

"A Bible for heroes." —RALPH WALDO EMERSON

PLUTARCH'S LIVES

VOLUME I



The
Modern
Library
Classics

THE DRYDEN TRANSLATION

Edited, with Notes and Preface, by
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

Introduction by JAMES ATLAS

PLUTARCH'S
LIVES

VOLUME I

The Lives translated, with a preface

by Robert Southey

illustrated by James Heath

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PLUTARCH

PLUTARCH was born during the reign of Claudius, around A.D. 45, at Chaeronea in Boeotia, a town of historic but somewhat faded importance. His family, originally from Thebes, had long enjoyed local distinction, a tradition he was to maintain in a life full of civic accomplishments. He founded a school of philosophy, served as Archon of Chaeronea, and eventually officiated as a priest of Apollo at Delphi. Only a few details of his life can be gleaned from his writings. At the time of Emperor Nero's visit to Greece in A.D. 66, Plutarch was by his own account a student of philosophy at Athens under the teacher Ammonius. As an exponent of Platonism, he vigorously attacked the positions of the Stoics and Epicureans. He was married and had at least five children.

Plutarch spent some part of his career in Italy, although he describes his experiences there only in passing; for example, in a discussion about his knowledge of Latin writers in his life of Demosthenes, he says that "having had no leisure, while I was in Rome and other parts of Italy, to exercise myself in the Roman language, on account of public business and of those who came to be instructed by me in philosophy, it was very late, and in the decline of my age, before I applied myself to the reading of Latin authors." He traveled in Egypt as well. He was a prolific writer in a variety of genres; his surviving work (representing perhaps half of what he wrote) fills a dozen volumes. In addition to the *Parallel Lives* of celebrated Greeks and Romans, which he produced late in his career, he wrote essays and dialogues on an immense range of subjects, collected in the *Moralia*. The dialogues—involving a cast of philosophers, grammarians, rhetoricians, and physicians—recreate in stylized fashion the table talk, alternately moralizing and frivolous, of Plutarch's milieu. The comings and goings of these participants—from Britain to Tarsus, from

Egypt to Lacedaemonia—emphasize that this was the heyday of Roman imperial unity, and an era of cultural flowering: Plutarch's contemporaries included Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, Arrian, Quintilian, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, Martial, and Juvenal.

Plutarch's own life may have been centered on his native town, but his writings move easily through centuries of history and across the length and breadth of the Mediterranean world. His reputation was evidently wide; under Trajan and Hadrian he is said to have received the insignia of a consul and a post as Procurator of Greece. He probably died sometime after A.D. 120. It was during the reign of Trajan that he wrote the *Lives*, which have proven his most enduring work. Intended as moral portraits rather than historical interpretations, the *Lives* are an incomparably rich trove of the facts and legends that Plutarch tirelessly collected, and an epitome of Graeco-Roman concepts of character. In the English translation made by Sir Thomas North in 1579 they contributed enormously, in both incident and language, to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The present translation, originally published in 1683–86 in conjunction with a life of Plutarch by John Dryden, was revised in 1864 by the poet and scholar Arthur Hugh Clough.

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INTRODUCTION

by *James Atlas*

PLUTARCH, the first modern biographer, chronicler of Mark Antony, Caesar, Pericles, and Brutus, is no less real to us than his mythic subjects. The known facts of his life are few, but enough to provide a vivid glimpse of him. He was born in Chaeronea, a small town in Boeotia "remarkable for nothing," noted one of his translators, "but the tameness and servility of its inhabitants." Even the year of his birth is uncertain: some place it near the middle of the reign of Claudius, others near the end, about 45 or 50 A.D. We know that he was Greek, and had a traditional Greek education; that he was studying philosophy under Ammonius at Athens when Nero made his incursion into Greece, in the twelfth year of the Emperor's reign, the sixty-sixth year of the Christian era; and that he was from a wealthy family. His ancestors were magistrates, and were relatively long-lived. Plutarch knew his great-grandfather Nicarchus, who, we read in his life of Antony, had been whipped by Roman soldiers while forced to carry grain to the coast; and his grandfather Lamprias, fabled for his wine-induced eloquence, also makes a cameo appearance in that narrative, the source of a story about the fantastically lavish banquets Antony and Cleopatra threw for their circle of overindulgent friends, who referred to themselves as the Inimitable Livers.

Plutarch's domestic life was tranquil, by all accounts, though often darkened by the tragedy of early death, a common hazard of that era. He had at least five children—four sons and a daughter—by his wife, Timoxena. Of his daughter, named after his wife, he wrote: "When she was very young she would frequently beg of her nurse to give the breast not only to the other children, but to her babies and dolls, which she considered as her dependents, and under her protection." She died in early childhood, and he also lost two of his sons prematurely. Plutarch's

response to the death of his daughter is frequently cited by scholars as a model of calm dignity in mourning. Their evidence is an essay in the form of a letter, entitled *The Consolation to His Wife*, that Plutarch wrote Timoxena, counseling her to grieve "within the reasonable limits": "What our loss really amounts to, I know and estimate for myself. But should I find your distress excessive, my trouble on your account will be greater than on that of our loss. I am not a 'stock or stone,' as you, my partner in the care of our numerous children, every one of whom we have ourselves brought up at home, can testify." Rather than allow themselves to be overwhelmed by loss, they could more profitably recall their good fortune, however brief: "Yet why should we forget the reasonings we have often addressed to others, and regard our present pain as obliterating and effacing our former joys?"

Plutarch was worldly, by the standards of his day and age. In his youth he may have traveled to Egypt—a stage in the classical Grand Tour—and also to Greece and Asia Minor. He certainly visited Italy—"on public business," he tells us in his life of Demosthenes—but he didn't get around to learning Latin until late in life, "having had no leisure, while I was in Rome and other parts of Italy, to exercise myself in the Roman language." He delivered his public lectures on philosophy in Greek. After his Italian sojourn—again, the precise dates elude historians—he retired to Chaeronea to compose his *Lives*. "As to myself, I live in a little town," he famously wrote, "and I choose to live there, lest it should become still less." A loyal and public-spirited member of the community whose population he refused "to make less by the withdrawal of even one inhabitant," he served for a time as the commissioner of sewage and public buildings.

I make no doubt that the citizens of Chaeronea often smile when they see me employed in such offices as these. On such occasions, I generally call to mind what is said of Antisthenes: when he was bringing home, in his own hands, a dirty fish from the market, some, who observed it, expressed their surprise; "It is for myself," said Antisthenes, "that I carry this fish." On the contrary, for my own part, when I am rallied for measuring tiles, or for calculating a quantity of stones or mortar, I answer, that it is *not* for myself that I do these things, but for my country. For, in all things of this nature, the public utility takes off the disgrace; and the meaner the office you sustain may be, the greater is the compliment that you pay to the public.

Plutarch's job as a magistrate was "to heal private animosities," to conciliate, to be always available to the citizenry, to keep his house open

"as a place of refuge for those who sought for justice." He also held a priesthood for life at Delphi, and was an honorary citizen of Athens. In later life, Hadrian made him Procurator of Greece. He "lived to be old," according to Arthur Hugh Clough, the Victorian-age poet who revised Dryden's version of the *Lives*. The exact date of his death, like that of his birth, is unknown, but it was probably early in the reign of Hadrian. He was survived by two sons, Plutarch and Lamprius; the latter was a philosopher who left a catalogue of his father's writings that have since disappeared, and upon which we must look, as Dryden says, with the same emotions that a merchant must feel in perusing a bill of freight after he has lost his vessel.

What we know of Plutarch, then, "forms a picture," as Clough described it, "of a happy domestic life, half academic, half municipal, passed among affectionate relatives and well-known friends"—the life of a cosmopolitan intellectual who lived two thousand years ago. His character, reflected in a handful of anecdotes and in the lively voice that animates his narratives, shines forth from the distance of two millennia like a lamp behind a curtain—faint and diffuse, but still illuminating.

Amidst the endless accounts of wars, the shimmering shields and gilt-edged swords, the massed troops in their elaborate finery, the pageant of blood and sacrifice, Plutarch's observations have a familiar, even intimate tone. That he was a sensitive soul is evident from his attitude toward the elder Cato, whom he reproves for selling off his servants when they got old "like so many beasts of burden." Animals, too, elicited his sympathy. It was important to take care of dogs and horses, he maintained, praising those who gave proper burial to their pets: "The obligations of law and equity reach only to mankind, but kindness and beneficence should be extended to the creatures of every species; and these still flow from the breast of a well-natured man, as streams that issue from the living fountain." Like Dr. Johnson, who once let go a hare that his host had caught in the garden with an eye toward making it their supper, he had kind words for the people of Athens, who spared the lives and put out to pasture animals that had been enlisted in building the temple at Hecatompedon.

Plutarch may have inherited his gentle temperament from his father, who was determined to teach his son the virtue of modesty. Once, he recounts, when a fellow citizen accompanied him on a diplomatic mission and had to stop along the way, Plutarch's father urged his son to share credit for accomplishing the task: "Say not *I went, I spoke, I executed*; but *we went, we spoke, we executed*." The lesson was to "avoid that envy which necessarily follows all arrogated merit." On another occasion, Arulenus Rusticus, an eminent political figure in Rome, happened to be in the au-

dience at one of Plutarch's lectures when a soldier arrived with a letter from the emperor: "Upon this there was a general silence through the audience, and I stopped to give him time to peruse this letter; but he would not suffer it; nor did he open the letter till I had finished my lecture, and the audience was dispersed—an example of serious and dignified behavior which excited much admiration." This example of self-mastery clearly made an impression on Plutarch; in his discourse on Inquisitiveness, he advised his readers not to open letters in a hurry, biting the strings.

For a contemporary reader, one of the most notable features of the *Lives* is how closely they resemble our own. Plutarch's evocation of the texture of Greek and Roman life has an utterly familiar feel. The architecture of homes; the contrast between city and country; the rituals of meals: all this information is conveyed with a freshness that makes it seem as if we could be reading about the civic culture of twenty-first-century Rome—or of New York City. Writing of Caesar, Plutarch remarks on his "dinner parties and entertainments and a certain splendor about his whole way of life"; Alcibiades is chided for his "drunkenness, debauchery, and insolence," his notorious flamboyance: "He was effeminate in his dress and would walk through the market-place trailing his long purple robes." He also borrowed vessels of gold and silver from the city for his own table—an ancient instance of expense-account abuse. The practice was apparently widespread. Lamachus, a Greek soldier, was said to be so poor that "whenever he sent in his accounts for a campaign, he was in the habit of claiming expenses for his clothes and shoes."

How accurate are these details? Not very. It has to be kept in mind that Plutarch was writing at a time when the world itself had yet to be mapped out. To say that his geography was shaky hardly covers the case. The Cimmerians, he informs us, "lived at the end of the world by the outer ocean in a land of shade and forests so thick that the sun is never visible because of the size and thickness of the trees which extend inland as far as the Hercynii." As for Britain: "The reported size of the island had appeared incredible and it had become a great matter of controversy among writers and scholars, many of whom asserted that the place did not exist at all. . . ." Plutarch's credulity will strike the modern reader as quaint. In his narrative, augurs who study entrails and monitor the flight of birds are in great demand. When a sparrow flies over the Forum with a grasshopper in its bill and throws part of it down on the ground, "this was interpreted by the professionals to mean that there would be quarrels and political disturbances between the great

landowners and the common people of the city." Assembling his life of Sulla, he relies on the usual vague sources ("they say") for a story about a satyr that was found on "a holy piece of ground" and brought to the Consul, "but could scarcely speak at all and could certainly say nothing intelligible." And in the life of Marcellus, he passes on rumors that "an ox had uttered human speech, and that a boy had been born with an elephant's head." Plutarch required no evidence: "When a story is so celebrated and is vouched for by so many authorities and, more important still, when it is so much in keeping with Solon's character and bears the stamp of his wisdom and greatness of mind, I cannot agree that it should be rejected because of the so-called rule of chronology."

There was nothing unusual about Plutarch's insouciance toward facts. Scholarship in his day was a highly impressionistic affair. Most of his sources were letters, speeches, and collections of sayings quoted largely from memory, stories heard and written down in a common-book—the *Symposiac*, or Table-Talk, a record of conversations collected from family and friends. Biography itself was only beginning to emerge as a genre. We hear of biographies, and perhaps autobiographies, as early as the fifth century B.C., but biography in a form we would recognize first appears in the Hellenistic Age. "The word is *bios*—not *biographia*," Arnaldo Momigliano explained in *The Development of Greek Biography*—that is to say, it dealt more with the type (generals, philosophers, demagogues) than with the individual. And it built upon another developing genre: "One of the spectacular features of intellectual life in the fifth century is the development of a new branch of research: history." In the work of Herodotus and Thucydides one encounters for the first time a "historiography centred on individuals," according to Momigliano: "The philosophical and rhetorical schools of the fourth century [B.C.] developed the art of talking about individuals, including the most important of individuals—oneself."

What distinguished Plutarch from his predecessors was his awareness of what we would now call the interior life. "My design is not to write Histories, but lives," he declared:

And the most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue or vice in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their character and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever. Therefore as portrait-painters are more exact in the lines and features of the face, in which the character is seen, than in the other parts of the body, so I must be

allowed to give my more particular attention to the marks and indications of the souls of men, and while I endeavor by these to portray their lives, may be free to leave more weighty matters and great battles to be treated by others.

It was in a man's private life rather than in his public deeds that character stood revealed. This was Plutarch's credo, as it would become the credo of Aubrey and Boswell, Carlyle and Macaulay, Lytton Strachey and Richard Ellmann. The history of biography begins with Plutarch's discovery that men are defined by their most peculiar traits. Thus, Themistocles put off things until the last minute "in order to deal with an immense quantity of business all at once and have meetings with many different kinds of people and thus make himself out to be a person of great importance and power." And thus the chameleonlike Alcibiades promoted the benefits of physical exercise in Sparta, of indolence in pleasure-loving Ionia, of drink in bibulous Thrace.

Not that Plutarch neglected the astonishing violence of antiquity. Few of his subjects died in their beds; murder, often at the hands of a bloodthirsty mob, was the order of the day. In his life of Gaius Marius, he describes how the Cimbri, routed by the Romans, fell upon their own: "The women, all dressed in black, stood on the wagons and killed the fugitives—their husbands, their brothers, their fathers; then they strangled their little children with their own hands, hurling them down under the wheels of the wagons or the feet of the animals; and finally they cut their own throats." Sulla thought nothing of butchering thousands of captured soldiers in the Circus. Phraates put his own father to death. But Plutarch was less interested in men's acts than in their consequences. He didn't believe in character development; his subjects were static, not evolving. It was "the drama of an individual's success or failure," as the Plutarch scholar D. A. Russell put it, that captured his imagination: "He is a moralist rather than a historian. His interest is less for politics and the changes of empires, and much more for personal character and individual actions and motives to action—duty performed and rewarded; arrogance chastised; hasty anger corrected; humanity, fair dealing, and generosity triumphing in the visible, or relying on the invisible, world."

Plutarch gave the fullest account of his method in the opening pages of his life of Pericles. Why did he write? To "arouse the spirit of emulation," to find in the deeds of heroes an illustration of "moral good" that inspires other men to follow. Of Coriolanus, who lost his father in youth, he noted: "His example shows us that the loss of a father, even though it may impose other disadvantages on a boy, does not prevent

him from living a virtuous or a distinguished life, and that it is only worthless men who seek to excuse the deterioration of their character by pleading neglect in their early years." Sertorius, who rose to be one of the great generals of Rome, he praised for his willingness to share power and negotiate fairly with his enemies, as well as for his equable disposition, which "enabled him to resist pleasure and fear alike: he was unmoved in the face of danger, nor did he become overelated with success." So often in Plutarch one reads of men whose successes make them arrogant: "Great powers bring about a change in the previous characters of their holders—a change in the direction of overexcitability, pomposity, and inhumanity." What appealed to him about Sertorius was his gentleness of spirit, his "magnanimity." Here was a man who adopted a fawn as his mascot in battle and grieved so intensely upon learning of his mother's death that he lay in his tent for a week.

Yet despite his efforts to emphasize his subjects' positive attributes, the dark side of humanity is always present in Plutarch's chronicles. The evidence of his subjects' bad qualities is irrepressible. Caesar's lust for distinction; Themistocles' insomniac obsession with the triumphs of his rival Miltiades; Mark Antony's "insane desire to be the first and greatest man in the world"—time and again, the moral good that Plutarch wishes to put before his readers is blotted out by the schemes and machinations, the greed, envy, competitiveness, and lust, that drive the world. Plutarch saw these forces at work even if he failed to grasp their ubiquity. Writing of the civil war led by Pompey and Caesar, he was awed by the spectacle of those two vast armies massed on the plain of Pharsalia, intent on mutual destruction—"a clear enough lesson of how blind and mad a thing human nature is when under the sway of passion."

Plutarch was modest about his chosen form; biography, he cautioned, was a provisional enterprise, dependent on hearsay and fallible memory, the facts obliterated by the remorseless erasures of time and history: "The true history of these events is hidden from us." Perhaps; but it was his insights into their causes, his knowledge of our profoundly divided human nature, that assured his immortality.

PREFACE



The author of this book, a student of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, has written this book for the purpose of presenting to the student a series of lectures on the subject of the history of the human mind.

The history of the human mind is a subject of great interest and importance. It is a subject which has attracted the attention of the most eminent philosophers and scientists of all ages. The history of the human mind is a subject which has attracted the attention of the most eminent philosophers and scientists of all ages. The history of the human mind is a subject which has attracted the attention of the most eminent philosophers and scientists of all ages.

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PREFACE

by Arthur Hugh Clough

THE collection so well known as *Plutarch's Lives*, is neither in form nor in arrangement what its author left behind him.

To the proper work, the Parallel Lives, narrated in a series of books, each containing the accounts of one Greek and one Roman, followed by a comparison, some single lives have been appended, for no reason but that they are also biographies. Otho and Galba belonged, probably, to a series of Roman Emperors from Augustus to Vitellius. Artaxerxes and Aratus the statesman are detached narratives, like others which once, we are told, existed, Hercules, Aristomenes, Hesiod, Pindar, Daiphantus, Crates the cynic, and Aratus the poet.

In the Parallel Lives themselves there are gaps. There was a book containing those of Epaminondas and Scipio the younger. Many of the comparisons are wanting, have either been lost, or were not completed. And the reader will notice for himself that references made here and there in the extant lives show that their original order was different from the present. In the very first page, for example, of the book, in the life of Theseus, mention occurs of the lives of Lycurgus and Numa, as already written.

The plain facts of Plutarch's own life may be given in a very short compass. He was born, probably, in the reign of Claudius, about A.D. 45 or 50. His native place was Chæronea, in Bœotia, where his family had long been settled and was of good standing and local reputation. He studied at Athens under a philosopher named Ammonius. He visited Egypt. Later in life, some time before A.D. 90, he was at Rome "on public business," a deputation, perhaps, from Chæronea. He continued there long enough to give lectures which attracted attention. Whether he visited Italy once only, or more often, is uncertain.

He was intimate with Sosius Senecio, to all appearances the same

who was four times consul. The acquaintance may have sprung up at Rome, where Sosius, a much younger man than himself,¹ may have first seen him as a lecturer; or they may have previously known each other in Greece.

To Greece and to Chæronea he returned, and appears to have spent in the little town, which he was loth "to make less by the withdrawal of even one inhabitant," the remainder of his life. He took part in the public business of the place and the neighbourhood. He was archon in the town, and officiated many years as a priest of Apollo, apparently at Delphi.

He was married, and was the father of at least five children, of whom two sons, at any rate, survived to manhood. His greatest work, his Biographies, and several of his smaller writings, belong to this later period of his life, under the reign of Trajan. Whether he survived to the time of Hadrian is doubtful. If A.D. 45 be taken by way of conjecture for the date of his birth, A.D. 120, Hadrian's fourth year, may be assumed, in like manner, as pretty nearly that of his death. All that is certain is that he lived to be old; that in one of his fictitious dialogues he describes himself as a young man conversing on philosophy with Ammonius in the time of Nero's visit to Greece, A.D. 66-67; and that he was certainly alive and still writing in A.D. 106, the winter which Trajan, after building his bridge over the Danube, passed in Dacia. "We are told," he says, in his Inquiry into the Principle of Cold, "by those who are now wintering with the Emperor on the Danube, that the freezing of water will crush boats to pieces."

To this bare outline of certainties, several names and circumstances may be added from his writings; on which indeed alone we can safely rely for the very outline itself. There are a few allusions and anecdotes in the Lives, and from his miscellaneous compositions, his Essays, Lectures, Dialogues, Table-Talk, etc., the imagination may furnish itself with a great variety of curious and interesting suggestions.

The name of his great-grandfather, Nicarchus, is incidentally recorded in the life of Antony. "My great-grandfather used," he says, "to tell, how in Antony's last war the whole of the citizens of Chæronea were put in requisition to bring down corn to the coast of the gulf of Corinth, each man carrying a certain load, and soldiers standing by to urge them on with the lash." One such journey was made, and they had measured out their burdens for the second, when news arrived of the

¹ Unless the expression "my sons your companions" ought to be taken as a piece of pleasantry.

defeat at Actium.¹ Lamprias, his grandfather, is also mentioned in the same life. Philotas, the physician, had told him an anecdote illustrating the luxuriousness of Antony's life in Egypt. His father is more than once spoken of in the minor works, but never mentioned by his name.

The name of Ammonius, his teacher and preceptor at Athens, occurs repeatedly in the minor works, and is once specially mentioned in the *Lives*; a descendant of Themistocles had studied with Plutarch under Ammonius. We find it mentioned that he three times held the office, once so momentous in the world's history, of *strategus* at Athens.² This, like that of the Bœotarchs in Bœotia, continued under the Empire to be intrusted to native citizens, and judging from what is said in the little treatise of *Political Precepts*, was one of the more important places under the Roman provincial governor.

"Once," Plutarch tells us, "our teacher, Ammonius, observing at his afternoon lecture that some of his auditors had been indulging too freely at breakfast, gave directions, in our presence, for chastisement to be administered to his own son, *because*, he said, *the young man has declined to take his breakfast unless he has sour wine with it, fixing his eyes at the same time on the offending members of the class.*"

The following anecdote appears to belong to some period a little later than that of his studies at Athens. "I remember, when I myself was still a young man, I was sent in company with another on a deputation to the proconsul; my colleague, it so happened, was unable to proceed, and I saw the proconsul and performed the commission alone. Upon my return when I was about to lay down my office, and to give an account of its discharge, my father got up in the assembly and bade me privately to take care not to say *I* went, but *we* went, nor *I* said, but *we* said, and in the whole narration to give my companion his share."

Of his stay in Italy, his visit to or residence in Rome, we know little beyond the statement which he gives us in the life of Demosthenes, that public business and visitors who came to see him on subjects of philosophy, took up so much of his time that he learned, at that time, but little of the Latin language. He must have travelled about, for he saw the bust

¹ There appears, however, to be no sure reason for saying that Plutarch himself remembered seeing his great-grandfather, and hearing him tell the story.

² This may throw some doubt on the statement (with which, however, it is perhaps not absolutely incompatible) made by the Byzantine historian Eunapius that "Ammonius, the teacher of the divine Plutarch, was an Egyptian."

Plutarch was certainly skilled in all the wisdom of the Græco-Egyptians; see his treatise addressed to the learned lady Clea, on Isis and Osiris; but he may, for anything we know, have stayed long and studied much at Alexandria.

or statue of Marius at Ravenna, as he informs us in the beginning of Marius's life. He undertook, he tells us in his essay on Brotherly Affection, the office, whilst he was in Rome, of arbitrating between two brothers, one of whom was considered to be a lover of philosophy. "But he had," he says, "in reality, no legitimate title to the name either of brother or of philosopher. When I told him I should expect from him the behaviour of a philosopher towards one, who was, first of all, an ordinary person making no such profession, and, in the second place, a brother, *as for the first point*, replied he, *it may be well enough, but I don't attach any great importance to the fact of two people having come from the same pair of bodies;*" an impious piece of free-thinking which met, of course, with Plutarch's indignant rebuke and reprobation.

A more remarkable anecdote is related in his discourse on Inquisitiveness. Among other precepts for avoiding or curing the fault, "We should habituate ourselves," he says, "when letters are brought to us, not to open them instantly and in a hurry, not to bite the strings in two, as many people will, if they do not succeed at once with their fingers; when a messenger comes, not to run to meet him; not to jump up, when a friend says he has something new to tell us; rather, if he has some good or useful advice to give us. Once when I was lecturing at Rome, Rusticus, whom Domitian afterwards, out of jealousy of his reputation, put to death, was one of my hearers; and while I was going on, a soldier came in and brought him a letter from the Emperor. And when every one was silent, and I stopped in order to let him read the letter, he declined to do so, and put it aside until I had finished and the audience withdrew; an example of serious and dignified behaviour which excited much admiration."

L. Junius Arulenus Rusticus, the friend of Pliny and Tacitus, glorified among the Stoic martyrs whose names are written in the life of Agricola, was in youth the ardent disciple of Thræsea Pætus; and when Pætus was destined by Nero for death, and the Senate was prepared to pass the decree for his condemnation, Rusticus, in the fervour of his feelings, was eager to interpose the veto still attaching in form to the office, which he happened then to hold, of tribune, and was scarcely withheld by his master from a demonstration which would but have added him, before his time, to the catalogue of victims. After performing, in the civil wars ensuing on the death of Nero, the duties of prætor, he published in Domitian's time a life of Thræsea, as did Senecio one of Helvidius, and Tacitus, probably himself, that of Agricola: the bold language of which insured his death. Among the teachers who afterwards gave instruction to the youthful Marcus Aurelius, we read the name of an Arulenus Rusticus, probably his grandson, united with that of Sextus

of Chæronea, Plutarch's nephew, "who taught me," says the virtuous Emperor, "by his own example, the just and wise habits he recommended," and to whose door, in late life, he was still seen to go, still desirous, as he said, to be a learner.

It does not, of course, follow from the terms in which the story is related, that the incident occurred in Domitian's time, and that it was to Domitian's letter that Plutarch's discourse was preferred. But that Plutarch was at Rome in or after Domitian's reign, seems to be fairly inferred from the language in which he speaks of the absurd magnificence of Domitian's palaces and other imperial buildings.

His two brothers, Timon and Lamprias, are frequently mentioned in his Essays and Dialogues. They, also, appear to have been pupils of Ammonius. In the treatise on Affection between Brothers, after various examples of the strength of this feeling, occurs the following passage: "And for myself," he says, "that among the many favours for which I have to thank the kindness of fortune, my brother Timon's affection to me is one, past and present, that may be put in the balance against all the rest, is what every one that has so much as met with us must be aware of, and our friends, of course, know well."

His wife was Timoxena, the daughter of Alexion. The circumstances of his domestic life receive their best illustration from his letter addressed to this wife, on the loss of their one daughter, born to them, it would appear, late in life, long after her brothers. "Plutarch to his wife, greeting. The messengers you sent to announce our child's death, apparently missed the road to Athens. I was told about my daughter on reaching Tanagra. Everything relating to the funeral I suppose to have been already performed; my desire is that all these arrangements may have been so made, as will now and in the future be most consoling to yourself. If there is anything which you have wished to do and have omitted, awaiting my opinion, and think would be a relief to you, it shall be attended to, apart from all excess and superstition, which no one would like less than yourself. Only, my wife, let me hope, that you will maintain both me and yourself within the reasonable limits of grief. What our loss really amounts to, I know and estimate for myself. But should I find your distress excessive, my trouble on your account will be greater than on that of our loss. I am not a 'stock or stone,' as you, my partner in the care of our numerous children, every one of whom we have ourselves brought up at home, can testify. And this child, a daughter, born to your wishes after four sons, and affording me the opportunity of recording your name, I am well aware was a special object of affection."

The sweet temper and the pretty ways of the child, he proceeds to

say, make the privation peculiarly painful. "Yet why," he says, "should we forget the reasonings we have often addressed to others, and regard our present pain as obliterating and effacing our former joys?" Those who had been present had spoken to him in terms of admiration of the calmness and simplicity of her behaviour. The funeral had been devoid of any useless and idle sumptuousness, and her own house of all display of extravagant lamentation. This was indeed no wonder to him, who knew how much her plain and unluxurious living had surprised his philosophical friends and visitors, and who well remembered her composure under the previous loss of the eldest of her children, and again, "when our beautiful Charon left us." "I recollect," he says, "that some acquaintance from abroad were coming up with me from the sea when the tidings of the child's decease were brought, and they followed with our other friends to the house; but the perfect order and tranquillity they found there made them believe, as I afterwards was informed they had related, that nothing had happened, and that the previous intelligence had been a mistake."

The Consolation (so the letter is named) closes with expressions of belief in the immortality of each human soul; in which the parents are sustained and fortified by the tradition of their ancestors, and the revelations to which they had both been admitted, conveyed in the mystic Dionysian ceremonies.

There is a phrase in the letter which might be taken to imply that, at the time of his domestic misfortune, Plutarch and Timoxena were already grandparents. The marriage of their son Autobulus is the occasion of one of the dinner parties recorded in the *Symposiac Questions*; and in one of the dialogues there is a distinct allusion to Autobulus's son. Plutarch inscribes the little treatise in explanation of the *Timæus* to his two sons, Autobulus and Plutarch. They must certainly have been grown-up men, to have anything to do with so difficult a subject. In his *Inquiry as to the Way in which the Young should read the Poets*, "It is not easy," he says, addressing Marcus Sedatus, "to restrain altogether from such reading young people of the age of my Soclarus and your Cleander." But whether Soclarus was a son, or a grandson, or some more distant relative, or, which is possible, a pupil, does not appear. Eurydice, to whom and to Pollianus, her newly espoused husband, he addresses his *Marriage Precepts*, seems to be spoken of as a recent inmate of his house; but it cannot be inferred that she was a daughter, nor does it seem likely that the little Timoxena's place was ever filled up.¹

¹ That he had more than two sons who grew up, at any rate, to youth, appears from a passage where he speaks of his younger sons having stayed too long at the theatre, and being, in consequence, too late at supper.

The office of Archon, which Plutarch held in his native municipality, was probably only an annual one; but very likely he served it more than once. He seems to have busied himself about all the little matters of the town, and to have made it a point to undertake the humblest duties. After relating the story of Epaminondas giving dignity to the office of Chief Scavenger, "And I, too, for that matter," he says, "am often a jest to my neighbours, when they see me, as they frequently do, in public, occupied on very similar duties; but the story told about Antisthenes comes to my assistance. When some one expressed surprise at his carrying home some picked fish from market in his own hands, *It is*, he answered, *for myself*. Conversely, when I am reproached with standing by and watching while tiles are measured out, and stone and mortar brought up, *This service*, I say, *is not for myself*, it is for my country."

In the little essay on the question, Whether an Old Man should continue in Public Life, written in the form of an exhortation of Euphanes, an ancient and distinguished member of the Areopagus at Athens, and of the Amphictyonic council, not to relinquish his duties, "Let there be no severance," he says, "in our long companionship, and let neither the one nor the other of us forsake the life that was our choice." And, alluding to his own functions as priest of Apollo at Delphi, "You know," he adds in another place, "that I have served the Pythian God for many *pythiads*¹ past, yet you would not now tell me, *you have taken part enough in the sacrifices, processions, and dances, and it is high time, Plutarch, now you are an old man, to lay aside your garland, and retire as superannuated from the oracle.*"

Even in these, the comparatively few, more positive and matter-of-fact passages of allusion and anecdote, there is enough to bring up something of a picture of a happy domestic life, half academic, half municipal, passed among affectionate relatives and well-known friends, inclining most to literary and moral studies, yet not cut off from the duties and avocations of the citizen. We cannot, of course, to go yet further, accept the scenery of the fictitious Dialogues as historical; yet there is much of it which may be taken as, so to say, pictorially just; and there is, probably, a good deal here and there that is literally true to the fact. The Symposiac, or After-Dinner Questions, collected in nine books, and dedicated to Sosius Senecio, were discussed, we are told, many of them, in the company of Sosius himself, both at Rome and in Greece, as, for example, when he was with them at the marriage festivities of Autobulus. Lamprias and Timon, the author's brothers, are frequent

¹ Periods of four years elapsing between the celebrations of the Pythian games, like the Olympiads for the Olympic games.

speakers, each with a distinctly traced character, in these conversations; the father, and the elder Lamprias, the grandfather, both take an occasional, and the latter a lively part; there is one whole book in which Ammonius predominates; the scene is now at Delphi, and now at Athens, sometimes perhaps, but rarely, at Rome, sometimes at the celebrations of the Games. Plutarch, in his priestly capacity, gives an entertainment in honour of a poetic victor at the Pythia, there is an Isthmian dinner at Corinth, and an Olympian party at Elis. As an adopted Athenian citizen of the Leontid tribe, he attends the celebration of the success of his friend, the philosophic poet Serapion. The *dramatis personæ* of the various little pieces form a company, when put together, of more than eighty names, philosophers, rhetoricians, and grammarians, several physicians, Euthydemus his colleague in the priesthood, Alexion his father-in-law, and four or five other connections by marriage, Favorinus the philosopher of Arles in Provence, afterwards favoured by Hadrian, to whom he dedicates one of his treatises, and who in return wrote an essay called Plutarchus, on the Academic Philosophy. Serapion entertains them in a garden on the banks of the Cephissus. They dine with a friendly physician on the heights of Hyampolis, and meet in a party at the baths of Ædepsus. The questions are of the most miscellaneous description, grave sometimes, and moral, grammatical and antiquarian, and often festive and humorous. *In what sense does Plato say that God uses geometry? Why do we hear better by night than by day? Why are dreams least true in autumn? Which existed first, the hen or the egg? Which of Venus's hands did Diomed wound?* Lamprias, the grandfather, finds fault with his son, Plutarch's father, for *inviting too many guests* to the parties given "when we came home from Alexandria." Ammonius, in office as general at Athens, gives a dinner to the young men who had distinguished themselves at a trial of skill in grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and poetry; and anecdotes are told on the occasion *of verses aptly or inaptly quoted.*

Of the other minor works, some look a good deal like lectures delivered at Rome, and afterwards published with little dedications prefixed. We have a disquisition on the Advantages we can derive from our Enemies, addressed to Cornelius Pulcher, a discourse On Fate, to Piso, and On Brotherly Affection, to Nigrinus and Quintus. Many, however, are dialogues and conversations, with a good deal of the same varied scenery and exuberant detail which embellish the Table-Talk.

In a conversation which he had been present at, "long ago, when Nero was staying in Greece," between Ammonius and some other friends, the meaning of the strange inscription at Delphi, the two letters EI, is debated. A visitor is conducted by some of Plutarch's friends over the sacred buildings at Delphi, and in the intervals between the some-

what tedious speeches of the professional guides, who showed the sights, a discussion takes place on the Nature of the Oracles. "It happened a little before the Pythian games in the time of Callistratus, there met us at Delphi two travellers, from the extremities of the world, Demetrius, the grammarian, on his way home to Tarsus from Britain, and Cleombrotus the Lacedæmonian, just returned from a journey he had made for his pleasure and instruction in Upper Egypt, and far out into the Erythræan Sea." The question somehow or other occurs, and the dialogue, *Of the Cessation of Oracles*, ensues; one passage of which is the famous story of the voice that proclaimed the death of the great Pan. Autobulus is talking with Soclarus, the companion of his son, about an encomium which they had heard on hunting; the best praise they can give it is, that it diverts into a less objectionable course the passion which finds one vent in seeing the contests of gladiators. Up come presently a large party of young men, lovers of hunting and fishing, and the question of the Superior Sagacity of Land or of Water Animals is formally pleaded by two selected orators. Stories are told of elephants; and Aristotimus, the advocate of the land animals, relates a sight (of the dog imitating in a play the effects of poison) which he himself, he says, saw in Rome, and which was so perfectly acted as to cause emotion in the spectators, the Emperor included; the aged Vespasian himself being present, in the theatre of Marcellus. It reads very much as if Plutarch, and not Aristotimus, had been the eye-witness.¹

Autobulus occurs again in the *Dialogue on Love*. At the request of his friend Flavianus, he repeats a long conversation, attended with curious incidents, in which his father had taken part on Mount Helicon, "once long ago, before we were born, when he brought our mother, after the dispute and variance which had arisen between their parents, that she might offer a sacrifice to Love at the feast held at Thespiæ."

The variance alluded to must clearly have been a fact. And, in general, though these playful fictions or semi-fictions, which form the machinery of the dialogues, are not indeed to be accepted in a literal way, they possess an authenticity which we cannot venture to attribute to the

¹Something also of a personal remembrance of Vespasian's unrelentingly severe temper may be thought to appear in the story, related in the *Dialogue on Love*, of the Gaulish rebel Sabinus, and his wife Eponina, mentioned by Tacitus in his *Histories*, who, after living in an underground concealment several years, were discovered and put to death. Two sons were born to them in their hiding-place, "one of whom," says Plutarch, "was here with us in Delphi only a little while ago," and he is disposed, he adds, "to attribute the subsequent extinction of the race of Vespasian to divine displeasure at this cruel and unfeeling act."

professedly historical statements about their author, given in later writers. Suidas, the lexicographer, repeats a mere romance when he tells us that Trajan gave him the dignity of consul, and issued orders that none of the magistrates in Illyria should do anything without consulting him. Syncellus, the Byzantine historian, under the record of one of the first years of Hadrian's reign, is equally or even more extravagant, relating that Plutarch, the philosopher of Chæronea, was in his old age appointed by the emperor to the office of governor of Greece. Though the period of Trajan and the Antonines was the golden age of philosophers, whose brief persecution under Domitian seems to have won them for a while a sort of spiritual supremacy, similar to that which, after Diocletian, was wrested from them by the ministers of the new religion, still these assertions are on the face of them entirely incredible.

There is a letter, indeed, given among Plutarch's printed works, in which a collection of Sayings of Kings and Commanders is dedicated to Trajan; and though much doubt is entertained, it is not at all improbable that it is Plutarch's own writing. There is nothing remarkable in its contents, and it is most noticeable for the contrast in tone which it presents to another letter, undoubtedly spurious, first published in Latin by John of Salisbury, which is a very preceptorial lecture to Trajan, his pupil, by Plutarch, his supposed former teacher.

A list of Plutarch's works, including many of which nothing remains, is also given by Suidas, as made by Lamprias, Plutarch's son; and a little prefatory letter to a friend, whom he had known in Asia, and who had written to ask for the information, is prefixed to the catalogue. The catalogue itself may be correct enough, but the name of Lamprias occurs nowhere in all Plutarch's extant works as that of one of his sons; and it cannot but be suspected that this family name was adopted, and this letter to the nameless friend in Asia composed, by some grammarian long after, who desired to give interest to an ordinary list of the author's extant writings.

In reading Plutarch, the following points should be remembered. He is a moralist rather than an historian. His interest is less for politics and the changes of empires, and much more for personal character and individual actions and motives to action; duty performed and rewarded; arrogance chastised, hasty anger corrected; humanity, fair dealing, and generosity triumphing in the visible, or relying on the invisible world. His mind in his biographic memoirs is continually running on the Aristotelian Ethics and the high Platonic theories, which formed the religion of the educated population of his time.

The time itself is a second point; that of Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian;

the commencement of the best and happiest age of the great Roman imperial period. The social system, spreading over all the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, of which Greece and Italy were the centres, and to which the East and the furthest known West were brought into relation, had then reached its highest mark of advance and consummation. The laws of Rome and the philosophy of Greece were powerful from the Tigris to the British islands. It was the last great era of Greek and Roman literature. Epictetus was teaching in Greek the virtues which Marcus Aurelius was to illustrate as emperor. Dio Chrysostom and Arrian were recalling the memory of the most famous Attic rhetoricians and historians, and while Plutarch wrote in Chæronea, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Martial, and Juvenal were writing at Rome. It may be said too, perhaps, not untruly, that the Latin, the metropolitan writers, less faithfully represent the general spirit and character of the time than what came from the pen of a simple Bœotian provincial, writing in a more universal language, and unwarped by the strong local reminiscences of the old home of the Senate and the Republic. Tacitus and Juvenal have more, perhaps, of the "antique Roman" than of the citizen of the great Mediterranean Empire. The evils of the imperial government, as felt in the capital city, are depicted in the Roman prose and verse more vividly and more vehemently than suits a general representation of the state of the imperial world, even under the rule of Domitian himself.

It is, at any rate, the serener aspect and the better era that the life and writings of Plutarch reflect. His language is that of a man happy in himself and in what is around him. His natural cheerfulness is undiminished, his easy and joyous simplicity is unimpaired, his satisfactions are not saddened or embittered by any overpowering recollections of years passed under the immediate present terrors of imperial wickedness. Though he also could remember Nero, and had been a man when Domitian was an emperor, the utmost we can say is, that he shows, perhaps, the instructed happiness of one who had lived into good times out of evil, and that the very vigour of his content proves that its roots were fixed amongst circumstances not too indulgent or favourable.

Much has been said of Plutarch's inaccuracy; and it cannot be denied that he is careless about numbers, and occasionally contradicts his own statements. A greater fault, perhaps, is his passion for anecdote; he cannot forbear from repeating stories, the improbability of which he is the first to recognise; which, nevertheless, by mere repetition, leave unjust impressions. He is unfair in this way to Demosthenes and to Pericles, against the latter of whom, however, he doubtless inherited the prejudices which Plato handed down to the philosophers.

It is true, also, that his unhistorical treatment of the subjects of his biography makes him often unsatisfactory and imperfect in the portraits he draws. Much, of course, in the public lives of statesmen can find its only explanation in their political position; and of this Plutarch often knows and thinks little. So far as the researches of modern historians have succeeded in really recovering a knowledge of relations of this sort, so far, undoubtedly, these biographies stand in need of their correction. Yet in the uncertainty which must attend all modern restorations, it is agreeable, and surely, also, profitable, to recur to portraits drawn ere new thoughts and views had occupied the civilised world, without reference to such disputable grounds of judgment, simply upon the broad principles of the ancient moral code of right and wrong.

Making some little deductions in cases such as those that have been mentioned, allowing for a little over-love of story, and for some considerable quasi-religious hostility to the democratic leaders who excited the scorn of Plato, if we bear in mind, also, that in narratives like that of Theseus, he himself confesses his inability to disengage fact from fable, it may be said that in Plutarch's Lives the readers of all ages will find instructive and faithful biographies of the great men of Greece and Rome. Or, at any rate, if in Plutarch's time it was too late to think of really faithful biographies, we have here the faithful record of the historical tradition of his age. This is what, in the second century of our era, Greeks and Romans loved to believe about their warriors and statesmen of the past. As a picture, at least, of the best Greek and Roman moral views and moral judgments, as a presentation of the results of Greek and Roman moral thought, delivered not under the pressure of calamity, but as they existed in ordinary times, and actuated plain-living people in country places in their daily life, Plutarch's writings are of indisputable value; and it may be said, also, that Plutarch's character, as depicted in them, possesses a natural charm of pleasantness and amiability which it is not easy to match among all extant classical authors.

The present translation is a revision of that published at the end of the seventeenth century, with a life of Plutarch written by Dryden, whose name, it was presumed, would throw some reflected lustre on the humbler workmen who performed, better or worse, the more serious labour. There is, of course, a great inequality in their work. But the translation by Langhorne, for which, in the middle of the last century, the older volumes were discarded, is so inferior in liveliness, and is in fact so dull and heavy a book that, in default of an entirely new translation, some advantage, it is hoped, may be gained by the revival here attempted. It would not have been needed, had Mr. Long not limited the

series which he published, with very useful notes, in Mr. Knight's Shilling Library, to the lives connected with the Civil Wars of Rome.

Dryden's *Life of Plutarch* is, like many of Dryden's writings, hasty yet well written, inaccurate but agreeable to read; that by Dacier, printed in the last volume of his French translations, is, in many respects, very good. The materials for both were collected, and the references accumulated, by Rualdus, in his laborious *Life* appended to the old Paris folios of 1624. But everything that is of any value is given in the articles in Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Græca*, and, with the most recent additions, in Pauly's *German Cyclopædia*. Much that is useful is found, as might be expected, in Clinton's *Fasti Romani*, from which the following table is taken:—

DATE	OCCURRENCES	AUTHORS
A.D.		
41.	Accession of Claudius.	
54.	Accession of Nero.	
66.	Nero comes into Greece; alluded to in Plutarch's Dialogue, On the EI at Delphi.	} Seneca. Lucan. Persius.
67.	Nero celebrates the Isthmian Games; alluded to in Plutarch's Life of Flamininus.	
68.	Galba is Emperor. Civil wars.	
69.	Vitellius, Otho, Vespasian.	
70.	Taking of Jerusalem.	
74.	The Philosophers are expelled from Rome.	} Death of Pliny the Elder.
79.	Death of Sabinus, the Gaul. Death of Vespasian, and accession of Titus. Eruption of Vesuvius; alluded to by Plutarch, as a recent occurrence, in his Enquiry why the Pythian Oracles are no longer delivered in verse.	
81.	Accession of Domitian.	
90.	The Philosophers are again expelled from Rome, after the death of Rusticus.	} Quintilian. Statius. Silius Italicus. Martial.
96.	Accession of Nerva.	
98.	Accession of Trajan.	} <i>Dio Chrysostom.</i> Tacitus, born about A.D. 60. <i>Plutarch.</i> <i>Epictetus.</i> <i>Arrian.</i>
100.	Pliny's Panegyric	
103.	Epictetus is teaching at Nicopolis, Arrian attending him.	} Pliny the Younger, born A.D. 61. Juvenal, born A.D. 59. <i>Favorinus.</i> Suetonius, born about A.D. 70.
104.	Pliny in Bithynia.	
106.	Trajan winters on the Danube; alluded to by Plutarch, On the Principle of Cold	
113.	Erection of Trajan's Column	
114.	Trajan's Parthian Victories. Plutarch had written his life of Antony before these.	
117.	Accession of Hadrian. In Hadrian's third year, Plutarch, according to Eusebius, was still alive.	
138.	Accession of Antoninus.	} <i>Ptolemy.</i> <i>Appian.</i> <i>Pausanias.</i> <i>Galen.</i> <i>Lucian.</i> <i>Athenæus.</i> <i>Dion Cassius.</i>
161.	Accession of Marcus Aurelius.	
181.	Accession of Commodus.	

NOTE.—The authors whose names are printed in italics are Greek writers.

The fault which runs through all the earlier biographies, from that of Rualdus downward, is the assumption, wholly untenable, that Plutarch passed many years, as many, perhaps, as forty, at Rome. The entire character of his life is of course altered by such an impression. It is, therefore, not worth while reprinting here the life originally prefixed by Dryden to the translations which, with more or less of alteration, follow in the present volumes. One or two characteristic extracts may be sufficient. The first may throw some light on a subject which to modern readers is a little obscure. Dryden is wrong in one or two less important points, but his general view of the *dæmonic* belief which pervades Plutarch's writings is tolerably to the purpose.

"We can only trace the rest of his opinions from his philosophy, which we have said in the general to be Platonic, though it cannot also be denied that there was a tincture in it of the Electic¹ sect, which was begun by Potamon under the empire of Augustus, and which selected from all the other sects what seemed most probable in their opinions, not adhering singularly to any of them, nor rejecting everything. I will only touch his belief of spirits. In his two Treatises of Oracles, the one concerning the Reason of their Cessation, the other inquiring Why they were not given in Verse as in former times, he seems to assert the Pythagorean doctrine of Transmigration of Souls. We have formerly shown that he owned the unity of a Godhead; whom, according to his attributes, he calls by several names, as Jupiter from his almighty power, Apollo from his wisdom, and so of the rest; but under him he places those beings whom he styles *Genii* or *Dæmons*, of a middle nature, between divine and human; for he thinks it absurd that there should be no mean between the two extremes of an immortal and a mortal being; that there cannot be in nature so vast a flaw, without some intermedial kind of life, partaking of them both. As, therefore, we find the intercourse between the soul and body to be made by the animal spirits, so between divinity and humanity there is this species of *dæmons*. Who,² having first been men, and followed the strict rules of virtue, have purged off the grossness and feculency of their earthly being, are exalted into these *genii*; and are from thence either raised higher into an ethereal life, if they still continue virtuous, or tumbled down again into mortal bodies, and sinking into flesh after they have lost that purity which constituted their glorious being. And this sort of *Genii* are those who, as our author

¹ He means the Eclectic as it is more usually called.

² He means, I believe, *Those who*; apparently the word *and* should be omitted in line 25, before *sinking into flesh*.

imagines, presided over oracles; spirits which have so much of their terrestrial principles remaining in them as to be subject to passions and inclinations; usually beneficent, sometimes malevolent to mankind, according as they refine themselves, or gather dross, and are declining into mortal bodies. The cessation, or rather the decrease of oracles (for some of them were still remaining in Plutarch's time), he attributes either to the death of those dæmons, as appears by the story of the Egyptian Thamus, who was commanded to declare that the great god Pan was dead, or to their forsaking of those places where they formerly gave out their oracles, from whence they were driven by stronger Genii into banishment for a certain revolution of ages. Of this last nature were the war of the giants against the gods, the dispossession of Saturn by Jupiter, the banishment of Apollo from heaven, the fall of Vulcan, and many others; all which, according to our author, were the battles of these Genii or Dæmons amongst themselves. But supposing, as Plutarch evidently does, that these spirits administered, under the Supreme Being, the affairs of men, taking care of the virtuous, punishing the bad, and sometimes communicating with the best, as, particularly, the Genius of Socrates always warned him of approaching dangers, and taught him to avoid them, I cannot but wonder that every one who has hitherto written Plutarch's Life, and particularly Rualdus, the most knowing of them all, should so confidently affirm that these oracles were given by bad spirits, according to Plutarch. As Christians, indeed, we may think them so; but that Plutarch so thought is a most apparent falsehood. 'Tis enough to convince a reasonable man, that our author in his old age (and that then he doted not, we may see by the treatise he has written, That old men ought to have the management of public affairs), I say that then he initiated himself in the sacred rites of Delphos, and died, for ought we know, Apollo's priest. Now it is not to be imagined that he thought the God he served a *Cacodæmon*, or, as we call him, a devil. Nothing could be further from the opinion and practice of this holy philosopher than so gross an impiety. The story of the Pythias, or priestess of Apollo, which he relates immediately before the ending of that treatise, concerning the Cessation of Oracles, confirms my assertion rather than shakes it; for 'tis there delivered, 'That going with great reluctance into the sacred place to be inspired, she came out foaming at the mouth, her eyes goggling, her breast heaving, her voice undistinguishable and shrill, as if she had an earthquake within her, labouring for vent; and, in short, that thus tormented with the god, whom she was not able to support, she died distracted in a few days after. For he had said before that the divineress ought to have no perturbations of mind or impure passions at the time when she was to consult the oracle, and



Introduction by JAMES ATLAS

Translated by JOHN DRYDEN

Plutarch's Lives, written at the beginning of the second century A.D., is a brilliant social history of the ancient world by one of the greatest biographers and moralists of all time. In what is by far his most famous and influential work, Plutarch reveals the character and personality of his subjects and how they led ultimately to tragedy or victory. Richly anecdotal and full of detail, Volume I contains profiles and comparisons of Romulus and Theseus, Numa and Lycurgus, Fabius and Pericles, and many more powerful figures of ancient Greece and Rome.

The present translation, originally published in 1683 in conjunction with a life of Plutarch by John Dryden, was revised in 1864 by the poet and scholar Arthur Hugh Clough, whose notes and preface are also included in this edition.

JAMES ATLAS is the author of *Bellow: A Biography* and is the general editor of the Penguin Lives series. He lives in New York City.

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