(Vol. XVII) Cicero
De Finibus

Book III

…

Section 5

5 He began: "It is the view of those whose system I adopt, that immediately upon birth (for that is the proper point to start from) a living creature feels an attachment for itself, and an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things which tend to preserve that constitution; while on the other hand it conceives an antipathy to destruction and to those things which appear to threaten destruction. In proof of this opinion they urge that infants desire things conducive to their health and reject things that are the opposite before they have ever felt pleasure or pain; this would not be the case, unless they felt an affection for their own constitution and were afraid of destruction. But it would be impossible that they should feel desire at all unless they possessed self-consciousness, and consequently felt affection for themselves. This leads to the conclusion that it is love of self which supplies the primary impulse to action. 17 Pleasure on the contrary, according to most Stoics, is not to be reckoned among the primary objects of natural impulse; and I very strongly agree with them, for fear lest many immoral consequences would follow if we held that nature has placed pleasure among the earliest objects of desire. But the fact of our affection for the objects first adopted at nature's prompting seems to require no further proof than this, that there is no one who, given the choice, would not prefer to have all the parts of his body sound and whole, rather than maimed or distorted although equally serviceable.

"Again, acts of cognition (which we may term comprehensions or perceptions, or, if these words are distasteful or obscure, katalēpseis), — these we consider meet to be adopted for their own sake, because they possess an element that so to speak embraces and contains the truth. This can be seen in the case of children, whom we may observe to take pleasure in finding something out for themselves by the use of reason, even though they gain nothing by it. 18 The sciences also, we consider, are things to be chosen for their own sake, partly because there is in them something worthy of choice, partly because they consist of acts of cognition and contain an element of fact established by methodical reasoning. The mental assent to what is false, as the Stoics believe, is more repugnant to us than all the other things that are contrary to nature.

"(Again,5 of the members or parts of the body, some appear to have been bestowed on us by nature for the sake of their use, for example the hands, legs, feet, and internal organs, as to the degree of whose utility even physicians are not agreed; while others serve no useful purpose, but appear to be intended for ornament: for instance the peacock's tail, the plumage of the dove with its shifting colours, and the breasts and beard of the male human being.) 19 All this is perhaps somewhat baldly expressed; for it

deals with what may be called the primary elements of nature, to which any embellishment of style can scarcely be applied, nor am I for my part concerned to attempt it. On the other hand, when one is treating of more majestic topics the style instinctively rises with the subject, and the brilliance of the language increases with the dignity of the theme." "True," I rejoined; "but to my mind, any clear statement of an important topic possesses excellence of style. It would be childish to desire an ornate style in subjects of the kind with which you are dealing. A man of sense and education will be content to be able to express his meaning plainly and clearly."

Section 6

6 20 "To proceed then," he continued, "for we have been digressing from the primary impulses of nature; and with these the later stages must be in harmony. The next step is the following fundamental classification: That which is in itself in accordance with nature, or which produces something else that is so, and which therefore is deserving of choice as possessing a certain amount of positive value — axia as the Stoics call it — this they pronounce to be 'valuable' (for so I suppose we may translate it); and on the other hand that which is the contrary of the former they term 'valueless.' The initial principle being thus established that things in accordance with nature are 'things to be taken' for their own sake, and their opposites similarly 'things to be rejected,' the first 'appropriate act' (for so I render the Greek kathēkon) is to preserve oneself in one's natural constitution; the next is to retain those things which are in accordance with nature and to repel those that are the contrary; then when this principle of choice and also of rejection has been discovered, there follows next in order choice conditioned by 'appropriate action';6 then, such choice become a fixed habit; and finally, choice fully rationalized and in harmony with nature. It is at this final stage that the Good properly so called first emerges and comes to be understood in its true nature. 21 Man's first attraction is towards the things in accordance with nature; but as soon as he has understanding, or rather become capable of 'conception' — in Stoic phraseology ennoia — and has discerned the order and so to speak harmony that governs conduct, he thereupon esteems this harmony far more highly than all the things for which he originally felt an affection, and by exercise of intelligence and reason infers the conclusion that herein resides the Chief Good of man, the thing that is praiseworthy and desirable for its own sake; and that inasmuch as this consists in what the Stoics term homologia and we with your approval may call 'conformity'7 — inasmuch I say as in this resides that Good which is the End to which all else is a means, moral conduct and Moral Worth itself, which alone is counted as a good, although of subsequent development, is nevertheless the sole thing that is for its own efficacy and value desirable, whereas none of the primary objects of nature is desirable for its own sake. 22 But since those actions which I have termed 'appropriate acts' are based on the primary natural objects, it follows that the former are means to the latter. Hence it may correctly be said that all 'appropriate acts' are means to the end of attaining the primary needs of nature. Yet it must not be inferred that their attainment is the ultimate Good, inasmuch as moral action is not one of the primary natural attractions, but is an outgrowth of these, a later development, as I have said. At the same time moral action is in accordance with nature, and stimulates our desire far more strongly than all the objects that attracted us earlier. But at this point a caution is necessary at the outset. It will be an error to infer that this view implies two Ultimate Goods. For though if a man were to make it his purpose to take a true aim with a spear or arrow at some mark, his ultimate end, corresponding to the ultimate good as we pronounce it, would be to do all he could to aim straight: the man in this illustration would have to do everything to aim straight, you yet, although he did everything to attain his purpose, his 'ultimate End,' so to speak, would be what corresponded to what we call the Chief Good in the conduct of life, whereas the actual hitting of the mark would be in our phrase 'to be chosen' but not 'to be desired.'

Section 7

7 23 "Again, as all 'appropriate acts' are based on the primary impulses of nature, it follows that Wisdom itself is based on them also. But as it often happens that a man who is introduced to another values this new friend more highly than he does the person who gave him the introduction, so in like manner it is by no means surprising that though we are first commended to Wisdom by the primary natural instincts, afterwards Wisdom itself becomes dearer to us than are the instincts from which we came to her. And just as our limbs are so fashioned that it is clear that they were bestowed upon us with a view to a certain mode of life, so our faculty of appetition, in Greek hormē, was obviously designed not for any kind of life one may choose, but for a particular mode of living; and the same is true of Reason and of perfected Reason. 24 For just as an actor or dancer has assigned to him not any but a certain particular part or dance, so life has to be conducted in a certain fixed way, and not in any way we like. This fixed way we speak of as 'conformable' and suitable. In fact we do not consider Wisdom to be like seamanship or medicine, but rather like the arts of acting and of dancing just mentioned; its End, being the actual exercise8 of the art, is contained within the art itself, and is not something extraneous to it. At the same time there is also another point which marks a dissimilarity between Wisdom and these arts as well. In the latter a movement perfectly executed nevertheless does not involve all the various motions which together constitute the subject matter of the art; whereas in the sphere of conduct, what we may call, if you approve, 'right actions,' or 'rightly performed actions,' in Stoic phraseology katorthōmata, contain all the factors of virtue. For Wisdom alone is entirely self-contained, which is not the case with the other arts. 25 It is erroneous, however, to place the End of medicine or of navigation exactly on a par with the End of Wisdom. For Wisdom includes also magnanimity and justice and a sense of superiority to all the accidents of man's estate, but this is not the case with the other arts. Again, even the very virtues I have just mentioned cannot be attained by anyone unless he has realized that all things are indifferent and indistinguishable except moral worth and baseness.

26 "We may now observe how strikingly the principles I have established support the following corollaries. Inasmuch as the final aim — (and you have observed, no doubt, that I have all along been translating the Greek term telos either by 'final' or 'ultimate aim,' or 'chief Good,' and for 'final or ultimate aim' we may also substitute 'End') — inasmuch then as the final aim is to live in agreement and harmony with nature, it necessarily follows that all wise men at all times enjoy a happy, perfect and fortunate life, free from all hindrance, interference or want. The essential principle not merely of the system of philosophy I am discussing but also of our life and destinies is, that we should believe Moral Worth to be the only good. This principle might be amplified and elaborated in the rhetorical manner, with great length and fullness and with all the resources of choice diction and impressive argument; but for my own part I like the concise and pointed 'consequences' of the Stoics.

Section 8

8 27 "They put their arguments in the following syllogistic form: Whatever is good is praiseworthy; but whatever is praiseworthy is morally honourable: therefore that which is good is morally honourable. Does this seem to you a valid deduction? Surely it must: you can see that the conclusion consists in what necessarily resulted from the two premises. The usual line of reply is to deny the major premise, and say that not everything good is praiseworthy; for there is no denying that what is praiseworthy is morally honourable. But it would be paradoxical to maintain that there is something good which is not desirable; or desirable that is not pleasing; or if pleasing, not also esteemed; and therefore approved as well; and so also praiseworthy. But the praiseworthy is the morally honourable. Hence it follows that what is good is also morally honourable.

28 "Next I ask, who can be proud of a life that is miserable or not happy? It follows that one can only be proud of one's lot when it is a happy one. This proves that the happy life is a thing that deserves (so to

put it) that one should be proud of it; and this cannot rightly be said of any life but one morally honourable. Therefore the moral life is the happy life. And the man who deserves and wins praise has exceptional cause for pride and self-satisfaction; but these things count for so much that he can justly be pronounced happy; therefore the life of such a man can with full correctness be described as happy also. Thus if Moral Worth is the criterion of happiness, Moral Worth must be deemed the only Good.

29 "Once more; could it be denied that it is impossible for there ever to exist a man of steadfast, firm and lofty mind, such a one as we call a brave man, unless it be established that pain is not an evil? For just as it is impossible for one who counts death as an evil not to fear death, so in no case can a man disregard and despise a thing that he decides to be evil. This being laid down as generally admitted, we take as our minor premise that the brave and high-minded man despises and holds of no account all the accidents to which mankind is liable. The conclusion follows that nothing is evil that is not base. Also, your lofty, distinguished, magnanimous and truly brave man, who thinks all human vicissitudes beneath him, I mean, the character we desire to produce, our ideal man, must unquestionably have faith in himself and in his own character both past and future, and think well of himself, holding that no ill can befall the wise man. Here then is another proof of the same position, that Moral Worth alone is good, and that to live honourably, that is virtually, is to live happily.

Section 9

9 30 "I am well aware, it is true, that varieties of opinion have existed among philosophers, I mean among those of them who have placed the Chief Good, the ultimate aim as I call it, in the mind. Some of those who adopted this view fell into error; but nevertheless I rank all those, of whatever type, who have placed the Chief Good in the mind and in virtue, not merely above the three philosophers[9] who dissociate the Chief Good from virtue altogether and identified it either with pleasure or freedom from pain or the primary impulses of nature, but also above the other three, who held that virtue would be incomplete without some enhancement, and therefore added to it one or other respectively of the three things I have just enumerated. 31 But still those thinkers are quite beside the mark who pronounced the ultimate Good to be a life devoted to knowledge; and those who declared that all things are indifferent, and that the Wise Man will secure happiness by not preferring any one thing in the least degree to any other; and those again who said, as some members of the Academy are said to have maintained, that the final Good and supreme duty of the Wise Man is to resist appearances and resolutely withhold his assent to the reality of sense-impressions. It is customary to take these doctrines severally and reply to them at length. But there is really no need to labour what is self-evident; and what could be more obvious than that, if we can exercise no choice as between things consonant with and things contrary to nature, the much-prized and belauded virtue of Prudence is abolished altogether? Eliminating therefore the views just enumerated and any others that resemble them, we are left with the conclusion that the Chief Good consists in applying to the conduct of life a knowledge of the working of natural causes, choosing what is in accordance with nature and rejecting what is contrary to it; in other words, the Chief Good is to live in agreement and in harmony with nature.

32 "But[10] in the other arts when we speak of an 'artistic' performance, this quality must be considered as in a sense subsequent to and a result of the action; it is what the Stoics term epigennēmatikon (in the nature of an after-growth). Whereas in conduct, when we speak of an act as 'wise,' the term is applied with full correctness from the first inception of the act. For every action that the Wise Man initiates must necessarily be complete forthwith in all its parts; since the thing desirable, as we term it, consists in his activity. As it is a sin to betray one's country, to use violence to one's parents, to rob a temple, where the offence lies in the result of the act, so the passions of fear, grief and lust are sins, even when no extraneous result ensues. The latter are sins not in their subsequent effects, but immediately upon their

inception; similarly, actions springing from virtue are to be judged right from their first inception, and not in their successful completion.

Section 10

10 33 "Again, the term 'Good,' which has been employed so frequently in this discourse, is also explained by definition. The Stoic definitions do indeed differ from one another in a very minute degree, but they all point in the same direction. Personally I agree with Diogenes in defining the Good as that which is by nature perfect. He was led by this also to pronounce the 'beneficial' (for so let us render the Greek ōphelēma) to be a motion or state in accordance with that which is by nature perfect. Now notions of things are produced in the mind when something has become known either by experience or combination of ideas or analogy or logical inference. The mind ascends by inference from the things in accordance with nature till finally it arrives at the notion of Good. 34 At the same time Goodness is absolute, and is not a question of degree; the Good is recognized and pronounced to be good from its own inherent properties and not by comparison with other things. Just as honey, though extremely sweet, is yet perceived to be sweet by its own peculiar kind of flavour and not by being compared with something else, so this Good which we are discussing is indeed superlatively valuable, yet its value depends on kind and not on quantity. Value, in Greek axiā, is not counted as a Good nor yet as an Evil; so that however much you increase it in amount, it will still remain the same in kind. The value of Virtue is therefore peculiar and distinct; it depends on kind and not on degree.

35 "Moreover the emotions of the mind, which harass and embitter the life of the foolish (the Greek term for these is pathos, and I might have rendered this literally and styled them 'diseases,' but the word 'disease' would not suit all instances; for example, no one speaks of pity, nor yet anger, as a disease, though the Greeks term these pathos. Let us then accept the term 'emotion,' the very sound of which seems to denote something vicious, and these emotions are not excited by any natural influence. The list of the emotions is divided into four classes, with numerous subdivisions, namely sorrow, fear, lust, and that mental emotion which the Stoics call by a name that also denotes a bodily feeling, hēdonē 'pleasure,' but which I prefer to style 'delight,' meaning the sensuous elation of the mind when in a state of exaltation), these emotions, I say, are not excited by any influence of nature; they are all of them mere fancies and frivolous opinions. Therefore the Wise Man will always be free from them.

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Section 15

15 "I am aware that all this seems paradoxical; but as our previous conclusions are undoubtedly true and well established, and as these are the logical inferences from them, the truth of these inferences also cannot be called in question. Yet although the Stoics deny that either virtues or vices can be increased in degree, they nevertheless believe that each of them can be in a sense expanded and widened in scope.12 49 Wealth again, in the opinion of Diogenes, though so important for pleasure and health as to be not merely conducive but actually essential to them, yet has not the same effect in relation to virtue, nor yet in the case of the other arts; for money may be a guide to these, but cannot form an essential factor in them; therefore although if pleasure or if good health be a good, wealth also must be counted a good, yet if wisdom is a good, it does not follow that we must also pronounce wealth to be a good. Nor can thing which is not a good be essential to a thing that is a good; and hence, because acts of cognition and of comprehension, which form the raw material of the arts, excite desire, since wealth is not a good, wealth cannot be essential to any art. 50 But even if we allowed wealth to be essential to the arts, the same argument nevertheless could not be applied to virtue, because virtue (as Diogenes argues) requires a

great amount of thought and practice, which is not the case to the same extent with the arts,13 and because virtue involves life-long steadfastness, strength and consistency, whereas these qualities are not equally manifested in the arts.

"Next follows an exposition of the difference between things; for if we maintained that all things were absolutely indifferent, the whole of life would be thrown into confusion, as it is by Aristo, and no function or task could be found for wisdom, since there would be absolutely no distinction between the things that pertain to the conduct of life, and no choice need be exercised among them. Accordingly after conclusively proving that morality alone is good and baseness alone evil, the Stoics went on to affirm that among those things which were of no importance for happiness or misery, there was nevertheless an element of difference, making some of them of positive and others of negative value, and others neutral. 51 Again among things valuable — e.g. health, unimpaired senses, freedom from pain, fame, wealth and the like — they said that some afford us adequate grounds for preferring them to other things, while others are not of this nature; and similarly among those things which are of negative value some afford adequate grounds for our rejecting them, such as pain, disease, loss of the senses, poverty, disgrace, and the like; others not so. Hence arose the distinction, in Zeno's terminology, between proēgmena and the opposite, apoproēgmena — for Zeno using the copious Greek language still employed novel words coined for the occasion, a licence not allowed to us with the poor vocabulary of Latin; though you are fond of saying that Latin is actually more copious than Greek. However, to make it easier to understand the meaning of this term it will not be out of place to explain the method which Zeno pursued in coining it.

Section 16

16 52 "In a royal court, Zeno remarks, no one speaks of the king himself as 'promoted' to honour (for that is the meaning of proēgmenon), but the term is applied to those holding some office of state whose rank most nearly approaches, though it is second to, the royal pre-eminence; similarly in the conduct of life the title proēgmenon, that is, 'promoted,' is to be given not to those things which are in the first rank, but to those which hold the second place; for these we may use either the term suggested (for that will be a literal translation) or 'advanced' and 'degraded,' or the term we have been using all along, 'preferred' or 'superior,' and for the opposite 'rejected.' If the meaning is intelligible we need not be punctilious about the use of words. 53 But since we declare that everything that is good occupies the first rank, it follows that this which we entitle preferred or superior is neither good nor evil; and accordingly we define it as being indifferent but possessed of a moderate value — since it has occurred to me that I may use the word 'indifferent' to represent their term adiaphoron. For in fact, it was inevitable that the class of intermediate things should contain some things that were either in accordance with nature, or the reverse, and this being so, that this class should include some things which possessed moderate value, and, granting this, that some things of this class should be 'preferred.' 54 There were good grounds therefore for making this distinction; and furthermore, to elucidate the matter still more clearly they put forward the following illustration: Just as, supposing we were to assume that our end and aim is to throw a knuckle-bone14 in such a way that it may stand upright, a bone that is thrown so as to fall upright will be in some measure 'preferred' or advanced' in relation to the proposed end, and one that falls otherwise the reverse, and yet that 'advance' on the part of the knuckle-bone will not be a constituent part of the end indicated, so those things which are 'preferred' are it is true means to the End but are in no sense constituents of its essential nature.

55 "Next comes the division of goods into three classes, first those which are 'constituents' of the final end (for so I represent the term telika, this being a case of an idea which we may decide, as we agreed, to express in several words as we cannot do so in one, in order to make the meaning clear), secondly

those which are 'productive' of the End, the Greek poiētika; and thirdly those which are both. The only instances of goods of the 'constituent' class are moral action; the only instance of a 'productive' good is a friend. Wisdom, according to the Stoics, is both constituent and productive; for as being itself an appropriate activity it comes under what I called the constituent class; as causing and producing moral actions, it can be called productive.

Section 19

19 62 "Again, it is held by the Stoics to be important to understand that nature creates in parents an affection for their children; and parental affection is the source to which we trace the origin of the association of the human race in communities. This cannot but be clear in the first place from the conformation of the body and its members, which by themselves are enough to show that nature's scheme included the procreation of offspring. Yet it could not be consistent that nature should at once intend offspring to be born and make no provision for that offspring when born to be loved and cherished. Even in the lower animals nature's operation can be clearly discerned; when we observe the labour that they spend on bearing and rearing their young, we seem to be listening to the actual voice of nature. Hence as it is manifest that it is natural for us to shrink from pain, so it is clear that we derive from nature herself the impulse to love those to whom we have given birth. 63 From this impulse is developed the sense of mutual attraction which unites human beings as such; this also is bestowed by nature. The mere fact of their common humanity requires that one man should feel another man to be akin to him.16 For just as some of the parts of the body, such as the eyes and the ears, are created as it were for their own sakes, while others like the legs or the hands also subserve the utility of the rest of the members, so some very large animals are born for themselves alone; whereas the sea-pen,17 as it is called, in its roomy shell, and the creature named the 'pinoteres' because it keeps watch over the sea-pen, which swims out of the sea-pen's shell, then retires back into it and is shut up inside, thus appearing to have warned its host to be on its guard — these creatures, and also the ant, the bee, the stork, do certain actions for the sake of others besides themselves. With human beings this bond of mutual aid is far more intimate. It follows that we are by nature fitted to form unions, societies and states.

64 "Again, they hold that the universe is governed by divine will; it is a city or state of which both men and gods are members, and each one of us is a part of this universe; from which it is a natural consequence that we should prefer the common advantage to our own. For just as the laws set the safety of all above the safety of individuals, so a good, wise and law-abiding man, conscious of his duty to the state, studies the advantage of all more than that of himself or of any single individual. The traitor to his country does not deserve greater reprobation than the man who betrays the common advantage or security for the sake of his own advantage or security. This explains why praise is owed to one who dies for the commonwealth, because it becomes us to love our country more than ourselves. And as we feel it wicked and inhuman for men to declare (the saying is usually expressed in a familiar Greek line)18 that they care not if, when they themselves are dead, the universal conflagration ensues, it is undoubtedly true that we are bound to study the interest of posterity also for its own sake.

Section 20

20 65 "This is the feeling that has given rise to the practice of making a will and appointing guardians for one's children when one is dying. And the fact that no one would care to pass his life alone in a desert, even though supplied with pleasures in unbounded profusion, readily shows that we are born for society and intercourse, and for a natural partnership with our fellow men. Moreover nature inspires us with the desire to benefit as many people as we can, and especially by imparting information and the principles of wisdom. 66 Hence it would be hard to discover anyone who will not impart to another any

knowledge that he may himself possess;a so strong is our propensity not only to learn but also to teach. And just as bulls have a natural instinct to fight with all their strength and force in defending their calves against lions, so men of exceptional gifts and capacity for service, like Hercules and Liber in the legends, feel a natural impulse to be the protectors of the human race. Also when we confer upon Jove the titles of Most Good and Most Great, of Saviour, Lord of Guests, Rallier of Battles, what we mean to imply is that the safety of mankind lies in his keeping. But how inconsistent it would be for us to expect the immortal gods to love and cherish us, when we ourselves despise and neglect one another! Therefore just as we actually use our limbs before we have learnt for what particular useful purpose they were bestowed upon us, so we are united and allied by nature in the common society of the state. Were this not so, there would be no room either for justice or benevolence.

67 "But just as they hold that man is united with man by the bonds of right, so they consider that no right exists as between man and beast. For Chrysippus well said, that all other things were created for the sake of men and gods, but that these exist for their own mutual fellowship and society, so that men can make use of beasts for their own purposes without injustice. And the nature of man, he said, is such, that as it were a code of law subsists between the individual and the human race, so that he who upholds this code will be just and he who departs from it, unjust. But just as, though the theatre is a public place, yet it is correct to say that the particular seat a man has taken belongs to him, so in the state or in the universe, though these are common to all, no principle of justice militates against the possession of private property. 68 Again, since we see that man is designed by nature to safeguard and protect his fellows, it follows from this natural disposition, that the Wise Man should desire to engage in politics and government, and also to live in accordance with nature by taking to himself a wife and desiring to have children by her. Even the passion of love when pure is not thought incompatible with the character of the Stoic sage. As for the principles and habits of the Cynics,19 some say that these befit the Wise Man, if circumstances should happen to indicate this course of action; but other Stoics reject the Cynic rule unconditionally.

Section 21

21 69 "To safeguard the universal alliance, solidarity and affection that subsist between man and man, the Stoics held that both 'benefits' and 'injuries' (in their terminology, ōphelēmata and blammata) are common, the former doing good and the latter harm; and they pronounce them to be not only 'common' but also 'equal.' 'Disadvantages' and 'advantages' (for so I render euchrēstēmata and duschrēstēmata) they held to be 'common' but not 'equal.' For things 'beneficial' and 'injurious' are goods and evils respectively, and these must needs be equal; but 'advantages' and 'disadvantages' belong to the class we speak of as 'preferred' and 'rejected,' and these may differ in degree. But whereas 'benefits' and 'injuries' are pronounced to be 'common,' righteous and sinful acts are not considered 'common.'20

70 "They recommend the cultivation of friendship, classing it among 'things beneficial.' In friendship some profess that the Wise Man will hold his friends' interests as dear as his own, while others say that a man's own interests must necessarily be dearer to him; at the same time the latter admit that to enrich oneself by another's loss is an action repugnant to that justice towards which we seem to possess a natural propensity. But the school I am discussing emphatically rejects the view that we adopt or approve either justice or friendship for the sake of their utility. For if it were so, the same claims of utility would be able to undermine and overthrow them. In fact the very existence of both justice and friendship will be impossible if they are not desired for their own sake. 71 Right moreover, properly so styled and entitled, exists (they aver) by nature; and it is foreign to the nature of the Wise Man not only to wrong but even to hurt anyone. Nor again is it righteous to enter into a partnership in wrongdoing with one's friends or benefactors; and it is most truly and cogently maintained that honesty is always the

best policy, and that whatever is fair and just is also honourable,21a and conversely whatever is honourable21b will also be just and fair.

72 "To the virtues we have discussed they also add Dialectic and Natural Philosophy. Both of these they entitle by the name of virtue; the former because it conveys a method that guards us for giving assent to any falsehood or ever being deceived by specious probability, and enables us to retain and to defend the truths that we have learned about good and evil; for without the art of Dialectic they hold that any man may be seduced from truth into error. If therefore rashness and ignorance are in all matters fraught with mischief, the art which removes them is correctly entitled a virtue.

Section 22

22 73 "The same honour is also bestowed with good reason upon Natural Philosophy, because he who is to live in accordance with nature must base his principles upon the system and government of the entire world. Nor again can anyone judge truly of things good and evil, save by a knowledge of the whole plan of nature and also of the life of the gods, and of the answer to the question whether the nature of man is or is not in harmony with that of the universe. And no one without Natural Philosophy can discern the value (and their value is very great) of the ancient maxims and precepts of the Wise Men, such as to 'obey occasion,' 'follow God,' 'know thyself,' and 'moderation in all things.' Also this science alone can impart a conception of the power of nature in fostering justice and maintaining friendship and the rest of the affections; nor again without unfolding nature's secrets can we understand the sentiment of piety towards the gods or the degree of gratitude that we owe to them.

74 "However I begin to perceive that I have let myself be carried beyond the requirements of the plan that I set before me. The fact is that I have been led on by the marvellous structure of the Stoic system and the miraculous sequence of its topics; pray tell me seriously, does it not fill you with admiration? Nothing is more finished, more nicely ordered, than nature; but what has nature, what have the products of handicraft to show that is so well constructed, so firmly jointed and welded into one? Where do you find a conclusion inconsistent with its premise, or a discrepancy between an earlier and a later statement? Where is lacking such close interconnexion of the parts that, if you alter a single letter, you shake the whole structure? Though indeed there is nothing that it would be possible to alter.

75 "Then, how dignified, how lofty, how consistent is the character of the Wise Man as they depict it! Since reason has proved that moral worth is the sole good, it follows that he must always be happy, and that all those titles which the ignorant are so fond of deriding do in very truth belong to him. For he will have a better claim to the title of King than Tarquin, who could not rule either himself or his subjects; a better right to the name of 'Master22 of the People' (for that is what a dictator is) than Sulla, who was a master of three pestilential vices, licentiousness, avarice and cruelty; a better right to be called rich than Crassus, who had he lacked nothing could never have been induced to cross the Euphrates with no pretext for war. Rightly will he be said to own all things, who alone knows how to use all things; rightly also will he be styled beautiful, for the features of the soul are fairer than those of the body; rightly the one and only free man, as subject to no man's authority, and slave of no appetite; rightly unconquerable, for though his body be thrown into fetters, no bondage can enchain his soul. 76 Nor need he wait for any period of time, that the decision whether he has been happy or not may be finally pronounced only when he has rounded off his life's last day in death, — the famous warning so unwisely given to Croesus by old Solon, one of the seven Wise Men; for had Croesus ever been happy, he would have carried his happiness uninterrupted to the pyre raised for him by Cyrus. If then it be true that all the good and none but the good are happy, what possession is more precious than philosophy, what more divine than virtue?"

The Loeb Editor's Notes:

1 Cp. I.8 ff.

2 viz. Ethics.

3 The young Lucullus's grandfather, Q. Servilius Caepio, was quaestor 100 B.C. and died 90 B.C. when Cicero was 16. But the following words seem to refer to a Caepio who, had he not died prematurely, would be in the prime of life when Cicero writes. This must mean the Caepio of the preceding sentence, Lucullus's uncle, who may well have left Cicero as the guardian of his son, as is stated below. We may assume that avi is a slip, either of Cicero's or of a copyist's, for avunculi (Schütz).

4 Cf. V.12.

5 This parenthesis has no relevance to the context.

6 The Latin is here inadequate; what is meant is apparently that the adult deliberately selects the natural Goods which as a child he pursued instinctively, and that the selection is now an officium. If however cum officio is the mark of selectio at this later stage, Cicero is inaccurate above when he applies officium to the instinct of self-preservation and the instinctive choice of natural Goods. On the other hand it is not clear why these should not be included under kathēkon 'appropriate action' or officium as defined at § 58, 'an act of which a probable account or reason can be given.'

7 'To live conformably,' ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν, was Zeno's formula for the End; it was interpreted as meaning 'to live on one harmonious plan." Cleanthes added, τῇ φύσει, 'to live in conformity with nature.'

8 Effectio is here taken as equivalent to the Aristotelian praxis, as in § 45; but it might be construed as having the sense of 'effectus' in Tusc. 2.3 viz. ergon in its wider sense, the product of an art, covering both praxis, the actual exercise of the art, which is the product of a 'practic' art, and ergon in the narrower sense, 'effectus' in § 32, the extraneous product of a 'poiëtic' or constructive art.

9 For these various schools see V.20-23.

10 This section looks as if it had been transferred here by error from the end of § 24 (Reid).

11 vitium means normally a defect or imperfection rather than a moral failing or vice.

12 i.e. They may be exercised on a larger or smaller scale.

13 It is to be remembered that 'artes,' technai, included professions, trades and handicrafts as well as sciences and the fine arts, and it is of the simpler crafts that philosophers, following Socrates, were mostly thinking when they compared and contrasted the other 'artes' with the 'ars vivendi.'

14 Tali, real or artificial, were used as dice; they had four long sides and two pointed ends; of the sides two were broad and two narrow. The talus was said to be rectus when lying on a narrow side, and pronus when on a broad side. Thus cadere rectus, to alight upright when thrown, would be the first stage towards assistere rectus, to remain standing upright.

Thayer's Note: For fuller details see the article Talus in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.

15 Loosely put for 'the primary things of nature and their opposites.'

16 A reminiscence of Terence, who humorously puts this Stoic tag into the mouth of Chremes as an excuse for his neighbourly curiosity: Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto, Heaut. 25, Cp. I.3, II.14.

17 A mussel in whose 'beard' a small crab is often found entangled. The notion of their partnership is found in Aristotle; Chrysippus introduced it as an illustration in Ethics.

18 ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί: said to have been quoted by Tiberius and Nero.

19 The Cynics cast off the ties of country and family, and proclaimed themselves Kosmou Politai, citizens of the Universe and members of the universal brotherhood of man.

20 Moral and immoral acts (a) viewed for their results for good and ill affect all mankind, (b) viewed in themselves concern the agent only; while in both aspects they do not admit of degree, but are either good or bad, right or wrong absolutely. Whereas things indifferent (i.e. everything but moral good and evil) are more or less advantageous or the reverse, both to the person immediately concerned and to the world at large.

21a 21b The sense seems here to require utile, 'useful,' rather than honestum; unless honestum is intended to mean 'held in popular esteem,' and so profitable.

❦

22 The old title of the dictators at Rome. Cicero plays on the meaning of magister, 'teacher.'

Thayer's Note:

a This passage speaks volumes about the decency of Cicero (and Cicero's idea of Cato), who in this respect is living in a bubble: the hoarding of knowledge is in fact one of the commonest of human vices both individual and corporate. As that realist the elder Pliny would write a century later:

Turpissima causa raritatis (scientiae) quod etiam qui sciunt demonstrare nolunt, tamquam ipsis periturum sit quod tradiderint aliis.

"The most shameful reason for the poor dissemination of knowledge is that those who know things don't want to present them openly, as if somehow in the process they would lose whatever they shared with others."

(N. H. XXV.16), my trans.

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