

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Of_Peace_of_Mind

XI.10 Know then that every station of life is transitory, and that what has ever happened to anybody may happen to you also. You are wealthy: are you wealthier than Pompeius?¹ Yet when Gaius,² his old relative and new host, opened Caesar's house to him in order that he might close his own, he lacked both bread and water: though he owned so many rivers which both rose and discharged themselves within his dominions, yet he had to beg for drops of water: he perished of hunger and thirst in the palace of his relative, while his heir was contracting for a public funeral for one who was in want of food.

XI.11 You have filled public offices: were they either as important, as unlooked for, or as all-embracing as those of Sejanus? Yet on the day on which the Senate disgraced him, the people tore him to pieces: the executioner³ could find no part left large enough to drag to the Tiber, of one upon whom gods and men had showered all that could be given to man.

XI.12 You are a king: I will not bid you go to Croesus for an example, he who while yet alive saw his funeral pile both lighted and extinguished, being made to outlive not only his kingdom but even his own death, nor to Jugurtha, whom the people of Rome beheld as a captive within the year in which they had feared him. We have seen Ptolemaeus King of Africa, and Mithridates King of Armenia, under the charge of Gaius's⁴ guards: the former was sent into exile, the latter chose it in order to make his exile more honourable. Among such continual topsy-turvy changes, unless you expect that whatever can happen will happen to you, you give adversity power against you, a power which can be destroyed by anyone who looks at it beforehand.

¹ Haase reads Ptolemaeus.

² Caligula.

³ It was the duty of the executioner to fasten a hook to the neck of condemned criminals, by which they were dragged to the Tiber.

⁴ Caligula.