



The other books identified in this painting are: (1) Boethius' *Consolationis Philosophiae* and, (2) under Elizabeth's arm, Seneca's *Epistulae*, which comprises 124 letters addressed to young Lucilius and expresses "ardent concern for the journey to wisdom" (Motto 1973, p. 54).

1-50: "concerned with increasing one's devotion to studies and eliminating many a passion and vice" (54-55)

51-90: this "middle period displays one as master of his passions, but subject ... to relapses" (55)

91-123: "the last period urges putting wisdom into practice, testing it" (55)

124: "is concerned with the very doorstep of wisdom, discussing ... the good as it is to be fully attained by reason" (55)

Madness:

-Cure for the "general madness of mankind" requires that "reason [be] brought to perfection in the soul" (41.8-9)

-It is caused by "false opinions" (94.17). 94.32-50 and 95.34 list elements of the cure.

-Nation-wide madness shown in "the much-vaunted crime of slaughtering whole peoples" (95.30) requires the help of philosophy (95.32) "in order to root out a deep-seated belief in wrong ideas" (95.34).

Letters of special note:

Letter 88, *De studiis liberalibus* [only letter in Erasmus' 1515 ed. to have its title listed separately in table of contents]

88.20: Liberal studies "prepare the soul for the reception of virtue."

88.28: Philosophy is "the only art to bring the soul to perfection."

88.29: "Loyalty is the holiest good in the human heart. [*Fides santicissimum humani pectoris bonum est.*] ... Can the liberal arts [*liberalia studia*] produce such a spirit within us?"

88.30: "*Humanitas* forbids pride [*superbum*] towards your associates [*socios*], and it forbids greed [*avarum*]. In words and in deeds and in feelings it shows itself gentle and courteous to all men. It counts no evil [*malum*] as another's solely. And the reason why it loves its own good is chiefly because it will someday be the good on another. Do liberal studies teach such character as this?"

Letter 90, *On the Benefit of Philosophy*

90.3: Philosophy's "sole function is to discover the truth about things divine and things human."

90.45, 46: "Nature does not bestow virtue; it is an art to become good.... Virtue does not reach [*contingit*] a soul unless that soul has been trained and taught, and by unremitting practice brought to perfection."

Letter 92, *On the Happy Life*

92.10: "Man's primary art is virtue itself."

92.30: our nature is to look to the heavens. Same thought in Boethius' *Consolation* 5.5, which More quotes in the 1521 letter to his children; see *Selected Letters*, p. 146.

Letter 104.19: "wisdom [is] the greatest of all the arts"

Letter 120.22: "No one can be one person except the wise man; the rest of us often shift our masks."

Letter 124.23: the highest human good is a "pure and corrected soul" [*animus scilicet emendates ac purus*]