

Many wealthy Romans, such as senators and businessmen, were known to have at least one country home to retreat to once they tired of country life. Pliny himself had a villa in the country at Laurentum, which he describes as a very peaceful environment in comparison to the busy city.

- ① "In my house I am disturbed by no rumours. I talk only to myself and my books .". For him, the city was full of trivialities that constantly needed tending to," On the day you did these things they seemed necessary. If you consider that you did them every day they seem useless and much more so when you have withdrawn from public life." while the simple country life let him focus on the peaceful pursuits he enjoyed. "I spend my leisure time so gladly, in serious writing and reading, days which others waste in the most useless occupations "(libentissime otium meum in litteris colloco, quos alii otiosissimis occupationibus perdunt).

③ In contrast Horace enjoys wandering around the city at leisure, unaccompanied by slaves, asking the price of vegetables, visiting the Circus Maximus and the Forum. He stops to listen to soothsayers. He exercises in the Campus Martius. He eats simply and is unprompted by ambition.

④ *quacumque libido est*

⑤ *incedo solus.*

Horace writes "The country mouse was rough and careful about his stores in such a way that he could relax his thrifty soul for hospitality." He has a thrifty lifestyle but has enough to share with the town mouse "He did not begrudge the chickpea he had put aside ..." (ille sepositi ciceris nec longae invidit avenae). There is generosity that is rare in the city.

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For the poor there is little peace and much noise in the city. Juvenal writes "Sleep is bought with great resources in the city." "Many sick people die by staying awake." If apartments do not collapse from negligence, there is always the danger of fire. Codrus, the victim of a fire "loses all his nothing." Nobody will even give him a crust, in contrast to the generosity found in the country. Juvenal clearly has a very grim view of the city, focusing on and possibly exaggerating the negative aspects, but drawing attention to the plight of the poor.

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In conclusion whether you are rich or poor it seems that the Romans thought it far safer and far more peaceful to live in the country. Poor people in the city have a far worse time of it than poor people in the country. In the city their homes are likely to fall or burn and they risk their lives on the streets. Life may be a bit rough in the country but there is food to eat and a seeming absence of danger. The city has business, decadence, liveliness and circus games but the country is safer and more peaceful judging by Horace's and Pliny's accounts. And with so much fear, danger and squalor in the city one would think the positive aspects are almost completely outweighed.

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In general it seems as if the rich man can live anywhere he pleases. If he can afford the litters and the dinner parties of the rich in Juvenal's satire and just strolling around free from care, exercising in a leisurely fashion and with slaves to wait on him like Horace, the city is a fine place. Romans who got rich in the city could afford to retire to the country while the poor were stuck in their dangerous buildings and streets

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