

# **THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS**

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The garden of Epicurus by Anatole France

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**ANATOLE FRANCE**

**THE GARDEN  
OF EPICURUS**



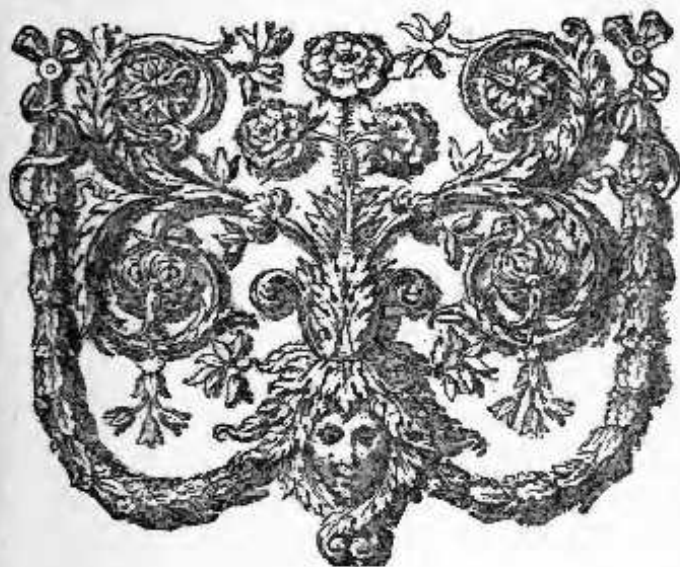
THE WORKS OF ANATOLE FRANCE  
IN AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
EDITED BY THE LATE FREDERIC  
CHAPMAN AND J. LEWIS MAY

THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS



# THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS

A TRANSLATION BY  
ALFRED ALLINSON



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MEMBERS OF THE

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*Cecropius suaves exspirans hortulus auras  
Florentis viridi Sophiae complectitur umbra.*

CIRIS.

*Que n'avons-nous connu vos caresses légères,  
O souffles embaumés de l'antique jardin,  
O brises de Cecrops, divines messagères,  
Vous qui tentiez jadis le poète latin !*

*C'est de là que nos yeux, dans un calme sourire,  
Auraient pu voir au loin les erreurs des mortels,  
L'ambition, l'amour, égaux en leur délire,  
Et l'inutile encens brûlé sur les autels.*

*- La Lampe d'Argile, par FRÉDÉRIC PLESSIS.*

Καὶ χαλεπωτέτων δὲ καιρῶν κατασχόντων τηλικαῦτα τὴν Ἑλλάδα, αὐτόθι καταβιῶναι, οἷς ἢ καὶ τρεῖς ἐπὶ τοὺς περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν τόπους διαδραμόντα πρὸς τοὺς φίλους, οἱ καὶ πανταχόθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀφικνούντο, καὶ συνεβίουν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ, καθὰ φησὶ καὶ Ἀπολλοδώροσ' ὄν καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα μῶν πρῖσθαι.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *De Vitis Philosophorum*, lib. xi. cap. i.

*Il acheta un beau jardin qu'il cultivait lui-même. C'est là où il établit son école; il menoit une vie douce et agréable avec ses disciples qu'il enseignoit en se promenant et en travaillant. . . . Il étoit doux et affable à tout le monde. . . . Il croyoit qu'il n'y a rien de plus noble que de s'appliquer à la philosophie.*

*(Abrégé de la vie des plus illustres philosophes de l'antiquité, ouvrage destiné à l'éducation de la jeunesse, par FÉNELON).\**

\* A Cecropian garden-plot, breathing scented airs, enfolds me in the verdant shade of flowering Sophia (Wisdom).

CIRIS, vv. 3, 4.

Why have we not known your dainty caresses, oh! scented airs of the ancient garden, oh! breezes of Cecrops, divine harbingers, ye who tempted in olden days the Latin bard! 'Tis thence our eyes, in a tranquil smile, might have beheld afar off the errors of mortal men,—ambition and love, well matched in their frenzy, and the unavailing incense burned on the altars.

*La Lampe d'Argile* (The Lamp of Clay), by FRANÇOIS PLESSIS.

Moreover, very troublous times having come upon Greece in those days, making it hard to live there, twice or thrice over he took voyages in the regions of Ionia among his friends, who used likewise to flock to him from all parts, and share his life in the garden, as Apollodorus relates; who tells us he purchased the plot for eighty minæ.

DIODES LAERTIUS, *Lives of the Philosophers*, Bk. x. ch. i.

He bought a fair garden, which he tilled himself. There it was he set up his school, and there he lived a gentle and agreeable life with his disciples, whom he taught as he walked and worked. . . . He was gentle and affable to all men. . . . He held there was nothing nobler than to apply oneself to philosophy.

(Summary of the Life of the most illustrious Philosophers of Antiquity,—  
Work destined for the Education of Youth, by FÉNELON.)

## THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS



WE find it hard to picture to ourselves the state of mind of a man of older days who firmly believed that the Earth was the centre of the Universe, and that all the heavenly bodies revolved round it. He could feel beneath his feet the writhings of the damned amid the flames; very likely he had seen with his own eyes and smelt with his own nostrils the sulphurous fumes of Hell escaping from some fissure in the rocks. Looking upwards, he beheld the twelve spheres,—first that of the elements, comprising air and fire, then the sphere of the Moon, of Mercury, of Venus, which Dante visited on Good Friday of the year 1300, then those of the Sun, of Mars, of Jupiter, and of Saturn, then the incorruptible firmament, wherein the stars hung fixed like so many lamps. Imagination carried his gaze further still, and his mind's eye discerned in a remoter distance the Ninth Heaven, whither the Saints were translated to