

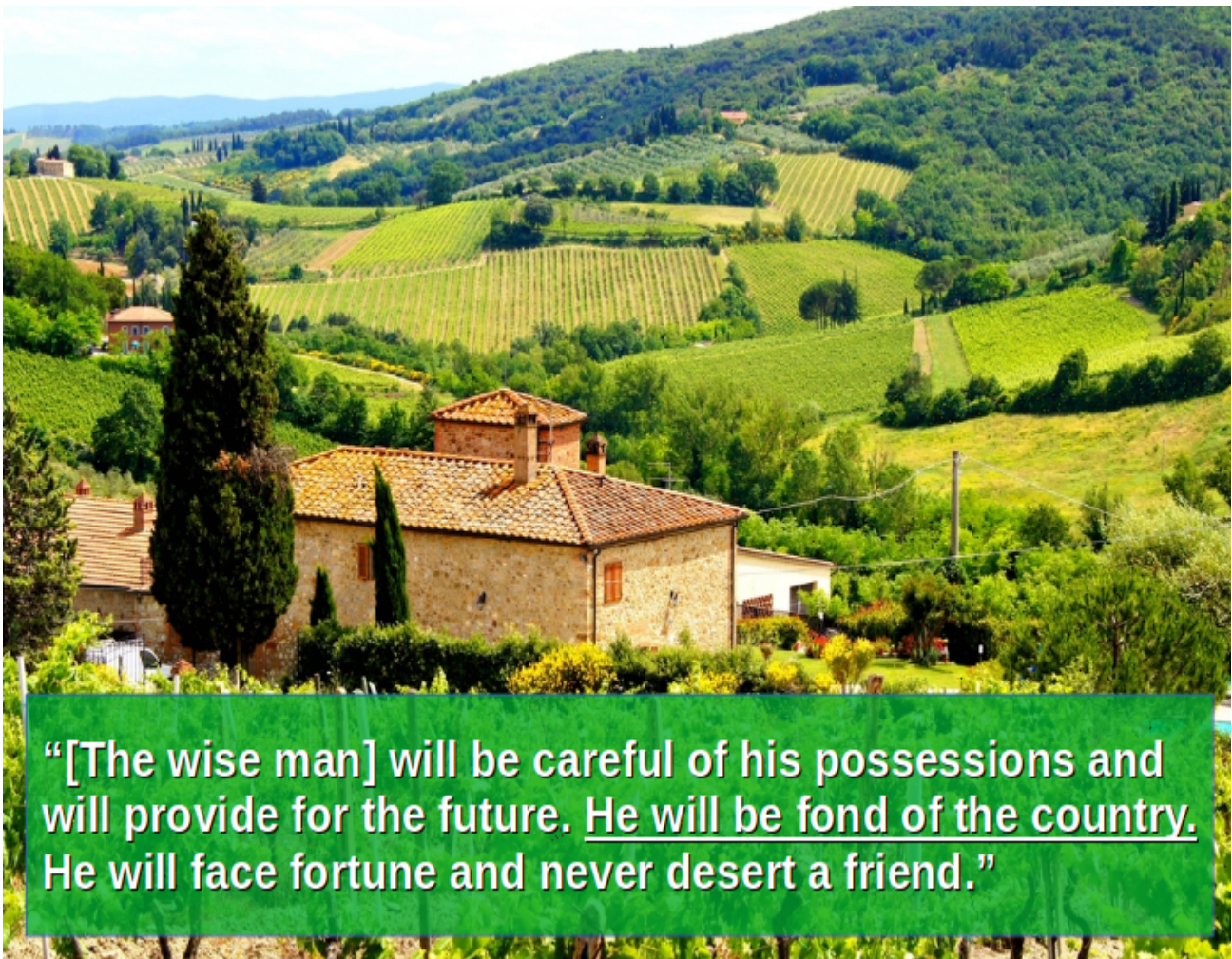
New Subforum: Epicurean Advice On Living Independently / Self-Reliantly / Simply / In the Country

Post by “Cassius” of October 1, 2018 at 9:29 AM

Epicureans in the ancient world lived through the complete collapse of their societies, and it is possible that we today are seeing the same thing. What does Epicurean philosophy have to say about how to deal with challenges to our societal structures? We frequently have new people ask questions like this: "I'm particularly interested in Epicurean ways of homesteading, as I am looking to leave the city for a more simple country life."

The first thing to remember is that according to Epicurus simple living (like virtue) is not an end in itself, but a tool in the pursuit of pleasure. But it's also clear that simplicity, independence, and self reliance are generally going to be critically important in sustaining a life of pleasure, and Diogenes Laertius recorded that Epicurus said specifically that the wise man will be "fond of the country."

Do any of our group members have personal experience in leaving the city for the country? We can discuss general issues of simple living, independence, self-reliance, etc., in this thread too, as they probably go hand in hand with the main topic.



“[The wise man] will be careful of his possessions and will provide for the future. He will be fond of the country. He will face fortune and never desert a friend.”

Post by “Pacatus” of April 11, 2023 at 1:00 PM

I just stumbled on this thread, and noticed no one else responded –

I retired from wage/salary work at age 50. In order to afford that, my wife and I did a big life-simplification project, purchasing a small circa-1940s brick cottage on 21 acres in the ridge country of Middle Tennessee. You had to cross a wooden bridge over a small tree-lined creek on a chert lane to get to our place. There were a few acres of pasture that we had a local farmer hay: we got enough hay to feed our two alpine goats over winter, and the farmer kept the rest. A wooded ridge rose up right behind our cottage. There was plenty of wildlife: deer, turkeys, a couple of coyotes – and at least one bobcat.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/533-new-subforum-epicurean-advice-on-living-independently-self-reliantly-simple-in-t/>

We put in a kitchen garden that yielded enough tomatoes, bell peppers, onions and garlic, and various herbs, to last the winter (we strung garlands of garlic in the open stairwell to the half-story upstairs). We planted some apple trees, expanded a small tart-cherry orchard, and planted blackberries (in addition to the wild ones).

We had a large propane heater stove in the den (a fairly central place) and a fireplace for heat. I cut some wood myself, and had three or four cords of seasoned hardwood delivered each year by the local tree-cutter. Pretty much all of it had to be split to fit the fireplace - which I happily did each fall with an axe, and wedges pounded by a sledge. (I say happily, because I really enjoyed it - but it took a toll on my back, which never healed properly from an old injury when I worked in the factory as a young man.) We had a couple of window air conditioners that barely kept up with the summer heat.

Viv made some lovely homemade dry wines from the cherries, blackberries and elderberries. She also went back to teaching part-time (because she needed more company than I do - and, as she put it, to be around other women as well); I was more the recluse, content with homey chores, and most days did not drive across that bridge.

We lived there for 15 years. We did not have television till the last few years. We did not have cell-phone service till really the last year. Internet was very sluggish and uncertain AOL dial-up. We read a lot in the evenings - books from the local library (I might have read more books through those years than any period before or since). We often took turns reading chapters from the same book, so we could talk about it.

After 15 years, the hard work just became harder (the chainsaws and pickaxes 15-years heavier, etc.). We sold the place and moved to a Midwest university town near where our children live. Now we still live simply in a small two-bedroom apartment; the garden is a few pots on the deck.

Our place on Terrapin Branch was far wilder than Epicurus' Athenian Garden. But, sometime during those years, I recall reading my first introductory book on Epicurus (I do not recall the author; might've been DeWitt).

And that's that story from my varied life ... ☐☐

Post by "Cassius" of April 11, 2023 at 1:09 PM

Great story Pacatus and a great way to live!