

LIBER XI

I. Claudius Augustalis tam ingenuae naturae, quam eruditionis adolescens complurium studiosorum¹ et praecipue agricolarum sermonibus instigatus extudit mihi, cultus hortorum prosa ut oratione componerem. Nec me tamen fallebat hic eventus rei, cum praedictam materiam carminis legibus impli-² carem. Sed tibi, Publi Silvine, pertinaciter expectanti versificationis nostrae gustum, negare non sustinebam, facturus mox, si collibuisset,² quod nunc aggredior, ut holitoris curam subtexerem³ villici⁴ officiis. Quae quamvis primo rei rusticae libro videbar aliquatenus executus; quoniam tamen ea simili⁵ desiderio noster Augustalis saepius flagitabat, numerum, quem iam quasi consummaveram, voluminum excessi, et hoc undecimum praeceptum rusticationis memoriae tradidi.

¹ studiosorum *Gesner* : studiorum *SAR*.

² collibisset *SA* : collibuisse *a*.

³ subtexerem *S* : subtexeram *A* : subtexam *R*.

⁴ villici *R* : vilicis *SA*.

⁵ simili *AR* : similis *S*.

^a The title Augustalis has two meanings : (1) a member of the college of priests instituted at Rome by Tiberius after the death of Augustus to supervise the worship of Augustus (*Tac. Ann.* I. 54); it consisted of twenty-one members, among whom was Claudius, afterwards Emperor, but if he were the person referred to here, he would hardly have been described

BOOK XI

I. Claudius, a priest of Augustus^a and a young man equally distinguished for his ingenuous disposition and for his erudition, encouraged by the discourses of several men of learning and especially of those interested in agriculture, extorted from me a promise to write a treatise in prose on the cultivation of gardens. Nor did this circumstance escape my memory when I was seeking to confine the said subject within the rules of poetry. But when you, Publius Silvinus, persistently demanded a taste of my versification; I could not bring myself to refuse, intending presently, if it should be your pleasure, to undertake the task on which I am now entering, namely, to append the duties of a gardener to the functions of a bailiff. Although I seemed already to some extent to have accomplished this in my first book on Agriculture, yet since my friend the priest of Augustus rather often demanded it of me with an eagerness which matches your own, I have exceeded the number of books which I had already practically completed, and have published this eleventh book of the principles of husbandry.

The duties of a bailiff.

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so simply as Claudius Augustalis. (2) An order of priests who supervised the rites of Caesar-worship and other cults in the *municipia*; they were often selected from the *libertini*. No doubt the Claudius mentioned here belonged to the latter class, but, without fuller details of his name, we have no means of identifying him.

3 Villicum fundo familiaeque praeponi convenit aetatis nec primae nec ultimae. Nam servitia sic tirunculum contemnunt, ut senem: quoniam alter nondum novit opera ruris, alter exequi iam non potest; atque hunc adolescentia negligentem, senectus illum facit pigrum. Media igitur aetas huic officio est aptissima: poteritque ab annis quinque et triginta¹ usque in sexagesimum et quintum² si non interveniant fortuita corporis vitia, satis validi
4 fungi muneribus agricolae. Quisquis autem destinabitur huic negotio, sit oportet idem scientissimus robustissimusque, ut et doceat³ subiectos, et ipse commode faciat, quae praecipit. Si quidem nihil recte sine exemplo docetur, aut discitur⁴ praestatque villicum magistrum esse operariorum, non discipulum, cum etiam de patrefamiliae prisci moris exemplum Cato dixerit: "Male agitur cum domino,
5 quem villicus docet." Itaque in Oeconomico Xenophontis, quem M. Cicero Latino sermoni⁵ tradidit, egregius ille Ischomachus⁶ Atheniensis rogatus a Socrate utrumne, si res familiaris desiderasset, mercari villicum tamquam fabrum, an a se instituere consueverit: "Ego vero, inquit, ipse instituo. Etenim qui me absente in meum locum substituitur, et vicarius meae diligentiae succedit, is⁷ ea, quae ego, scire debet." Sed haec nimium prisca, et eius quidem temporis sunt, quo idem Ischomachus
6 negabat quemquam rusticari nescire. Nos autem

¹ ab annis quinque et triginta S: et triginta (om. ab annis quinque) A: ab anno xxx R.

² sexagesimum et quintum SA: sexagesimum R.

³ ut et doceat S: ut doceat A: ut edoceat R.

⁴ discitur R: dicitur S: df A.

⁵ latine sermone S.

⁶ Ischomachus SA.

⁷ is om. SA.

It is fitting that a bailiff should be set over your farm and household who is neither in the first or in the last stage of his life. For slaves despise a novice as much as they despise an old man, since the former has not yet learned the operations of agriculture and the latter cannot any longer carry them out, and his youth makes the novice careless while his age makes the old man slow. Middle age, therefore, is best suited to this function and, if no accidental bodily defects intervene, a man will be able to perform the duties of an active enough farmer from thirty-five years until his sixty-fifth year. But whoever is
4 destined for this business must be very learned in it and very robust, that he may both teach those under his orders and himself adequately carry out the instructions which he gives; for indeed nothing can be taught or learned correctly without an example, and it is better that a bailiff should be the master, not the pupil, of his labourers. Cato, a model of old-time morals, speaking of the head of a family, said: "Things go ill with the master when his bailiff has to teach him." Therefore, in the *Economicus* of
5 Xenophon,^a which Marcus Cicero translated into Latin, that excellent man Ischomachus the Athenian, when asked by Socrates whether, if his domestic affairs required it, he was in the habit of buying a bailiff, as he would a craftsman, or of training him up himself, answered, "I train him up myself; for he who stands in my place in my absence and acts as a deputy in my activities, ought to know what I know." But this state of affairs dates from too long ago and indeed belongs to a time when the same Ischomachus asserted that everyone knew how to farm. But let
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^a XII. §§ 3, 4.

memores ignorantiae nostrae vigentis sensus adolescentulos corporisque robusti peritissimis agricolis commendemus. Quorum monitionibus vel unus¹ ex multis, (nam est difficile erudire) non solum rusticationis, sed imperandi consequatur scientiam. Quidam enim quamvis operum probatissimi artifices, imperitandi parum prudentes aut saevius aut etiam lenius agendo rem dominorum corrumpunt. Quare,
 7 sicut dixi, docendus, et a pueritia rusticis operibus edurandus, multisque prius experimentis inspicendus erit futurus villicus, nec solum an perdidicerit disciplinam ruris, sed an etiam domino fidem ac benevolentiam exhibeat, sine quibus nihil prodest villici summa scientia. Potissimum autem est in eo magisterio scire et aestimare, quale officium et qualis labor sit cuique iniungendus. Nam nec valentissimus possit² exequi quod imperatur, si nesciat quid agat; nec peritissimus, si sit invalidus.
 8 Qualitas³ itaque cuiusque rei consideranda est. Quippe aliqua sunt opera tantummodo virium, tanquam promovendi onera portandique: aliqua sociata viribus et arti, ut fodiendi⁴ arandique, ut segetes et prata desecandi; nonnullis minus virium, plus artis adhibetur, sicut putationibus insitionibusque vineti: plurimum etiam scientia pollet in aliquibus, ut in pastione pecoris atque eiusdem
 9 medicina. Quorum omnium officiorum villicus, quod

¹ unus *ed. pr.* : unum *R* : *om. SA.*

² possit *vet. ed.* : posset *R* : *om. SA.*

³ nostrae (§ 6)—qualitas *om. SA.*

⁴ foviendi *A.*

us, mindful of our ignorance, place young men who are mentally active and physically strong in charge of our most skilful husbandmen, by whose advice one at least out of many (for education is difficult) may attain to a knowledge not only of farming but also of commanding others; for there are some who, although they are highly approved for the manner in which they carry out their crafts, have very little skill in commanding others and ruin their masters by handling the matter with either too much severity or even too much leniency. Therefore, as I have
 7 said, your future bailiff must be taught and must be hardened from boyhood to the operations of husbandry and must be first tested by many trials to see not only whether he has thoroughly learned the science of farming but also whether he shows fidelity and attachment to his master, for, without these qualities, the most perfect knowledge possessed by a bailiff is of no use. The most important thing
 in this kind of superintendence is to know and estimate what duties and what tasks should be enjoined on each person; for the strongest man could not carry out an order, unless he knows what he has to do, nor the most skilful, if he lacks the strength.
 8 The nature therefore of each operation must be taken into consideration; for some tasks require strength only, such as the moving and carrying of heavy loads, others require a combination of strength and skill, as in digging and ploughing and mowing field crops and meadows; to some less strength and more skill is applied as in the pruning and grafting of a vineyard, and for some knowledge is of the chief importance, for instance, in the feeding and
 9 doctoring of cattle. Of all these tasks a bailiff cannot,

- iam dixi prius, aestimator bonus esse non potest, nisi fuerit etiam peritus, ut in unoquoque corrigere queat perperam factum. Neque enim satis est reprehendisse¹ peccantem, si non doceat recti viam. Libenter igitur eadem loquor² tam docendus est futurus villicus, quam futurus figulus aut faber. Et haud facile dixerim, num illa tanto expeditiora sint discentibus artificia, quanto minus ampla sunt.
- 10 Rusticationis autem magna et diffusa materia est, partesque si velimus eius percensere, vix numero comprehendamus. Quare satis admirari nequeo, quod primo scriptorum meorum exordio iure conquestus sum, ceterarum artium minus vitae necessariarum repertos antistites, agriculturae neque discipulos neque praeceptores inventos; nisi magnitudo rei fecerit³ reverentiam vel discendi vel proficisci paene immensam scientiam, cum tamen non ideo turpi desperatione oportuerit eam neglegi.⁴
- 11 Nam nec oratoria disciplina deseritur, quia perfectus orator nusquam repertus est; nec philosophia, quia nullus consummatae sapientiae:⁵ sed e contrario plurimi semetipsos exhortantur vel aliquas partes earum addiscere, quamvis universas percipere non possint. Etenim quae probabilis ratio est obmutescendi, quia nequeas orator esse perfectus, aut in socordiam compelli, quia desponderis sapientiam?
- 12 Magnae rei quantulumcunque possederis, fuisse participem, non minima gloria est. Quis ergo,

¹ reprehendisse *R*: reprehendi *SA*.

² loquor *R*: loquatur *A*: loquitur *S*.

³ fecerit *AR*: cepit *S*.

⁴ neglegi *R*.

⁵ sapientiae *R*: scientiae *SA*.

^a Book I, Preface, § 5.

as I have said, be a good judge unless he has also become skilled in them, so that he can correct what has been done amiss in any one of them; for it is not enough to have reproofed one who errs, if he fail to show him the way to do the task aright. Therefore I wish to say what I said before, namely, that the future bailiff must be taught his job just like the future potter or the mechanic. I could not readily state whether these trades are more quickly learnt because they have a narrower scope; but certainly the 10 subject-matter of agriculture is extensive and widespread and, if we wished to reckon up its various parts, we should have difficulty in enumerating them. I cannot, therefore, sufficiently express my surprise, as I justly complained at the beginning of my treatise,^a at the fact that, while instructors can be found in the other arts which are less necessary for life, for agriculture neither pupils nor teachers have been discovered. Perhaps the magnitude of the subject has produced a feeling of awe about the learning or professing a science which has practically no limits, though it ought not for that reason be neglected in a base spirit of despair. For neither is the art of 11 oratory abandoned because no perfect orator has anywhere been found, nor philosophy, because no man of consummate wisdom has been discovered; but, on the contrary, very many people encourage themselves to acquire a knowledge of at least some parts of them, though they cannot grasp them as a whole. For what justifiable motive is there for keeping silent just because you cannot be a perfect orator, or for being driven into idleness because you despair of attaining wisdom? However little is the portion 12 which you have attained of something great, it is no

LUCIUS JUNIUS MODERATUS COLUMELLA

inquis, docebit futurum villicum, si nullus professor est? Et ego intelligo difficillimum esse ab uno velut auctore cuncta rusticationis consequi praecepta. Verumtamen ut universae disciplinae vix aliquem consultum, sic plurimos partium eius invenies¹ magistros, per quos efficere queas perfectum villicum. Nam et arator² reperiatur aliquis bonus, et optimus fossor, aut faeni sector, nec minus arborator et vinitor, tum etiam veterinarius et probus pastor, qui singuli rationem scientiae suae desideranti non subtrahant.

- 13 Igitur complurium agrestium formatus artibus, qui suscepit officium villicationis, in primis convictum domestici, multoque etiam magis exteri vitet.³ Somni et vini sit abstinentissimus, quae utraque sunt inimicissima diligentiae. Nam et ebrioso cura officii pariter cum memoria subtrahitur; et somniculosum plurima effugiunt.⁴ Quid enim possit aut ipse agere aut cuiquam dormiens impedire?
- 14 Tum etiam sit a venereis amoribus aversus: quibus si se dederit, non aliud quidquam possit cogitare quam illud quod diligit. Nam vitiis eiusmodi plectus animus nec praemium iucundius quam fructum libidinis nec supplicium gravius quam frustrationem cupiditatis existimat.

¹ invenies *scripsi*: invenias *codd.*

² arator *SA*: orator *R.*

³ exteri vitet *AR*: exteribit *S.*

⁴ efficiunt *SAa.*

little glory to have possessed yourself of a share. Who, therefore, you say, will teach the future bailiff, if there is no professor of the art? I, too, am aware that it is very difficult to attain to a knowledge of all the precepts of agriculture from, as it were, a single authority; nevertheless, though you will find scarcely anyone acquainted with the whole art, yet you will find very many masters of parts of it, with whose help you can form the perfect bailiff. For a good ploughman can be found and an excellent digger or mower, and likewise a forester and vine-dresser, also a farrier and a good shepherd, no one of whom would refuse to impart to one desirous of learning them the principles of his art.

Therefore, when he who is to take up the duties of 13 a bailiff has been instructed in the arts of a number of different husbandmen, let him particularly avoid intimacy with members of the household and even much more with strangers. He should be most abstemious in respect of wine and sleep, both of which are quite incompatible with diligence; for as a drunkard loses his memory, so he becomes careless in his duties, and very many things escape the notice of one who is unduly given to sleep. For what can a man himself do or order someone else 14 to do, while he is asleep? Further, he should also have an aversion to sexual indulgence; for, if he gives himself up to it, he will not be able to think of anything else than the object of his affection; for his mind being effused by vices of this kind thinks that there is no reward more agreeable than the gratification of his lust and no punishment more heavy than the frustration of his desire.

- Igitur primus omnium vigilet, familiamque semper ad opera cunctantem pro temporibus anni festinanter producat et strenue ipse praecedat. Plurimum enim refert colonos a primo mane opus aggredi
 15 nec lentos per otium pigre procedere. Siquidem Ischomachus¹ idem ille: Malo, inquit, unius agilem atque industriam, quam decem hominum negle-
 16 gentem et tardam operam. Quippe plurimum affert mali, si operario tricandi² potestas fiat. Nam ut in itinere conficiendo saepe dimidio maturius pervenit is, qui naviter et sine ullis concessionibus permeabit, quam is, qui cum sit una profectus, umbras arborum fonticulorumque amoenitatem vel aurae refrigerationem captavit: sic in agresti negotio dici vix potest, quid navus operarius ignavo et
 17 cessatore praestet. Hoc igitur custodire oportet villicum, ne statim a prima luce familia cunctanter et languide procedat, sed velut in aliquod proelium cum vigore et alacritate animi praecedentem eum tamquam ducem strenue sequatur, variisque exhortationibus in opere ipso exhilaret laborantes: et interdum, tanquam deficienti succursurus, ferramentum auferat parumper, et ipse fungatur eius officio, moneatque sic fieri debere, ut ab ipso fortiter sit effectum.
 18 Atque ubi crepusculum incesserit, neminem post se relinquat,³ sed omnes subsequatur more optimi pastoris, qui e grege nullam pecudem patitur in

¹ Ischomachus A: comachus S.

² tricandi SA: meretricandi R.

³ reliquerit S.

^a Xenophon, *Oecon.*, XX. § 16.

Therefore he should be the first of all to wake up and, according to the season of the year, always march out smartly to their work the slaves who are slow and himself walk briskly at their head; for it is of the greatest importance that farm-workers should begin work at early dawn and should not proceed slowly with it through laziness. For Ischomachus, 15 already mentioned, says: "I prefer the prompt and assiduous work of one man to the negligent and slothful work of ten."^a It occasions a great deal 16 of harm if a workman be given the opportunity to trifle away his time; for as in accomplishing a journey a man who goes forward energetically without any loitering arrives by one-half earlier than he who, having set out at the same time, has kept looking out for shady trees and pleasant springs and cooling breezes; so in the business of farming it is difficult to say how far superior an active workman is to one who is lazy and a loiterer. A bailiff, therefore, must 17 watch that the slaves go out immediately at early dawn not in a dilatory and half-hearted manner, but that, like soldiers marching to some battle, with vigour and eagerness of mind they follow him energetically as he marches in front of them as their leader, and he should encourage them as they labour at their actual work with various exhortations, and from time to time, as if to aid one whose strength is failing, he should take his iron tool from him for a while and do his work for him and tell him that it ought to be carried out in the vigorous manner in which he himself has done it.

And when twilight has come on, he should leave no 18 one behind but should walk in rear of them, like a good shepherd, who suffers no member of the flock to

- agro relinqui. Tum vero, cum tectum subierit, idem faciat, quod ille diligens opilio: nec¹ in domicilio suo statim delitescat, sed agat cuiusque maximam curam; sive quis, quod accidit plerumque, sauciatus in opere noxam² ceperit, adhibeat fomenta: sive aliter languidior est,³ in valetudinarium⁴ confestim deducat, et convenientem ei
 19 ceteram curationem adhiberi iubeat. Eorum vero, qui recte valebunt, non minor habenda erit ratio, ut cibis et potio sine fraude a cellariis praebeatur, consuescatque rusticos circa larem domini focumque familiarem semper epulari; atque ipse in conspectu eorum similiter epuletur, sitque frugalitatis exemplum: nec nisi sacris diebus accubans cenet, festosque sic agat, ut fortissimum quemque et frugalissimum largitionibus prosequatur, nonnumquam etiam mensae suae adhibeat, et veliti aliis⁵ quoque honoribus dignari.
- 20 Tum etiam per ferias instrumentum rusticum, sine quo nullum opus effici potest, recognoscat, et saepius inspiciat ferramenta; eaque semper duplicia comparet,⁶ ac subinde refecta custodiat, ne si quod in opere vitiatum fuerit, a vicino petendum sit; quia plus in operis servorum avocandis, quam in pretio rerum eiusmodi dependitur.

¹ opilioni ec *S*: oppinio nec *A*.

² noxam *R*: noxiam *Sa*: noxium *A*.

³ est *Schneider*: at *SAR*.

⁴ valetudinari *SAR*.

⁵ alis *SA*.

⁶ comparet *SR*: comparat *A*.

be left in the field. Then, when he has come indoors, let him act like that careful herdsman and not immediately hide himself in his house but exercise the utmost care for every one of them; and if, as generally happens, any one of them has received some hurt in the course of his work and is wounded, let him apply fomentations, or, if anyone is rather ill in some other respect, let him immediately convey him to the infirmary and order that any other treatment which is suitable to his case be applied. No less consideration should be shown for those who are in good health, that their food and drink may be provided by those in charge of the supplies without their being defrauded, and he should accustom the farm-labourers always to take their meals at their master's hearth and household fire; and he should himself eat under similar conditions in their presence and be an example to them of frugality. He should not take his meals reclining on a couch except on solemn holidays, and he should celebrate festal days by bestowing largesse on the strongest and most frugal among them, sometimes even admitting them to his own table and showing himself willing also to confer other honours upon them.

Then also during the holidays he should inspect the farming implements, without which no work can be carried out, and he should rather often examine the iron tools. These he should always provide in duplicate, and, having repaired them from time to time, he should keep his eye upon them, so that, if any of them have been damaged in the course of work, it may not be necessary to borrow from a neighbour; for it costs more than the price of these things if you have to call off the slaves from their work.

- 21 Cultam vestitamque familiam utiliter magis habeat quam delicate, id est munitam diligenter a frigoribus et imbribus, quae utraque prohibentur optime pellibus manicatis, et sagatis cucullis: idque si fiat, omnis paene hiemalis dies¹ in opere tolerari possit. Quare tam vestem servitorum, quam, ut dixi, ferramenta bis debebit omnibus² mensibus recensere. Nam frequens recognitio nec impunitatis spem nec peccandi locum praebet. Itaque mancipia vineta, quae sunt ergastuli, per nomina quotidie citare debebit atque explorare, ut sint diligenter compedibus innexa: tum etiam custodiae sedes an tuta et recte munita sit: nec, si quem dominus aut ipse vinxerit, sine iussu patrisfamiliae resolvat.³ Sacrificia nisi ex praecepto domini facere nesciat: haruspiciem sagamque sua sponte non noverit, quae utraque genera vana superstitione rudes
- 23 animos infestant. Non urbem, non ullas nundinas nisi vendendae aut emendae rei necessariae causa, frequentaverit. Neque enim coloniae suae terminos egredi debet, nec absentia sua familiae cessandi aut delinquendi spatium dare. Semitas novosque limites in agro fieri prohibeat. Hospitem, nisi ex amicitia domini, quam rarissime recipiat. Ad ministeria sua conservos non adhibeat, nec ulli terminos egredi,

¹ hiemalis dies *R*: hiemalibus diebus *SA*: hiemalis diebus *a*.

² omnibus *SA*: singulis *R*.

³ solvat *SA*.

He should keep his slaves turned out and clothed serviceably rather than daintily, that is to say, carefully protected against cold and rain, both of which are best kept off by coats of skin with sleeves and thick hoods. If this be done, almost every winter's day can be endured while they are at work. Therefore the bailiff ought to examine the clothing in the same way as the iron tools, as I have already said, twice every month; for regular inspection allows no hope of impunity and no opportunity for wrong-doing. And so he will have to call over the names of the slaves in the prison, who are in chains, every day and make sure that they are carefully fettered and also whether the place of confinement is well secured and properly fortified; and he should not release anyone whom his master or he himself has bound without an order from the lord of the house. He must not think of offering sacrifices except on an instruction from his master; and he must not on his own initiative have any acquaintance with a soothsayer or fortune-teller, both of which classes of persons disturb ignorant minds with vain superstition. He should not frequent the town or any fairs except for the sale or purchase of something necessary; for he ought not to go beyond the limits of the estate nor by his absence give the slaves the opportunity of stopping work or committing misdemeanours. He should prevent the making of paths and new boundaries on the estate. He should receive a visit from any stranger as rarely as possible, and then only when he comes as a friend of his master. He should not make use of his fellow-slaves for any service to himself nor allow any of them to go beyond the boundaries of the estate except under stress of great

- 24 nisi magna coegerit necessitas, permittat. Pecuniam domini neque in pecore nec in aliis rebus promercalibus occupet. Haec enim res advocat villicum curam, et eum negotiatorem potius facit quam agricolam, nec unquam sinit eum cum¹ rationibus domini paria facere; sed ubi nummum est² numeratio, res pro nummis ostenditur. Itaque tam istud vitandum habebit, quam hercule fugiendum venandi vel aucupandi studium, quibus rebus plurimae operae avocantur.
- 25 Illa iam, quae etiam in maioribus imperiis difficulter custodiuntur, considerare debet, ne aut crudelius aut remissius agat cum subiectis: semperque foveat bonos et sedulos, parcat etiam minus probis, et ita temperet,³ ut magis⁴ eius vereantur severitatem, quam ut saevitiam detestentur. Poteritque id custodire, si maluerit cavere, ne peccet operarius, quam, cum peccaverit, sero punire. Nulla est autem vel nequissimi hominis amplior custodia quam quotidiana operis exactio. Nam illud verum est M. Catonis oraculum, nihil agendo homines male agere discunt. Itaque curabit villicus, ut iusta reddantur. Idque⁵ non aegre consequetur, si semper se repraesentaverit. Sic enim et magistrī singulorum officiorum diligenter exequentur sua munia, et familia post operis exercitationem fatigata cibo quietique potius ac somno quam maleficiis operam dabit.

¹ eum *om. AR.*

² nummum est *Lundström*: non est *SAA.*

³ temperet *R*: temperat *S*: temperate *Aa.*

⁴ magis *om. S.*

⁵ idque *Schneider*: itaque *R*: atque *a.*

necessity. He should not employ his master's money 24 in purchasing cattle or anything else which is bought or sold; for doing this diverts him from his duties as a bailiff and makes him a trader rather than a farmer and makes it impossible to balance accounts with his master; but when a reckoning-up in money is being held, goods are displayed instead of cash. He will, therefore, regard it as a practice to be shunned, just as much indeed as zeal for hunting and fowling, by which many employees are distracted from their duties, is to be avoided.

He will have to observe those principles which it is 25 difficult to maintain in larger spheres of government, namely, not to deal either too cruelly or too leniently with those set under him: he should always cherish the good and diligent and spare those who are not as good as they ought to be, and use such moderation that they may rather respect his strictness than hate his cruelty. He will be able to guard against the latter contingency, if he prefers rather to take care that a labourer commits no offence than to punish him later on, when he has done so; for there is no more efficient means of restraining even the most wicked man than by daily exacting from him his task. For the oracular saying of Marcus Cato is full of 26 truth: "By doing nothing men learn to do evil." The bailiff will, therefore, take care that a full day's work is rendered, and he will obtain this without difficulty, if he himself always puts in an appearance; for thus the foremen of the different duties will 27 diligently carry out their tasks, and the slaves, being tired after the performance of their work, will turn their attention to food and rest and sleep, rather than to evil doing.

In universa porro villicatione, sicut in cetera vita, pretiosissimum est intelligere quemque, nescire se quod nesciat, semperque cupere, quod ignoret, 28 addiscere. Nam etsi multum prodest scientia,¹ plus tamen obest imprudentia vel neglegentia, maxime in rusticatione; cuius est disciplinae caput semel fecisse quicquid exegerit ratio culturae. Nam² quamvis interdum emendata sit perperam facti imprudentia vel neglegentia, res tamen ipsa iam domino decoxit, nec mox in tantum exuberat, ut et iacturam capitis amissi restituat, et quaestum re- 29 sarciat. Praelabentis vero temporis fuga quam sit irreparabilis, quis dubitet? Eius igitur memor praecipue semper caveat, ne improvidus ab opere vincatur. Res est agrestis insidiosissima cunctanti, quod ipsum expressius vetustissimus auctor Hesiodus hoc versu significavit:

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολιερὸς ἀνὴρ ἄταισι παλαίει.

Quare vulgare illud de arborum positione rusticis usurpatum, serere ne dubites, id villicus ad agri totum³ cultum referri iudicet, credatque, praetermissas non duodecim horas sed annum periisse, nisi sua quaque die quod instat effecerit. 30 Nam cum propriis paene momentis fieri quidque debeat, si unum opus tardius quam oporteat⁴ peractum sit, ceterae quoque, quae sequuntur, culturae post iusta tempora serius adhibentur,

¹ scientia *vett. edd.*: inscientia *R.*

² nam *R*: num *SA.*

³ totam *S*: totū *AR.*

⁴ oporteat *R*: oportet *SA.*

^a *Works and Days*, 413.

Furthermore, in everything which concerns the bailiff's profession, as in life generally, it is of the greatest value that every one should realize that he does not know that of which he is ignorant and that he should always desire to learn it. For, although know- 28 ledge is a great advantage, ignorance or carelessness does more harm than knowledge does good, especially in agriculture, of which art the chief point is to have done, once and for all, whatever the method of cultivation shall have required; for, though ignorance and carelessness, which have caused something to be done amiss, can sometimes be remedied, yet the master's property has already been impaired and cannot afterwards yield a great enough increase to make up for the loss of capital and restore the lost profit. Who can doubt how irreparable is the flight 29 of time as it slips away? The bailiff, mindful of this, should always beware above all things, lest, through want of forethought, he be overcome by his work; for agriculture is very apt to deceive the dilatory man, a fact which the very ancient author Hesiod has expressed rather forcibly in this line:

He who delays must aye with ruin strive.^a

Wherefore let the bailiff hold that the opinion about the planting of trees common on the lips of husbandmen, "never hesitate to plant," is applicable to the whole of agriculture, and let him be sure that not merely twelve hours but a whole year has been lost, if pressing work is not carried out on its own proper day. For since everything has, one might say, its 30 own proper moment when it should be done, if one piece of work is carried out later than it should be, all the other tasks of agriculture also which follow it

omnisque turbatus operis ordo spem totius anni frustratur. Quare necessaria est menstrui cuiusque officii¹ monitio ea, quae pendet ex ratione siderum et
31 caeli. Nam ut ait Vergilius,

Tam sunt Arcturi sidera nobis
Haedorumque dies servandi et lucidus anguis,
Quam quibus in patriam ventosa per aequora vectis
Pontus et ostriferi fauces tentantur Abydi.

Contra quam observationem multis argumentationibus disseruisse me non infitior² in iis libris, quos adversus astrologos composueram. Sed illis disputationibus exigebatur id, quod improbiissime Chaldaei pollicentur, ut certis quasi terminis, ita
32 diebus statis³ aëris mutationes respondeant: in hac autem ruris disciplina non desideratur eiusmodi scrupulositas; sed, quod dicitur, pingui Minerva quamvis utile⁴ continget⁵ villico tempestatis futurae praesagium, si persuasum habuerit, modo ante, modo post, interdum etiam stato die orientis vel occidentis competere vim sideris. Nam satis providus erit, cui licebit ante multos dies cavere suspecta⁶ tempora.

II. Itaque⁷ praecipiemus, quid quoque mense faciendum sit, sic temporibus accommodantes opera ruris, ut permiserit status caeli: cuius varietatem

¹ officium *SA*.

² infitior *A*: inficior *SR*.

³ statis *S*: satis *AR*.

⁴ quamvis utile *S*: quamvis inutile *A*: quantumvis utile *R*.

⁵ continget *R*: -it *SA*.

⁶ suspecta *R*: suscepta *SA*.

⁷ itemque *SA*.

^a *Georg.* I. 204 ff.

^b A work of Columella which has not survived.

are put in train too late after the proper dates, and all the order of work, being disturbed, causes the hopes of the whole year to be disappointed. Therefore warning about the duties of each month, dependent on a consideration of the stars and sky, is
31 necessary: for as Vergil says:

Arcturus' star, the Kids and gleaming Snake
We must observe as carefully as men
Who, sailing homewards o'er the wind-swept sea
Through Pontus and Abydos' narrow jaws,
The breeding-ground of oysters, seek to pass.^a

Against this observation I do not deny that I have disputed with many arguments in the books which I wrote *Against the Astronomers*.^b But in those discussions the point which was being examined was the impudent assertion of the Chaldaeans^c that changes in the air coincide with fixed dates, as if they were confined within certain bounds; but in our science of
32 agriculture scrupulous exactitude of that kind is not required, but the prognostication of future weather by homely mother-wit, as they say, will prove as useful as you can desire to a bailiff, if he has persuaded himself that the influence of a star makes itself felt sometimes before, sometimes after, and sometimes on the actual day fixed for its rising or setting. For he will exercise sufficient foresight if he shall be in a position to take measures against suspected weather many days beforehand.

II. We will, therefore, prescribe what work must be done each month, accommodating the operations
of agriculture to the seasons of the year, as the state
What work must be done in each month of the year.

^c An early people of Assyria, pioneers in astronomy and astrology.