet. *Dom.* 14. 4). For an echo of these words cf. Tac. *Hist.* II. 76. 7: "An excidit trucidatus Corbulo?"

and our speeches of thanks, never forgetting that an emperor is best praised in his lifetime through criticism of his predecessors according to their deserts. For when an evil ruler's survivors hold their peace, it is clear that his successor is no better.

54. Could any spot remain ignorant of the lamentable spirit of adulation in the country, when tribute to the emperors was paid in the form of shows and riotous entertainment,<sup>1</sup> where dancing and wailing ran through every kind of buffoonery and effeminacy, expressed in rhythmic antics and shrieks? But the scandal was that everything was approved in the Senate as well as on the stage, through consul and actor alike. You cut out all these stage performances from honours paid to you. Thus serious poetry and the everlasting glory of our historic past pay you tribute in place of a moment's disgraceful publicity; furthermore, the whole theatre-audience will rise to show its respect with all the more unanimity now that the stage is to say less of you. But why confine my admiration to this, when the other honours we offer you are always so sparingly accepted or else refused?<sup>2</sup> Hitherto, anyone called on to speak in the Senate, on any subject however slight and trivial, had to prolong his speech with adulation of the emperor. We debated the increase in number of gladiators or the founding of a workers' union; the boundaries of empire might have been extended as we discussed colossal arches and inscriptions too long for temple architraves, or else the months, when more than one were to take the

<sup>1</sup> Described in Suetonius, *Dom.* 4.

<sup>2</sup> Confirmed by *Ep.* X. 9. 2.

names of the Caesars.<sup>1</sup> For their part, the emperors suffered this and even enjoyed it, believing it their due. But which of us today spends the proper time for his speech on praising the emperor as if forgetful of the subject of debate? The credit here is due to moderation on your part, not self-restraint on ours; it is in obedience to your wishes that we assemble in the House not to compete in flattery but to practise and render justice, and to pay tribute to your open-hearted sincerity through our confidence that your likes and dislikes are genuinely what you say they are. We start and finish at a point where neither was possible when another was in power; for though there have been others who refused most of the honours offered them, no one was great enough before for us to believe that he did not want them offered. This, I think, is more splendid than any inscription, since your name is engraved not on beams of wood or blocks of stone but in the records of imperishable glory.

55. It will go down through the ages that there has been a prince to whom, in the full vigour of his lifetime, only modest honours were decreed, and, more often, none at all. Of course we cannot hope to compete with the compulsion of former times, for novelty is more readily devised by simulated than by genuine feeling, less successfully by freedom and affection than by servitude and fear. Since, therefore, adulation has exhausted any possibility of innovation, the only new way left for us to do you honour is to venture sometimes to say nothing. Ah,

12. 2). Domitian gave his title of "Germanicus" to September, and his own name to October (Suet. *Dom.* 13. 3).

if ever our loyal devotion breaks its silence and overcomes your hesitation, what honours shall we decree and you be glad to accept! Then it will be made plain that it was not pride and contempt which made you refuse the highest honours while accepting lesser ones, for this, Caesar, was nobler on your part than to refuse all: to refuse all would be merely courting favour, while it is true modesty to choose the lowest. The same spirit of moderation marks your relations with us, and with the treasury; we need not feel that our motives are suspect, and the treasury has a limit set to its expenditure, since you are not minded to replenish it (if emptied) from the wealth of innocent men. And so statues are put up for you as they were for individuals in times past for their outstanding services to the State; Caesar's portrait is there for all to see, fashioned from the same bronze as that of a Brutus or a Camillus, and for the same reason<sup>1</sup>—for they expelled the tyrant kings and conquering foe from the walls of Rome, while Caesar sweeps tyranny away, banishes all that captivity has bred, and makes sure that the imperial seat he holds shall never be a tyrant's throne. And knowing your wisdom as I do, I find it less remarkable that you set aside or limit those titles which are mortal and must perish; for you know where lies the true, eternal glory of a prince. Therein are the honours over which devouring flames, passage of time, the hands of a successor have no power. Arches and statues, even altars and temples must all decay, to

the Gauls from Latium in the fourth century, had his in the Forum. Cf. 13. 4.

be lost in oblivion, for posterity to neglect or revile; in contrast, a spirit which is above ambition, which can hold in check the temptations of power unbounded, blossoms as the years go by and hears its praise most often on the lips of those who are least forced to sing it. Moreover, an emperor is no sooner elected than his fame is assured for all time, for better or worse; he need not seek a lasting reputation (it will last in spite of him) but a good one: and this is preserved not in portraits and statues but in virtue and good deeds. His form and features too, so short-lived as they are, are not so well expressed and retained in silver and gold as by his people's love. That happy fortune is yours to enjoy, in every way you could desire, for your radiant face and beloved countenance dwell in the words, the looks, the thoughts of all your subjects.

56. I dare say you have noticed, Conscript Fathers, that I have long since stopped selecting what I shall say; for I set out to praise my prince in person, and not his actions. Many deeds may be admirable though bad men do them, but a man can only win praise for himself if he possesses true virtue. Wherefore, august Emperor, nothing can bring you greater glory than the fact that in expressing our thanks we have nothing to omit or conceal. Is there anything in your principate which a panegyrist must hurry over with a passing word? Any moment or instant of time which has yielded no benefit and commands no approbation? Does not everything combine to make the highest praise of you no more than a faithful record of the truth? And so my speech could be infinitely prolonged, although the period of

which I speak is less than two years.<sup>1</sup> I have said much about your moderation, but how much more is still unsaid! For example: you accepted a second consulship because an emperor, your father, bestowed it; but later on, when the gods placed supreme authority in your hands, that power to direct your own future as well as everything else, you refused the consulate a third time, although you could have assumed its duties so well.<sup>2</sup> It is noble to postpone a distinction, nobler still to put aside the glory it would bring you. Which commands my admiration more—the consulship you refused or the one you held? and held not in the tranquil atmosphere of the city deep in the embrace of peace, but in the face of savage tribes, like those heroes of old who changed the toga of office for a soldier's cloak and carried victory to lands unknown. It brought honour for the empire and distinction to you, when friends and allies sought audience in their own countries, their native lands; it was a splendid sight after so many years to see green turf piled high for a consul's tribunal, with the soldiers' javelins and standards for a guard of honour alongside the rods of office, and you presiding in person, your majesty enhanced by contrast with the varied garb of your petitioners and their discordant voices, their speeches seldom dispensing with an interpreter. If it is noble to administer justice to fellow-citizens, what is it to enemies! The splendour of occupying a curule chair in the assured peace of the forum pales beside the glory of setting it up in vast open spaces in the conqueror's wake, with calm and security acting as a threat to hostile river-banks; the glory too of scorn-

ing the cries of savages, and displaying the toga instead of parading arms to quell fear of the foe! Thus you were hailed as *imperator* not in effigy but in person, in your own hearing; others had to defeat an enemy to win this title, but it was yours for your cool indifference to his threats.

57. So much for the fame of the consulship you held. Now for the one you postponed, when your principate had only just begun and (as if sated and surfeited with honours) you refused the office of consul which newly-elected emperors had previously claimed even when it was assigned to others. One of them at the end of his reign had even snatched away a consulship he had bestowed himself and which had nearly run its course.<sup>1</sup> This then was a distinction so coveted by emperors, whether beginning or ending their reigns, that they could seize it from its bearers; yet you left it for your subjects, even when it was vacant and unoccupied. Should we have begrudged you a third consulship? Or a first one in your new capacity as our prince? You were in fact emperor when you entered your second one, but were still serving under another emperor,<sup>2</sup> and could only claim credit by setting an example of obedience. Why, the country has seen men five or six times consul,<sup>3</sup> and not only those named amid the violence and confusion of the times when liberty breathed her last<sup>4</sup> but those to whom the office was brought at their country homes far away from Rome:<sup>5</sup> could it look on while a prince and leader of mankind refused a third consulship as likely to be unpopular

<sup>4</sup> Marius seven times; Caesar, five times consul.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. L. Quinctius Cincinnatus, C. Atilius Regulus.

with his people? Are you to be so much more modest than a Papirius or a Quinctius—you who are Augustus and Caesar and the Father of your country? There was a republic then, you say, to summon them; but surely there is still a republic to call on you, as well as a Senate, and the consulate itself, which must be honoured and ennobled if you will shoulder its responsibilities.

58. I am not asking you to model yourself on him<sup>1</sup> whose successive consulships dragged the long year out without a break, only drawing a comparison with those who have thought little of their several consulships. A member of the Senate had been consul three times at the moment when you refused to hold office a third time.<sup>2</sup> Evidently we asked too much of your modesty by our unanimous request that our prince should be consul as often as one of his own senators, but your diffidence about accepting would have been excessive even in an ordinary citizen. Can a third consulship really be promotion for the son of a consular father granted a triumph? Is it not rather his due, his proper reward, if only as a member of a distinguished family? And so ordinary people enjoyed the honour of opening the year and heading the official calendar, and this too was proof of liberty restored: the consul now need not be Caesar. (The year began in freedom in the same way after the kings were expelled, long ago when the appearance of individual names in the calendar marked the end of servitude.) O wretched ambition in those who sought to match their lifelong power with a perpetual consulship! Or perhaps not ambition so much as spiteful jealousy, to appropriate

every year and pass on the official purple only when its lustre was tarnished after use. Where then shall I give my highest praise—to the noble spirit in you which led you to deny an honour always sought after, to the moderation which made you yield it to others, or to the benevolence which enabled you to enjoy it through them?

59. Even so, the time has come for you to offer yourself for the consulate, and increase its status by taking and holding it in person. To refuse it too often can be misinterpreted, or give the impression that you value it too little. In fact, of course, you refused because you value it so highly, but you will convince no one of this unless one day you accept. You may beg to be spared trophies and statues and arches of triumph and must be forgiven for your modesty, for these are clearly offered to you personally. But what we are asking now is that you teach future emperors to break away from their inertia and suspend their pleasures for a while, to rouse themselves for a moment at least, and not sleep away their good fortune: to put on the toga of office which is already in their possession as it is in their power to give, to mount the curule chair which they are keeping empty: in short, to be what they have really wished to be, and not to agree to become consul only to say they have been one. You have held a second consulship, I know, but the armies, the provinces, even foreigners can be said to have benefited from it, not any of us. Certainly we have heard it said that you fulfilled every duty as a consul, but what is hearsay? And the rumour goes that you were the very soul of justice, kindness, and consideration, but it is only

rumour. It is only right that we should be able one day to trust the evidence of our own eyes and our own judgement, and not always have to rely on your reputation and reports. How long are we to rejoice in your existence without ever having you in our midst? Let us see whether that second consulship of yours has not really made you give yourself airs! A year's interval can make a big difference in a man's character, and even more in a prince's. We are told that possession of one virtue means possession of all,<sup>1</sup> but all the same we want to know whether a good consul and a good prince are still one and the same today. For apart from the general difficulty of exercising two kinds of supreme power at the same time, there is a certain contradiction between them: for a prince should resemble as much and a consul as little as possible an ordinary citizen.

60. I do of course realize that your chief reason last year for refusing the consulship was the impossibility of holding it in absence.<sup>2</sup> But now that you are restored to Rome in answer to our prayers, how else can you give better proof to us of those great qualities in you which we missed when you were away? It is not enough for you to enter the House if you do not bid us assemble; you should not be present at our meetings without presiding, nor listen to speeches unless you call on the speakers. Would you restore its former majesty to the consuls' tribunal, once so much revered? Then mount it. Do you want to strengthen respect for the magistrates, spread restraint among litigants, and confirm the authority of the law? Then let men come before you. Rest assured that your country's present

interest in wanting to see you consul as well as emperor is simply what it would be if you were an ordinary citizen and could be senator and consul as well.

Thus these repeated, cogent arguments have broken down the long resistance of our prince's modesty, and at last he has yielded.<sup>1</sup> In what way? Not by descending to his subjects' level, but by raising them to his; for he accepted a third consulship only to be able to bestow one. He knew the moderation and reluctance of those who would accept a third consulship only as colleagues of another who was three times consul. This honour used to be granted in the past to allies in war and companions in danger, and only in rare cases; yet you bestowed it on two outstanding individuals who had served you well and bravely but as civilians. In both cases, the watchful care of your colleague set a restriction on you, Caesar; but it is rare and almost unknown in a prince to think himself under any restraint, or to welcome it if he does. This then is a debt which you wish to repay, and in doing so by granting a third consulship you see yourself not as a great emperor so much as a not ungrateful friend. Moreover, however modest the services of your subjects, you ennoble them by virtue of your rank, for everyone is made to feel that he has given as much as he has received from you. Your generosity leaves me with nothing to ask, save that you will always create these mutual obligations, and so leave your subjects in doubt whether they do better as your debtors or your creditors.

61. For my part, I thought I had the great Senate

of past times before my eyes when I beheld a consul for the third time seated by your side, and a consul-elect, again for the third time, called upon to speak. This was their finest hour, as it was also yours! Tall men, however erect, normally look smaller by the side of those who are taller still; in the same way, your subjects' highest honours are diminished by comparison with your own exalted state, and the nearer they approach to your eminence, the more they seem to lose of their own. Such men could never be made your equal, however much you wished, but you raised them sufficiently high for them to stand out above the rest as you did above them. If you had singled out one person only for a third consulship during the year you held your own it would have been clear proof of your magnanimity—for if success means the power to do all one wishes, magnanimity is the will to do all one can. In that case there would have been praise for the man who earned his third consulship, but more for the prince under whom he earned it; the winner of such a prize might be great and memorable, but how much greater the one who awarded it! Well: did you not choose two for the honour of a third consulship, two for the sacred privilege of being your colleague? (No one then can doubt that your chief reason for extending your own consulship was to cover not one but both of theirs.) Both had recently held a second consulship, received from your father<sup>1</sup>—which is not quite the same as having it granted by you; for both, the rods of office so lately laid aside were still before their eyes, and the traditional cries of the lictors heralding their approach still ringing in

their ears when once again they donned the purple and seated themselves in the curule chair; just as in times past, when the enemy at the gates and the republic's gravest hour of peril demanded men tried and tested in office, it was a case of returning the same men to the consulate rather than the consulate to them. Such is your power to do good that your gracious favour has the same effect as stern necessity. These men had just taken off their robes of office when they must put them on again, dismissed their lictors only to call them back; their friends had offered congratulations and taken their leave, and now they must return. Surely some superhuman stroke of genius, some more than mortal power enables you to renew men's times of rejoicing and revive their happiness, to deny all respite to congratulations, and refuse to allow a break before the next consulship beyond the time spent on winding up the one before! May your work continue, and may your spirit and guiding fortune never tire; bestow third consulships on as many of us as possible, and when you have given all you can, may there ever be more of us to whom they should be given!

62. All benefits which are awarded to deserving men give as much pleasure to others like them as to the recipients; yet in particular, the consulship conferred on these two senators delighted the entire Senate (not just one section of it) so much that everyone felt he shared both in the giving of the honour and in receiving it. For these are the men who were the Senate's choice, and indeed its first choice, when it was selecting the best men for the commission to reduce public expenditure;<sup>1</sup> this, then, is what recommended

them so warmly to Caesar. Has not past experience shown us all too often a situation where the Senate's approval can make or mar a man in the Emperor's eyes? It is only a short time since nothing was so fatal as for him to think that this one or another had the Senate's affection and support. He hated everyone we loved—but we felt the same about his favourites. Today, prince and Senate are rivals in their affection for all who most deserve it; by turns we prove this or accept the proofs he gives us, and—chief indication of our mutual sentiments—we love the same men. Henceforth, Conscript Fathers, you may be open in your favours and steadfast in your affections; there is no need now to conceal your love and hatred for fear the one may bring harm, the other profit, when Caesar's approval and disapproval rests on the same objects as the Senate's. Present or absent, you share his counsels. He granted a third consulship to men of your choosing, and in the same order in which you had chosen them. Whether he has special affection for those who he knows are dearest to your hearts, or whether he will not give precedence to anyone he personally prefers to them, the honour he does you is equally great. Older men can look to rewards, young ones to examples; they can gather on the doorsteps of houses which at last feel free to open wide their doors. Anyone who looks up to the men the Senate admires can be sure of finding favour with a prince who believes that his own status is increased as others advance, and who feels no distinction in standing supreme unless those beneath him stand as high as possible. Continue, Caesar, in the course you have

planned, and believe each one of us to be the equal of his public reputation; have eyes and ears for that alone, and pay no attention to furtive suggestions and whispers which do most damage to those who heed them. General opinion is more to be trusted than individual—it is quite possible for individuals to deceive and be deceived, but no one can dupe everybody, nor can everyone combine to dupe him.

63. I pass now to your consulship, though there are certain events relating to it which did in fact precede it: first of all, you were present in person at your election, as a candidate not only for the consulate but for immortality and the fame of setting an example for good rulers to follow and bad ones to look on with surprise. The people of Rome saw you in the ancient seat of their former power, while you bore patiently with the long ceremonial of the electoral assembly,<sup>1</sup> the slow ritual which this time was not a farce; and so you were made consul as if one of us, us who are made consuls by your word. How many of your predecessors did honour in this way either to the consulate or to the people? Some of them, we know, awaited the news of their election heavy-eyed with sleep, gorged with the banquet of the day before; others who were certainly alert and awake in their own rooms were plotting exile and death for the very consuls who proclaimed their election. Vile ambition, blind to the meaning of true majesty, for a man to covet honours which at heart he despised, to despise what he coveted, and although his gardens overlooked the election-field,<sup>2</sup> to keep away

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the gardens of Lucullus, imperial property since 47, which overlooked the Campus Martius. Cf. 50. 6.

as though the Rhine and Danube flowed between! Would you scorn the votes you hoped would confirm your election, and think it sufficient to be proclaimed consul by your own order, without preserving any semblance of a free state? Would you stand aloof from the elections, cowering in some hiding-place, as if they were not there to confer a consulship on you but to abrogate your supreme power? Earlier despots, in their overweening pride, held to their conviction that if ever they acted as senators, they would cease to be emperors in their own eyes. Most, however, were kept away not so much by pride as by a kind of fear; conscious of their vices and their incestuous nights, how could they have dared to defile the auspices and pollute the sacred field with their guilty tread? Their contempt for everything human and divine had not reached the point of steeling them to stand up in that great open space and face the eyes of gods and men directed on them. In striking contrast, it was your moderation and your purity of heart which persuaded you to offer yourself to men's judgement and the divine presence of the gods.

64. There have been others who merited the consulate before receiving it, but in addition, you proved your worth at the very moment of doing so. The election ceremonies were over (for, remember, this candidate was already emperor) and the entire crowd was already on the move, when you surprised everyone by going up to the consul's chair and presenting yourself to take the oath,<sup>1</sup> in the words no emperor had ever used except when compelling others to swear. Now you see how essential it was for you not to have refused the consulate; we should

not have believed you would act as you did had you not accepted it. I am still astonished, Conscript Fathers, still unable to believe the evidence of my ears and eyes; I keep on asking myself whether I really heard and saw this thing. The Emperor, Caesar, Augustus, the Chief Pontiff stood before the seated consul—yes, the consul sat while his prince stood before him, and remained seated, undisturbed and unafraid, as if it were normal practice. Moreover, while he sat he repeated the words of the oath to his prince who remained standing: and the latter swore. Clearly and explicitly he pronounced the words whereby he consigned his life and household to the wrath of heaven if knowingly he swore false. Great is your glory here, Caesar, and so it will remain, whether your successors follow your example or not. A man three times consul acted as he did at his first election: a prince showed himself no different from a commoner, an emperor no different from one of his subjects: this surely is beyond all praise. For my part, I cannot judge which is the more splendid: the fact that you took the oath with no precedent before you, or that you took the words from another's lips.

65. In the Forum, too, you mounted the platform of your own accord and were equally scrupulous to submit yourself to the laws.<sup>1</sup> No one had intended these laws to apply to the Emperor, Caesar, but you were unwilling for your privileges to extend beyond our own. The result is that we are all the more willing for them to do so. There is a new turn of phrase which I hear and understand for the first time—not “the prince is above the law” but “the

law is above the prince "; Caesar bows to the same restrictions as any other consul. He takes the oath of obedience to the law with the gods as witness (for who if not Caesar can command their attention?)—he takes it under the watchful eye of those who must take it too, well aware that no one must be more scrupulous about keeping to his oath than the man most concerned that there should be no perjury.

Then, at the moment of laying down your consulship, you swore a similar oath that you had done nothing contrary to the law; and this, as a statement of achievement, was even finer than your earlier promise. To appear on the platform so often, to frequent a place shunned by the pride of princes, there to assume and there to lay down your offices: how this conduct becomes you, and how it contrasts with the conduct of those who took up a consulship for a day or two—or, rather, failed to take it up—only to issue a proclamation that they had flung it aside! That was what took the place of the assembly, the platform and their oath, doubtless to make their consulship end as it had begun, and to provide the only indication that they had been elected at all: namely, the absence of any other consul.

66. I have not left out our prince's consulship, Conscript Fathers, but I wanted all I had to say about oaths to be dealt with at once, for this is no barren, empty subject in which a single facet of his glory must be broken up into fragments and handled several times. The first day of your consulship had hardly dawned before you entered the senate-house and exhorted us, individually and collectively, to resume our freedom, to take up the responsibilities

of the power we might be thought to share,<sup>1</sup> to watch over the interests of the people, and to take action. All your predecessors had said the same, but none had been believed. In our mind's eye were the shipwrecks of the many who had advanced in a hazardous period of calm, only to be sunk by an unforeseen storm; for no sea could be more treacherous than the flattery of those emperors whose instability and guile made it more difficult to be on guard against their favour than their wrath. But in your case, we have no fears, and are all eagerness to follow your lead. You bid us be free, and we shall be free; you tell us to express ourselves openly, and we shall do so, for our previous hesitation was due to no cowardice or natural inertia, but to fear and apprehension, and the lamentable caution born of our perils which bade us turn eyes and ears and minds from our country, from that republic which was utterly destroyed. Today we can place our trust and reliance on your promises and sworn oath, and open our lips long sealed by servitude, loosen our tongues which were bound to silence by so many evils; for you truly wish us to be what you bid us, and your exhortations are free from all overtones of deception. In short, no traps are laid today for the trustful, bringing their own dangers for those who set them—for no prince has ever been deceived unless he led the way in deception.

67. For my part, I believe I have formed this impression of the Father of us all as much from the

<sup>1</sup> Durry compares *Ep.* IX. 2. 3, and thinks the "quasi" a Tacitean comment on the Senate's diminished powers. Cf. 63. 5 (*liberae civitatis simulatio*).

manner of his delivery as from the words he has said. Only consider the seriousness of his sentiments, the unaffected candour of his words, the assurance in his voice and decision in his countenance, and the complete sincerity of his gaze, his pose and gestures, in fact of his entire person! So, we may be sure, he will always remember the advice he gave us, and will always understand that in making use of the freedom he granted we are acting only in obedience to him. We need have no fears that he will think us improvident if we show no hesitation in profiting by the security of the times, since he remembers how differently we lived under a wicked emperor. We were accustomed to offering vows<sup>1</sup> to ensure the eternity of the empire and the safety of the emperors, or, rather, the safety of the emperors and thereby the eternity of the empire. But in the case of our present emperor, it is worth noting the wording of these vows, and the clause "if he has ruled the State well and in the interests of all." Such vows are indeed worthy of being always renewed and always discharged. At your instigation, Caesar, the State has struck a bargain with the gods that they shall preserve your health and safety as long as you do the same for everyone else; otherwise they are to turn their attention from protecting your life, and to abandon you to such vows as are taken in secret. Others used to wish to outlive the State, and took steps to do so; but for you, the thought of personal safety is hateful unless it be bound up with the safety of us all. You permit no prayers on your behalf unless they benefit their authors, and every year you set the gods to reconsider you, insisting that

they must revise their opinion if you have changed since the time of your election. But you act with full knowledge, Caesar, in your pact with the gods to preserve you if you deserve it; you are well aware that no one can judge this better than the gods themselves. Can you not imagine, Conscript Fathers, how his thoughts run, night and day: "I have put arms to be used against me, if public interest demands, in the hands of my own prefect;<sup>1</sup> but when it comes to the gods, I will never seek to avert either their wrath or their indifference, rather will I beg and pray that my country shall never have to offer vows on my behalf against its will, or if it has already done so, that they shall not be binding."

68. Thus, Caesar, from your agreement with the gods you have a glorious reward in your continued safety. For by stipulating that the gods shall preserve you only "if you have ruled the State well and in the interests of all" you can be confident that you are ruling well, as long as they are preserving you. And so you can be carefree and happy all through that day which was fraught with fear and anxiety for the other emperors, who spent it racked by suspense, uncertain how far to try our patience, awaiting from all quarters the messages of our common servitude. And if perchance some of these were delayed by rivers, snow, or adverse winds, they jumped to the conclusion that they would get their just deserts. Their apprehensions were always the same; for a bad ruler fears anyone worthier than himself as a likely successor, so when all are worthier, all are feared. Your own tranquillity is not interrupted either by belated messages or slow delivery of letters;

you can be sure that everywhere the oath is being taken for you, as you have taken it for us all, for no one would deny himself this pleasure. The fact is, we love you as you deserve—but in our own self-interest rather than in yours. The day will never dawn when we offer vows on your behalf only from a sense of duty, with no benefit to ourselves. (There is no virtue in supporting a prince who can claim the credit for our support.) We may well complain that it is only the rulers we hate who violate our privacy, for if good and bad were equally inquisitive, what universal admiration for yourself you would find, what delight and rejoicing, what conversations you would hear everywhere between us and our wives and children, and even before the hearths and altars of our homes! You would then understand how we are sparing those sensitive ears of yours. But however different love and hatred may be, they have one close resemblance: we give our love more unrestrainedly to good princes in this very place where we have freely hated bad ones.

69. You have, however, had proof of our affection and our sentiments, as far as you could in person, on the day<sup>1</sup> when your thoughtfulness for the anxieties and personal feelings of candidates was at pains not to let anyone's pleasure be marred by another's disappointment. Some departed full of happiness, others full of hope; there were many to congratulate, but none to console. You were none the less active in urging our young men to canvass the Senate, address their pleas to the senators, and not to hope for advancement from the Emperor unless they had sought it here. If anyone needed an

example at this point, you added that he had only to follow yours—a difficult example for anyone to follow, no easier for a candidate than for a prince! Where is the candidate who can show greater respect for the Senate for a single day than you have done throughout your life, and particularly on the day when the candidates were subject to your decision? What else was it but respect for the Senate which made you offer young men of noble birth the position which was their family right, but earlier than it was due? So at long last the light of the nobility<sup>1</sup> is not dimmed by Caesar but made to shine more brightly; at last the grandsons of great men, the descendants of liberty, need not fear nor be feared by the Emperor; instead, he exalts and honours them by early distinctions, and restores them to their ancestral glory. Any remnant of an ancient house, any lingering spark of former splendour he revives and cherishes and promotes to the service of the State. The great names are held in honour among men; they are on the lips of fame, brought back from the shades of oblivion by the graciousness of Caesar, whose intention is not only to preserve our noble families but to create them.

70. One of the candidates<sup>2</sup> had been responsible for a province as quaestor, and there had settled the finances of an important city by a remarkable piece of planning. This, you thought, should be put before the Senate; for while you are emperor—you,

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Sextus Quinctilius Valerius Maximus, born in Alexandria Troas in Mysia, given *latus clavus* by Nerva; quaestor in Bithynia in 97, trib. pleb. in 100, praetor 103, then *corrector* of Achaia (*Ep.* VIII. 24; S. 235).

whose virtues have gone far beyond the distinction of your origin—why should the status of those who deserve to have descendants among the nobility be inferior to that of those whose parents were already ennobled? You are indeed well fitted to report on our magistrates in this way on all occasions, and by rewarding the good instead of punishing the bad to make them better men. The country's youth was fired with inspiration to imitate what it saw winning recognition; none could fail to share this thought, knowing that anything done well by anyone in the provinces was fully known to you. There is profit now and advantage for those with responsible positions in the provinces; they can rest assured that incorruptibility and application on their part can expect the highest reward in the Emperor's judgement and support. Hitherto, however honest and upright his nature, a man's views were distorted, or at any rate weakened, by the reflection—lamentable but true—that even if he did well, would Caesar know? And if he knew, would he show it? And so the emperors in their malice or their indifference allowed evil counsels to go unpunished, while promising no rewards to deeds well done; thus they deterred some from seeking distinction but no one from crime. Things are different today. Anyone who has governed a province well is offered the position his merits demand; the field of promotion and fame lies open to all; everyone can set out to achieve his aspirations, and owes his success to his own efforts. The provinces too have been relieved by you of their fears for the future, the danger of malpractices and the need to bring prosecutions; for if they can ad-

vance the career of those whose services have won their thanks, they will not be compelled to lodge complaints against anyone, and besides, they know now that nothing helps a candidate for future honours better than the ones he has already held. It is an excellent thing for office to be sought through office, and honour as a result of honour already bestowed. For my part, I should like to see a provincial governor citing not only the recommendations of his friends and the support on his behalf he has coaxed out of city factions, but also the civic resolutions of the Roman townships and cities where he has served.<sup>1</sup> It is good that cities, peoples and nations play their part in casting votes for the men they knew as governors, and the most effective way of petitioning on behalf of a candidate is to express your gratitude to him in thanks.

71. Again, with what applause and delight the Senate acclaimed you, when you embraced each candidate as you named him,<sup>2</sup> stepping down to our level as if your intention was to join in our congratulations! Which am I to do—admire you, or blame those who made your behaviour exceptional by contrast with their own: when they sat as if rooted to their chairs of office, offering only a hand so slowly and reluctantly, and apparently seeing merit in doing no more than that? Our eyes have been fortunate to behold the old-style form of ceremony, the prince as equal with the candidates, to see him standing with them, conferring honour and yet standing no higher than those who received it from him; so that with sincere admiration the entire Senate acclaimed you as the more noble and revered.

For when a man can improve no more on his supreme position, the only way he can rise still higher is by stepping down, confident in his greatness. (There is nothing the fortune of princes has less to fear than the risk of being brought too low.) For me, even your courtesy seemed less remarkable than your anxiety to make it felt. In adapting your expression, your voice and gestures to your words, as if this was some commission you had to entrust to another, you ran through the whole gamut of politeness. Similarly, when the names of the sponsors were received with the usual cries of acclamation, your voice could be heard among them; from Caesar's lips was heard the Senate's assent, and the tribute we were happy to pay to merit in the Emperor's presence was voiced by him with us. Thus by hailing these men as the best choice, you made them so; nor was it only their life which won your approval, but also the judgment of the Senate: which rejoiced to find itself honoured no less than those who received your praise.

72. Next, you offered prayers to the gods, that the elections, thus duly performed, should bring success and happiness to us, to the State, and to yourself. Should we not rather reverse this order, and beg the gods to grant that all your actions, present and future, prove successful for yourself, for the State, and for us, or, to shorten our prayers, for yourself alone, on whom the State and ourselves alike depend? There was a time (which lasted all too long) when the Emperor's successes and misfortunes did not coincide with ours; but now we share with you both joys and sorrows, and we cannot be happy without you

any more than you can without us.<sup>1</sup> Or should you (if it were possible) have ended by asking the gods to grant your prayers only so long as you continued to merit our esteem? Nothing stands higher with you than your subjects' affection: so much so, that you would put our love before that of the gods, and desire theirs only if you have ours. Certainly the fate of your predecessors has taught you that no one can expect the gods to love him when men do not. It was difficult for us to match these prayers of yours with appropriate acknowledgement, but we managed to do so; such was the warmth of our feeling and our enthusiasm, which set a torch to our cries of acclamation! No mental power on our side prompted these words, Caesar, but your own virtue, your own merits—words such as no adulation has ever devised nor terror wrung out. Whom have we feared so as to conjure up these expressions, or loved so as to produce an avowal like this? You know the exigencies of servitude; have you ever heard or said the like? Fear may indeed be inventive, but the result is far-fetched and constrained. The very nature of anxiety is not that of security, and misery has quite different resources at its command from joy: neither can be prompted by pretended emotion. Unhappiness has its own language, and so has good fortune, and even if what they say is identical, it is differently worded.

73. You witnessed yourself the happiness in the faces of us all. None kept his cloak or dress as when he lately left his home, as we raised the roof with our cheers; nothing could shut in such cries. Not a man but leapt to his feet, unconscious of having done so,

for we did much self-prompted, and still more by some instinct or authority—even behind rejoicing there is a driving force. No thought for your modesty could restrain us—our fervour leapt into flames the more you would have damped it down. This was no wilful disobedience, Caesar; yours is the power to release our joy, but its extent is beyond our control. On your part, too, you confirmed the sincerity of our acclamation by the unfeigned shedding of your tears. We saw your eyes wet, your face overcome by joy; we saw your blushes give outward expression to the sense of unworthiness in your heart. This fired us the more to pray that you would never have a different cause for tears or anything to cloud your face. And to these seats of ours we must put a question, as if they could make reply: have they ever seen an emperor's tears? (The Senate's they have witnessed often enough.) You have laid a heavy burden on emperors to come, and no less on our successors, who will expect their princes to be worthy to receive a similar acclamation; while these princes will feel slighted because they do not.

74. I can find no more appropriate word than the one voiced by the entire Senate in hailing you as "fortunate." Here we were referring not to your material wealth but to your inner self, for genuine good fortune lies in being judged worthy of enjoying it. But among the many words of weight and wisdom spoken on that day,<sup>1</sup> these must be singled out: "Trust us, trust yourself." This was said with great

<sup>1</sup> These are the *acclamationes* greeting the proposals of the emperors. Examples are quoted at length in *SHA. Alex. Sev.* 6-7, *M. Claud. Tac.* 4-5.

confidence in ourselves, but greater still in you; for a man may deceive another, but no one can deceive himself, so long as he looks closely at his life and asks himself what are his true deserts. Moreover, our words carried conviction in the hearing of the best of princes through the very factor which made them unconvincing to his evil predecessors; for though we went through the motions of affection before them, they could never believe that they were genuinely liked. Furthermore, we prayed that the gods should love you as you do ourselves, and who would say this of himself or to a prince who showed only lukewarm affection? On our own account, the sum of our prayers was simply that the gods should love us as you do. Amidst our acclamation of yourself we declared ourselves happy too: has this not the ring of truth? How could we be happier? Secure in our prince's love, we have only to hope that the gods will love us in the same way. And so this city which has always shown its devotion to religion and earned through piety the gracious favour of the gods has only one thought for the completion of its happiness: the gods must follow where Caesar shows the way.

75. But why trouble to assemble all these details? I could hardly hope to keep in mind or cover in a speech all that you, Conscript Fathers, decided to save from oblivion by publishing in the official records and inscribing on bronze.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto, only the speeches of the emperors were made safe for all time by records of this kind, while our acclamations went no farther than the walls of the senate-house; and indeed, these were such that neither Senate nor prince could take pride in them. Today these have

been sent out into the world and passed on to posterity both in the general interest and to do honour to us all; firstly, so that the world could be summoned as an active witness to our loyalty, secondly to demonstrate that we were not afraid to pass judgement on good and bad rulers even in their lifetime, finally to give proof that though previously we were not ungrateful, we were unhappy so long as we were denied the opportunity of making our gratitude known. Now we are all eagerness and determination, clamouring for you not to set limits to our feelings or your own merits, in a word, to remember the example you owe to posterity! Let future princes too learn to distinguish between true acclamation and false, and owe it to you that they can no longer be deceived. The road to good repute need not be made for them, they have only to follow it; they have not to clear their path of adulation, only to guard against its return. There is no uncertainty about how they must act nor how their actions will be received. What then can I add, in the name of the Senate, to the prayers I shared with the whole Senate, except this? May your heart never lose the joy which showed in your eyes on that occasion, may you always think of that day with affection, and yet go on to greater things, to win fresh rewards and hear new acclamation; for the same words can only be repeated about the same deeds.

76. It was in accordance with the best traditions of the consulate that the Senate should continue in a three-day sitting,<sup>1</sup> following your own example of patience, and that during that time you acted solely in your capacity as presiding consul. Each senator

when called on for his opinion spoke as he thought fit; he was free to disagree, to vote in opposition, and to give the State the benefit of his views. We were all consulted and even reckoned with, and the sentence which carried the day was the better one, and not merely the first proposed.<sup>1</sup> Contrast the previous reign: who dared then to open his mouth or say a word except the poor wretches called on for the first speech? The rest, too terrified to move, endured the forced necessity of giving assent in silence, without rising from their seats, their mental anguish as painful as their physical fears.<sup>2</sup> A solitary senator expressed a single view for all to follow, though none approved, and least of all the speaker. (People detest nothing so much as measures which pretend to be the general will.) Maybe the Emperor put on an attitude of respect for the Senate in its presence, but once out of the House he was emperor again, throwing off all his consular obligations with careless contempt. But Caesar has conducted himself as if he were *only* consul, thinking nothing beneath him unless it were beneath a consul too. In the first place, he would leave his home without the delays caused by the pomp which accompanies imperial pride, or by the commotion of attendants who must clear his path; he paused only once on his threshold to take the auspices and receive with proper reverence the directions of the gods. No one was jostled or pushed aside, and his official escort was so unobtrusive and his lictors so restrained that several times the prince

" Tacitean " in the speech, ending with an apt *sententia*. The phrase *ad sentiendi necessitas* was used by Tacitus in *Ann.* III. 22. 4 for the senate of Tiberius.

and consul was forced to wait for another passing crowd. As for his own entourage, it was so modest and disciplined that it might have been accompanying the progress of some great consul of the past in the service of an honest ruler.

Usually he proceeded to the forum, but quite often to the Field of Mars. 77. There he was present in person at the consular elections,<sup>1</sup> and took as much pleasure in hearing the consuls proclaimed as he did in their designation. The candidates stood before the prince's chair, as he had previously stood himself before the consul's, and were directed to take the oath in the same words as their prince had recently used—for he believes the act of swearing so important that he expects everyone to do as he did. The rest of the day was devoted to the administration of justice, and there he gave proof of his scrupulous attitude towards equity and his deep reverence for the letter of the law. If approached as emperor, he simply replied that he was consul. No magistrate had his rights or authority diminished; indeed, he took pains to increase these, by delegating the majority of the cases to the praetors and addressing them as his colleagues, not with any idea of courting popularity among his audience, but because these were his genuine sentiments—for such was the value he put upon the praetor's office that in his estimation to be called the Emperor's colleague added nothing to its status. In addition, his application to the task of administering justice made it appear that he was refreshed and restored by hard work. Which of us takes the same trouble or makes so much effort? Who devotes himself to the duties of the offices he

sought or fulfils expectations like this? It is of course only proper that he should stand out above the other consuls, when it was he who made them, for it would be an insult to his position if office could be bestowed by one incapable of filling it. The creator of consuls must also instruct them, and show those who are going to receive the highest office from him that he knows the value of his gifts; in this way they will also come to know the value of what they have been given.

78. With all the more justice then, did the Senate ask you to bow to its wishes and accept the consulate for a fourth time.<sup>1</sup> That it speaks with the voice of authority and not of flattery is proved by your own attitude of deference; there is no demand which the Senate has a better claim to make of you or you to grant. For the prince no less than for the common man the thread of life is short and easily snapped, even when he deems himself the equal of the gods;<sup>2</sup> and thus it is only proper that the best among us should apply his efforts to leaving records of his justice and moderation which will be of service to his country even after death. None can achieve this better than the consul. We know that your intention is to set up liberty in our midst again. What distinction should find more favour with you, what title should you bear more often than that which was the first creation of liberty restored? It is just as democratic to be prince as well as consul as to be consul alone. Take thought too for the feelings of propriety of your colleagues (yes, colleagues; for that is how you refer to them and wish us to do the same); it will be painful for modest men to recall their own

third consulship unless they see you consul once again. What is sufficient for the prince cannot help but be excessive for his subjects. Grant these prayers, Caesar, and gratify the wishes of those for whom it is your custom to intercede with the gods; for this is in your power.

79. Perhaps in your own eyes a third consulship is enough, but this is all the more reason for its not sufficing our demands. It only formed the habit in us of wanting to see you consul again and again. We might be less pressing if we had yet to learn what sort of consul you would be; refusal of a chance to test you would be more easily accepted than the denial of continuing with you whom we know. Shall we be permitted to see him as consul once again? Will he hear and repeat the formula of yesterday, and give us pleasure equal to his own? Will he preside over our public rejoicing, as its author and its object, attempt (as is his wont) to check our outbursts of enthusiasm—and fail to do so? The Senate's loyal devotion will match itself against the prince's moderation in a splendid struggle, happy in its outcome whether it triumphs or not. For my part, I anticipate some form of happiness as yet unknown and even greater than before, for no one is so unimaginative as not to hope for a consul to prove all the better for repeated experience. Another man, though he did not abandon himself to the delights of idleness, would at least have sought relief from continuous service by an interval of peaceful retirement; but he rid himself of a consul's cares only to resume those of empire, so balancing his responsibilities that as prince he never sought to be consul, nor as consul to

be prince. We see how he hastens to fulfil the desires of the provinces, the prayers too of every city, with no difficulties over giving audience nor delays in making reply. Admission is immediate, dismissal prompt; at last there is an end of closed doors and crowds of delegates waiting on the palace steps.

80. Now let me turn to judicial matters,<sup>1</sup> where you showed how strictness need not be cruel nor mercy weak. You did not mount the tribunal for the purpose of enriching your private exchequer, and the only reward you sought in passing sentence was the knowledge that justice had been done. Before you stood the litigants, concerned more for your opinion of them than for their fortunes, fearful of your judgement on their character rather than on their case. This is indeed the true care of a prince, or even that of a god, to settle rivalry between cities, to soothe the passions of angry peoples less by exercise of power than by reason: to intervene where there has been official injustice, to undo what should never have been done: finally, like a swift-moving star, to see all, hear all, and be present at once with aid wherever your help is sought. It is thus, I fancy, that the great Father of the universe rules all with a nod of the head, if he ever looks down on earth and deigns to consider mortal destinies among his divine affairs. Now he is rid of this part of his duties, free to devote himself to heaven's concerns, since he has given you to us to fill his rôle with regard to the entire human race. And you are filling it, worthy of his trust in you: since every passing day brings every advantage for us and the greatest glory for you.

81. But whenever you have succeeded in stemming

the tide of your engagements, the form of recreation you prefer is simply this—a change of work. Your only relaxation is to range the forests, drive wild beasts from their lairs, scale vast mountain heights, and set foot on rocky crags, with none to give a helping hand or show the way; and amidst all this to visit the sacred groves in a spirit of devotion, and present yourself to the deities there. In the days of old this was the training and the delight of youth, these were the skills which formed the leaders of the future—to pit speed against an animal's swift-footedness, and strength and dexterity against its courage and cunning; while in times of peace it brought no small honour to sweep marauding wild beasts from the plains and raise the siege they laid to the farmers and their work. Then this distinction was also claimed by those emperors who lacked the ability to win it, claimed by a mere pretence of skill, as they rounded up animals who had been tamed and weakened by captivity and then let loose to provide them (of course!) with amusement. But Caesar puts just as much effort into the chase as he does into making a capture, while the hardest task of hunting out a quarry is what delights him most. And, indeed, does he ever decide to display the same physical energy on sea, he is not one to follow the sails afloat only by eye or pointing finger; one moment he sits at the helm, at another he matches the sturdiest of his comrades in mastering the waves, taming the opposition of the winds, and forcing a passage by oar against a racing current.

82. How different he is from that man who could not bear the calm of the Alban lake, or the still

silence of the lake at Baiae,<sup>1</sup> nor even endure the sound and splash of an oar without shivering in disgraceful terror at each stroke! So it was that, far removed from the slightest sound, sheltered from every shock and movement, his vessel firmly held in tow, he was brought like a victim to the sacrifice. Disgraceful scene, for the emperor of the Roman people to follow behind with another to steer his course and direct his helm, as if held prisoner in his own ship! Rivers also witnessed this shameful travesty; the Danube and Rhine<sup>2</sup> were delighted for their waters to play their part in our disgrace, and it was no less a blot on the empire for this to be seen by Roman eagles, Roman standards, and the Roman river-bank, than by the other side, the bank of the enemy—the enemy whose habit it was to navigate or swim across these same rivers, whether blocked with ice-floes or flooding the plains when ice is melted and passage is free. Not that I think so highly of hardness of physique and muscle as such, unless the body is ruled by a mind more powerful than itself, one which is neither softened by fortune's favour nor led astray by imperial riches into idleness and excess; in this case a body which thrives on work and sinews developed by service, whether trained on mountain or at sea, will win my admiration. I have observed that since ancient times, the husbands of goddesses and the sons of gods have won fame less through the glory of their marriages or the divinity of their fathers than by skills such as these; at the same time I ask

<sup>2</sup> Here, as usual, Pliny belittles Domitian's military activity both in Germany and in the Suebian-Sarmatic wars. Cf. 11. 4, 14. 5, 20. 4 and notes.

myself what, if these are Caesar's recreation and amusements, must be the extent of his serious interests and preoccupations, from which he turns to relaxation like this. For it is a man's pleasures (yes, his pleasures) which tell us most about his true worth, his moral excellence, and his self-control. No one is so dissolute that his occupations lack all semblance of seriousness; it is our leisure moments which betray us. This is the very time which the majority of his predecessors used to spend on gambling, debauchery and extravagance, thus replacing what should have been the relaxation of their serious concerns by a different form of tension—their pursuit of vice.

83. One of the chief features of high estate is that it permits no privacy, no concealment, and in the case of princes, it flings open the door not only to their homes but to their private apartments and deepest retreats; every secret is exposed and revealed to rumour's listening ear. But in your case, Caesar, nothing could better redound to your credit than a searching inspection of this kind. Your public conduct is indeed remarkable, but no less so your private life. Splendid though it is to keep yourself thus unspotted by any form of vice, it is even more so to do the same for the members of your family, for the more difficult it is to vouch for others rather than oneself, the more honour is due to you for combining your own excellence with making all those around you reach the same high standard. Many distinguished men have been dishonoured by an ill-considered choice of a wife or weakness in not getting rid of her; thus their fame abroad was damaged by their loss of

reputation at home, and their relative failure as husbands denied them complete success as citizens. But your own wife<sup>1</sup> contributes to your honour and glory, as a supreme model of the ancient virtues; the Chief Pontiff himself,<sup>2</sup> had he to take a wife, would choose her, or one like her—if one exists. From your position she claims nothing for herself but the pleasure it gives her, unswerving in her devotion not to your power but to yourself. You are just the same to each other as you have always been, and your mutual appreciation is unchanged; success has brought you nothing but a new understanding of your joint ability to live in its shadow. How modest she is in her attire, how moderate the number of her attendants, how unassuming when she walks abroad! This is the work of her husband who has fashioned and formed her habits; there is glory enough for a wife in obedience. When she sees her husband unaccompanied by pomp and intimidation, she also goes about in silence, and as far as her sex permits, she follows his example of walking on foot. This would win her praise even if you did the opposite, but with a husband so moderate in his habits, how much respect she owes him as his wife, and herself as a woman!

84. Your sister,<sup>3</sup> too, never forgets that she is your sister, and your own frank sincerity and candour can be clearly recognized in her, so that if comparison were drawn between her and your wife, one could only wonder which is the more conducive to an upright life, good training or fortunate birth. Nothing leads to dissension so readily, especially between women, as the rivalry which is most likely to arise

from close proximity, to be fed on similarity of status and inflamed by jealousy until it ends in open hatred; all the more remarkable then must it appear when two women in the same position can share a home without a sign of envy or rivalry. Their respect and consideration for each other is mutual, and as each loves you with all her heart, they think it makes no difference which of them stands first in your affection. United as they are in the purpose of their daily life, nothing can be shown to divide them; their one aim is to model themselves on your example, and consequently their habits are the same, being formed after yours. Hence their quiet contentment and untroubled serenity—they run no risk of being no more than your subjects, for that is what they have always been. The Senate had offered them the title of *Augusta*,<sup>1</sup> which both made haste to refuse, unwilling to bear it so long as *you* refused to be known as the Father of your country, or else believing it a greater honour to be spoken of simply as your wife and sister. But whatever the reason for such modesty on their part, this is the title they deserve; this is how we think of them in our hearts, the more because it is left unspoken. Nothing can be more glorious for women than to value true distinction through the opinion of the world instead of by the magnificence of titles, and to make sure they are worthy of a great name though they may not wish to bear it.

85. Furthermore, even in the hearts of ordinary men, humanity's former blessing of friendship had

be dated between December 104 and 105, and Pliny's evidence is explicit that it was not held in 100.

withered and died, and in its place had sprung up flattery and adulation, and worse even than hatred, the false semblance of love; while in the Emperors' palace nothing remained of friendship but the name, now empty and derided.<sup>1</sup> For how could friendship survive between men thus divided, the one half feeling themselves the masters, the other half their slaves? It was you, Caesar, who brought her back from exile, to find a home again; you have friends because you know how to be one. Love cannot be demanded of subjects, as other things can; there is no sentiment so lofty and independent, so impatient of tyranny, so uncompromising in its expectations of a return. It is possible for a prince to incur hatred (though perhaps unjustly) from many of his subjects, though he feels none himself; it is not possible for him to win affection unless he shows it too. And so you love as you are loved; all honour to both sides, though the glory is all yours, since it is you who step down from your superior status to carry out all the duties of friendship, descend from being emperor to be a friend—though in fact you are never more emperor than when you fill the rôle of friend, for a prince needs every kind of friendship to maintain his position,<sup>2</sup> and so his first care is to provide himself with friends. May you ever follow this line of conduct, never fail to practise this among your other virtues: and never let yourself be persuaded that a prince demeans himself unless he hates. There is nothing more delightful in human affairs than to inspire love, unless it is to feel it, and you can enjoy both, seeing that the warmth of your own affection kindles even more in your friends. The reasons are two: it is

easier to love one man than many, and your opportunities for putting your friends under obligation to you are so great that no one, without ingratitude, can fail to make sure that his love exceeds your own.

86. At this point I must recall the personal distress you chose to undergo rather than refuse anything to a friend. You released from office a man of the highest merit,<sup>1</sup> one of your dearest friends, in spite of your grief and reluctance, as if there was no possibility of your retaining him. How much you felt for him was shown by the extent of your regret; your heart was torn and broken as you yielded to his pressure. The situation was unheard-of: for an emperor and his friend to have conflicting desires, and the friend's wishes to take precedence. Here then is something to go down on record for all to remember—a prefect for the praetorian guard was chosen not from those who put themselves forward but from those who held back, and once chosen was allowed to return to the retirement he so obstinately preferred: occupied as you were by the cares of empire, you begrudged no one an honourable release. We can appreciate the extent of our debt to you, Caesar, for all the hardships and vexations of the responsibilities you bear, when retirement is sought and granted by you as the greatest of blessings. Your distress, I am told, was undisguised, as you saw him on to the boat; yes, you saw him off, and there on the shore you were not ashamed to give him your embrace and kiss of farewell. There on a watchtower, the witness of his friendship, stood Caesar, and prayed for a calm sea for his departing friend, prayed too for a speedy return (if that was to

be his desire); nor could he help following him into the distance with repeated prayers and tears. Of your generosity I say nothing. No services could approach princely solicitude and endurance like yours, which merited some recognition on his side that his determination came too near obstinacy. No doubt he debated in his heart whether to swing round his helm, and would have done so, if there were not more joy and happiness than even what a prince's intimacy can bring, in missing him in absence with the knowledge that he feels the same. And so he enjoys both the high reward of having accepted office and the greater honour which came to him from laying it down; while your readiness to fall in with his wishes has at least made it clear that you cannot be suspected of retaining anyone against his will.

87. To use no force, to remember at all times that whatever the powers anyone is granted, liberty will always be dearer to men's hearts—this is indeed democratic and proper for one who is father to us all. It is your prerogative, Caesar, to confer office on those who may desire to relinquish it, to grant exemption to any who seek it, though it may be against your own wishes, to understand that your friends are not deserting you if they want to retire, to be always finding people whom you recall from private life or send back to it. And to those of you in the Senate whom our Father deems worthy of his friendship and regard, I say: cherish the high opinion he has of you; this is your concern, not his, for a prince may show that he can feel affection in one case without being blamed for not doing as much for others. But which

of you could be lukewarm in his feelings towards one who accepts the rules of friendship instead of imposing his own? One man may seek Caesar's affection in person, another when he is away; let both receive it according to his preference. No one becomes irksome by his presence, no one is forgotten in absence; everyone retains his position once he has won it, and Caesar can more easily forget the face of an absent friend than let the love he bears him fade from his heart.

88. Most of the emperors, though masters of their subjects, were the slaves of their freedmen, at the mercy of their counsels and their whims.<sup>1</sup> Through them they spoke and were spoken to; through them priesthoods, prefectures and consulships were sought—through them, or rather, from them. By contrast, you hold your freedmen in high honour, but as freedmen only, and believe that a reputation for honesty and good character is all they should expect, for you know that the chief indication of weakness in a ruler is the power of his freedmen. In the first place, you employ no one unless he was considered and chosen for you or your father or for one of the better emperors; then you train these men daily in such a way that they measure themselves against their own position, not yours: with the result that they prove all the more worthy of our high regard because it is not forced on us.

Is there not just reason for the title bestowed on you by the Senate and people of Rome—the title of *Optimus*, Best?<sup>2</sup> It may seem ready-made and commonplace, but in fact it is something new. No one is known to have merited it before, though it was

there to be used if someone proved worthy. Would it have been better to call him "Fortunate"? This is a tribute to his luck, not his character. What about "the Great"?<sup>1</sup> This has a ring of envy rather than renown. In adopting you, the best of emperors gave you his own name, to which the Senate added that of *Optimus*, to be as much your personal name as the one your father gave. Thus you are as clearly designated and defined by the name of *Optimus* as by that of Trajan; just as formerly the house of Piso was known for frugality,<sup>2</sup> and those of Laelius and Metellus for wisdom and filial piety.<sup>3</sup> All these virtues are contained in the single name which is yours, for "the Best" can only refer to the man who outstrips all others who are best in their own distinctive ways. And so it was only proper to place this at the end of your other titles,<sup>4</sup> as being the greater one, for it means less to be Emperor and Caesar and Augustus than to be better than all those who have borne those titles before you. For the same reason, the Father of gods and men is worshipped under the title *Optimus* followed by *Maximus*, Best and Highest, and the more honour is due to you, who in the eyes of all are equally Highest and Best. You have won a title which cannot pass to another without seeming borrowed, in the case of a good prince, and false, in the case of a bad one; and though all in future may claim it, it will always be recognized as yours. Just as the

<sup>4</sup> At this time Trajan was still officially called *Imperator Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, pater patriae*. *Optimus* appears after *Traianus* in inscriptions of 113/14. (S. 99-101.)

name of Augustus reminds us of the man to whom it was first decreed,<sup>1</sup> so this title of *Optimus* will never return to the memory of man without recalling you, and whenever our descendants are called on to bestow it, they will always remember who it was whose merits won it as his due.

89. What happiness you must feel today, divine Nerva, on beholding him whom you judged the best candidate for your choice proving that he is best, and being addressed as such! What joy for you to stand second in comparison with your son! There can be no better indication of your greatness of soul than the fact that though so good yourself you did not hesitate to choose a better man. You also, father Trajan (for you too, though not raised to the stars, must surely occupy the nearest place), must know such delight when you see your son who was tribune and soldier under you<sup>2</sup> now risen to be supreme commander and emperor, when you enter into friendly rivalry with his adopter so as to determine where the greater glory must be assigned—to his begetter or to the one who made him his choice. All honour to you both for the immense service you have done your country and the great benefit you have conferred on it. Though it was your son's merits which brought one of you triumphal ornaments<sup>3</sup> and the other his place in heaven, your glory for owing these to him is what it would be had you won them yourselves.

90. I am well aware, Conscript Fathers, that the consuls should feel a sense of obligation (in their public rather than their private capacity) which goes beyond that of any other citizen. For just as the

hatred roused by the evil emperors was more right and honourable if prompted by general rather than personal injustices, so it is nobler to love the good ones for their services to the human race and not to any particular men. But it has become customary for the consuls, once their official speech of thanks is finished, to go on to express their personal debt to their prince. Allow me then to perform this duty, as much on behalf of my distinguished colleague, Cornutus Tertullus,<sup>1</sup> as for myself. I should surely speak for us both when my debt of thanks is due as much on his account as on my own, especially when the supreme generosity of the Emperor took note of our intimacy and conferred on us jointly what would have won the gratitude of us both had it been assigned only to one. Both of us had suffered from that robber and assassin of every honest man through the massacre of our friends, as the hot breath of his falling thunderbolt passed close by our heads;<sup>2</sup> for we took pride in having the same friends and mourned their loss together, and just as today we share the same hopes and joys, at that time we were one in grief and terror. The divine Nerva had recompensed us for our times of peril in expressing his wish to promote us as being honest citizens, though as yet unknown; for the advancement of those whose only prayer hitherto had been to remain forgotten by the Emperor was a further indication that times had changed.

91. We had not yet completed our second year in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ep.* V. 14 and Index.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ep.* III. 11. 3 and VII. 27. 14: the "reign of terror" under Domitian in 93.

an exacting and important office<sup>1</sup> when you offered us the consulate, and this you did, noblest of princes and most valorous of emperors in the field, so that to its supreme honour might be added the further distinction of rapid promotion. This marks the gulf between you and those among your predecessors who sought to recommend their benefits by hedging them with difficulties, and believed that honours would be more acceptable to their recipients if hope long deferred, exasperation and endless delays tantamount to a rebuff, had first turned them into a mark of ignominy. Modesty prevents us from quoting in detail your recommendation, whereby you did honour to our love of virtue and the State by comparing us with the great consuls of the past—whether justly or not we cannot venture to decide, for it would be improper for us to disparage your expressed opinion, and an embarrassment to admit to any truth in such a splendid tribute to ourselves. You, on the other hand, are fully worthy to bestow the consulate on such men as you can extol in terms like these. Forgive me for saying that the most welcome feature to us of the favours you bestow is your intention that we should be colleagues once again. That was demanded by our mutual affection, the harmony of our way of life, and the uniformity of our principles, which is so marked that the similarity of our habits detracts from the merit of our close agreement; for either of us to disagree with his colleague would be as surprising as if he were at odds with himself. Thus there is nothing incidental or transitory in the pleasure which each of us feels in the consulship of his colleague; it might be a second one of his own,

only with this difference: those who hold office twice are indeed honoured twice, but on different occasions, whereas we have received our two consulships together and hold them together, and through the person of the other each feels that we are consuls at the same moment and for a second time.

92. It is no less remarkable that you bestowed the consulate on us while we were prefects of the treasury before you appointed a successor there. Honour has been heaped on honour, and our responsibilities not only prolonged without a break but doubled, now that a second office has anticipated the end of the first as if it were not enough for it to follow in succession. Such was your faith in our integrity that you were confident that it would do no damage to your principles of close surveillance if you did not permit us to retire into private life when we laid down an office of such importance.<sup>1</sup> Nor must I neglect to mention that you conferred a consulship on us in the same year as you held your own,<sup>2</sup> and so our consulship will be recorded on the same page as yours, and our names will appear on the calendar headed by your own. It was not beneath your dignity to preside in person at our election and to pronounce the sacred formula of the oath; it was your decision to make us consuls, and your voice which proclaimed us; you sponsored our candidature in the senate-house and announced its success on the election-field. Moreover, what an honour it is for us of all men to be assigned to the month which is distinguished by your birthday! It will be our good fortune to celebrate by public games and official

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 60. 4 and note.

announcement that day of triple rejoicing which saw the removal of the worst emperors, the accession of the best, and the birth of one even better than the best.<sup>1</sup> It will be our lot to mount (beneath your own eyes) a chariot even nobler than usual, and amid the cries of good omen and clamour of competing vows offered in your presence,<sup>2</sup> we shall be carried gladly along, unable to judge from which quarter the louder cheering strikes our ears.

93. There is still something which demands praise beyond all else: the fact that when you have made consuls you allow them to act without interference, by which I mean that there are no fears nor perils as regards the Emperor to weaken and destroy their spirit; the consuls will not have to listen to anything against their will nor have decisions forced on them. Our office retains and will retain the respect due to it, and in exercising our authority we need lose none of our peace of mind. Moreover, if the high dignity of the consulate should chance to be diminished, the fault will not be found in the times we live in but in ourselves. So far as rests with our prince, the consuls are free to fill their rôle as they did before the days of emperors. Is there any proper return we can make you, to match all you have done for us? Only perhaps by remembering all our lives that we have been consuls, your consuls: by ensuring that our opinions and pronouncements are worthy of the office we once held: by playing an active part in public affairs to show we believe that the republic still exists: by not withholding our aid and counsel, and by not imagining ourselves rid of the consulate and dismissed from office, but believing ourselves

always closely bound up with it in some way, so that we continue to uphold by our efforts and devotion the position which brought us so much honour and respect.

94. To end my speech, I call on the gods, the guardians and defenders of our empire, speaking as consul on behalf of all humanity: and to you in particular, Capitoline Jupiter, I address my prayer that you shall continue your benefits, and augment the great gifts you have bestowed by making them perpetual. You heard our prayers under a bad prince; now give ear to our wishes on behalf of his opposite. We are not burdening you with vows—we do not pray for peace, concord, and serenity, nor for wealth and honours: our desire is simple, all-embracing, and unanimous: the safety of our prince.<sup>1</sup> This is no new concern we ask of you, for it was you who took him under your protection when you snatched him from the jaws of that monster of rapacity; for at the time when all the peaks were tottering to their fall, no one could have stood high above them all and remained untouched except by your intervention. So he escaped the notice of the worst of emperors, though he could not remain unnoticed by the best. It was you too who gave him clear signs of your interest as he set out to join his army,<sup>2</sup> when you yielded to him your own name and glory; and you who spoke your opinion through the voice of the Emperor, when you chose a son for him, a father for us, a Chief Pontiff for yourself. It is therefore with increased confidence, using the same form of vow that he asked to be made on his behalf, that I make

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 5. 2-4 and notes.

this my earnest prayer: "If he rules the State well and in the interests of all," first preserve him for our grandsons and great-grandsons, then grant him one day a successor born of him and formed by him in the image of the adopted son he is, or if fate denies him this, guide and direct his choice to someone worthy to be adopted in your temple on the Capitol.<sup>1</sup>

95. To you, Conscript Fathers, my debt is great, and this is published in the official records.<sup>2</sup> You it was who paid me tribute according to the best traditions, for my orderly conduct as tribune,<sup>3</sup> my moderation as praetor,<sup>4</sup> my integrity and determination in carrying out the requests you made of my professional services for the protection of our allies.<sup>5</sup> More recently, you hailed my designation as future consul with such acclamation that I am well aware that I must redouble my efforts if I am to receive your continued approval, and retain and increase it day by day; I do not forget that the truest judgement on whether a man merits an office or not is passed at the moment of his assuming it. All I ask is your support in my present undertaking and your belief in what I say. If then it is true that I advanced in my career under that most treacherous of emperors before he admitted his hatred for honest men, but was halted in it once he did so,<sup>6</sup> preferring a longer route when I saw what the short cuts were which opened the way to office; that in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ep.* X. 3a and VI. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny held his quaestorship, tribunate, and praetorship under Domitian, and also the *praefectura aerarii militaris*; the check in his career must therefore refer to his consulship, if indeed there was one. See Introduction, p. xi.

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bad times I was one of those who lived with grief and fear, and can be counted among the serene and happy now that better days have come; that, finally, I love the best of princes as much as I was hated by the worst: then I shall act not as if I consider myself consul to day and ex-consul tomorrow, but as if I were still a candidate for the consulate, and in this way shall minister at all times to the reverence which is due to you all.

*Translator's note.* Where *princeps* is translated as 'prince' it is because no other English word seems to combine the emphasis of a monosyllable with the patriotic feeling which inspires the speech.